



CHRISTIANITIES IN THE TRANS-ATLANTIC WORLD

# The Life and Times of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles

A Forgotten Scholar

Timothy C. F. Stunt

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# Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World

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Timothy C. F. Stunt

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of Samuel Prideaux  
Tregelles

A Forgotten Scholar

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Timothy C. F. Stunt  
Naples, FL, USA

Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World

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*Andrew Walls*  
*Pignus amicitiae et gratiarum*

## PREFACE

This book has been some sixty years in the making.

When, as a schoolboy, I began my far from successful efforts to wrestle with classical Greek, my father who was an elder in the local assembly of Plymouth Brethren, where we worshiped as a family, was delighted. Being an earnest student of scripture, he reckoned that his son would now be able to read the New Testament in its original language. In 1955, for Christmas, he gave me a copy of Bagster's interlinear *Greek New Testament* with its apparatus detailing the variant readings of the seven principle printed editions, which succeeded the Erasmian text reproduced by Stephanus in 1550. In the book's introduction, I became acquainted with six strange editorial names of which I had previously never heard and which ever since have had for me something of a magic ring about them: Elzevir, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles and Alford.

My subsequent investigation of these exotic names uncovered something even more momentous for a boy whose family had been Plymouth Brethren for three generations. At my father's suggestion, I visited the Marylebone Public Library to consult the *Dictionary of National Biography* and learnt that for some fifteen years one of these scholarly editors, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, had been a Plymouth Brother, a discovery that led me to wonder (with possibly a sigh of relief!) whether perhaps we (Brethren) were not quite so peculiar after all! It was a moment of instant bonding! I can no longer call myself a Plymouth Brother, but the discovery, over sixty years ago, that a scholar like

Tregelles had been numbered among us, set in motion the seemingly endless search for what came to be known in my family as ‘Timothy’s *Tregelliana*’.

In recent years, the focus of my long-standing interest in this remarkable man has been sharpened by the Cambridge University Library’s readiness to pay over a million pounds to secure ownership of the sixth-century Codex Zacynthius—a palimpsest of St Luke’s gospel that was first transcribed and edited by Tregelles more than a hundred and fifty years ago. In the words of Lord Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, ‘The discovery and identification of the undertext’ of this Codex is ‘a fascinating detective story’, and because Tregelles contributed so much to our understanding of that text, his life must similarly, I feel, be worthy of investigation.

The quest for *Tregelliana* has been complicated and frustrating. In spite of extensive local searches in Cornish and Devonian archives, my findings relating to his early life in Falmouth have been sadly minimal, and if ‘the child is father of the man’, my account of his development has inevitably been hampered by this dearth of material.

By way of contrast, in the early 1960s I found well over a hundred of Tregelles’s letters and other relevant materials in the private collection of the late Mr. C.E. Fry of Newport, Isle of Wight, who encouraged me to study them closely and authorized me to quote from them. Providentially, I transcribed (in those far off pre-Xerox days) many of these letters and I was later able to photocopy the remainder. Elsewhere, I have briefly described this unusual collection and some of its travails in the years before Mr. Fry consigned it to the safe keeping of the Christian Brethren Archive [CBA], in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, but here I shall simply say that the laborious transcriptions of my youth have proved to be invaluable as during the intervening years several items in the collection were ‘lost’, although the new location of some of them has recently become apparent.<sup>1</sup>

A major challenge faced by biographers is to elucidate the context in which their subjects found themselves. Being a man of unbounded curiosity, Tregelles interacted with several cultural spheres, which were often

<sup>1</sup>For details of the Fry Collection, see my *From Awakening to Secession* (Edinburgh, 2000), 313–14. I shall indicate in footnotes if the original MS is now accessible in the CBA or elsewhere, or whether I have been dependent on one of my fifty-year-old transcriptions or a photocopy.

practically unknown to one another. Pioneers of the nineteenth-century Welsh renaissance could be forgiven for knowing nothing of evangelically minded folk in Tuscany, just as Anglican textual scholars in Cambridge were liable to have a very limited understanding of the fastidious morality of traditional Quakers or the theological peculiarities of the Plymouth Brethren. Tregelles engaged with all of these people and it is my hope that readers unfamiliar with one or more of these worlds with which, at different stages, he was involved, will bear with details that are necessary if we are to understand, not just the life of Tregelles but also the times in which he lived.

Two further preliminary caveats are needed. The verbosity of much Victorian writing can in any case be wearisome without having it further confused with religious jargon. As one who struggled in his youth to avoid what the French call ‘le patois de Canaan’<sup>2</sup> I trust that my readers will forgive me if I stress that although such language may be tedious in the twenty-first century, those who used it (as Tregelles did sometimes) were not necessarily hypocrites but merely prisoners of their cultural circumstances. (In fact, it was something of an achievement to have extricated himself from the peculiarities of Quaker speech in which people as well as the deity were always addressed as ‘thou’ and ‘thee’.) Their earnest and wordy expressions of religious sentiment may engender impatience but perhaps may also remind us of their less hurried world.

My second clarification is more specific. The maiden name of Tregelles’s mother was Prideaux and not only was this, his second given name, but it was the name by which his family addressed him. Further to complicate matters, he married his maternal cousin Sarah Anna Prideaux. The frequent use of this name in these pages would inevitably leave room for confusion, and to avoid this I have sometimes used his full name or just his surname, but often I have simply used his initials ‘SPT’—an identification, which also has the merit of brevity and ease of speech in the possessive form.<sup>3</sup> In a similar simplification, having to mention with some frequency the seven volumes of his *Edition of the Greek Text of the New Testament*, I have often referred to it as his *magnum opus*. Others of his works have a reasonable claim to greatness, but SPT’s

<sup>2</sup>A mode of speech for which an English equivalent could be *bibleddybook*.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps, I should also make clear that my use of ‘SPT’ as his name is *not* a concession to the somewhat quaint practice of the early Plymouth Brethren whose authors frequently opted for the pseudo-anonymity of their initials (as in JND[arby] and BWN[ewton]).

Greek New Testament is truly a monument to one man's careful exactitude and incomparable endurance.

As will become apparent, the principle concern in Tregelles's life was the original Greek text of the New Testament. The manuscript transmission of ancient texts and their preservation in monastic and other libraries have an allure all of their own, and therefore, they have been an integral part of my quest for Tregelles. In all honesty to my readers, I have to state that I can make no claim to any truly scholarly competence in this field. I am fascinated by but not learned in classical languages and consequently crave the indulgence of the real scholars who, I hope, will find *The Life and Times of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles* to be of interest albeit written by an historian who is little more than a linguistic *dilettante*!

The number of debts incurred during sixty years is far too great for me to enumerate. I trust that the expression here of my sincere gratitude to all who have assisted and often patiently suffered in the gestation of this project will be sufficient. I am sure that none of them will resent my singling out my wife Nancy as the person who, *grace à Dieu*, ensured that I would live to complete this protracted work.

Naples, Florida  
Summer 2019

Timothy C. F. Stunt

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He has two children and lives in south-west Florida.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AHTL	Andover-Harvard Theological Library
<i>Al. Cantab.</i>	<i>Alumni Cantabrigienses...</i> see Venn, J.A.
<i>Al. Oxon.</i>	<i>Alumni Oxonienses...</i> See Foster, Joseph
AV	<i>Authorized Version</i> (a.k.a. <i>King James Version</i> )
BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
<i>Bibl. Corn.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Cornubiensis...</i> see Boase, G.C.
BL	British Library
BML	Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana
BNC	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence
Bod	Bodleian Library
CBA	Christian Brethren Archive, John Rylands University Library of Manchester
CRO	County Record Office, Truro, Cornwall
CUL	Cambridge University Library
CW	<i>Christian Witness</i>
DBI	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i>
DQB	Dictionary of Quaker Biography (typescript)
DWB	<i>Dictionary of Welsh Biography</i>
ECM	<i>Editio Critica Maior</i> of the Greek NT
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>FQE</i>	<i>Friends Quarterly Examiner</i>
JRUL	John Rylands University Library, Manchester
<i>JSL</i>	<i>Journal of Sacred Literature</i>
<i>JURCHS</i>	<i>Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society</i>
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
LSF	Library of the Society of Friends

LXX	Septuagint version of the OT
MA	Massachusetts
MS[S]	Manuscript[s]
NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
NT	New Testament
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OR	Oregon
OT	Old Testament
s.n.	<i>Sub nomine</i> [under the name of the subject]
UGL	University of Glasgow Library



## CHAPTER 1

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# A Falmouth Childhood

## 1.1 FALMOUTH

When the news of the battle of Trafalgar and the death of Lord Nelson reached England in November 1805, it was the people of Falmouth, in Cornwall, who were the first to learn the news. It may well be asked why a little town like Falmouth was distinguished in this way, rather than one of the great ports like Bristol or Plymouth. The simple answer is that not only is Falmouth the third deepest natural harbour in the world, but it was also the first port of safety available to a British ship entering the English channel in an Easterly direction, especially if it was being chased by a larger French ship—a familiar situation in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century as the French and the English were at war for much of that period. In fact, on that day in 1805, a larger French vessel was pursuing Captain Lapenotiere, who was carrying the Trafalgar dispatches in a very small schooner, the HMS Pickle, and for him, Falmouth was indeed a place of safety.

But Falmouth was more than just a haven in wartime. During the previous two centuries, it had grown sufficiently in importance to have become the first port of call for the packet service, carrying mail from the United States and other countries. In fact, Falmouth's distinction as a port had resulted in a significant growth in the town's trading wealth and prosperity and one family that participated in this process with great success is of particular interest for our purposes.

From the mid-seventeenth century, the Fox family increasingly dominated the commercial and industrial life of Falmouth.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 QUAKERS IN FALMOUTH

Although they were not related to George Fox, the founder of the Quaker movement, the family of that name in Falmouth was deeply committed to the principles of the Society of Friends and to their pacifist ideals, which forbade their producing materials that would be used in warfare. Their reputation for probity meant that they were respected as a pre-eminently reliable family with whom to have good commercial dealings, and George Croker Fox's<sup>2</sup> shipping business was so successful that members of his family acted continuously, from 1792 to 1905, as consuls in Falmouth for the United States as well as a number of other countries.

In examining life in Falmouth during the late eighteenth century and the part played in it by the Quaker element in its population, we are considering the world into which the subject of this book was born in 1813. There is a dearth of contemporary material relating to the early life of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles and his family, but by investigating the society in which he grew up, we can usefully discover something about the circumstances that influenced his early development.

On a smaller scale than the Fox dynasty but nevertheless with some success, the old Cornish family of Tregelles was one of several other Quaker families that thrived in Falmouth. In the South West of England, one of the earliest followers of the founder-Quaker, George Fox, had been a tailor John Tregelles (?1627–1706), who in 1676 had married Honoria the daughter of a Spanish immigrant, Nicholas José.<sup>3</sup> Imprisoned on more than one occasion in Pendennis Castle and Launceston gaol, for his Quaker

<sup>1</sup>For Falmouth in its Cornish context, see James Whetter, *The History of Falmouth* (Redruth: Truran, 1981). For the Fox family in Falmouth, see T.H. Bradley, 'The Fox Family of Falmouth: Their contribution to Cornish Industrial History, 1640–1860,' *Cornwall Association of Local Historians' News Magazine* 14 (October 1987): 9–17.

<sup>2</sup>George Croker Fox I (1727–1782). His eldest son and grandson were identically named.

<sup>3</sup>Copy of marriage certificate, Truro/CRO, Stephens of Ashfield Papers, ST/874.

convictions,<sup>4</sup> Tregelles and his family faithfully maintained the Quaker tradition and the ‘Tregelles meeting house’ is mentioned in the Falmouth records of the late seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

One of John’s great-grandsons was Samuel Tregelles,<sup>6</sup> our subject’s grandfather, who established a rope factory in Ashfield, Budock, on the outskirts of Falmouth, and whose links with the Fox family are well illustrated by the marriage of two of his younger sisters, Elizabeth (1768–1848) and Mary (1770–1835), to Robert Were Fox (1754–1818) and Thomas Were Fox (1766–1844), brothers of George Croker Fox II, whose father’s shipping business we mentioned earlier. It is apparent from the minutes of the Quaker regional monthly meetings that when Samuel Tregelles (the owner of the rope factory) was about thirty-five years old, he was in trouble with the Quaker authorities. In October 1801, he ‘came forward and declared that he had departed from the standard of truth and rectitude’. On consideration of the circumstances, details of which were not recorded, the Quakers disowned him in December for ‘grossly immoral conduct’. When more than two years later, in March 1804 he asked for readmission to the Society, the application remained a matter for discussion for a further six months.<sup>7</sup>

Of his many children, the eldest son Samuel (1789–1828), the father of our subject, is an elusive figure about whom there is little recorded information. However, his standing among the Falmouth Friends doesn’t seem to have been affected by his father’s misconduct and, a few years later, when he announced (21 November 1810) his intention of marrying Dorothy Prideaux (1790–1873), the Friends monthly meeting (19 December 1810) raised no objection and gave their approval.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The Friend* 6 (1848) 98; 80 (1907) 367; cited in ‘Dictionary of Quaker Biography’ [DQB] (typescript in London/LSF); see Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War and Interregnum, 1642–1660: A Social and Political Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), 348.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Gay, *Old Falmouth: The Story of the Town ...* (London: Headley Brothers, 1903), 40.

<sup>6</sup> 10 June 1766–1763 June 1831. In 1787 he married Rebecca Smith who died 6 August 1811, aged 45.

<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the West Cornwall Monthly Meeting, November 1801–October 1804 (Truro/CRO, Society of Friends Archive, SF/105). Confusingly, SPT’s grandfather is here referred to as ‘Samuel Tregelles, junior’ because his uncle Samuel Tregelles (1725–1805) was still living.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes October 1808–March 1813 (Truro/CRO, SF/108), in which the designation ‘Samuel Tregelles, junior’ is now assigned to SPT’s father.

Dorothy Prideaux, whose father George (1744–1815) was a solicitor,<sup>9</sup> came from an old Cornish family living in Kingsbridge, Devon. Like the Tregelles family, her ancestors were also Quakers and it was in their meeting house at Kingsbridge that the Quakers regularly held one of their quarterly divisional meetings.<sup>10</sup> It is clear therefore that although we have scant information about the childhood of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, who was born at Wodehouse Place, Falmouth on 30 January 1813, he was from the very outset of his life part of an extended family with long-established Quaker roots, and indeed, the town in which he grew up was significantly characterized by Quaker culture and practice.

A few years before SPT's birth, his father, together with Lord Wodehouse, planned to build an Almshouse on some land provided by the baron, at the foot of Mount-Sion in Porhan Lane, Falmouth. It was a typically Quaker work of philanthropy, and in 1810, the building was erected, consisting of a row of small tenements, which provided accommodation for ten widows 'of good character, who have not received parochial relief'.<sup>11</sup>

Whether this act of conspicuous charity on the part of SPT's father was an attempt to redeem the family's reputation is far from clear, especially as we are ignorant of the nature of the older Samuel's indiscretions, but at this stage, the newly married Samuel Tregelles (SPT's father) was living up to the expectations to which other worthy Quakers in Falmouth had given rise. The shadow of a future bankruptcy was not yet hanging over the family.

### 1.3 YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY

On the wider canvas of national and international events, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles was born into a world of anxiety. England had been at war with France for the best part of twenty years, and people who lived on the South

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Jackson Howard, Frederick Arthur Crisp [eds.], *Visitation of England and Wales*, xv (priv. printed, 1908) [Howard, Crisp, *Visitation*] 140. Cf. R.M. Prideaux, *Prideaux, A West Country Clan* (Chichester, Phillimore 1989).

<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *Kingsbridge and Salcombe, with the Intermediate Estuary, Historically and Topographically Depicted. Embellished with Four Views* (Kingsbridge: R Southwood, 1819), 38.

<sup>11</sup> R. Thomas, *History and Description of the Town and Harbour of Falmouth* (Falmouth: J. Trathan, 1827), 90n. Cf. Anonymous, *Panorama of Falmouth Containing: A History of the Origin, Progress, and present state of the Port; particulars of the Packet and other Establishments; directions to the Public Offices, Taverns, Lodging Houses, etc.* (Falmouth: Philp [sic] 1827), 54.

Coast could not but be aware of the hostilities. In addition to the possibility that the press gang could arrive at any moment and seize able-bodied men for the naval forces, the war itself was on their doorstep. Quite apart from ships putting into Falmouth, seeking refuge from French men-of-war, there had been the liability of French invasion. The mother of Benjamin Newton, later to be SPT's close friend and confidante, recalled how when she was living in Falmouth in 1803, many had fled the town, fearing a French raid. Newton himself was five years older than Tregelles, but he too had grown up in a Quaker family on the South Coast of Devon and Cornwall and vividly recalled returning from school, in February 1815, to find his mother, having learnt of Napoleon's escape from Elba, wringing her hands in despair and exclaiming, 'Now torrents of blood will be shed'.<sup>12</sup>

Although Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815 when SPT was only two years old, the post-war years were similarly difficult times. For years, the economy had been on a war-footing and the end of the war brought serious unemployment and financial problems. Samuel Tregelles (SPT's father) is usually described as a merchant, but we have little evidence as to the commodities in which he dealt.

There are some indications that he may have worked with his father in the rope manufacturing business, but it seems that he took some risks that landed him in bankruptcy. Some random papers have survived, but they give no indication of the nature of Samuel Tregelles's folly.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to his son, who was always known by his second name, Prideaux—his mother's maiden name—Samuel Tregelles had two daughters: Anna Rebecca (1811–1885) was fifteen months older than her brother, and a third child Dorothea was born five years after her brother, but she only lived for a couple of weeks. In his early years, Prideaux attended a school at Ashfield on the outskirts of Falmouth, managed by his aunts Lydia (1800–1891) and Rachael Tregelles (1805–1874). Lydia who outlived our subject recalled his eagerness to learn and his remarkable memory.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup>T.C.F. Stunt, *The Elusive Quest of the Spiritual Malcontent: Some Early Nineteenth Century Ecclesiastical Mavericks* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 26 n.88.

<sup>13</sup>Truro/CRO, ST/882 debts of Samuel T., 1820. The only direct account is in B.W. Newton's recollections: 'His [SPT's] father had £30,000 which he lost in speculation and died leaving a boy and a girl unprovided for'. Wyatt MSS 4 (Manchester/JRUL/CBA 7059), 121.

<sup>14</sup>Cambridge MA/AHTL, Special Collections, Papers of Caspar René Gregory (bMS

One other scrap of anecdotal information confirms this picture of Prideaux Tregelles's early development and precocity. Their very distant cousins in the Fox family, Ellen, Jane and Tabitha Fox,<sup>15</sup> who lived at Perranarworthal a few miles North of Falmouth, were rather older than Prideaux and his sister Anna, but nevertheless were their 'frequent play-mates'. Ellen had a particular memory of the 'grave' young Prideaux delighting to use antique language as when he observed one afternoon: 'This bread-and-butter cumbers me'.<sup>16</sup> Clearly 'Little Prid', as they used to call him,<sup>17</sup> was a serious boy—a scholar in the making.

## 1.4 A NEW SCHOOL

In 1825, at the age of twelve, Prideaux Tregelles was one of the first pupils to be enrolled in the Classical and Mathematical School in Falmouth. Some idea of this newly founded school is given in a contemporary account. There were seventy-five shareholders or Proprietors each contributing £15. Located in the New Road above Killigrew Street, the school was

admirably situated and presents a handsome classical elevation; the interior consists of a noble lofty School-Room, a vestibule, and two apartments, one for the Governors and Committee, and the other for the person in care of the premises, with suitable attached offices, and at the back a good Play-ground; in front is a Garden within iron rails and a carriage-drive to the flight of steps at the door.

The local benefactor, Lord Wodehouse (who, as we noted earlier, had cooperated with Samuel Tregelles in the Almshouse project), was responsible for the gift of the land for the site of the property.

The School-room is 60 feet long, 26 wide, and 21 high, and the number of Boys which are admitted is 100. The Noble Patron and the Proprietors,

560/125 [7]) Augusta Prideaux, 'Life of Dr Samuel Prideaux Tregelles' [hereafter Prideaux, MS Life] [p. 2].

<sup>15</sup> Ellen (1807–1890) and Jane (1808–1863) both later married into the Crewdson family, while Tabitha married into the Lloyd family of banking fame. The sisters were great-great granddaughters of George Croker Fox II's grandfather, George Fox by his first marriage.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen Crewdson, *Our Childhood at Perran* and *Postscript to Mother's Diary*, by F. Mary Broadrick (Liverpool, 1926), 34.

<sup>17</sup> See below Chapter 11, Footnote 31.

according to their shares, have nominations of one boy each, the parents paying the moderate sum of 7 guineas per annum. The Masters have three nominations each, at nine guineas per annum; and gentlemen not being proprietors may propose scholars by paying first a fixed sum for each one admitted, and seven guineas per annum, so far as will complete the above number. ...

There are five Masters including the French Teacher, at graduated Salaries; the two first must be graduates of one of the Universities. The Head-Master has the whole management of the School, so that it be conformable to the Laws and Rules made for its guidance. A public examination of the Scholars is held once a year on four following days previous to the Midsummer holidays, and PRIZES are adjudged to the most deserving youths.<sup>18</sup>

This then was the school in which Samuel Prideaux Tregelles at the age of twelve began his secondary studies. As one of the first students to be enrolled, Prideaux Tregelles would almost certainly have attended the opening ceremonies also described in the contemporary account:

The Mayor, Aldermen, and Corporation met the President, Officers and Committee of Management at the Town-hall, and proceeding towards the School House were met by the Proprietors, and the Masters in their Academic gowns at the head of their Scholars, the procession then passed into the spacious School-Room, where a number of Ladies and Gentlemen were assembled as spectators. The Head-Master read a portion of the Church service with a selection of psalms and offered up two appropriate prayers for the occasion, after which he delivered an excellent address, — on the advantages of an education which would combine sound learning with religious instruction, which without doubt would be the means of bestowing on, many hundreds incalculable benefits; concluding with an exhortation for ALL to perform their duty, with a firm trust in Providence for a furtherance in their laudable endeavours.

It was here for the next three years that Prideaux pursued his studies but perhaps a word about his headmaster would be appropriate at this point.

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, *Panorama of Falmouth*, 55–57.

## 1.5 A SCHOLAR IN THE MAKING

Thomas Sheepshanks had previously been a student at Shrewsbury School (1812–1816) where, after securing his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1820, he had been a teacher for five years. Ordained in 1825, he became the curate of Penwerris in Falmouth, a position that he held in conjunction with his headmastership. There may have been an element of nepotism in his appointment as his uncle John Sheepshanks (1765–1844) was the vicar of St Budock (1824–1844) and Archdeacon of Cornwall (1826–1844). Thomas Sheepshanks was later briefly Rector of Edinburgh Academy (1828–1829) before his appointment as Headmaster of Coventry Grammar School (1834–1860) where he numbered among his pupils the future novelist George Eliot to whom he gave Latin and Greek lessons.<sup>19</sup>

We may reasonably assume that SPT's enthusiasm for ancient languages must have benefited from this scholar's teaching at Falmouth, and according to one account, he made such good progress that Sheepshanks did his best to persuade the lad's family to send him to Oxford or Cambridge<sup>20</sup> but, as entrance to the universities was only open to Anglicans at that time, this would have required Prideaux to be baptized in the Church of England—a suggestion that would have been unacceptable to the Quakers into whose circle he had been born. In any case, with the crisis in his father's business affairs, the proposal was not remotely feasible from a financial point of view, and as if to finalize the matter, in March 1828 at the age of 39, Prideaux's father died. The boy's academic career now came to an abrupt halt when his widowed mother appears to have reckoned that a more practical training was called for.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Fisher, G.W., Hill, J.S., [eds.] *Annals of Shrewsbury School* (London: Methuen and Co., 1899) 286; *Alumni Cantab.* iv. 486. His son John became a Bishop of Norwich.

<sup>20</sup> Cambridge MA/AHTL, Prideaux, MS Life [p. 2]. The suggestion that he might go to Oxford or Cambridge is mentioned in Newton's recollection where he unaccountably refers to Sheepshanks as 'Archdeacon Elliot, Archdeacon of Cornwall'—a cleric of whose existence there appears to be no record (Wyatt MSS 4 [Manchester/JRUL/CBA 7059] 121).

<sup>21</sup> From an anonymous newspaper cutting preserved in the Cornwall County Record Office (Truro/CRO, ST/905), we learn that Sheepshanks resigned in July 1828, as the school was a financial failure. Prideaux Tregelles's departure, therefore, coincided with the closure of the school. The school appears to have been revived at a later date. Another textual scholar Prebendary Scrivener (born in the same year as SPT) was proud to recall that 'twenty years later', he had been the school's headmaster; Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students*, 4th ed., Rev. Edward Miller [ed.] (London: Geo. Bell, 1894), 2: 241.

One of her late husband's aunts, Anna Tregelles (1759–1846), had married, Peter Price (1739–1821) the manager of a successful iron works in Glamorganshire, South Wales, and the possibility of an apprenticeship in Price's establishment seemed to offer, for young Prideaux, a more realistic future than the world of *academe*. In a matter of months, the family had moved to Neath Abbey in South Wales.



## CHAPTER 2

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# A Welsh Interlude

## 2.1 NEATH ABBEY, GLAMORGAN

The Iron Foundry at Neath Abbey, where Prideaux Tregelles began his apprenticeship in 1828, had come under new management in 1790 when it was leased to a consortium of members of the Fox Family and their brother-in-law, Samuel Tregelles (SPT's grandfather). The arrangement was unmistakably typical of the Fox family whose investments were not confined to a particular field of enterprise. In the words of a recent family historian:

In mining, their [the Fox Family's] assets were widely spread whenever possible as minority interests, so as to reduce the risk in that unpredictable industry. They were among the first to look beyond the primary aim of digging holes in the ground and to realise that by creating ports, providing mining supplies, selling coal and exporting ore, they could automatically reap great benefits from a whole mining area and divorce themselves from the worst consequences of a single mine failure.<sup>1</sup>

The Neath Abbey ironworks were ideal for such a global approach to industry. The River Neath provided transport to Swansea, and this in turn gave

<sup>1</sup>T.H. Bradley, 'The Fox Family of Falmouth: Their Contribution to Cornish Industrial History, 1640–1860,' *Cornwall Association of Local Historians News Magazine* 14 (October 1987): 12.

access to the harbour at Portreath, on the North Cornish coast, where the Fox family had cooperated with the Bassett family in the construction of a tram road company. The works at Neath were thus supplied with Cornish iron ore from Perran, which was another centre of Fox activity. The quality of production in the Neath Abbey ironworks during the nineteenth century became almost legendary and ‘for a long period of years the firm had the reputation of pre-eminence for the manufacture of all kinds of machinery, pumps, boilers, marine and stationary engines, etc.’<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps of greatest importance for this notable enterprise of the Fox and Tregelles family was the fact that for the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, the foundry in Neath was managed by a man whose professional credentials and religious experience were exactly suited to the family’s Quaker ideals. Peter Price (1739–1821) had worked with the Quaker ironmaster Abraham Darby, the younger, whose father of the same name had been a pioneer of the iron industry in Coalbrookdale. Price had also been the manager of the machine shop of the largest iron foundry in Scotland, and, being held in high regard by James Watt himself, he was singularly well qualified to become the manager of the Fox mine at Perran in Cornwall and then a few years later to move to Neath Abbey itself where he took up a similar position.<sup>3</sup> Of significance too, was the fact that he was a first generation Quaker. Born a Roman Catholic who was said to have been fondled as a baby by Bonnie Prince Charlie, he had experienced an unusual conversion, during a month-long illness as a teenager in France in 1754 when he was said to have had visions of both heaven and hell. The absence of any awareness of purgatory in his visions was said to have contributed to his decision to renounce Roman Catholicism. As a young man in America on the outbreak of war, he was reluctant to take up arms, and on his return to England, he became a Quaker.<sup>4</sup> In 1781, he married Anna Tregelles (1759–1846), a sister of SPT’s grandfather, Samuel, thus

<sup>2</sup>W.W. Price, ‘Joseph Tregelles Price (1784–1854), Quaker and Ironmaster,’ in J.E. Lloyd, R.T. Jenkins [eds.], *Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940 [DWB]* (London: Society of Cymmrodorion, 1959).

<sup>3</sup>D. Rhys Phillips, *The History of the Vale of Neath* (Swansea: Beili Glas, 1925), 290.

<sup>4</sup>See Hannah Southall, ‘The Price Family of Neath,’ in *FQE*, 28 (1894) 189–90, reproduced in *Friends’ Intelligencer and Journal* 51 (Philadelphia, 22, 29 September 1894): 601–602, 619–20 and cited in article ‘Peter Price’ in *DQB* (typescript in London/LSF). Cf. Rev. T. Mardy Rees, *A History of the Quakers in Wales and Their Emigration to North America* (Carmarthen: Spurrell and Son, 1925), 95–96. ‘Unlike other ironmasters in South Wales, they did not get together a fortune by casting or boring cannon for scenes of warfare’, J. Lloyd,

cementing the Quaker link with Falmouth. In his later years, he was ably assisted by his son Joseph Tregelles Price (1784–1854) who took over the management of the Neath Abbey ironworks in 1818.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 A QUAKER APPRENTICESHIP

It was to this thriving Quaker establishment that Prideaux Tregelles came from Falmouth, with his widowed mother and sister Anna Rebecca, to take up an apprenticeship at the age of 15.<sup>6</sup>

Bringing with them, Quaker letters of commendation from Falmouth,<sup>7</sup> the family now became part of the Neath Quaker meeting, and the few of his letters that have survived from these years have all the hallmarks of the boy's Quaker upbringing. As was the custom with all good Quakers, he avoids the pagan names of the months, referring to July as the '7th mo.', and likewise, he addresses his correspondents with the pronoun *thou* or *thee*. Quaker morality was something SPT held in high regard, especially as exemplified by the noble conduct of his father's cousin Joseph Tregelles Price who was now SPT's employer.

During the social unrest of 1831 at the time of the Merthyr Riots, it was well known that Joseph Price had travelled to London to intercede at the highest level for a prisoner whom he considered to have been unjustly accused. As an eighteen-year-old, SPT had immense respect for his employer and wrote at length to his aunt Lydia in Falmouth with an

*The Early History of the Old South Wales Ironworks (1760 to 1840)* (London: Bedford Press, 1906), 102.

<sup>5</sup>For Joseph Tregelles Price, see *DWB. s.n.*; G. Eaton, *Joseph Tregelles Price, 1784–1854: Quaker Industrialist and Moral Crusader: A Portrait of His Life and Work* (Neath: Glamorgan Press, 1987). Cf. Laurence Ince, *Neath Abbey and the Industrial Revolution* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), 82.

<sup>6</sup>If his uncle Edwin's experience, eight years earlier, was anything to go by, they would have taken a boat from Portreath (on the northern Cornish coast) to Ilfracombe, and from there the packet boat to Swansea whence on a pony to Neath Abbey; Sarah E. Fox [ed.], *Edwin Octavius Tregelles: Civil Engineer and Minister of the Gospel* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), 3–4.

<sup>7</sup>Minutes of West Divisional Monthly Meeting of Cornwall 1824–29 (Truro/CRO, SF/113), and *ibid.*, 1829–1834 (SF/114).