

F.A. COX OF HACKNEY

Nineteenth-Century Baptist Theologian, Historian, Controversialist, and Apologist

I INTRODUCTION

Nobody can read very far in nineteenth-century Baptist history without encountering the name of F.A. Cox who exercised a pulpit ministry of some forty-two years over the Baptist congregation in Hackney, after a youthful appointment to succeed Robert Hall in Cambridge had failed to satisfy either pastor or people. I have previously written about Cox's pastoral activities and his busy endeavours in education and religious liberty¹. Here I want to turn more to examples of his thinking and his writing, for Cox was rather more than the frenzied activist that Skeats and Miall may be taken to identify². His learning, if belonging to an older generation of scholarship, was substantial, and provides insight into the state of the Baptist mind in the first half of the nineteenth century, with its contrasting concern for the unity of Christ's church and for Baptist identity, for a first recording of Baptist mission history and for advocating new methods for extending the church at home, including specific engagement by way of apologetics with the world of unbelief.

II ON CHRISTIAN UNION³

'No christian can question the importance of promoting union among the avowed followers of Christ, to the utmost practicable extent', canvassed Cox. At the same time he admitted that what was being sought as a goal already existed, in some measure at least, between individuals, who were sighing and praying for the consummation of this purpose. Concern for unity, in his judgement, did not simply arise out of pragmatic considerations but had its theological rooting in the nature of God and his purposes. Scripture and Nature, whilst glorying in variety, both testified, in Cox's opinion, to the oneness of God. Perceived diversity still operated to a given process of law, for all was brought, in language reminiscent of William Paley, by 'evident design' into conformity to the Almighty's 'universal scheme': 'the machinery is there to which every atom is attached, working out its wondrous purpose, and touched on the prime-spring by the Almighty Disposer'. The logic was that a similar principle should be effective in both the life of the church and the individual. 'By the laws of moral attraction and affinity, under the guidance of Divine Providence, church after church, will be formed and associated, the scattered elements of individual opinion or action combined together, till the world of union, christian harmony and peace, shall emerge from the yet distant and unorganized materials of a wide-spread christianity' [pp.665-6]. Association was the glue whereby discrete churches were joined together in one gospel purpose.

Cox began by analysing the causes of disunity, identifying the bitterness of theological controversy, the centralizing and sectarian spirit of denominationalism,

and the prevalence of anti-social feeling [pp.667-670]. In the first instance the problem was how to support free discussion and a genuine spirit of inquiry without allowing place to 'the unholy passions' of 'acerbity and exasperation'. Even here Cox noted some improvement: 'Our Calvins no longer call their opponents dogs, nor our Luthers denounce those with whom they contend, as unfit for the kingdom of heaven' [p.668].

The rise of denominationalism, here recognized as a specific phenomenon, had unloosed upon Christendom the bitterness of party spirit. Talk of 'our' church, 'our' denomination, 'our' mission, was much to be regretted, for 'it places our church in contradistinction to the church, that is ... the church of Christ'. 'Why should fellow-christians make their differences more palpably apparent than their agreements? Why should they so constitute their societies, and arrange their subordinate movements as to make it a point of honour to support their party rather than their christianity; and proclaim their Shibboleth, rather than their common faith, in every town and district, in every church and chapel, in every circle and family, in every sixpenny magazine and penny periodical? ... Must both literature and religion be for ever poisoned with sectarianism, and a civil war prevent a more combined and extended assault upon the territories of sin and of Satan?' [p.669]. Denominations might have functional purposes, in focusing the energies of their members in support of the goals of mission, but they were never intended to create 'walls of separation'.

Practically he discerned too little social exchange between the leaders of the several denominations. He imagined them at a Bible Society anniversary, though not in so great numbers as in former years: 'There - that is, on the platform - they are full of brotherly love, or, at least, of all brotherly words ... then after all these expressions and exhibitions, they separate, it is to be feared, generally with undiminished prejudices, jealousies and dislikes, - with scarcely a shake of the hand, never to meet again, till another anniversary, or, perhaps, in many instances, never again in this world' [p.670]. Sectarian bigotry was all set to rule the situation again for another year. If things were not quite that bad, there still remained a lack of common enterprise calling forth united commitment. This indefensible world of schismatic sects was most obviously to be seen amongst Scottish Presbyterians where, despite agreement on theology and polity, divisions remained unrepaired, causing the church to offer a shattered and divided witness [p.672].

Cox analysed previous attempts to secure church union in Britain, dismissing with derision the methodologies of Acts of Uniformity and attempts to make the Established Church more comprehensive. More sadly the founding of the Bible Society, 'this fine confederation of piety and public spirit ... for the circulation of the scriptures without note or comment', which Cox had been amongst the first to support, had not brought the union of mind amongst christian leaders it first promised. Too much sectarianism had been allowed to influence its counsels, as it had secured parliamentary and episcopal support.⁴

For the reluctance of evangelical clergy in the Established Church to be reliable

partners in the search for unity, Cox cites Angell James. 'Their very excellences, so great and so obvious, make me regret the more, that any sentiment of their own, or any view of the confederation of others, should prevent them coming into visible christian union with their brethren of the various protestant communities' [p.675]. Cox supported Angell James' argument that before the establishment of what was to become the Liberation Society, evangelical Anglicans were already distant from their dissenting colleagues, notwithstanding attempts to persuade them that the evidence of scripture was against the principle of church establishments. Cox, with a sense of bitterness, resignedly admitted: 'the fallacy lay in ... supposing that a national system of religion, which is a system of absorption, could by [any] possibility become a system of union'.

His appreciation of large Exeter Hall-type rallies was ambiguous. Whilst they helped to unite Christians of different persuasions and, therefore, ought to be convoked frequently, he was suspicious of outward displays. These could never be a substitute for a deeper level of bonding: 'we should aim to *be* Christians more than to *declare* it, so we should rather seek to *be* united than to publish it as a fact to the world' [p.677]. Rather than an annual event in central London, he argued for more frequent meetings in the suburbs and in provincial towns and cities. These need not be of a public kind but might rather embrace abundant prayer and freedom of converse, based upon a general underwriting of Biblical truth. They should focus upon 'that portion of christianity, whatever it may be, which constitutes its essence and is vital to the system, - with freedom for divergence on particular doctrines and matters of polity' [p.678]. Thus Cox argued for the two contrasting goods of establishing a clear and well-defined centre but allowing freedom at the circumference: in his words, 'no compromise of principle, but no restraint of legitimate discussion', for he firmly believed that 'Christian union can never be successfully pursued by sacrificing christian liberty' [p.680]. This followed from his belief that the biblical model was that the apostles, when dealing with things not vital, displayed the gentleness of the lamb, but when contending for the truth of God against human invention, revealed the fury of the lion [p.682].

Arguing for united prayer, united concern for Europe, and united advocacy of the interests of persecuted and suffering Christians, he also advocated united support of missions. In the tradition of Robert Hall, he also boldly called for a combined celebration of the Lord's Supper, by all who could, in conscience, come together to the one table of Christ, for the inward union of spirit which made this visible demonstration of oneness possible exactly demonstrated how an inner bonding needed to precede all external manifestations.

III BAPTISMAL CONTROVERSIALIST

Notwithstanding his robust advocacy of Christian Union, Cox also entered the fray as a major expositor of the argument in favour of restricting baptism to believers. In this respect, his writings offer insight into the kind of argument that a

theologically literate Baptist offered in defence of the particular beliefs of his denomination. His essay *On Baptism*, published in 1824⁵, was provoked by the arguments of a trio of Congregational Paedobaptists, especially the contemporary Scots, Greville Ewing and Ralph Wardlaw. Both of these had been disciples of the Haldane brothers, but had parted company with them, when in 1808 they adopted Baptist views. The third author was Timothy Dwight, the recently deceased [1817] president of Yale, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and the theologian who through his pen had more than any other helped to establish the norms of 'evangelical orthodoxy' in North America. Ewing's work, his *Essay on Baptism* [1823], was recently published and that may explain why two-third's of Cox's study was concerned with Ewing's highly contrived and speculative etymology of the Greek *baptizo*. Though inventive, this failed to conform to any known philological principles, leading David Thompson to describe Ewing's philological word-mongering as 'a gift to those Baptist authors who wanted to make fun of him'.⁶ Wardlaw's sermons on the Abrahamic Covenant, designed to counter Baptist views and to promote a covenant theology, had been published as long ago as 1807 and were replied to in the following year by Archibald M'Lean⁷. M'Lean's volume was counted critical in converting Robert Haldane almost instantly, it is said, to Baptist views. Dwight's views on baptism are to be found in his *Theology Explained and Defended*, published posthumously in 1818, though based on sermons delivered from 1795 onwards, when he took up his post as president of Yale, and thereafter widely circulated in the United Kingdom.

Cox's engagement with Ewing, gives a glimpse of a sophisticated defence of the exclusive practice of believers' baptism. Although popular feeling supported the Paedobaptist position, the Baptists, in Cox's opinion, had the best of the argument. This he argued on the grounds that the most distinguished Paedobaptist authors had made numerous important concessions to the Baptist position, in particular conceding much of the argument as to the mode of baptism in apostolic practice. This enabled Cox to cite a range of authorities in favour of immersion as the correct translation of the Greek, *baptizo*. 'Their churches', Cox avowed, 'contain vast numbers of theoretic baptists, who have discernment enough to appreciate the form of evidence, but not piety enough to pursue the path of duty' (p.vi).

Cox's principal argument was to insist that both the mode and the subject of baptism should be in harmony with the general principles of the Christian religion: 'It is', he affirmed, 'in the personality of religion that we fix the very root of our argument'. Since it is very clear that Jesus established a spiritual religion, only spiritual subjects could be admitted to its fellowship; 'anything else would be incongruous and absurd as well as manifestly unscriptural'. In Cox's judgement there could be no more basic understanding concerning the Christian Gospel than

that man is individually responsible to God for his actions, and as such an object of appeal, entreaty, warning and promise, eligible to an immortal destiny of woe and delight, of condemnation or salvation. In this there can be

no substitution; one person can no more occupy another's situation, as a being responsible to God, than he can possess another's mind, and exercise the mental and moral faculties of another being. He can neither be righteous nor wicked, saved nor lost for another ... No one can profess faith, no one can put on Christ, no one can obey God, no one can perform a duty which is enjoined as a public expression and avowal of any Christian principle, for another. [pp.6-7]

As in all matters of religion there could be no vicarious action: each person was responsible before God for their own destiny and thus individual choice, responsibly undertaken, was the defining action.

In Cox's exposition are to be found concepts that derived from the language of the enlightenment absorbed as part of his Scottish university education. Thus he argued that the essential nature of the Christian sacraments is that they require participation by morally responsible agents. If the Lord's Supper, here referred to as 'the sacramental festival', required the presentation of the whole person 'as a living sacrifice upon the altar of duty', how could baptism be focused on the subject of a small child passive in his or her mother's arms? The practice of communion thus paid tribute to the part played in Christianity by 'moral agency and personal responsibility': 'its requirements presuppose capability and obligation with regard to its disciple'. Logic here, in Cox's view, suggested the fundamental question. If the ability to make moral decisions was a precondition for communion, why was it not also required for baptism. This was especially so when 'the entire reason of baptism being practised at all, was founded upon a consideration of personal obligation and was instituted to express a personal dedication to God?'

If such considerations were to be laid on one side and the practice of baptism were exceptionally to be incongruent to the general requirements of Christian faith, then one would expect that incongruence to be the subject of special comment. Again if baptism was 'of an anomalous character - partly Jewish, partly Christian, - that again surely would be specifically noted in scripture. Cox therefore asked:

Are some to be baptized on a profession of faith, and for this reason only, that they do profess it - and others without such a profession, and when incapable from infant age of any moral obligation, or any personal duty? Were this the case, baptism must stand alone - it is not analogous to any other institution - it is not accordant with the general principles of Christianity, not a part of the system - it is in some cases significant, in others not so - it may be a putting on Christ, or it may be a mere external badge, nay, rather, a momentary indication that the individual receiving it is ... related to the Christian professor, and his relationship is supposed to constitute a right to the reception which, in the case of the infant recipient confers no benefit, prevents no evil, and contains no moral obligation - and with the assured obligation, in the mind of the whole party concerned in the anomalous transaction, that the baptized individual, not only cannot then profess Christianity, but may be its future opponent and dispenser. [pp.9-12]

A second part of Cox's apologetic was concerned with working out the apostolic conception of baptism in Romans 6 and Colossians 2 as a symbolic re-enacting of the processes of burial and resurrection. The significance of this was denied by Ewing, who argued, first, that the reference in these passages was to preparation for burial and the washing of the body, not any process of immersion. Secondly, Ewing asserted that Christ's interment was not below the ground but horizontally within the sepulchre, so that in his burial no movement down and up was properly symbolized. By contrast, Cox remained firmly committed to the idea of immersion and interment meaning a burying in the soil or commitment to the earth [p.72]. Cox thus continued to find that the baptismal act retained significance, representing 'a spiritual burial with Christ, and a resurrection to newness of life' [p.59].

The ensuing biographies of those baptized in infancy weighed quite heavily with Baptist apologetists at this time.

That all are not renewed in infancy is lamentably evinced by the subsequent lives of thousands with regard to whom the symbolical representation of their regenerate state is awfully premature. That some may be sanctified from the womb we do not question; but we possess no means of distinguishing between them and others; the difference, wide as it is, can only be evident to him in whose purposes of sovereign mercy they are included. This, however, is not the condition of adults, who are both capable of professing their faith in Christ, and of proving the genuineness of their profession by the purity of their conduct. [p.114]

Again, the language here seems to reflect the culture of the enlightenment as much as the mind of the New Testament. Adulthood is thus construed as a precondition to both decision-making and discriminating behaviour, the one, from the human point of view, the crucial prerequisite for baptism, the other, the test as to its validity.

There was a further difficulty in the Paedobaptist position: if baptism was the rite of initiation into church membership, why were those baptized in infancy not treated as fully church members from the moment of their baptism in Paedobaptist churches? [p.115]. This caused Dwight *both* to affirm that they were members of the church, *but* also to deny that they were, 'in the sense commonly intended by the term' [p.115], for he admitted that 'something beside baptism, or a profession of religion, is necessary to constitute a membership of any particular church'. This, Dwight argued, was clearly the case with the Ethiopian eunuch [p.116]. This line of reasoning was further developed on the supposed analogy of ordination to ministry: 'A minister, by his ordination, is constituted not a minister of a particular church, but of the christian church at large; hence a person may be a member of the church at large, and not a member of a particular church'. To become a member of a particular church required a much more precise covenant with the community concerned. Such a church covenant was dependent upon a profession of religion by the person involved. 'Persons baptized in infancy, are baptized on the ground of that

profession of religion which their parents have made - whenever they themselves make the same profession, they become entitled to communion at the sacramental table', and by entering into a church covenant, membership of a particular church [p.118]. Baptists were perplexed by such arguments: 'In what conceivable sense can it be said that a person belonging to no one of the churches that constitute the church general, nevertheless is a member of the church general?' [p.153].

Evangelical Paedobaptist authors frequently justified their practice of infant baptism by an appeal to covenant theology which they derived from the experience of Abraham. Baptism was then seen to stand in relation to the new covenant in much the same way as circumcision was related to the old covenant. Cox denied the parallel: 'Here are two divine institutions, appointed at the distance of many centuries, and under two distinct economies of Providence ... There is in the appointment of circumcision no anticipating reference to baptism, and in the institution of baptism, no retrospective glance at circumcision' [p.128-9]. No textual evidence was available to suggest that the one was analogous to the other and, for the connection to be made, it was argued that such textually explicit injunction would have been absolutely necessary. Later Cox more explicitly argued that the requirement for circumcision was 'absolutely abolished ... in every part of the New Testament' [p.148]. Furthermore he raised the practical difficulty with regard to continuity that, whilst circumcision was confined to male descendants, though indiscriminate of parental faith, baptism was offered to all children of believers, regardless of gender.

The Abrahamic Covenant was with the patriarch's extended family, on the basis of either blood relationship or servile association, and required no profession of faith or demonstration of holiness, since circumcision provided a clear means of distinguishing such a progeny from the surrounding nations. Nowhere, claimed Cox, was the covenant of circumcision called a covenant of grace. In particular he noted that, whilst Ishmael and Esau were part of the covenant of circumcision, they were not within the covenant of grace [Acts 7.1ff]. By contrast, Cox underlined the fact that Abraham's *faith* was counted to him for righteousness, before and apart from his subsequent circumcision [Romans 4.10-22]. The argument, citing Galatians 5 and Romans 4, was that Abraham was participant in two covenants, the one spiritual recorded in Genesis 12 when Abraham was seventy-five years old, and the other temporal, recorded in Genesis 17, twenty-four years later. He thereafter had two lines of descent, one through circumcision and the nation of Israel and the other through faith leading to the new Israel of the Church [pp.141-2].⁸

Cox did not believe that circumcision, as Wardlaw contended, ever 'represented the two great blessings of justification and sanctification', and so asked for the textual evidence for this claim, and for the contention that children within the Abrahamic covenant were 'spiritually renewed' in the process of circumcision [pp.132-3].⁹ Most clearly Cox denied that Abraham was 'the federal head of the dispensation of grace'. To demonstrate this he listed all those of Abraham's natural

seed whom Cox took to fall outside its scope. For this purpose he began with 'the mocking Ishmael and the profane Esau', for 'none will pretend that the covenant of grace embraced ... the unbelievers who fell in the wilderness, the ten tribes who revolted from the God of Israel, and worshipped calves at Dan and Bethel; and the Scribes, Pharisees and enemies of Christ, in the day of his humanity' [p.150]. Press the analogy between circumcision and baptism, in his judgement, and the integrity of the church was wholly destroyed because the former required neither repentance nor faith. Paedobaptists did indeed press the analogy between the two rites, but, according to Cox, the equivalence failed at every point [pp.153-4]. Both scripture and logic seemed to argue the Baptist case, or, at very least, the arguments of Ewing, Wardlaw and Dwight failed to persuade Cox that they offered attractive alternatives to the Baptist beliefs with which he had grown up and which stood at the heart of his pastoral ministry.

IV SUPPORTER AND HISTORIAN OF MISSIONS

Daniel Katterns noted that early in his life Cox had offered to serve 'under the auspices of another denomination' as a missionary in France because of his fluency in that language, but somehow providence thwarted that intention, saving him for heavy responsibilities at home. At a later point in his career he failed to be tempted by the offer of a pulpit in New York. But his concern for overseas missions and the wider church never flagged. He was one of the nineteen new faces to join the Baptist Missionary Society General Committee when it expanded beyond its 'Northamptonshire' origins in 1812, and was diligent in his service of the Society, serving on many critical sub-committees. Well-balanced in the counsel he offered, he was shrewd in his assessment of men, as seen in his perceptive cameos of Ivimey, Marshman and Steadman among others.

In 1842 it was to Cox that the society turned to write its first history, which wins from Dr Payne the accolade of 'valuable', and so it is¹⁰. Written when much secular history was of a narrative kind, Cox made serious efforts to go back to the sources and to balance narrative with analysis. However, the need to cover fifty years of home organization as well as the Asian and Caribbean fields, led to a rather encyclopaedic approach. Present consideration of Cox's mission history will, for want of space, be confined to the Indian story. Not taken in by Baptist myth-making, Cox firmly placed Baptist overseas missionary endeavour in the context of the older engagements of Roman Catholics and Moravians [p.12], and did not neglect the ecumenical potential enshrined even within the establishment of a denominational missionary society [p.4]. He demonstrated the early difficulties in securing wide support within the denomination [pp.21-2], though within the Northamptonshire Association, in which he himself had grown up, he affirmed John Sutcliffe's issuing of the Prayer Call of 1784 as a necessary preliminary to the new concern for overseas missions.¹¹ Otherwise the unpropitious context was dramatically but not unfairly emphasized: 'Discord reigned in Europe, perplexity in Britain; and gross

darkness covered the face of the world' [p.2].

Cox properly paid tribute to the success of John Thomas in securing converts in India [pp.20, 25] even before he joined the society, contrasting this with Carey's more publicized patient wait for the conversion of Krishna Pal. Thereafter many conversions were to follow, though not surprisingly, given a hostile culture and open persecution, some backsliding occurred. The caste system was immediately perceived by the early missionaries as one of the most formidable barriers to the success of their work; thus the breaking of caste became an early imperative. The conversion of brahmins, however, secured for the mission peculiarly able Indian advocates, clearly recognized to have a persuasiveness quite different from that which came from a foreigner [pp.96-9,186ff], however hard he worked to familiarize himself with local culture and custom.

To come to terms with the cultural context, the early missionaries had to master an array of local languages, another area of conspicuous success, especially when associated with the establishment of a printing house. Thus the mastery of language and the translation of the scriptures, activities extensively recorded by Cox [pp.99ff, 170ff, 185ff, 210ff], were of first importance to the early missionaries. These labours underwrote all other mission activities. Because of this the gravestone tribute to Carey reads: 'The Translator of the Scripture and the Benefactor of Asia', for Carey did not simply confine his concern to Indian languages. This is the context for measuring the disaster of March 1812 when the Serampore printing house went up in flames, complete with print and texts. To see this as providence intervening to ensure that the two or three translations, with which Carey, Marshman and others were engaged, were revised to take account of improved linguistic understanding and better command of idiom, surely requires considerable grace even in missionaries. The inventory of damage done shows the Serampore press serving other interests, such as that of the Calcutta Bible Society, and the work of the evangelical Anglican, Henry Martyn. At home the financial loss was over-subscribed within fifty days and the mission afforded publicity on a wider scale than had previously been secured.

Though Cox's remit was to tell the overseas story, he also noted how the undertaking of the 'foreign enterprise' 'roused attention to domestic claims', especially through the work of Saffery, Steadman and Franklin in the west country. This laid the basis for the subsequent formation of the Home Missionary Society, of which from 1824 Cox was joint secretary [pp.37-8]. Fairly early in the history of the Indian mission difficult questions of mission strategy had to be faced, especially whether the missionary presence could be more extensively spread in Indian society if the missionaries combined their missionary endeavours with secular employment. This was initially opposed by William Ward who thought the business risk an encumbrance, but, against this, it was argued that such a strategy 'would secure a more effectual and wider dissemination of the gospel throughout the country, the training up of natives, the preparation of an experienced body of missionaries, who would from time to time introduce others, and the consolidation

of the talents of the missionaries and the profit of their labours into one available fund'. Cox himself seemed less than sympathetic to such a scheme and shed no tears over the failure of the stratagem which he attributed to its 'secularity' [pp.118-9].

This may be coloured by the fact that he clearly stood with the home committee of the BMS over against the Serampore missionaries in the controversy that marred relationships in the years 1817-37. As historian, however, he for the most part deals with the issue fairly; he clearly was one of the reconciling personalities who helped to bring this unhappy division to a pleasing conclusion in 1837¹². At first the issue was one of embryonic tension, largely held at bay so long as Fuller represented the Serampore interest in the United Kingdom and the mission at home remained the child of the Northamptonshire Association. The death of Fuller and the movement of the society's headquarters to London created a very different set of relationships. John Ryland graphically expressed this when he spoke of his fear 'for the ark of the mission, when it should be transported to London and fall into the hands of mere counting-house men'. This remark needs to be set over against Fuller's own wise words: 'we do not consider ourselves as legislators for our brethren; but merely as co-workers with them.'

The controversy was partly about the crucial missiological question as to the differential roles of the home committee and senior field missionaries in policy making. Such matters became exceptionally acute since the men in the field were already in process of creating independent churches with independent Indian agencies to service them. They had also recruited much of the mission's man-power locally, both from the ex-patriot community and amongst converted Indians, whom they, but not the home committee, specially prized as evangelistic agents and church leaders [p.155]. Issues of property ownership also loomed large, especially as this had largely been funded by the Serampore trio's commercial activities, rather than remittances from the United Kingdom. The home committee was further prompted in its actions by criticisms raised by the younger Calcutta missionaries of the work of their Serampore elders.

The critical issue, however, was the costs and functions of Serampore College, with its wide curriculum and its willingness to admit Hindus and Muslims as well as students sponsored by missionaries. William Ward came to Britain in 1819 to seek funds for this and to secure the home committee's backing. He raised some £2,600. The home committee, never happy about an institution whose foundation, especially its literary department, it had never sanctioned, was not wholly behind the initiative. They supported his fund-raising activities, but themselves offered only limited funding confined to 'the preparation of pious natives for the christian ministry' [pp.280, 286]. Cox, the Stepney tutor and London university founder, showed himself surprisingly critical of this £10,000 grand educational venture: 'In referring to the differences between the missionaries and the committee, it has been already intimated that to the latter it appeared an objectional scheme; and its subsequent failure justified their apprehensions. In the splendid ideas of a literary

institution, which, however, was but very partially applicable to missionary purposes, the cost was not sufficiently considered, nor the probability of rival projects being undertaken which might prove detrimental to its interests' [p.316].¹³ Though the mission and function of Serampore as an institution was to divide those involved in its history for a further century and a half, its overall contribution to Christian mission and to the articulation of Indian self identity can hardly be written off as failure.

V ADVOCATE OF REVIVAL

The advocate of Christian Unity, and the relentless defender of denominational interests, was no less a friend to the cause of revival. Its techniques, as developed by North American churches, he had witnessed when he travelled amongst the churches with James Hoby on a fraternal delegation sent by the Baptist Union in 1835. Such observations and information were of particular interest to one who had for the last ten years been one of the joint secretaries of the Home Missionary Society¹⁴. Moreover, concern for revival and concern for religious freedom, which also occupied much of Cox's abundant energy, were linked together in so far as their fruitful interplay provided one of the arguments for the separation of church and state. The American experience of freedom of conscience had proved a fertile context for ample church growth, unimpeded by church monopolies or establishments.

Cox suggested five reasons for the success of American churches. The first was individual effort to secure conversions, seen in zeal to bring their contacts to 'immediate decision in religion' [p.5]. Such principles were to be worked out within the family and within each church member's circle of friends. Successful ministry depended on church members both developing and exploiting such circles of friendship. The local church needed to be deliberately open to those outside its membership and to the integration of strangers into its fellowship.

Secondly, local prayer associations had been widely established to pray for revival generally and for specifically identified targets [p.6]. Such associates operated both through corporate meetings in one another's houses and through covenants of private prayer, 'to meet in spirit at appointed times'. These created an anticipation of success: American Christians 'ask believingly, wait confidently, and receive copiously' [p.7]. Cox reproduced 'Daily Topics for a Concert of Prayer', which he had no doubt could be efficaciously used in the United Kingdom [pp.8-9].

Thirdly, the Americans had developed Enquiry Meetings, clearly an important part of American success but for England they would need 'a judicious adaptation to the conditions of social life'. Some British ministers had begun to pioneer their use but they were capable of much more extensive exploitation.

Fourthly, Cox pointed to the encouragement in America of juvenile piety and communion [p.10]. By contrast in Britain, although the seed had been widely broadcast through the Sunday-School movement, British Christians had scarcely

ventured to hope for a speedy harvest: they had not 'prayed the process through'. Indeed in British church culture, there was 'a certain shrinking from the manifestation of religion at a very immature age, as if it could scarcely be genuine or permanent', whereas the American experience was that 'those who had professed the earliest, had persevered the longest' [p.11].

The fifth strategy was the development of 'Maternal Associations', following the example of Mrs Payson, who had first established a monthly meeting of mothers to pray for their children. Part of the urgency for this was that juvenile life in the 1830s was well acquainted with premature mortality. It was timely that a London Maternal Association had recently been founded. Its quite elaborate structure of rules, Cox, with a concern for good record keeping, reproduced: such records were essential for all enrolled children to receive recognition on their birthdays [p.13ff]. Membership of such an association called for a very clear commitment by mothers to work for the conversion of their offspring and to guard them against 'vanity, pride and worldly-mindedness'. Concern for children was easily extended to care for dependent servants. Ladies from the country were welcomed at the London Association. If a mother was removed by death, 'it shall be the duty of the Association to regard with peculiar interest the spiritual welfare of her children' [p.12].

Sixthly, Cox commended the establishment of new places of worship in necessitous districts. In America those who were 'not in the first ranks of opulence though commercially prosperous' gave generously to this church planting. This was also, seventhly, aided by a process of friendly separation within churches as they grew in size: 'if even unholy schism has been blessed by the Holy Spirit, how much more planned and amicable separations'. In the USA, when a church reached a certain size, such a strategic division of the congregation was automatically agenda-ed, with the loss of numbers nearly always made good, partly by demographic factors, partly by aggressive mission strategies.

An eighth factor was the planning and carrying out of itinerancies or mission journeys devoted to the promotion of revival. Such activities had a successful history in the United Kingdom as well, but the heritage needed to be recovered, and not merely as occasions for fund-raising: 'Let us have some journeys exclusively for the revival and diffusion of religion - to encourage our Christian brethren and refresh our souls by holy intercourse, and to bring apostate men to Christ' [p.19]. The ninth strategic element was the promotion of 'Protracted Meetings'. These had had a mixed press in Britain, being viewed with some suspicion as seeking to organize the work of the Spirit, but Cox was convinced that, when judiciously managed, they constituted 'a very high order of Christian instrumentality.' Cox defined their purpose very precisely: 'Protracted Meetings consist in an association of ministers invited for the purpose to pray, preach and hold Christian conference together, in a specified town or district, for three, four or more successive days, regulating the length of time by the thermometer of awakened feeling.' To those who entertained

prejudice against such meetings, Cox posed the question: 'as a considerable part of our population is not brought under the influence of an effective ministry, as conversions in our congregations are yet comparatively few, as the vigour of faith, zeal and prayer, is not yet fully put forth, are we not imperatively called upon to adopt such powerful combinations of ordinary means, or such new application of them, as reason, experience and scripture sanction?' [pp.21-2]. He convinced himself that there were Biblical precedents for this methodology, and read church history as indicating that from time to time 'extraordinary measures have always been resorted to, in effecting a revival or reformation'. Observing that fire can both destroy and give heat, he believed that contemporary church life exhibited 'much more danger from an excess of frigidity than from an excess of fervour, and whilst we would condemn fanaticism, we must not allow torpidity' [p.23]. Although himself engaged in a settled pastorate of long and enduring significance, Cox was not frightened of aligning himself with those in the denomination who believed that changing circumstances needed new methods and that these could be usefully derived from those which had proved successful in North America. In so doing, he, like many another Particular Baptist leader, was embracing methodologies that necessarily challenged the Calvinism with which they had grown up, but with little sense of departing from the inherited faith: the techniques of revivalism moved Fullerism a step further away from historic Calvinism.

VI CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

Though well content with his royal and aristocratic connexions, as for example that with the Duke of Sussex through his work for religious liberty, and with Lord Brougham in promoting the new university in London, Cox also sought to engage the proletariat of the metropolis with a rather heavy Christian apologetic. For example, in 1823 he was asked to speak at the opening of Albion Hall, Moorfields,¹⁵ whose primary objective was to be 'the communication of moral, biblical and religious information to the rising race', or, more concretely, 'to fight infidelity with knowledge'.

As part of this task its promoters, in a pre-Darwinian world, were concerned to canvass what they took to be a new apologetic for religious truth - the harmony which they believed existed between religion and science. Accordingly Natural Theology featured high in the institution's prospectus: lectures were to be given 'on the works of God as illustrative of his perfections.' Two years later, in 1825, the Duke of Bridgewater was to leave £8,000 for commissioning a series of scholarly works, 'On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation.' Cox's task was 'to point out the glory of the divine impress, as it appears to creatures of the greatest magnitude, and the most remarkable insignificance so minute that without microscopic assistance they cannot be discerned by the human eye'. In so doing, he was to explore and exhibit the wonders of the works of God to show the variety that existed in the family of God, in the air, the earth and the

waters beneath.

He recognized, but did not then explore, that the science of geology had raised questions relating to the Mosaic account of creation and the deluge. Modern astronomy might be argued to have created an infinity of context in which to consider the life of humankind: alternatively it could be seen as providing detail of what the Psalmist had long ago perceived: 'The heavens declare the glory of God...'. Barrow's *Mathematics* had created a new point of reference for human study. 'The capacity with which the creator has endowed us of investigating the works of his hands, involves the obligation to engage in so interesting and beneficial an employment.' Cox declared himself in favour of 'sowing the seeds of every kind of useful knowledge in the fields of youth', with the hope of nurturing the Bacons and the Newtons of a forthcoming generation. All was, however, to be set within a religious context, for religion was necessary to 'render knowledge all it is capable of becoming, a point of moral worth'.

Amongst his publications is to be found the intriguing heading *Lectures to Socialists*. This more accurately relates to a single lecture given by Cox at the Eagle Chapel on 4 December 1839.¹⁶ He opens, after a sermonic citing of Psalm 66.7: 'There is a God. The world was created. We have various faculties, physical and mental. We must die. These are evident truths'. This led the lecturer into a Paleyesque argument that the created world bore testimony to the operation of an overarching intelligence or mind. In a rather circular and theoretical fashion, he argued that to reject such an idea was to be in rebellion against God himself. Moreover, man could not have created himself, therefore he must have had an antecedent. 'To suppose that there is no moral government of the world would be to suppose that there is no God. For how can God exist unless he rules?' If he does not rule there must be a superior power and thus we 'undeify Deity'. If God rules, then part of that rule is to call man to account: for if a man is not called to account he is merely animal. Cox proceeded to raise the issue of the origin of evil, but he would have no truck with any form of philosophical dualism as again 'undeifying Deity'. The human crisis was to be construed as the consequence of man's voluntary disobedience and departure from God's will. Divine judgment of this situation would naturally lead to man perishing, but the atoning power of the sacrifice of God's Son offered both forgiveness and salvation.

The universal consequence of human sin, however, was that 'wherever God is unknown or disobeyed, there will be misery and confusion'. Experiments, Cox claimed, had been tried to discover other ways to happiness, 'tried and failed': thus the judgement, 'The folly and absurdity of Socialism, as it is termed, (though of all things the most unsocial in its principles) is partly this ... It places the happiness of man in that very indulgence of the passions which has always been the cause of his misery'. All the indications were that man was not a responsible being, rather he was 'compelled by an irresistible necessity to be what he is and do what he must.'

By this time the audience was beginning to latch upon particulars of Cox's

remarks, and interventions and interruptions began. Cox cited Robert Owen, in a Benthamite sense, as arguing that human psychology induced the individual to seek that which was pleasant, or produced pleasant sensations, eschewing that which provoked disagreeable sensations, not knowing prior to experience what the sensation would be. 'The object of the 'Socialist', (if I can understand it) is to annul obligation - to convince men that they can know nothing of God, that they cannot be responsible, that they are nothing but what they are made, and were made to be what they are by their organisation and by the external circumstance which act upon and influence it'. The Owenites' statement on 'The religion of the New Moral World' added up to nothing less than 'real, absolute, unsophisticated atheism' or, perhaps more clearly, pantheism. Cox was unimpressed by their talk of 'an eternal, uncaused, omnipresent existence', which has ever filled the universe, possessing such attributes as enable it to 'direct the atom and control the aggregate of nature'. Such an appeal to a force existing to govern the universe was nugatory since the argument was that its existence remained 'incomprehensible to man'. 'If this power had desired to make the nature of its existence known to man' argued the Owenites, 'it would have enabled him [man] to comprehend it without mystery or doubt.' For the socialist, the divine existence seemed to be identified with the impersonal laws of creation or the forces of nature itself. By contrast, Cox confirmed the personality of the Trinity, concluding, 'If Jesus Christ be not the saviour of the world, the world is irretrievably lost. If we unbind ourselves from our allegiance to God, and separate from his throne, we involve ourselves in infinite error and irretrievable ruin.'

At this point a Mr Linwood interrupted 'the preacher': he heard Cox to argue that the Owenites were out to demoralize society, teaching man that to indulge his appetites and give free vent to his passions was the highest happiness he could attain. Linwood wanted respectfully to know from what part of Owen's teaching such an inference was deduced. This led to some procedural wrangling: apparently the meeting had been set up with an agreement that there should be a presentation on successive occasions from both sides but that there be no debate or discussion. The Revd Robert Ainslie complicated the issue by insinuating that Linwood had previously been expelled by the Owenite Socialists. A Mr Bailey, identified as the official Socialist spokesman, concluded the meeting by announcing that he would reply to Cox at the Socialist Rooms in Great Queen Street on the following Tuesday; Cox not reluctantly concurred with this proposal.

A similar apologetic is found in Cox's address on '*The relative Duties of the Rich and the Poor*'. This was given at the Albion Chapel five years later at the end of 1844, as part of a lecture series on 'The Application of Christianity to the Relations of Life'.¹⁷ This address had something of a 'bias to the poor' emphasis, though far from well developed. Cox clearly stated that the poor had a special place in gospel concern, especially since Jesus in his earthly life so clearly identified himself with their condition [pp.18-19]. Cox's prevailing emphasis, however, was on mutuality

of interest. The argument was that the social system was integrated as a whole in much the same way as the physical system. Rich and poor alike, existing under God's moral governance, were separated from the animal kingdom by the gift of human reason, which was at once the gift of God and that characteristic which distinguished humankind from other parts of creation. From such insights derived mutual obligations within an economy of common concerns. Reflecting Bentham's felicific calculus, but worked out now within the context of a biblical theology, Cox underscored human happiness as a creation goal. This could be secured in so far as women and men engaged in 'the right fulfilment of their duties to him [God as creator], and to each other' [p.10]: obligation to one another was determined by 'common descent from one great universal Father of all', who not only intended the happiness of all, but provided the means for obtaining this.

From such a base Cox developed ideas of mutual dependency. 'The rich need the poor, and the poor need the rich', a mutuality all too easily vitiated by any unnatural and absurd claims to independency articulated by either party, 'the separating pride of the rich and the rude faction of the poor' [p.11]. In fact society was dependent for its welfare on its humblest members. Thus Cox quoted with obvious approval the following unattributed words:

all the improvements of wealth, nay all the distinctions of royal grandeur rest on the industry of the poor, upon the silent unperceived industry, working out of the view and frequently out of the contemplation, of those who are most indebted to it. Let no one look with contempt upon the meanest of his fellow creatures, on account of his having to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow.

Equally the poor needed the superintending intelligence of the rich to discipline the social machine and make sure it works to the good of all. Specifically Cox identified five responsibilities of the rich to the poor. First, the practice of 'benevolent bestowment' should not be seen as acts of 'self-denial' but rather as 'self-remunerative', in so far as 'giving becomes receiving' [p.12]. This was best done daily in life; 'posthumous bestowments' could not mitigate against a debased and selfish earthly career, 'effacing its hideousness by a golden line in a will' [p.13]. True charity was not undertaken at arm's length. Indeed, making provision relevant to an individual's need necessarily demanded an evaluation of an individual and his family's position. Charity of this kind, 'penetrating the abodes of woe, and uttering the comfort of a kind word, is not satisfied with merely shedding the tears over the tale of woe, or doling out a charitable contribution, but comes down into the very circumstances of those whom it aims to relieve, and seeks with persevering kindness to ameliorate'. The same principle held true whether applied in the heart of the metropolis or in depressed areas of agriculture or the new manufacturing towns. The distinguishing factors of such charity were the self-involvement of the rich and the avoidance, following Benthamite principles, of 'indiscriminating' indulgence which only served to enpauperize.

The second duty that fell to the rich was to create opportunities for gainful employment which was much more creative than charitable hand-outs. Whilst indigence might make a claim on society, idleness could make none. To indulge the undeserving was itself a moral failure. Again a mutuality was easily perceived: 'the very life of the rich can only be secured by the labour of the poor.' The labour of the poor should not be exploited, either by employment which was injurious or oppressive, or which embraced an immoral element, or by work being contracted for some ulterior purpose, such as the securing of 'a right voter for his neighbour at an election, or a zealous attendant on the Church of a clerical magistrate' [p.14]. Neither of these factors should determine whether the poor man's family had a roof over their heads or whether they 'be made to smile or to starve'. The poor should neither be overworked nor underpaid: it was wholly appropriate that government should establish the limits in such circumstances.

The third obligation upon persons of property was the promotion of the mental and the moral improvement of the poor, funding what they were unable to fund for themselves. That it should be considered wrong to educate the poor above their station in life was a wicked calumny [p.14]. Education was not to be confined to the narrowly utilitarian: 'The true idea of education is not merely storing the mind with a certain set of propositions, or a certain accumulation of facts, but directing the mind to the right uses of facts, under the influences it possesses, so as to constitute knowledge, *wisdom*, by its just application to the circumstances of human life, and to the great objects for which an immortal being is created. Education, therefore, is the impartation of knowledge and of moral wisdom, by which a man is fitted for every station in which Providence places him'. Thus education progressively equipped a man for his changing responsibilities as Providence worked out his career. Moreover, an educated man must necessarily be committed to educating others, having demonstrated the power of education in his own life. In this process both day schools and Sunday Schools had a part to play; Cox was a ready supporter of both¹⁸.

Fourthly, Cox argued that the rich owed the poor a framework of righteous laws. 'The legislative capacity resides in the aristocracy, and the wealthy representatives of the counties; and their responsibility - alas, too often forgotten in party struggles, is great' [p.16]. With regret it had to be admitted that there was too much 'class legislation, party interests, selfish movements, and shameful oppressions: such things as might supplanting right, deaf ears to loud complaints, and legislatives acting in opposition to reason, justice, humanity and religion'. Unless there was equality of intent in framing and executing the law, weak laws would provoke crime rather than controlling it. Instead, 'Labour should be encouraged - trade promoted - the price of justice cheapened - the game laws abrogated'.

Finally, Cox affirmed that the rich owe to the poor and to all men 'the practical recognition of the great fact of an universal religious equality', criticizing the aristocracy for their tendency 'to domineer and to dictate even in matters of religion

and conscience.’ This allowed him to smuggle in an element from another agenda by posing the question: ‘What claim has the Church of England to be identified with the Church of Christ? On what Scriptural ground is the alliance between church and State founded?’ Overall, Cox claimed:

The religion of Jesus gives freedom of thought and action; asserts the claims of private judgment, institutes its own bible as the only law, reduces all men as sinners to the same level in the sight of God, whilst it proclaims the same foundation of hope of salvation to all; separates the things of Caesar and things of God, enthrones Christ as the universal Lord of conscience, and rebukes at once the folly, the pride, the ignorance and the vain pretensions of the advocates of political creeds and parliamentary churches, by saying ‘My kingdom is not of this world’.

Reciprocally Cox offered three duties owed by the poor to the rich [p.17]. The first was simply an exhibition of gratitude. It was not for the poor to chide the rich with not doing more: for that, the rich would have to answer to the justice of God. Secondly, the poor should be content with reasonable wages; hitherto striking for wages had not advanced the workers’ cause. Wages would be adjusted not in response to artificial pressures but according to what the laws of political economy, here construed as part of the natural order of things, allowed. The rich, however ‘must not grind the faces of the poor’. Thirdly, the poor were invited to make an intelligent appreciation of the interests of their employers to whom they were contractually obligated even without written documentation. Employers in engaging labour exposed their property to risk, something not to be exploited not least by simple neglect: workers must not expose their employers’ goods to be ‘spoiled or dissipated’ [p.18]. Whilst the observance of moral principles did not determine who would be rich in this world, moral principle would secure status in the next world. ‘The everlasting destiny of a man will arise, not from his being rich or poor in this world, but from his being the follower of Christ, or the opponent of his truth.’ Thus heaven would witness many reversals of fortune, with many who now enjoyed great wealth becoming ‘infinitely and eternally poor’. Upon this wise men should reflect.

Beyond the tomb, Cox was confident of heavenly rewards for the believer, though perhaps he entertained reservations about the idea of judgment. For example, when preaching on the Believer’s Death he was happy in the affirmations made by 2 Timothy 1.12 about Christian confidence in belief in Christ, but was reticent to explore the ‘critical meaning’ of the words, ‘I have committed unto him against that day’. This was, of course, an issue on which much later the Baptist Union Declaration of Principle had to admit difference of judgement within the constituency.

Hardly revolutionary, Cox’s social theology may be seen as gently reformist. Worked out within a ministry which did indeed embrace both rich and poor, it clearly and consciously sought to interpret biblical principles, but nevertheless reflected much current secular thought from Bentham to Paley. It took issue more

with a state church than with the state itself, though it clearly challenged aristocratic control of the state and its defence of the *ancien régime*. Salvation did not lie in any Owenite utopia: rather it was to be found within the economy of voluntary churches upholding gospel values within a voluntarist state. The United States of America offered a model of such a free church existing within a constitution that properly separated church and state, though even that society exhibited the great blot of slavery, in which fellow Baptists both suffered as slaves and exercised illegal authority as slave-holders, against which Cox and James Hoby expostulated at the Triennial Convention of American Baptists in 1835. Even the separation of church and state did not yield social utopia: rather it revealed in sharper contrast what Cox saw as the consequence of human fallibility.

NOTES

- 1 "Active, Busy, Zealous": the Revd Dr Cox of Hackney', pp.223-41, in ed. W.H. Brackney, P.S. Fiddes, and J.H.Y. Briggs, *Pilgrim Pathways, Essays in Baptist History in Honour of B.R. White*, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, USA, 1999.
- 2 H.S. Skeats and C.S. Miall, *History of the Free Churches of England, 1688-1891*, 1891, pp.471-2.
- 3 This was the title of an anonymous piece that Cox wrote for *The Eclectic Review*, June 1845, responding to a collection of essays introduced by Dr Chalmers, mainly by Scottish authors but including an essay by John Angell James. Cox's piece was re-published in the period leading up to the founding of the Evangelical Alliance, with due attribution as to author as, *On 'Christian Union' being a Brief Inquiry into the Causes of Disunion among Christians and the Reasons of Failure: the Efforts at Union hitherto made*, 1845.
- 4 This issue was of particular concern to Baptists because of the clash between the Serampore missionaries and the Bible Society over translations of scripture which used immersionist language to translate the Greek *baptizo*. No problem had arisen up to 1833 but in that year the Calcutta Auxiliary of the Bible Society raised objections and secured the support of London in refusing both financial aid to the Baptists and the distribution of their translations without amendment. This led to the establishment of a separate [Baptist] Bible Translation Society (BTS) in 1840. [See E.B. Underhill, *Baptists and the Bible Society*, 1868, and J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century*, 1994, pp.56ff]. In 1842 Cox produced in two substantial volumes the first history of the BMS, but I can find only the most general of references to this episode in that history, e.g. pp.170, 185-6, 'It is much to be lamented that insinuations were published to the prejudice of the translations carrying on at Serampore, by parties at home who were engaged in the same general work of missions', though this could simply refer to accusations of inaccuracy. By contrast the baptismal issue does, I think, underlie his remarks in his essay, *On Christian Union*. The limitation of comment in the history of the BMS is the more strange in that he gives considerable attention to the work of the Printing Press and Type Foundry built at a cost of more than £20,000, all found from Indian sources, and to scripture translation and distribution [pp.278-308]. On the other hand, Cox underlines litigation with the adherents of 'the Propagation Mission, whose missionaries, being puseyites, maintaining the doctrines of apostolic succession and episcopal ordination as essential marks of the true church, engaged in open warfare with the *unauthorized* teachers of christianity'. F.A. Cox, *History of the Baptist History Society from 1792-1842*, 1842, Vol II, p.303. Cox had been one of the two Baptists to present the Baptist protest to the Bible Society on the translation issue and also took a lead in the founding of the new society, proposing the second resolution which sought 'to disavow a spirit of hostility or unkindness towards the British and Foreign Bible Society', the members of the new Society acting rather as independent coadjutors in the sphere of Bible distribution. He subsequently became a member of the first committee of the

- BTS [*Baptist Magazine*, 1840, pp.202-3] Its foundation followed similar action in 1838 by American Baptists who formed the American and Foreign Bible Society when the American Bible Society adopted a paedobaptist stance, a process in which Cox also had some involvement.
- 5 F.A. Cox, *On Baptism; chiefly in reply to the Eymological Positions of the Rev Greville Ewing, in his 'Essay on Baptism'; the Polemic Discussions of the Rev Timothy Dwight, STD, LLD, in his work entitled 'Theology'; and the Inferential Reasonings of the Rev Ralph Wardlaw, DD in his 'Lectures on the Abrahamic Covenant', 1824.*
 - 6 D. Thompson, 'Baptism, Church and Society in England since 1800', Unpublished Hulsean Lectures, University of Cambridge, 1984, p.6. As over against Ewing's philological inventions, appeal is made to the work of the Presbyterian, George Campbell, [1719-1796], Professor of Divinity and Principal of Marischal College in the University of Aberdeen [cf pp.87/89], who in 1789 published an annotated translation of the Gospels which reached a seventh edition in 1834. One section of Cox's *On Baptism* is entitled, 'Defence of Dr Campbell'.
 - 7 In the advertisement to his volume, Cox calls M'Lean's reply to Wardlaw 'a masterly performance' but claims his own answer was written before seeing it, although available for sixteen years it 'has scarcely been heard of in England.' Cox, *On Baptism*, p.vi.
 - 8 For this argument he appeals to John Owen, *On the Epistle to the Hebrews*, who argues that Abraham had 'a double seed allotted unto him. A seed according to the flesh, separated to the bringing forth of the Messiah according to the flesh; and a seed according to the promise, that is, such as by faith should have an interest in the promise, or all the elect of God' [p.146].
 - 9 At this point Cox invoked the authority of Joseph Kinghorn, *The Argument in support of Infant Baptism from the Covenant of Circumcision, examined, and shown to be invalid*, who argued, 'In a great variety of respects God was the God of Abraham's posterity, and still is their God; when they obeyed Him, he blessed them; and when they rebelled, he punished them... But, in neither case, do we see any evidence that spiritual grace was bestowed through the means of circumcision...'
 - 10 E.A. Payne, 'History: Too Much or Too little', *Baptist Quarterly*, 1968, p.394 points out that Cox is a useful foil to those who overemphasize Carey in BMS historiography. Earlier, in his article on 'Baptist Missionary Society History', Payne had written warmly of Cox's *History*, but concluded, 'His account is careful and discriminating, but he wrote much too near the time to appreciate the full significance of what he was recording', *BQ*, Vol XI, 1944, p.296.
 - 11 See also M.A.G. Haykin, 'A Habitation of God through the Spirit', John Sutcliffe ... and the Calvinistic Baptists of the eighteenth century', *Baptist Quarterly*, 1992, p.313.
 - 12 See N.P. Hancock, 'Healing the Breach, Benjamin Godwin and the Serampore Controversy', *Baptist Quarterly*, 1993, p.122.
 - 13 On page 213 Cox appears more understanding of the Serampore project, when he relates it to the training of young Indians in grammar as a preliminary to Christian service.
 - 14 See Cox, *Suggestions designed to promote the Revival and Extension of Religion, founded on observations made during a journey in the United States of America in the Spring and Summer of 1835*, 1836 24pp. This was announced as preparatory to a larger Cox/Hoby volume to be published later, and described by the *Baptist Magazine* as 'a most seasonable tract' which had already gone through four editions [1836. p.111].
 - 15 *Oration on the Opening of Albion Hall, Moorfields, Finsbury Circus*, 1823.
 - 16 *Lectures to Socialists and others, delivered by Dr F.A. Cox at Eagle Street Chapel, Dec 4 1839*, 1839.
 - 17 F.A. Cox, *The Relative Duties of Rich and Poor*, a Lecture delivered on 12 December 1844, Albion Chapel, London.
 - 18 See an early sermon of his entitled *The value of Christian Knowledge considered*, 1805, preached for the benefit of Harvey Lane Sunday School, Leicester, which it was said was a good introduction to his later *Essay on the Excellence of Christian Knowledge*; and note his address to the British and Foreign Schools Society, *Baptist Magazine*, June 1832, p.247.

J.H.Y. BRIGGS *Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Birmingham Westhill, and Editor, Baptist Quarterly*