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CHURCH, STATE AND PEOPLE IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA,
1835-1850

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PREFACE

When this work was begun, the writer had an ill-informed interest in Australian Church history, not a shrewd suspicion that anything in particular was true of that history. What follows, therefore, is the result of looking at several interesting aspects of Church-life in Australia, rather than of steadily searching for evidence in support of one proposition. The period 1835-50 was not arbitrarily chosen (though the writer did not fully appreciate its significance when it was suggested to him); for this was the watershed between the era of the penal colonies proper and the expansion of Australia following the gold rushes and responsible government. It is very much to be stressed that the development and sophistication of society between 1835 and 1850 made the later developments possible and helped to determine their form. Three aspects are examined in some detail: the religious provision, the education debate and the content and consequence of the clergymen's preaching. The choice of these subjects was not arbitrary, either, but was dictated by the historical material and the historical situation, for these seemed to be the obviously large issues and to raise the vital questions.

Minor themes are developed in the sections dealing with each of these. One is that by 1850 most Australians were fairly well supplied with churches and clergymen, and that interpretation of Australian religious behaviour should not be made on the pre-supposition that the colonists were badly served compared with Englishmen, or, at least, with the masses in English cities. Another claim is that the Churches prejudiced their chances of securing a substantial place for religious instruction in the nation's schools, by fighting in the way they did in the eighteen thirties and forties. A third theme is that, although the Churches had considerable support in the colonies, their messages fell on deaf ears among a majority of colonials (especially of the poorer colonials). Examining the way in which the Churches in Australia often lost their victories, and yet survived their defeats, between 1835 and 1850, leads to a major (if tentative) theme that

the Churches have always held much the same place, and faced essentially the same problems, in the Australian community. There have been many changes. It is to be emphasized, for instance, that overt support for Christianity from the Governments was much greater in these early years than it is today. Yet the result of these researches (or, perhaps, the feeling of this researcher) is that the real position of the Churches among the Australian community at large has changed very little. Contempt, criticism and conformity are present in about the same proportions as ever, and the Churches often had almost as much difficulty in imposing their wills upon politics and society in colonial days as they have in our own day.

One large omission from this essay is that of strife within denominations. Every denomination had, to a lesser or greater degree, its internal feuds, but, apart from the Evangelical-Tractarian controversy, these are passed over. The most serious of the intra-denominational quarrels occurred among the Presbyterians on the mainland, who split asunder and re-formed only to split again; but this involved personalities (and especially that personality, J.D. Lang) probably more than principles. The Evangelical-Tractarian contest within the Church of England is discussed at length because it touched all the Churches, and involved doctrine and the practice of the faith, to a far greater extent. It may be argued that the whole question of Church and state eventually became a crucial element in the Presbyterian differences; but the importance of this problem is stressed in this thesis by discussing state aid for religion on a wider (and, it has seemed, the proper) basis.

Similarly, inter-denominational bitterness is largely ignored except where it becomes a part of the church-aid and church-schools issues. A study devoted to sectarian sympathies and antipathies would shed light on Australian Church history, and a discussion of the degree to which denomination rivalries assisted or hindered the advance of religion in the land would be valuable; but it has not seemed that to do so here would be to put first things first. Sometimes it can be useful to draw attention to the fact that in

a particular area one denomination was over-represented and another was under-represented, for this did happen in some districts in the colonies. No use is made of these variations here, however, for the broad picture of the colonies is that the strong denominations were strong nearly everywhere, and the weak were weak nearly everywhere. To give weight to the unusually high proportion of adherents claimed by a particular denomination in a particular small area would be important in a local history, but misleading in a history of the colonies as a whole.

I owe much in many quarters, beginning with all who smoothed my way towards a scholarship and the South Australia Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia which allowed me to take it up. With wisdom, patience and courtesy, Professor C.M.H. Clark moved me from a position of appalling ignorance to the point of being able to write a thesis, then left me in peace to get on with it. In the final stages, Professor Sir Keith Hancock and Associate Professor K.S. Inglis made valuable suggestions, and Mrs Ann Mozley gave me the benefit of her knowledge of the Rev. W.G. Clarke and of scientific sources. While no self-respecting cartographer would willingly take any responsibility for the maps I drew to illustrate the text, I owe it to Mr Hans Gunther to say that without his advice and assistance they would have been very much worse. I am deeply indebted to other staff members of the A.N.U., to officials of various Churches and to the staffs of the National, Mitchell and A.N.U. Libraries and the Tasmanian State Archives. My wife accepted the role of thesis-widow in place of being a minister's unpaid assistant; if this was to leap out of the frying-pan into the fire, her only complaint was about clumsy sentences in successive drafts of the thesis. Not least have I appreciated the moral support of fellow research scholars - 'For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe'.

Apart from this help, only my own work went into the thesis.


JOHN BARRETT

SUMMARYPART I

Chapter 1: Although religious provision for lower-class persons in the eastern Australian colonies was no worse than in the great towns of England, and although the bulk of the colonists lived in areas where the Churches were fairly active and moderately well represented, religious provision was quite inadequate in the mid-thirties. The Church leaders were, therefore, very worried about the situation, and government authorities also wanted better provision to be made.

Chapter 2: Nineteenth century tolerance and the mixture of sects in the colonies gave rise to a very strong aversion to exclusive endowment: hence the passing and popularity of the egalitarian Church Acts. Even Anglican opposition was muted (especially in N.S.W., where the needs were most pressing) because of the huge task of extending religious facilities and because of the overwhelming support enjoyed by the measures. Church progress between 1836 and 1841 was unparalleled, and this was not least because of the Church Acts.

Chapter 3: The very success of the Church Acts (i.e. the number of applications for aid) embarrassed the Governments, which were in financial difficulties anyway. This forced the legislatures to impose limits upon assistance to the Churches. Even so, Government assistance under the Acts amounted to over half a million pounds between 1836 and 1850. Government policy was based on denominational equality, non-interference with internal Church affairs, and financial assistance to religion; but a trend towards abolishing state aid was becoming very evident.

Chapter 4: The principle of state aid retained much popular support throughout the forties, but it also came under increasing criticism - partly because of the cost, and partly through distaste for denominational rivalries. Abolition of state aid was often predicted in the newspapers, but public opinion was

divided and uncertain. Purely private giving to the Churches was very large, with perhaps the most consistent support coming from the commercial and middle classes, rather than the landed and upper classes - although the 'squatters' gave much financial assistance once their stations were developed.

Chapter 5: Religious provision in 1850 was much better, absolutely and comparatively, than it had been in the mid-thirties. The great increase in population had been more than matched by the increased numbers of churches and clergymen (with the lusty young Port Phillip District partially excepted). The quarter where the Churches were least successful was in the squatting districts: most colonists were well served, but the outback minority was poorly served.

PART II

Chapter 6: The Churches had the strength to slow, but not enough support to prevent, the coming of a state system of schools. In N.S.W., the Irish system was abandoned in 1836 because of united Protestant objections to it as a 'pro-Catholic' scheme. A plan to adopt the British and Foreign system was abandoned in 1839, mainly because of Anglican opposition to its non-credal character, but also because of Catholic, Wesleyan and some Presbyterian preferences for their own schools. The Select Committee's recommendation of a general system was not put into effect in 1844 because the clergy's opposition had not diminished. But sectarian instruction was not popularly desired above secular education, and the cost of separate church schools was very great; hence, in 1847-8, a general system was at length introduced.

Chapter 7: In 1835 the public schools in V.D.L. were almost exclusively Anglican. For eight years (1839-46) they were non-Anglican, a modified British and Foreign system being adopted. For the next two years (1847-8) half the schools were state-aided Anglican schools, and from 1849 to 1854 nearly all the schools were once more controlled by the Anglicans. A determined Anglican campaign, and the backing of Gladstone, won this brief

triumph; but the Anglican clergy's refusal to co-operate even in the compromise general system had antagonized many colonists, and the clergy could not long retain their victory. The final result was unfavourable to religious instruction in the schools.

Chapter 8: Both the modified British and Foreign system operating in V.D.L., and also the Irish system, allowed a great deal of religious instruction. Although many churchmen (especially Anglican, Catholic and Wesleyan clergymen argued that there was danger of a general scepticism emerging from a general system, their ideal of teaching all things in an unfettered context of religious faith could not often be put into practice. There was little, if any, more religious education given in church schools than in state schools. Sunday schools had a double role - the teaching of both religion and reading; but the teaching of religion was most prominent. Anglicans were comparatively weak in this work and, coupled with their opposition to state schools, this hindered religious instruction.

Chapter 9: The principle of universal education was accepted in the Australian colonies - by the clergy as well as the laity; but the class distinctions were rigidly maintained in the schools, and the church and state elementary schools were the preserve of the lower classes. The identification of the clergy (and their children) with the higher classes meant that they fought over, rather than with, the working classes; and this militated against their effectiveness in winning the lower classes to their side and point of view.

Part III

Chapter 10: The Tractarian-Evangelical controversy, and the degree to which Church tradition was to complement purely biblical authority, caused turmoil among Anglicans and mistrust of the Church of England by Nonconformists. The barrier between Nonconformity and Anglicanism was strengthened, although the trend within the Church of England was towards the via media.

Chapter 11: The colonial preaching was quite skilled. Features of it which are discussed include: the constant warnings of a judgement to come, without much resort to fire and brimstone; the absence of a strong predestinarian doctrine for the individual; belief in the direct intervention of God; Sabbatarianism; cautions against making an idol of worldly goods; the uncritical acceptance of the social order; and the belief that the new scientific knowledge simply bolstered the Paleyist argument from design.

Chapter 12: The clergy and their lay helpers attempted to spread the gospel and induce moral reform by the distribution of tracts and Bibles, by frequently epic tours of the out-back (not at all the preserve of the Catholics), by charity and temperance advocacy. These efforts met with considerable success, but even greater failure.

Chapter 13: The failure to practice religion was widespread in the colonies, but there was also considerable religious observance which reflected true faith as well as conventional and utilitarian motives. Both aspects need to be given full weight in Australian history. Australians have not been simply materialistic, and materialism is not merely the product of the post-1850 age.

CONTENTS

<u>Preface</u>	11
<u>Summary</u>	v
<u>Maps</u>	x
<u>Abbreviations</u>	xi
INTRODUCTION	2
<u>PART I. THE PROVISION OF CHURCHES AND CLERGYMEN FOR</u>	
<u>EASTERN AUSTRALIA, 1835-50</u>	
Chapter 1. BEFORE THE CHURCH ACTS: RELIGIOUS PROVISION IN NEW SOUTH WALES TO 1836, AND IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND TO 1837.	
The colonies compared with Great Britain	12
The colonial Churches' view of the problem	33
Chapter 2. THE PASSING OF THE CHURCH ACTS, 1836-7, AND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH.	
English opinion	50
Colonial practice, New South Wales	57
Colonial practice, Van Diemen's Land	68
The immediate aftermath	84
Chapter 3. AFTER THE CHURCH ACTS: (1) GOVERNMENT PROBLEMS AND POLICIES.	
Treasuries at bay	91
Restricting the Church Act in New South Wales	97
The problem in Van Diemen's Land	110
A cargo of bishops, and a problem of command	118
Chapter 4. AFTER THE CHURCH ACTS: (2) PUBLIC OPINION AND SUPPORT	
The people's reaction to state aid	126
The people's support of the Churches	134
Chapter 5. RELIGIOUS PROVISION IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA, 1850.	152
<u>PART II. THE CHURCHES AND EDUCATION IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA,</u>	
<u>1835-50.</u>	
Chapter 6. CHURCH SCHOOLS OR STATE SCHOOLS? (1) NEW SOUTH WALES.	
The Protestant defeat of Bourke's Irish system, 1836	163
The Anglican rejection of Gipps' British and Foreign system, 1839	176

	Catholics and the proposed general systems, 1835-9	183
	Clergymen <u>versus</u> a select committee, 1844	187
	The establishment of a National Schools' Board, 1847-8	196
Chapter 7.	CHURCH SCHOOLS OR STATE SCHOOLS? (2) VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.	
	The Anglicans resist change, 1835-8	202
	The Anglicans boycott a British and Foreign system, 1839-42	207
	Bishop Nixon against Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, 1843-7	220
	A triumphant interval for Anglican schools, 1848-50	233
Chapter 8.	THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE: SOME FURTHER ASPECTS.	
	Religious instruction in the day schools	238
	The role of Sunday schools	260
Chapter 9.	THE SOCIAL ISSUE: SCHOOLS FOR THE HUMBLER CLASSES.	271
PART III. <u>RELIGIOUS OPINION AND PRACTICE IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA, 1835-50.</u>		
Chapter 10.	THE DOCTRINES AND PREACHING OF THE CLERGY: (1) SOME STUMBLING BLOCKS.	
	The times of the tracts	291
	Anglican preaching as a mirror	305
	The Bible	311
Chapter 11.	THE DOCTRINES AND PREACHING OF THE CLERGY: (2) SERMON SKILLS, AND SOME COMMON THEMES.	
	Sermon skills	317
	Fleeing the wrath to come	321
	Prayer and divine intervention	326
	The workaday world	333
	Science and the Creator	339
Chapter 12.	THE OUTREACH OF THE CHURCHES.	
	Extensions to the parochial ministry	348
	The bush pastors	357
Chapter 13.	THE PEOPLE'S BELIEF AND UNBELIEF	
	Religious observance	370
	Practical atheism	386
	A vague answer to a leading question	392
	REVIEW	396
	<u>Appendices</u>	400
	<u>Bibliography</u>	404

MAPS

The Nineteen Counties of New South Wales: Population, Clergymen and Churches, 1836	facing p.31
Van Diemen's Land: Stationing of Clergymen, 1837.	" " 44
New South Wales, including Port Phillip and Moreton Bay: Stationing of Clergymen, 1850.	" " 152
Van Diemen's Land: Stationing of Clergymen, 1850.	" " 159

ABBREVIATIONS

- Abbreviated titles not followed by date and place of publication are used to indicate books previously cited, when use of op.cit. would not show which of an author's works is referred to.
- ANU Australian National University, Canberra.
- B.T. Miss. Bonwick Transcripts from Documents in London, Missionary Section (Mitchell Library).
- Courier Hobart Town Courier.
- CSIL Colonial Secretary, N.S.W., In Letters (Mitchell Library).
- CSOL Colonial Secretary, N.S.W., Out Letters (Mitchell Library).
- CSO Colonial Secretary's Office, V.D.L.: Correspondence Files (Tasmanian State Archives).
- Examiner Launceston Examiner.
- GO Lieutenant-Governor's Office, V.D.L.: Duplicate Despatches sent to the Colonial Office (Tasmanian State Archives).
- Herald To 1 Aug. 1842, Sydney Herald; thereafter, Sydney Morning Herald.
- H.R.A. Historical Records of Australia, Series I (unless otherwise stated).
- H.R.N.S.W. Historical Records of New South Wales.
- J.R.A.H.S. Journal and Proceedings, Royal Australian Historical Society.
- Lowe Committee Report from the Select Committee on Education, with Appendix, and Minutes of Evidence, N.S.W., 1844.
- LSD Lands and Surveys Department, V.D.L.: Correspondence Records (Tasmanian State Archives).
- Min. of Exec. Coun., N.S.W. Minutes of the Executive Council of New South Wales (Mitchell Library).
- Min. of Exec. Coun., V.D.L. Minutes of the Executive Council of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmanian State Archives).

ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney.
NL	Australian National Library, Canberra.
N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min.	Minutes of the New South Wales District Meeting, Wesleyan Methodist Church (Dixson Collection and Mitchell Library).
TA or TSA	Tasmanian State Archives, Hobart.
V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min.	Minutes of the Van Diemen's Land District Meeting, Wesleyan Methodist Church (Wesley Church, Hobart).
<u>V. & P., N.S.W.</u>	<u>Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, New South Wales.</u>
<u>V. & P., V.D.L.</u>	<u>Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Van Diemen's Land.</u>

(The term Votes and Proceedings has been used loosely to cover volumes entitled Minutes and Papers as well. There is considerable irregularity in the available volumes, but reference to Ferguson's Bibliography of Australia will indicate the likely source used.)

INTRODUCTION

In 1788 Botany Bay was simply an extension of England's prison system, a wretched camp of convicts and their guards, but the settlement thus begun was not to be long confined. Food had to be grown, and stock raised; convicts became free, and free men saw opportunities in the new land; the Australian continent beckoned to all who could master her, and many came to compete for her favours. In the thirties free migration was swelling, and New South Wales and its offshoot, Van Diemen's Land, had begun to develop into diversified communities of some sophistication. By 1850 the marks of society were more obvious in eastern Australia than the scars of the penal colonies.

In the forties, a respectable citizen of Sydney could stroll along paved, gas-lit footpaths between gracious Georgian buildings. Houses, inns and shops were there in abundance, and there were also numerous schools (public and private), a subscription library containing fifteen thousand volumes, a hospital, a legislative council chamber, the churches and chapels of half a dozen denominations, a number of banks and insurance houses, a post office embellished with six Doric columns, a theatre accommodating two thousand persons, and two luxury hotels of three and four stories. The perambulating citizen might have acknowledged the salute of the mayor (or a physician, a judge, a geologist, an elected legislative councillor) whose carriage moved along a macadamized street. He might have resisted overtures from the secretary of a total abstinence society, greeted a prosperous iron manufacturer, succumbed to the plea of the treasurer of a benevolent society, discussed investments with a merchant and land-tenure with a squatter, and bowed to a doctor of divinity, before settling himself for a performance by a choral society, or for speeches arguing the case for national schools. Next day he might have read an account of his evening's entertainment in the Sydney Morning Herald. Through it all, he might have been little conscious of convictism in the city, though a glance at a policeman's face might have reminded him of the source whence the constabulary had sprung.

It was the steady growth of the colonies along these lines which made the years 1835 to 1850 most significant. Water piped to the city houses, steam-boats in the harbours, a growing quantity and variety of manufactures, a vigorous free press, the local publication of books and pamphlets, an expanding number of elementary schools, the opening of colleges for secondary education, the arrival of the first bishops, the general development of the Churches, and of literary and scientific societies, of mechanics' institutes and other voluntary societies, the settling of huge new areas, a vast expansion in the wool industry, squatters securing their land, stations improved and wives and families brought to them - all these, and more, were the things which distinguished the period. Indeed, the legal transformation of the colonies from penal settlements into communities with partially representative government was the achievement of these years. Transportation was abolished in 1840 for New South Wales, and in 1853 for Van Diemen's Land. By 1842 New South Welshmen occupying houses valued at £20 a year could elect twenty-four of the thirty-six legislative councillors; in 1850 a £10 franchise was adopted for the colony, and for new, similar councils in Van Diemen's Land and Victoria.

Yet this polite society was still formed upon a base of villainy and ignorance, of debauchery and coarseness. When Sir Richard Bourke, eighth Governor of New South Wales, proposed a radical change in the relation of Church to state (advocating state aid for all denominations), he hoped that thereby would be 'secured to the State good subjects, and to society good men'.¹ Good subjects and good men had to be secured; they did not crowd out to the Australian colonies on every ship, and those who came did not enter a society conspicuous for loyalty, honesty, sobriety or piety. And this was partly a result of convictism.

¹Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, H.R.A., xvii, 229-30.

A grand total of over one hundred and fifty thousand convicts was landed in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. In the mid-thirties convicts constituted over one third of the population of New South Wales, and they still amounted to much the same proportion in Van Diemen's Land in 1850, while there remained in both colonies large numbers of former prisoners, and many influences stemming from the worst penal era. Some convicts reformed, some were never criminals in any true sense, and the presence of the convicts helped to promote Government interest in schools, and Government support of the Churches; but, on the whole, convictism did not foster good subjects and good men. Most of those transported were ignorant and brutalized, and the many Irishmen among them (who were no less degraded) had their own reasons for despising English law and English religion.

Another part of the problem of developing a decent, orderly society arose from scattered settlement and primitive conditions beyond the main centres. Sydney's streets were macadamized, but it took a bushman to follow safely most of the 'roads' in the interior. In tiny Van Diemen's Land the difficulties were more restricted, but in sprawling New South Wales, where the governors completely failed to confine the spread of settlement, the problem was immense. The theoretical boundaries of settlement were those of the nineteen counties, but men continuously pushed out with their flocks and herds to squat wherever there was grass and water. After 1834, the flock-owners forced upon the authorities a whole new district (Port Phillip) which was soon to become a separate colony. The constant expansion brought difficulties over ownership of land and the maintenance of law and order, and also made it extremely hard to provide schools and churches - each an important factor in the attempt to produce and preserve good subjects and good men.

At this time, indeed, churches and schools belonged together. Traditionally, the Church of England had been responsible for the schools both in England and in the colonies.

In Scotland and Ireland, and in England among the Dissenters, the schools were also largely associated with religious bodies, or conducted according to an agreement between such bodies, and the state had only recently admitted its responsibility to bring education to the masses. The conflict in England between the state, Dissent and the Church of England over the control and support of the schools was carried out to the Australian colonies, and there made - if possible - even worse by the nature of colonial communities, which were small, scattered and denominationally mixed. How to overcome this problem was one of the most hotly debated questions of the time.

The debate extended to the relative positions of the Churches themselves. In England, rivals and reformers were questioning the position of the Established Church, and English colonists brought the challenge to Australia, where it was eagerly espoused by Scots and Irish who clung loyally to their respective national Churches. If the Anglican Church was no Church to the Irish, and if the Presbyterian Church was established by law in Scotland, why should the Church of England alone be supported by colonial Governments? The question was raised fiercely, and had to be answered tactfully. Men like Bourke, with liberal ideas, were not displeased by all its implications, yet they did not find the solution easy. Though it was scarcely practicable (and not, in their view, desirable) to restrict aid to Anglicanism only, the placing of all denominations upon an equal footing meant braving the wrath of powerful Anglicans and involving the state in enlarged expense. The denominational tangle thus aggravated the problem of securing good subjects and good men.

Convict influence, colonial rawness and denominational rivalry were not the only sources of the problem. Much religious ignorance and carelessness in the colonies had first taken root in England, and was simply transplanted. Even as late as March 1851, the Australian-born formed less than half of the population of New South Wales, and just over a quarter

of Victoria's. For most people in the colonies, therefore, their British background was directly significant. What that background could mean in the matter of religion was vividly suggested by a chaplain on an emigrant ship in 1850. He wrote:

Now that I am thrown into a mixture of all classes of society, I find with regret, that in this heterogeneous mass there are very very few who seem to have fixed notions of what religion is. There seems to be no rational confession of faith amongst them. They have no idea of the nature of the Sacraments. Some think that religion consists in not being an absolute infidel; others in not being a Papist; others in allowing their neighbour to be of what creed he likes; all their ideas on religious subjects seem imbued with a cold vague negative Protestantism, 'that evil spirit of unbelief which departs from the living God'...¹

Here was the hard core of the problem - English indifference. 'English' is used advisedly, because the Scots were more likely to have a religious training and the Irish, for all their hooligan element, were usually ready to confess their sins and assist at the Mass. But vast numbers of Englishmen from the cities especially, and from the lower classes, were quite unconnected with either church or chapel at home. The problem had a long history and a wide range, and contemporary witnesses to its existence are numerous and diverse.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the evangelical William Wilberforce described even the professed churchmen of the more privileged classes as being 'little acquainted' with Christianity.² Some thirty-five years later, the radical William Cobbett answered his own question, 'Does the Establishment conduce to religious instruction?', with a blunt 'No: flatly no'.³ The unorthodox theist, Thomas Carlyle, saw among the masses only the symptoms of the Church's neglect, and among

¹ J.D. Mereweather, Life on Board an Emigrant Ship: Being a Diary of a Voyage to Australia, London 1852, p.64.

² W. Wilberforce, A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country..., Glasgow 11th edn. c.1829, p.92.

³ W. Cobbett, Legacy to Parsons... [1835], London 1947, p.65.

other classes the reduction of God's laws to 'a Greatest-Happiness Principle, A Parliamentary Expediency'.¹ Frederick Engels, German visitor and embryonic Marxist, produced evidence from which he argued that even farm workers in England had 'to a great extent, broken with the Church' and that, where they outwardly complied, they often inwardly rebelled.² No enemy of the Church of England, but one of her bishops - C.J. Blomfield - reported in 1840 on 'the thousands of miserable destitute souls' living without pastoral care in the Diocese of London alone.³

Nor did Dissent or Methodism fill the gap. Dissenters were notoriously middle-class, and usually not missionary minded as far as the working masses about them were concerned. Although the Methodists were supposed to be effective among the poorer classes, and London was a Methodist stronghold compared with many other centres, only about one half of one per cent of that city's population was Methodist in 1815.⁴ If Methodist numbers in the metropolis are multiplied by six, to allow for adherents as distinct from members, no more than three per cent were touched by Wesley's followers. The idea is quite false that some time after 1738 (the year of John Wesley's 'conversion') the English people generally began to attend church or chapel, and retained the habit until the maturing of the generation born in 1859-60 (the years of The Origin of Species and of Essays and Reviews). All too many Englishmen (particularly from the town working-classes) were growing up without the practice of religion, or much knowledge of it. When they came to Australia, whether as

¹T. Carlyle, Past and Present [1843], London 1899, pp.136, 146; and Chartism [1839] in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, London 5 vols. 1899, IV, pp.155-6.

²F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England [1844], trans. and ed. by W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner, Oxford 1958, pp.303-4.

³A. Blomfield, A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield..., London 2 vols. 1863, I, pp.225-6.

⁴Methodist numbers in London (6,350) are taken from M. Edwards, After Wesley, London 1935, Appendix I, p.163. London's population was well over one million.

convicts or as migrants, they brought their indifference with them, and piled it on the heap of difficulties already made large by isolation and pre-occupation with the business of living, by the breaking of old ties and the shortage of churches and clergymen.

Colonial Church and state authorities recognized the great need for moral and Christian teaching. Public men and newspapers supported religion - at least in the public eye, in a general sense, and as the handmaid of morality and social order. Religious provision received the serious attention of Government between 1835 and 1850, a heavy expense was borne by the colonial Treasuries (and Imperial Military Chests) in giving and continuing state aid, and the Churches' ideals for education were allowed - if restively permitted - to dominate the school systems for years. That this happened indicates that religion in nineteenth century England had another aspect.

Though there were millions untouched by religion throughout the period, there were other millions - especially among the middle and upper classes - who were deeply influenced by religion and by high moral ideals. Evangelicalism - in the broadest sense - achieved its 'maximum influence' about 1840 and showed its 'first signs of decline' about 1870, so that Victorian England, was, of civilized countries, 'one of the most religious that the world has known'.¹ The Oxford Movement contributed to this religious seriousness; beginning in 1833 under the leadership of Keble, Pusey and Newman, and widely circulating its Tracts for the Times, the movement both inspired and provoked the Christian public by its High Church emphases. Methodism and Dissent were effective enough among the middle classes, and were increasing in prestige and influence. Among the people who counted, religion was pervasive and was therefore prominent in the national code of England, and considered important by the officials and respectable citizens who came from England to Australia.

¹R.C.K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914, Oxford 1952, pp.140, 137.

The most devout churchmen, and the most dogmatic, often looked with suspicion and dislike upon the religious beliefs of the colonies' leading citizens. They saw that Christian revelation and doctrine were being weighed in minds saturated with the philosophy of Liberalism, with its tolerance of all creeds and its faith in the light of knowledge. In some churchmen's eyes, state aid to all sects and attempts to do away with denominational schools in favour of a general system witnessed only to a carelessness about religious truth. Perhaps it did show at least religious casualness.¹ Yet the colonies' influential men were not positively averse to Christianity (or very rarely so), and were not unappreciative of the Churches' importance; on the contrary, their concern for religious provision and observance was noteworthy. Religion, even if it was often broad and shallow, was strikingly apparent among the more respectable classes when they are compared, not with the Kingdom of Heaven, but with the Australian state today.

But not all, and not even a majority, of the colonials were very respectable. Many were socially disreputable and religiously ignorant, and were often both together. Representatives came to Australia from each of the 'two nations' into which Benjamin Disraeli divided England, calling them the rich and the poor.² He might have distinguished between the religiously disposed and the religiously ignorant and found that, by and large, they remained the same groups. From these two nations, Australia drew her people; and the impoverished nation's representatives should not be underestimated while attention is focussed upon the men of the more privileged nation, and upon how they tried to secure good subjects and good men. After all the debates about state aid

¹See Michael Roe, 'Society and Thought in Eastern Australia, 1835-51', Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1960. Roe's thesis is that the 'Authority' which sustained colonial society was 'Moral Liberalism'.

²B. Disraeli, Sybil: or, The Two Nations, first published in 1845.

to Churches and religious teaching in schools, and after all the practical experiments, it had to be acknowledged that many in the colonies possessed 'that evil spirit of unbelief which departs from the living God'.

PART I

THE PROVISION OF CHURCHES AND CLERGYMEN FOR
EASTERN AUSTRALIA, 1835-50

CHAPTER 1BEFORE THE CHURCH ACTS: RELIGIOUS PROVISION IN
NEW SOUTH WALES TO 1836, AND IN
VAN DIEMEN'S LAND TO 1837The Colonies compared with Great Britain

On the shores of Botany Bay the first fleet left about one thousand persons, of whom one was a clergyman of the Church of England appointed to the cure of souls. After this small beginning, the colony's religious provision was long neglected. It was of no comfort to those concerned about the problem to know that many people in the cities of England were just as spiritually neglected as any in New South Wales: the colonial problem remained. The real turning point came after 1835, when both the state and the Churches made great and costly efforts to provide adequately for the colonials' spiritual needs. They were not entirely successful, but they had a great deal of success, and the institutional development of the Churches between 1835 and 1850 (in Van Diemen's Land, as well as in New South Wales) is a striking feature of the period.

The Rev. Richard Johnson, chaplain in 1788, had no church and some of the worst parishioners in the world, but he had one advantage over many clergymen in England and many of his colonial successors: his people were limited in number and location, so that he knew who and where they were. A chaplain to the New South Wales Corps, the Rev. James Bain, worked also in the colony from 1792 to 1794, and in the latter year an assistant colonial chaplain arrived in the person of the Rev. Samuel Marsden. But there was no permanent church building, and the population so increased that, in 1799, the ratio of people to clergyman had doubled, being over two thousand to one. When Johnson resigned in 1800, Marsden was the sole official minister for the whole four thousand in the colony. The only amelioration came through the unofficial efforts of a number of clerical and lay missionaries of the London Missionary Society who retreated to Sydney, from time to time, to escape

the perils of their work in Tahiti. Religious provision was fast deteriorating and was to become even worse, after a temporary reprieve.

Marsden had the assistance of one Protestant clergyman from 1801 to 1807, for the conditionally pardoned Henry Fulton, who had been transported on a charge of sedition in Ireland, ministered at Norfolk Island in those years. The Rev. James Dixon, one of three Catholic priests transported for similar offences in 1800-1801, also gained permission to act as a chaplain after his emancipation in 1803. This religious provision for the numerous Catholics was speedily interrupted in the next year, when Dixon's salary was withdrawn, probably unjustly, after a rebellion among Irish convicts. Dixon remained a further four years in the colony, but his position was very uncertain and difficult, and he held no faculties and could absolve only in articulo mortis.

Provision for Protestants soon became worse and Catholic provision much worse. Marsden returned to England on leave in 1807, so that the two ex-convicts, Fulton and Dixon, were the only ministers of religion in New South Wales. In 1808 Dixon left the colony and Fulton, as a consequence of the Bligh rebellion, was temporarily suspended from office. One of the L.M.S. missionaries, William Pascoe Crook, was appointed to act in Fulton's place, but despite Crook's later claim to be a duly accredited Independent minister (a claim which was contested), he was certainly not ordained in 1808.¹ There were, therefore, eight or nine thousand New South Welshmen left without a clergyman until the Rev. William Cowper, another Anglican, arrived in August 1809. By 1810 at least the Anglicans in the colony were better served, having four chaplains amongst them. But the increase in clergymen had not kept pace with the increase in population, and the ratio of about two thousand

¹W.P. Crook to S. Tracy, 18 June 1813, B.T. Miss., Box 49, p.318ff (ML). A Letter from the Rev. Samuel Marsden to Mr William Crook..., Sydney 1835.

six hundred people to each minister was still greater than in earlier years.

In 1815, in contrast to Crook, Dixon, and the few other transient missionaries and priests who simply happened to come and go in the colony, the Rev. Samuel Leigh arrived in Sydney by the express appointment of the British Wesleyan Conference. His advent heralded the end of the virtual Anglican monopoly, but Anglican provision alone may be considered for a little longer. Officialdom and the Church of England were loth to admit the right of non-Anglicans to take Englishmen from the fold of the Established Church, and Anglican provision is a convenient gauge for assessing the colonial situation. The number of persons in the colony to every Anglican clergyman in various years, shown in the accompanying table, reveals that, with temporary checks, the proportion of people to parson in New South Wales had been worsening since the year of foundation.

New South Wales¹

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Persons to each Anglican Clergyman</u>
1788	1,000
1799	2,000
1800	4,000
1810	2,600
1817	3,400
1821	4,250
1825	3,100
1830	3,000
1836	4,500

But comparison with earlier years in the colony is not the most meaningful standard by which to judge the situation in the mid-thirties. A majority of the people in the colony (and an even larger proportion in Van Diemen's Land) had come

¹Population figures based on charts prepared by F.K. Crowley, in C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 1788-1850, Sydney 1958, p.405. The number of clergy to 1830 taken from W.W. Burton, The State of Religion and Education in New South Wales, London 1840, pp.1-11, and E.C. Rowland, A Century of the English Church in New South Wales, Sydney 1948, pp.220-1. For the number in 1836 (seventeen) see Appendix A.

from England, and a crucial standard for comparison is the number of pastors provided there by the Established Church. In England and Wales there were about 10,500 clergymen of the Church of England in 1836, and the total population was about fourteen and a half million - a parson for every fourteen hundred people.¹ According to unthinking arithmetic, the English and Welsh were very much better served by the Church of England than were the New South Welshmen.

This does not reveal the whole truth. The number of men in Holy Orders is one thing; where they were and whom they served is quite another. How well they served the great towns of England and Wales is as important as their numbers, for, in the thirties, English convicts and free migrants were often coming directly from the cities, or were avoiding going to live in them. Convicts formed thirty-six per cent of the New South Wales population in 1836, and a majority of them had been townsmen at home.² Also, although the free migrants of the thirties included a very high percentage of country workers,³ they were people who had faced a choice between migration overseas and migration to the cities of England: they were not remaining in rural England. Between 1821 and 1831 the population of England and Wales as a whole increased by sixteen per cent; but the population of London increased by twenty per cent, Manchester grew by forty-seven, Liverpool by forty-four, Birmingham by thirty-six, Nottingham by twenty-five, Newcastle by twenty-three

¹The population figure is a rough average of the figures in 1831 and 1841 censuses (Common Papers, 1831, xviii, 1 and 1841, Session 2, ii, 277). The number of clergy is again a fairly rough calculation from the Abstracts of the Numbers and Classes of Clergy for 1835 and 1838 (ibid., 1837, xli, 217, and 1840, xxix, 55).

²C.M.H. Clark, 'The Origins of the Convicts Transported to Eastern Australia, 1787-1852', Historical Studies, Vol. 7, Nos. 26 and 27, esp. p.130; L.L. Robson, 'The Origin and Character of the Convicts Transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 1787-1852', pp.26, 36 and Ch. 11 (Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1963).

³R.B. Madgwick, Immigration into Eastern Australia, 1788-1851, London 1937, p.243.

and so on.¹ These cities of the new industrial era were drawing the majority of the people into them, and are the key places for comparison with colonial conditions.

In these great towns the masses, by and large, were in little contact with the Church of England, and the immigrants from the country were 'dumped down in neglected heaps...wholly uncared for by Church or State'.² A contemporary writer dismissed even non-residency of parsons in rural areas as the real cause of Anglicanism ineffectiveness. He added:

...its great inefficiency as a national establishment arises from other causes - from the enormous population of the towns, where the minister of the parish is generally resident, but utterly incapable of doing the work which he is nominally set to perform.³

Sheffield, with a population of over 60,000 in 1821, was served by eight clergymen - one to 7,500 people.⁴ Before reform in 1844, Leeds had the clergy of only three churches responsible for the pastoral care of 150,000 people.⁵ An average of ten parishes in South Staffordshire in 1841 gave one clergyman resident and endowed for every 7,238 inhabitants; another parish of over 11,000 inhabitants had no resident clergyman at the time of the investigation.⁶ In 1836 London had nine parishes with an average of 12,200 persons per clergyman, four parishes with 15,000 and twenty-one parishes with 16,000.⁷

¹Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain, 1801-1831, pp.6, 13, Commons Papers, 1831, xviii, 1.

²G.M. Trevelyan, English Social History, London 1948, pp.479, 481.

³Thomas Arnold, Principles of Church Reform, 1833 (1962 edn., edited with an introduction by M.J. Jackson and J. Rogan, p.139).

⁴E.R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City, London 1957, pp.70-1.

⁵J.L. & B. Hammond, The Age of the Chartists, London 1930, p.229. Eighteen of the twenty-one churches were served by perpetual curates without pastoral responsibility.

⁶Midland Mining Commission, First Report, Commons Papers, 1843, xiii, p.133.

⁷Second Report, Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Commissioners, p.6, ibid., 1836 xxxvi, 1.

The Perpetual Curate of an industrial town was understating the case when he said, 'It is quite impossible a clergyman in these populous parishes can properly know his people.'¹ The chances of a clergyman effectively reaching his ten thousand parishioners in an English city were no greater than those of ministering to four and a half thousand in Australian towns or bush. The intending migrant from the English upper or middle classes, well served by clergymen at home, might indeed ask himself whether he could 'take that step without probable spiritual loss'.² But the working-man from the town, or the rural labourer forced to leave the country areas, was likely to be as well, or better, off in New South Wales.

In Van Diemen's Land (founded in 1804) the lower-class colonist was as likely to enjoy the ministrations of an Anglican clergyman, for the island colony was in much the same situation as the mainland. From four hundred and thirty-three people served by one clergyman (Robert Knopwood) in 1804, the population had grown to 43,895 in 1836. With nine Anglican ministers in their midst at the beginning of the year,³ they were about 4,900 to one, and therefore not badly off compared with the poorer townsmen in England.

Although English countrymen were increasingly well-served by the Established Church in the thirties and forties, they were not necessarily well cared for by the clergy. Pluralism and non-residency were still too common. One who lived in the cathedral city of the Norwich Diocese in 1837 could see from his windows nine parishes, of which only one contained a resident clergyman.⁴ The 6,120 absentee parsons (out of 10,533)

¹Ibid., 1843, xiii, p.171.

²W. Pridden, Australia..., London 1843, p.362.

³Arthur to Glenelg, 26 January 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 488.

⁴S.C. Carpenter, Church and People, 1789-1889, 3 vols. London 1959, p.55.

in 1827,¹ had fallen off to just over 4,000 in 1838,² but this still left a lot of country people to the mercies of the weather - which decided whether the pluralist parson would gallop from parish to parish to give an abbreviated service, or not.³

The rural picture is not to be seen in too dark colours. Henry Mayhew, the investigator of the London slum-folk in the forties, found that, among Protestants, the former countrymen went to church most frequently; they had been 'reared in the habit of church-going' and sometimes persisted, though there were many exceptions.⁴ Parliamentary commissioners reporting on rural life in the early forties, also came to some favourable conclusions on religious observance and on the attention paid by the clergy to the labouring classes. Alfred Austin (reporting on Wilts, Dorset and Somerset) found that there was 'the most satisfactory evidence of a great change in this respect having taken place in late years'.⁵ The great change implied also a great neglect, and migrants from rural areas, though much more likely to have been cared for by an Anglican parson than the townsmen, were quite likely to have come from parishes where the incumbents were neglectful.

In Australia a most serious lack was the absence of an Anglican bishop until the first half-century of settlement was almost completed. Not until June 1836, when William Grant Broughton (formerly Archdeacon) returned to Sydney as Bishop of Australia, could confirmation, ordination and consecration

¹J.R.H. Moorman, A History of the Church in England, London 1958, p. 334.

²J.L. and B. Hammond, op. cit., p.220.

³E. Halevy, History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, 6 vols, 1961, I, p.398.

⁴Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 3 vols London n.d. (and an Extra Volume, 1862) II, p.333. He adds, 'Among London-bred labourers such habits are rarely formed.'

⁵Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, p.41, Commons Papers, 1843, xii, 1.

be properly performed as episcopal functions.¹ Meanwhile two generations had grown up, and a majority of the 54,621 Protestants in New South Wales were nominally Anglicans.² Van Diemen's Land continued within Broughton's diocese until 1843 before acquiring its own bishop. From this important aspect, devout Anglicans in the colonies were much worse off than their counterparts in England. But, on the whole, colonials with convict or poor free-migrant origin were unlikely to be more neglected by the Church of England clergy in Australia than they would have been in England.

As well as ministers, the devout need churches and chapels. Here also the situation in the British Isles is relevant in assessing the provision made in eastern Australia. Again the provision of Anglican churches only may be examined first, since the early nineteenth century Anglicans considered it their responsibility to provide church accommodation for the entire population.

Valiant attempts to put the theory into practice failed in England. From 1818 a parliamentary Church Building Commission worked on a generous grant to provide more churches,³ but in 1836 there was still a serious lack of church accommodation in the great towns. It was calculated that provision should be allowed for one third of the whole population, but in thirty-four London Parishes (population: 1,137,000) only eleven per cent, could be in church at any one time. In thirty-eight Lancashire parishes (population: 380,000) church-room varied from about

¹ Cf. Letters Patent constituting the Episcopal See of Australia (in R.A. Giles, Constitutional History of the Australian Church, London 1929, p.219ff), and A.P. Elkin, The Diocese of Newcastle, Sydney 1955, pp.81-2.

² Abstracts of the Census taken in the month of September, 1836. It only distinguished between Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews and Pagans.

³ Report of Commissioners for building Additional Churches in Populous Parishes, p.16ff, Commons Papers, 1821, x, 1; and Sixteenth Report (of the same), ibid., 1836, xxxvi, 171. The work of the Church Building Commission, 1818-1856, has been well discussed in M.H. Port, Six Hundred New Churches, London 1961.

seventeen to four per cent. Twenty similarly large parishes in the Diocese of York could accommodate from seventeen to three per cent. In the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry there were sixteen such parishes in which between seventeen and seven per cent could be accommodated.¹ Seven years later, a Midland mining commissioner furnished a report of eleven South Staffordshire parishes (population approaching 200,000) whose churches accommodated from twenty-three to eleven per cent. He added that a scarcity of any kind was commonly described by saying that the things were 'as few as parish churches'.²

In spite of the picture of England as a land in which every village has its spire, churches in rural England had not been properly maintained in many places. William Cobbett spoke of the villages each having its church - where it had 'not been suffered to tumble down'.³ Elie Halevy vividly described the ruin: 'In the dilapidated churches, no better than empty barns, the children of the village played their marbles, the beadles hatched out their chickens.'⁴ The village and the religious idyll did not always go together.

In the Australian colonies to which these townsmen and countrymen came, Anglican church-building started slowly. It was ten years before the foundation stones were laid for the first permanent buildings on the mainland (at Parramatta and St Philip's, Sydney), and the foundation stone of St David's, Hobart, was not laid until 1817. But by the thirties considerable leeway had been made up. Indeed Van Diemen's Land was perhaps better provided with churches than the great towns of England. In 1835 its twelve Anglican churches could accommodate about fourteen per cent of the population.⁵ New South Wales

¹ Second Report, Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Commissioners, pp.6-7, Commons Papers, 1836, xxxvi, 1.

² First Report (South Staffordshire), Midland Mining Commission, ibid., 1834, xii, pp.133, 127.

³ William Cobbett, Legacy to Parsons [1835], London 1947, p.91.

⁴ E. Halevy, op. cit., I, p.398.

⁵ Statistical Returns of V.D.L., 1824-1835, Hobart 1836, Table 24.

was not so well provided. Possibly five thousand persons could be seated in its nine Anglican churches in 1835, and perhaps another 1,000 in the other 'eight chapels, or school houses used as such'.¹ It had accommodation, that is, for about eight per cent of the total population. Judged by the Anglican ideal of having sufficient churches to seat one third of the population at any one time, Anglican church provision in both England and the Australian colonies was hopelessly inadequate. But at least the colonists were no worse off than many of them would have been at home.

'Home' for a small minority of the colonists was not England, of course, but Scotland; and for a larger minority (about twenty-seven per cent in New South Wales in 1836) it was Ireland. In the colonies Scottish Presbyterians were badly served, comparatively and absolutely, in the first thirty-odd years. A Presbyterian congregation was formed in New South Wales in 1802, and its chapel - Ebenezer, at Portland Head - was built in 1809, the first to be built by voluntary subscription in New South Wales; but Presbyterian ministers did not arrive in the colonies until 1823, the Rev. Archibald McArthur coming to Hobart in January, and the Rev. John Dunmore Lang to Sydney in May. However, the situation had very much improved by the thirties, for in 1836 there were five ministers in New South Wales and five in Van Diemen's Land.² Scots Church, Sydney, could seat 1,100 people, and the colony had other smaller chapels, while about two thousand persons could find room in the several churches in Tasmania.³ Since, in 1836, there would

¹W.G. Broughton, A Charge delivered to the Clergy..., Sydney 1841, App. A, gives the number of churches. Sittings estimated by use of the official Colony of N.S.W. for the Year 1828, pp.152-3. Cf. 6,750 sittings in 1839 - W.W. Burton, op. cit., Appendix xii; by the end of 1839, four consecrated churches had been added - Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia (2 vols., in the Diocesan Registry, Sydney), I, pp.26, 69, 111, 124).

²See Appendices A and B.

³The Statistical Returns cited above give two churches in 1835, seating 1,306. J. Heyer, The Presbyterian Pioneers of Van Diemen's Land, Hobart, 1935, pp.93, 102, 119, 113, lists three churches in 1835, with a fourth opened in 1836.

have been at most seven thousand Presbyterians on the mainland and two and a half thousand in the island colony, the situation had very much improved.¹ To each minister there were something like fourteen hundred Presbyterians in the one colony, and five hundred in the other. Probably from a quarter to a third could be accommodated in New South Wales, and four-fifths in Van Diemen's Land. This compared very well with religious provision for Anglicans in the colonies, and not badly with Scotland itself.

There is no reason to suspect that the kirks in the smaller towns and countryside of Scotland were ever neglected, or that their ministers were careless, and provision was often reasonably adequate even in the cities. In the District of Edinburgh there was one parish minister of the Church of Scotland for every 5,600 inhabitants, or one for about every 2,500 persons belonging to the Establishment. Of the whole Edinburgh population, twenty-two per cent could be accommodated by the Church of Scotland - or virtually forty per cent of its adherents. All the denominations together could provide for forty-eight per cent of the total population of the city.² The Scots who came to Australia were used to a considerable amount of provision by the Churches. Those who came to live in isolated areas in Australia were very much denied this;³ but in the main centres of population, they were, by the thirties, quite well served.

In the eyes of most Irish migrants, of course, there was no religious provision at all unless it was provided by the Catholic Church. At home they were used to neglect by the

¹The 1836 N.S.W. census did not give the number of Presbyterians, but they were roughly ten per cent of the population in 1841; there were 77,000 persons in N.S.W. in 1836. There were 2,551 Presbyterians among the free inhabitants of V.D.L. in 1838 - Return of the Free Inhabitants of V.D.L., Government Notices, 1838, pp.144-6. Very few of the convicts would have been Presbyterian.

²First Report of the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, pp.3-5, 24-5, Commons Papers, 1837, xxi, 19.

³Cf. Margaret Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, Melbourne, 1961, pp.112-3.

United Church of England and Ireland,¹ and were glad of it - resenting only the payment of tithes for the services they did not want and were seldom offered. As the century went on, however, they were becoming used to a Catholic priesthood (trained at Maynooth College, outside Dublin) closer than ever to them in sympathies and habits of living,² and also to much more adequate buildings for worship.

The early nineteenth century was an age of rehabilitation for Irish catholicism, when by the long-sustained self-sacrifice of a poor community much was done to repair the material losses of the previous three centuries. In the forty-odd years between the union and the famine all over Ireland 'newly built slated chapels' replaced the low thatched barns or even 'mass rocks' and 'mass gardens' of the penal era.³

In England, where Irish migrants significantly swelled the number of the poor in the cities, they remained strikingly faithful to their religion.⁴ After Catholic emancipation in 1829 they were increasingly served by their Church - a devoted priesthood for a devoted people. One contemporary observer described the change in the village of Staley Bridge, near Manchester. It had changed in forty years from a village of 1,000 people to a market town of 15,000. Some 4,000 of these were Irish who had their own chapel, two priests and a congregation of over 2,000 persons⁵ - a proportion of worshippers to

¹'At the beginning of the nineteenth century 60 per cent of the benefices lacked glebe houses and 18 per cent were even unprovided with churches' - R.B. McDowell, Public Opinion and Government Policy in Ireland, 1801-1846, London 1952, p.19.

²J.A. Reynolds, The Catholic Emancipation Crisis in Ireland, 1823-29, Newhaven 1954, pp.45-6, 51-2.

³R.B. McDowell, op. cit., p.31.

⁴The Irish rubbish-carters, as well as the country-bred, in London went most frequently to church - Mayhew, loc. cit. See also ibid., I, pp.111-2, 514ff. This did not mean that there was not much ignorance, profligacy and vagrancy among them; see ibid., III, pp.385, 405, 416; Appendix to Second Report of Commissioners, Trades and Manufactures, p.509, Commons Papers, 1843, xiv, 1.

⁵Henry Ashworth to Edwin Chadwick, 13 Feb. 1835, Commons Papers, 1843, xlv, p.121.

inhabitants which, compared with the non-attendance of English Protestant workers, heavily underlines the persistence of the habit of worship among the Irish Catholics. In England as a whole, the number of Catholic chapels increased from three hundred and forty-six in 1824 to five hundred and seventy-four in 1851 (seating 186, 111); and the number of priests increased from five hundred and fifty-seven to eight hundred and seventy-five between 1841 and 1853.¹ It was nowhere easy to be an Irish Catholic, but the means of grace were usually sought for, and usually found.

In Australia, at first, the Catholics' situation was grim. Anglicans had lacked a bishop, but, with the exception of Dixon's single year of chaplaincy, Catholics lacked even an official chaplain until 1820. Even the restricted, unofficial activities of such priests as Dixon had covered only about eight of the first thirty-two years. Priests had fruitlessly volunteered to work in New South Wales without pay,² and Father Jeremiah O'Flynn actually arrived in the colony in 1817, only to be deported by Macquarie in 1818 because he did not have formal authority from the British Government,³ although the Catholic population had always been from one quarter to one third of the total. Meanwhile, Catholic convicts were sometimes compelled to attend the detested Church of England services.

Nevertheless Catholic history is not all a tale of penalties. It was something for Australian Catholics to have two priests - the Rev. John Joseph Therry and the Rev. Philip Conolly - on the Government pay-roll in 1820, nine years before Catholic emancipation in England, and ten years before formal

¹T.E. May, The Constitutional History of England, 3 vols. London 1882, III, p.223.

²Thomas Walshe to Sydney (c.1787), H.R.N.S.W., I, Pt. 2, pp.119-20.

³See J.G. Murtagh, Australia. The Catholic Chapter, Sydney 1959, p.11ff. The O'Flynn episode resulted in the subsequent provision for Australian Catholics.

emancipation was proclaimed in New South Wales.¹ Final proof that the worst days were really over was given in 1835 when the Rt Rev. John Bede Polding arrived as bishop (ten months before the Anglican bishop reached Sydney, if that was any consolation). In 1836 there were the bishop, a vicar-general and five priests in New South Wales, and two priests in Van Diemen's Land.² They were all paid by the Government, and some Government aid had been given towards Catholic churches,³ of which there were five in New South Wales in 1836, providing a total accommodation for 3,650 persons, with another (to hold 1,000 worshippers) in the course of slow erection.⁴ This was not at all adequate for the Catholics, who numbered nearly 22,000. Even more hopeless was the one dilapidated church, seating two hundred, in Van Diemen's Land, where there were two thousand Catholics; the prospect of one other chapel in 1836 was not very helpful.⁵ But the situation had vastly improved, and showed every sign that it would continue to do so.

Other denominations were also firmly established by 1836. Of these, the principal was the Wesleyan Methodist Society, with four ministers in New South Wales and four in the southern colony.⁶ The number of their chapels was given as ten in New South Wales and five in the sister colony, though some of these erections must have been small and flimsy.⁷ The Independent (or Congregational) and Baptist Churches, and the Society of Friends (Quakers), had very restricted early careers.

¹The proclamation was dated 18 Jan. 1830 - Public Statutes of New South Wales, 1824-1837, p.174.

²See Appendices A and B.

³See, e.g., V. & P., N.S.W., 1832, for £500 being voted (in March).

⁴Polding's return, quoted in P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church in Australasia, Sydney n.d. [1894], p.190. An 1837 return shows that the sixth was still unfinished.

⁵Statistical Returns, previously cited, No. 24; Arthur to Glenelg, 26 Jan. 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 486.

⁶See Appendices A and B.

⁷Report of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society, London 1836, pp.16-19, cf. N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 28 Dec. 1835, Q. XII.

Independency came to the colonies early through the visits and, in some cases, the settling of L.M.S. missionaries.¹ William Pascoe Crook was in the colony in 1836, apparently insisting on the validity of his ordination, but described only as 'deacon' in a contemporary almanac.² The Quakers, Backhouse and Walker, made a prolonged tour of the colonies between 1832 and 1837, and had an abiding influence.³ But most of this work was sporadic, and permanent congregations were slow to form and even slower to expand.⁴ In 1836, when Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics and Wesleyans were expanding rapidly, there was only one Baptist minister in each colony; one Independent in New South Wales; three Independents in Van Diemen's Land; and a small representation of Friends in both places.⁵ Each of these minor sects was also making some contribution to the colonies' chapel accommodation.

It was, of course, this total religious provision, not the Anglican provision, which mattered most. The colonists in New South Wales were served by thirty-five ordained ministers of religion in the month of the census in 1836,⁶ thus making a ratio of about 2,200 people to each pastor. With twenty-three clergymen of all denominations,⁷ Van Diemen's Land had a smaller ratio of 1,900 to one. In this regard the colonies did not

¹ See J. King, Ten Decades, The Australian Centenary Story of the London Missionary Society, London n.d. (c.1895); or, G.L. Lockley, 'An Estimate of the Contribution made in New South Wales by Missionaries of the L.M.S. arriving there between 1798 and 1825', (M.A. thesis, Sydney, 1949).

² Tegg's, 1837, p.119.

³ See James Backhouse, A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies, London 1843.

⁴ For a particular Baptist's disgust at the failure of Hobart to secure a minister (until 1843), and at the spread of the Wesleyans and Catholics, see Twenty Three Unpublished Letters of Francis Smither Edgar...1834-1852, Tasmanian Collection (T.S.L.).

⁵ See Appendices A and B.

⁶ See Appendix A.

⁷ See Appendix B.

compare well with England and Wales, where there were probably well under one thousand people to each Christian minister, when all denominations are considered.¹

Yet these are, once more, mere averages and fallible guides. In them, typical colonial hard work is not contrasted with surviving English sinecurism, and the well served classes (middle, upper and rural) are undistinguished from the largely neglected town workers. Recollection of the twenty-one worst London parishes vividly points the moral. In those parishes lived three times as many people as lived in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land; but the Anglican clergy serving those Londoners were fewer than those in eastern Australia by twenty-five per cent. There were twenty-one Anglican ministers for 336,000 Londoners (or one to sixteen thousand), and there were twenty-seven Anglican ministers for 121,000 colonials (or one to 4,500). Nor did Catholic priest or Dissenting minister radically alter the position. Naturally the Catholics who flooded into the English cities found little ready-made provision for them; more unexpectedly, the 'Protestants' already there were often as little connected with Dissent as with the Establishment. Among Protestant Londoners, Henry Mayhew found that half of the women street-sellers who attended Dissenting places of worship went to Methodist chapels, but the number who went to any were only a tiny minority.² In other difficult areas the Methodists were also active - the labours of the Primitive Methodists on the Oldham coal fields are one example³ - but the Methodists were not reaching many of the workers. There were 'perhaps 800,000

¹I am indebted to Methodist, Baptist and Congregational officials in England for valiant efforts to provide estimates of the number of their ministers in 1836. There were about 1,200 Congregationalists, 900 Baptists and 1,500 Methodists (of all varieties). There were perhaps 800 Presbyterians. The question is difficult, since records are often non-existent. I have made no attempt to secure the number of ministers of other denominations.

²H. Mayhew, op. cit., I, pp.514-5.

³First Report, Mines and Manufactures, p.127, Commons Papers, 1842, xv, 1.

people attending Methodist meetings in Great Britain in 1821, or less than six per cent of the population; and the Methodists were already tending to become middle class'.¹ The Baptists found new life in the first part of the nineteenth century, and were not ineffective in some places among the workers.² But this did not mean a large proportion of the working classes. The truth about Dissenters as a whole was revealed by the proud claim of one of their contemporary historians that they generally occupied the 'middle station in society'.³

The conclusion drawn earlier from the study of exclusively Anglican figures is, essentially, the conclusion to be drawn also from a consideration of all denominations. With the exception of the Catholics (who sought out their priests, so that a hundred Catholics to five Protestants went to church, according to Mayhew),⁴ workers bred in, or migrated to, the towns were not much touched by the Christian ministry. Those of this class who found themselves in eastern Australia stood a much better chance there of finding themselves confronted by a minister.

In the matter of church-room, Dissent added greatly to the total accommodation in England. There was truth as well as exaggeration in a complaint made in 1805 that Methodists and Dissenters were building 'on every corner'.⁵ By 1812 there were more Dissenting places of worship than Anglican churches in

¹K.S. Inglis, 'Churches and Working Classes in Nineteenth Century England', Historical Studies, Vol. 8, No. 29, p.45. Extremely relevant to the whole of this discussion is the same author's Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England, London 1963, pp.9-20.

²A.C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists, London 1956, pp.157, 187.

³J. Bennett, History of the Dissenters, 1808-1838, London 1839, p.240, quoted in R.G. Cowherd, The Politics of English Dissent, London 1959, p.15.

⁴H. Mayhew, loc. cit.

⁵M. Atkinson to S. Marsden, 13 July 1805, Marsden Papers, I, p.34 (ML).

parishes of one thousand and more persons.¹ Dissenting chapels were often smaller than the Anglican churches, but in many places the Dissenters provided greater total sittings than the Church of England. In 1839, Anglican sittings in Leeds were 13,235 while the accommodation in non-Anglican chapels was 28,216.² Sheffield Anglicans in 1841 could accommodate 15,000 compared with the Dissenting figure of 25,000.³ The Anglicans had the advantage of drawing on large state grants for church building in these years,⁴ but, in spite of this, they could only offer a grand total of five million sittings compared with four and a half million in Dissenters' chapels by the middle of the century.⁵

The total church and chapel building was, nevertheless, an impressive achievement. Fifty-eight per cent of the population of England and Wales (approaching nine million) could be accommodated in all places of worship in 1801. By 1851, although the population had nearly doubled, being almost eighteen million, fifty-seven per cent could still be accommodated.⁶ Even in the great towns the total provision was very high. To find only 2,634 Anglican sittings in three working-class wards of Leeds, containing 43,000 people in 1839, points to a serious situation; but add the 11,464 chapel sittings and one third - the proportion aimed at by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners - could be

¹Abstract of Number of Churches and Dissenting Places of Worship, Commons Papers, 1812, x, 155 (Anglican, 2,533; Dissenting, 3,438).

²J.L. and B. Hammond, op. cit., p.230 n. 1. The Hammonds suggest that Dissent had too many chapels after 1830, not from the aspect of providing for the poor (who seldom used them), but from the point of view of keeping up the interest payments (ibid., p.244 n. 4).

³E.R. Wickham, op. cit., pp.80-1.

⁴For the dates of erection of, and accommodation in, the 'Commissioners' Churches', see M.H. Port, op. cit., pp.131-73.

⁵Religious Worship, England and Wales, Commons Papers, 1852-3, lxxxix, cxxxi.

⁶Ibid.

accommodated.¹ Again, the 40,000 accommodated in the churches and the chapels of Sheffield in 1841 were very nearly one third of the total population.² In 1846, after considerable church building, London was reported to have 500,000 seats available for its two million inhabitants. The Bishop of London considered this an over-estimate,³ but sheer shortage of room could not have been the largest problem faced by those who wanted to see the metropolis church-going.

It is not easy to explain this provision away, although there are qualifying factors. One large Anglican church was not as effective as several smaller, dispersed chapels might have been. Seats for the poor were usually hard, draughty and inconvenient in the large churches.⁴ Folk were kept away from the churches of all Protestant denominations by their poor clothes and the cold stares of the more affluent.⁵ It was far from easy for the poor to find the time to go to worship.⁶ It is altogether doubtful whether the most suitable accommodation was provided in the most suitable positions, and whether the poor were either expected or wanted in numerous churches. Yet, had the town masses generally wanted to go to church, they could scarcely have complained that it was impossible to find accommodation of a sort, however justly they may have said that they did not want to be put in some 'queer place as if they had a fever'.⁷

¹J.L. and B. Hammond, loc. cit.

²E.R. Wickham, loc. cit.

³Alfred Blomfield, op. cit., I, p.248.

⁴See, e.g., evidence of the Rev. Henry Farish, Sheffield, Appendix to Second Report.... Trades and Manufactures, p.471, Commons Papers, 1843, xiv, 1.

⁵See, e.g., First Report, Midland Mining Commission, p.193, ibid., 1843, xiii, 1 (Wesleyan); H. Mayhew, loc. cit. (Anglican); D. Williams, The Rebecca Riots..., Cardiff 1955, p.102 (Wales).

⁶H. Mayhew, op. cit., I, p.41, III, p.354; First Report.... Mines and Manufactures, Commons Papers, 1842, xv, 118, 135, 212-3.

⁷H. Mayhew, op. cit., I, p.514.

THE NINETEEN COUNTIES OF N.S.W.

POPULATION, CLERGYMEN AND CHURCHES, 1836

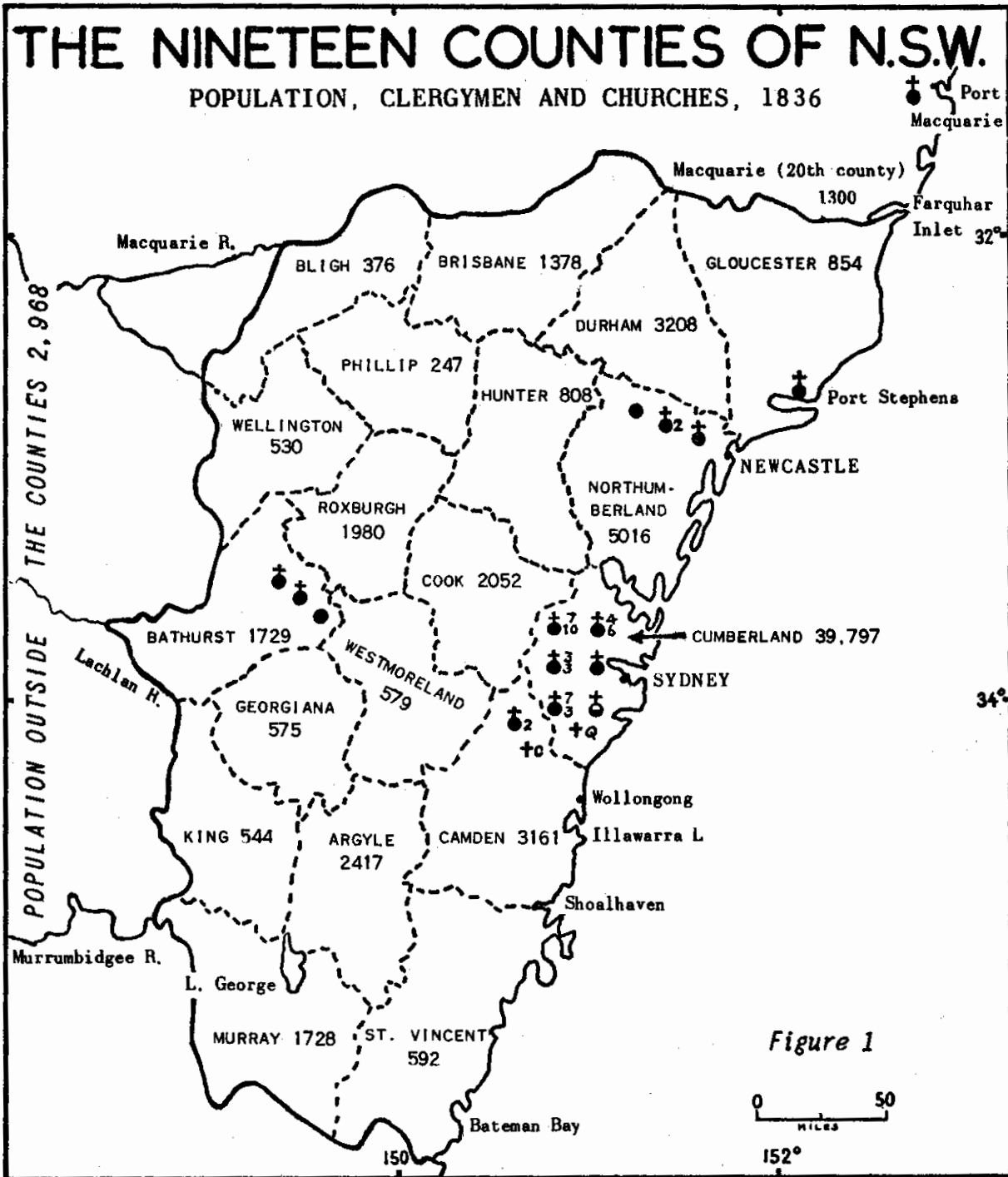


Figure 1

0 50
MILES

152°

○ Clergyman (no chapel)

⚪ 1 clergyman & 1 church or chapel

⚪⚪⚪ 4 clergymen & 3 churches or chapels, etc.

● Anglican

● Catholic

● Presbyterian

● Wesleyan

● Independent

○ Baptist

+Q Quaker chapel

+C Catholic chapel

Figure after each county name is population in that county.

It was perhaps in the matter of church-room that the eastern Australian colonies emerged worst in a comparison with England. Van Diemen's Land was the better provided. Government figures - probably accurate for the Anglican Church, but perhaps under-estimating Dissenting provision - gave a total of 10,450 sittings in 1836; there was room, that is, for almost twenty-four per cent of the population.¹ New South Wales was considerably behind its sister colony. Accommodation in Anglican churches in 1836 was in the realm of 6,000 and there were something like 7,000 sittings in non-Anglican places of worship.² This meant that only about seventeen per cent of New South Welshmen were provided for by all denominations. Clearly the Australian colonies were well behind England, and even many large towns in England, in providing church-room.

There is, however, an important qualification to be made. The number of churches does not fairly indicate the real number of gatherings for worship in the colonies. In Figure 1 only the consecrated Anglican churches (and a church at Port Stephens)³ are included. But there were many other regular centres. Thomas Hassall, for instance, when stationed at Narallen, held services more or less regularly at Heber Chapel, Denbigh, at Cabramatta 'in a miserable log building, greatly infested with vermin, formerly used as a School-house', at Camden in the Macarthurs' school, at Vermont on a house verandah, at Glenderuel in a large dairy, at Mulgoa Forest in a private home, at Stonequarry in the courthouse, and at Oakes in a log and bark hut.⁴ This was the case with all denominations, although only their properly constructed church

¹Statistical Returns of Van Diemen's Land, 1824-1839, No. 24.

²For Anglican accommodation, see earlier discussion. Wesleyan records give measurements rather than sittings. Catholic churches and the Scots Church, Sydney, could seat 4,750 between them; and, presumably, the other Protestant chapels - at least 15, of all sorts and conditions - could seat another 2,250 between them.

³Erected by the Australian Agricultural Company; not included in the list of consecrated churches in W.G. Broughton's 1841 Charge, Appendix A.

⁴W.W. Burton, op. cit., pp.180-2.

buildings have been taken into account above.¹

The Hassall-type preaching places may have been to the advantage of the poorer classes who came to the colonies, for clothes must have mattered less in such surroundings. The lower classes had other advantages over their counterparts in the English cities. They could usually earn more and, if they wanted to, dress better in the colonies, thus finding it less humiliating to go (again, if they wanted to) to church. There was more possibility of a clergyman spending a night in a shepherd's hut than in a room in a London tenement. Because of the smaller population, and the responsibility of authorities and employers for convicts, ticket-of-leave men and workers in general, there was a greater chance of the lower orders knowing, and even being known by, a clergyman. There was not as much church-room, even for these people, in the colonies; but, in practice, they were no further from a church in the Australian bush than the typical London workers were from St Paul's.

Certainly the Irish Catholic migrants, and the English and Scottish migrants from the upper, middle or rural classes, had less chance of finding adequate church accommodation and ministerial attention in the colonies. Their church and chapel associations could be fairly well (or very well) maintained in the towns and closer settled areas, but they were shattered in the squatting districts. There were sufficient people in such a situation to make the deficiency in religious provision serious, especially since these were the people who had, in Britain, been the church-goers. But they were far from forming the whole number of colonists.

On the contrary, the poorer people from industrialized, urban England were present in very large numbers. Between thirty and forty per cent of the people in both colonies were

¹Hence only seven Wesleyan chapels have been shown for Cumberland County in Figure 1. Ten were claimed in Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, 1836, pp.16-17, but only four were listed in Tegg's Almanac, 1837, p.118. A compromise figure was adopted because some of the ten must have been far too crude to be properly compared with Anglican churches.

convicts in 1836 and, as such, came mainly from the towns of the homeland. Of the free migrants in the 'thirties, a minority, but a substantial one, was also from the towns, and many were assisted migrants. Whether these people remained in the more populous districts in the colonies (as most of them did), or moved out to the sheep and cattle stations, they were not worse off for religious provision than a majority of the English townsmen. If this is only to say that religious provision was very scanty in the colonies, at least it is not to say that migrants necessarily came to worse provision in Australia. Indeed, a great many eastern Australians must have found, gladly or indifferently, that the means of grace were more readily available in the colonies than at home.

The Colonial Churches' view of the problem

Colonial churchmen were depressed by their inadequate means for meeting the spiritual needs of the colonists. They did exaggerate the difference between religious provision in Australia and in England, looking at the latter with too favourable eyes, so that W.G. Broughton declared that few in England (if they had the proper disposition) could not 'enjoy the benefit of religious instruction and communion' whereas it was 'totally different' in the colonies.¹ This was quite unrealistic, yet Broughton was right in the sense that many migrants did come to very different and totally inadequate church provision, and many others came from religious neglect to equal religious neglect. Zealous Australian churchmen, clerical and lay, therefore raised their voices in strong demand that the situation be remedied.

That staunch Anglican, Judge Burton, in his expose of colonial religion, indignantly reported that the number of Anglican clergymen in New South Wales was the same early in 1837 as it had been in 1829, while the population had doubled.

¹Report from Committee on Immigration, p.16, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

He also added a point easily overlooked: the effects of strain and age on some of these clergy made the Church of England even weaker than it had been in 1829.¹

Between 1834 and 1836, Archdeacon Broughton was in England - on half salary and with no expenses paid - trying to get something done about 'extended and populous districts devoid of Churches, devoid of Clergymen, devoid of Schools'.² The nineteen counties, in theory marking the limits of settlement in New South Wales, contained some 33,000 square miles, being greater in area than Ireland (and its lakes, the Surveyor-General had added!).³ In seventeen of these counties, Broughton reported, there were only five Anglican clergymen; but scattered over the wide half-tamed area were at least thirteen thousand people (a conservative figure, as a study of Figure 1 will show). Five additional chaplains were wanted in these counties, and another four were urgently required for other parts. Sydney, for instance, had only two ministers (apart from Broughton) for more than twelve thousand Protestants, and another was needed.⁴ At Cook's River, as a second instance, a congregation of three hundred might be gathered, but there was 'a total absence of public worship' for want of a parson and a church. This situation was leading to a 'visible decline of Religious Principle' and to 'vice and irreligion'.⁵

So Broughton pleaded his case and returned to the colony. He returned a bishop, but he returned alone. Not a single

¹W.W. Burton, op. cit., p.64. Cf. Broughton to Coleridge, 19 Oct. 1837, B.P.

²W.G. Broughton, A Charge delivered to the Clergy of New South Wales...February 1834, Sydney 1834, p.20.

³Memo. by T.L. Mitchell, 29 April 1828, H.R.A., xiv, p.178.

⁴Cf. William Yate, To the Parishioners of St. James' Church, Sydney, Sydney 1836, p.3, where the printed letter is justified on the grounds that the extent of the parish made a personal visit to all impossible.

⁵Memorial by S.P.C.K., and Schedule annexed [1835], H.R.A., xviii, pp.212-3.

chaplain came out with him.¹ New South Wales held little attraction for the clergy. By letter, Samuel Marsden had also been making appeals for clergy;² to him the Rev. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge University, wrote:

I have really done all I could to get Chaplains for you; but in vain.... We have a vast increase of pious gowns-men; but to send them before they have taken their B.A. Degree is impossible, on account of the Bishops; and, after that, on their own account. We learn here a love of ease and affluence; neither of which are likely to be got by a voyage to Botany Bay.³

It was a disappointed bishop, therefore, who set about his duties on his return. He visited Bathurst in 1836, finding deep pleasure in a consecration and confirmation there, but saddened by his inability to go on to 'the wide districts to the west and north' where, he feared, the wandering population would soon become 'fixed in hopeless unacquaintance with the blessed truths and expectations of the Christian faith'.⁴ He looked further: far beyond Wellington, in all the country of Mudgee and Molong, on the Liverpool Plains and, farther still, along the Murrumbidgee and over the extended plains of Maneroo. Here were many cattle stations and those who worked them. What of these?

¹The Rev. W.M. Cowper (son of a N.S.W. clergyman of long standing) had come out in March 1836, as a chaplain to the A.A. Company. For Broughton's odd claim that he was unable to accept Cowper's offer to put himself at his disposal, see W.M. Cowper, Autobiography and Reminiscences, Sydney 1902, pp.105-6.

²E.g., Marsden to D. Coates, 23 Feb. 1836, B.T. Miss. Box 54, pp.1878-9.

³C. Simeon to S. Marsden, 10 Nov. 1835, Marsden Papers, I, p.549 (ML). Colonial clergy did not necessarily suffer financially - as Marsden's detractors would have been quick to point out. Broughton pointed out that clergymen who were 'almost hopeless about obtaining a maintenance at home' could marry and educate their children in N.S.W. - see James Macarthur, New South Wales; its present state and future prospects...., London 1837, pp.263-4.

⁴S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, pp.40-1.

Living in a state of concubinage, frequently promiscuous, without books or means of instruction of any description, the observation of the Sabbath-day totally obliterated among them, their children growing up not only without baptism, but almost in unacquaintance with the name or being of their Creator, these persons...are placed in a situation as dreadful to contemplate as that of any race of heathen existing upon this earth.¹

It was particularly hard to minister to them. They went out far, and went out early. The exploring Major Mitchell crossed the Liverpool Range ('which divides the colony from the unexplored country') in December 1831, and, after three days' journey, came to Loder's station. After another three days, he came to a track 'passing by other cattle stations on the plain'.² In 1836, on his expedition to the Darling and Murray Rivers, Mitchell passed stations far beyond the boundaries of settlement, and near Mount Amyot 'met a colonist...who had been 70 miles down the river in search of a run for his cattle'.³ Hence the irony in the boast of John Sidney: 'I was one of the first white men who settled on the Barwen, and that a full year before Sir Thomas Mitchell discovered it!'⁴ Where the settler had not anticipated the explorer, he very quickly followed. When Mitchell was returning from the Darling on his expedition of 1835, he found two stations established already on the trail he had blazed on the outward trip six months earlier. But he was not surprised: this had happened before, when his boat depot on the Nammooy (for the 1831-2 expedition) was occupied by Sir John Jamieson's stockmen almost immediately after his first despatch.⁵ This was the pattern followed through all these years.⁶

¹S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, p.49.

²T.L. Mitchell, Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia..., 2 vols, London 1838, I, pp.25, 27, 32.

³Ibid., II, pp.8-16. Mitchell added, 'In no district have I seen cattle so numerous as all along the Lachlan.'

⁴'A Bushman', A Voice from the Far Interior of Australia, London 1847, p.7.

⁵T.L. Mitchell, op. cit., I, p.326ff.

⁶Cf. Emigrants' Letters..., London 1850, p.17.

Women were usually absent from the first stations. Mitchell found a white woman at Loder's station in 1831, but she was 'perhaps the only white woman then dwelling beyond the mountains'.¹ For years to come, lack of amenities kept the station owners' wives and children away from the properties, and men with families - an unnecessary expense and nuisance - were not wanted on the stations.² Women without children were often employed as cooks or hut-keepers by the mid-forties,³ but the strictly limited numbers of women and children reduced the social and religious influences which would have helped the Churches to minister. Discussing his own informal acts of worship each Sunday the bachelor Alfred Joyce wrote: 'Our neighbour, with a large family and greater moral and religious responsibilities, held a more regular and formal service.'⁴ For religion to prosper in the outback, wives and children were required, and these came mainly in the forties, not the thirties.

The cause of religion was not helped, either, by the facts that the number of men on each station was tiny, and that their social status was often low. Mitchell found that the first station built in his tracks on the Bogan River 'was occupied by the cattle of Mr. Lee, of Bathurst' and two stockmen, but not by Mr. Lee himself.⁵ Almost certainly the other one-established by Mr Pike - was also without the benefit of its owner's presence, for this was a common arrangement.⁶ Where free proprietors were absent, the workers poor or 'in servitude', and women and children rare, it was almost impossible for the

¹T.L. Mitchell, op. cit., I, p.29n.

²Cf. Report of the Benevolent Society of N.S.W., 1847, Sydney 1847, p.15. The depression of 1841-44 did cause some movement of men with families into the farther settlements - Gipps to Stanley, 3 Apr. 1844, H.R.A., xxiii, 511.

³M. Kiddle, op. cit., pp.119, 135.

⁴G.F. James (ed.), A Homestead History, The Reminiscences...of Alfred Joyce...1843-64, Melbourne 1949, p.109.

⁵T.L. Mitchell, op. cit., I, pp.326-7.

⁶Cf. Broughton to Coleridge, 25 Feb. 1839, B.P.; J.S. Hassall, In Old Australia, Brisbane 1902, p.26.

Churches to become well set up. Even when Government aid came in 1836 it could not easily be appropriated in such circumstances, since the aid was forthcoming only when the local inhabitants were able to contribute substantially towards the maintenance of a clergyman, and, normally, to the building of a church.¹

Yet Bishop Broughton was not without hope amidst all these difficulties. He had been much encouraged, while in England, by the response of the voluntary societies for the Propagation of the Gospel and for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. These societies had memorialized the British Government, they were seeking chaplains, and were contributing large sums of money towards the building of churches and the payment of clergy in Australia.² The Australian Diocesan Committee of the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. was formed seventeen days after Broughton's return, and thousands of pounds had been contributed towards the cost of thirty-three projected churches within a year.³ This was better than Broughton had hoped; when in England he had only put the required churches at twenty.⁴ When the thirty-three were built - and only a shortage of tradesmen and labourers delayed the start on many of them - the situation would be changed almost beyond recognition. Broughton regarded this support as evidence of a proper concern for religion among the 'principal inhabitants', and of laudable energy among the supporters of the Anglican Church.⁵

The Catholic bishop, J.B. Polding, had similar hopes and problems. He proudly declared in 1836 that an improvement in the moral tone of Sydney was admitted on all sides since the

¹S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, p.27.

²A Statement of the Objects of...the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K., Sydney 1836, p.5; and S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, pp.27-8; *ibid.*, 1838, p.47.

³*Ibid.*, 1837, pp.22, 25-6.

⁴Schedule in H.R.A., xviii, 213.

⁵S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, pp.23, 51.

arrival of additional priests less than a year before, and that many who had been spiritually careless were already reformed. But his clergy, though they drove themselves, were simply unable to do all that was required. The chaplain at Maitland had to serve also Newcastle, the whole of the William's River, Paterson's Plains, the districts of the Upper Hunter, Patrick's Plains and the Liverpool Plains. In the midst of an increasing Catholic population even the newly enlarged body of priests could do no more than their predecessors, who had been forced merely to 'run hastily from place to place...to supply the most pressing wants of their flocks'. This was clearly bad, since 'passing visits leave only passing impressions', and there were vast areas - the districts of Argyle and of Bathurst, 'all the settled country beyond the Blue Mountains', and the Penal Settlements - for which there were no priests at all.

What could be expected, asked Polding, of a people in such a state of neglect? It had been said that no Catholic criminal executed in New South Wales during the previous four years had received the rites of his Church in the colony until he was actually in gaol. How could convicts be reformed without religion? What hope could there be for the free emigrant if he were deprived of pastoral care? And what of the rising generation, if the children were only to be 'guided by the depraved example of their parents'? So Polding asked for double the number of priests, and quickly.¹

The dissatisfaction of the two major denominations was reflected, with various distortions, in the others. The Presbyterian, J.D. Lang, considered his cause to be suffering grievously for a variety of reasons. First, the influence of the dreadful past had to be overcome: before 1821, and the beginning of some significant free immigration, Lang thought it hardly possible to speak of the state of religion in the colony; and still the evil marks of the penal colony remained. Then

¹Polding to Bourke, 6 May 1836. Printed in V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. There were seven priests; seven more were asked for.

there was the too-favourable treatment of the Anglican Church, with its corollary of an officially cold-shouldered Presbyterianism, both of which were being continued by the Government into the thirties - the Anglicans measuring their aid by thousands, and the Presbyterians by hundreds of pounds. Thirdly, there was the Church of Scotland's own culpable neglect of colonial religion, and the common ministerial attitude that only a weak brother with no prospects at home would go to a colony.¹ The New South Wales Presbyterians had few churches and only five ministers in 1836, and Lang left the colony in July (before the passing of the Church Act) to seek more men.

Lang, who had an opinion and a spate of entertaining words on every subject in the colony, commented on the progress of Wesleyan Methodism and declared it, also, to be very disappointing. He dismissed the Wesleyans by saying that in Sydney their number was not large, and that out of Sydney their numbers were 'very inconsiderable'.² The official Wesleyan returns, indeed, gave some confirmation of this. Ministers were stationed only at Sydney, Parramatta, Windsor and Bathurst in one colony, and at Hobart, Launceston and Port Arthur in the other; and the number of full members of the Wesleyan Society was less than six hundred.³

But the number of Wesleyan members is quite misleading, for membership required exacting religious and moral behaviour.⁴ The number whom the Wesleyans regularly contacted in worship was always vastly greater than the number of members. Apart from any others, hundreds of convicts in Van Diemen's Land were compelled to attend Wesleyan preaching each week, for at Port Arthur at this time - and for years after - the Wesleyan

¹J.D. Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, 2 vols. London 1834, II, Chapter 5, *passim*.

²Ibid., II, pp.310-11.

³N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 28 Dec. 1835, Q.VII, gives 532 full members (in both colonies).

⁴See ibid., Q. XXXIII, for reported exclusion of 'many merely nominal members'.

minister was the sole Protestant pastor.¹ Nevertheless, in spite of their lay-preachers and the considerable numbers of chapels and preaching-places connected with each station, the Wesleyan out-reach was limited. Not until 1839, for instance, did a Wesleyan minister preach in the Illawarra district, and then he was only visiting the area.² In that year the Wesleyan superintendent in New South Wales repeated his earlier reports of urgent calls for ministers from various parts of the colony which could not be met. 'We want the labourers,' he told the English committee, 'and we must look to you for them'.³ Three years earlier, the Van Diemen's Land Methodists had reported the same thing.⁴ It was a recurring cry, and the main reason why the Wesleyans did not become stronger.⁵

Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur, gave a report on the religious situation in Van Diemen's Land in 1836. He thought that the agitation in the colony for Government assistance in the building of Catholic, Wesleyan and Independent chapels should be quickly and favourably answered. Even the Anglican rural dean (the Rev. Phillip Palmer) recommended public aid for the Wesleyan chapel at Launceston, on the grounds that not one third of the inhabitants could be accommodated in the church. The want of a more extensive Church Establishment was lamentable, continued Arthur; the nine Anglican chaplains and nine catechists were quite inadequate for a dispersed population. Since the 'convict taint' had to be removed and the depraved and the poor sought

¹See, e.g., General Returns, V.D.L. District Minutes, 13 April, 1843, where at Port Arthur the total attendants are given as 1,400 and the (enviable!) average attendance as 1,400.

²Extract from Mr Robinson's Journal, Methodist Church Papers, Uncat. MSS., Set 197, Item 4, (ML).

³The Rev. J. M'Kenny to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, 16 Aug. 1839, Report of Wesleyan Missionary Committee, London 1840, p.28. Cf. N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., Dec. 1835, Q. XXXIII.

⁴V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 21 Oct. 1836, Q.27.

⁵Cf. ibid., 4 Nov. 1841, Q. 32, where a curt answer (no more men so no new stations) was given to the compulsory question about the opening of stations.

after, an increase in Anglican pastors (preferably from the ranks of the Evangelicals) was a matter of real and pressing necessity. The convicts and the lower classes were being served extremely well by the Wesleyans, but without considerable assistance from the Government there would be 'a large class of the community...without any religious or moral instruction whatever'.

The Catholics - the Lieutenant-Governor went on - had been 'an inconsiderable body', mostly poor and many drunken, having 'enjoyed few opportunities of receiving instruction'. Their half-finished and half-ruined chapel at Hobart was likely to remain in that condition because of dissension between the priest (Conolly) and his congregation; but the visit of Bishop Polding and the arrival of the Rev. J.A. Cotham had put new life into the cause. The Presbyterians were described, as usual, as 'a very respectable portion of the community', and so were the Independents and Quakers - the last of whom, though few, were also trying to get a chapel built.¹ Colonel Arthur, therefore, infused some optimism into his review of religious provision in his domain. But, once more, the keynote was urgency. More clergy, more churches, more money, were urgently required: the alternative was vice and irreligion rampant.

In this colony, as on the mainland, particular concern was expressed about the needs of the interior. A Tasmanian newspaper attacked the appointment of Bishop Broughton on the grounds that thirty itinerant preachers could have been supported on the episcopal stipend (falsely rumoured to be £3,000 per annum). The colonies, the paper said, did not require bishops and archdeacons, but humble preachers who would go from house to house in the thinly populated areas, preaching the gospel, teaching sound doctrine and morality to the young, and reducing the number of families who did not have it in their power to hear the word of God.²

¹ Arthur to Glenelg, 26 Jan. 1836, and enclosed Extracts from Min. of Exec. Coun., 14 Oct. 1835, H.R.A., xviii, p.486ff.

² Colonial Times, 5 July 1836, p.221, c.2.

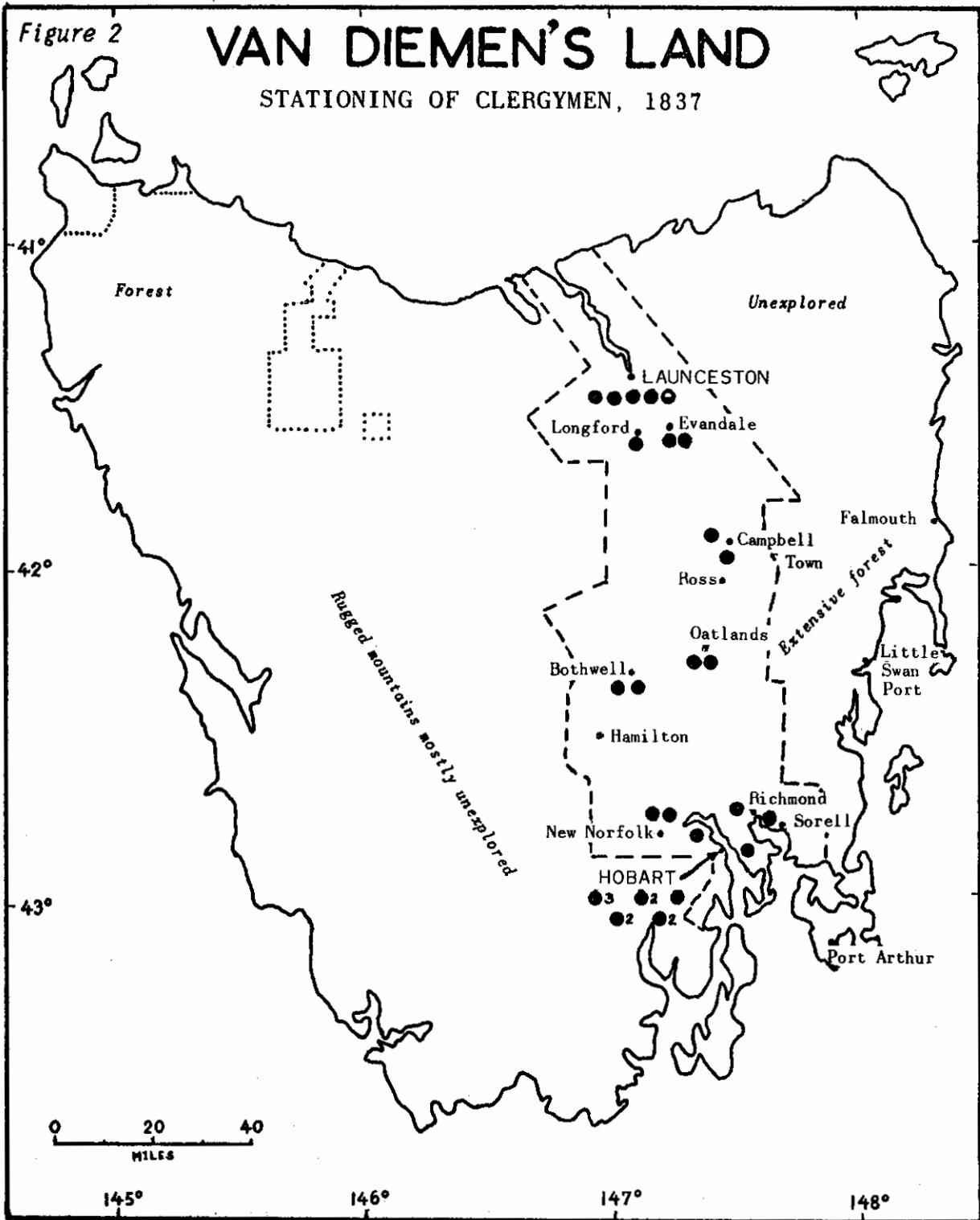
The problem of the interior was not just a figment of a newspaper editor's imagination. In the Legislative Council, M'Lachlin, Kerr and others, were shortly to urge the needs of the more isolated settlers, and the Colonial Secretary was to admit that it might be necessary to take up the question of giving support to itinerant preachers.¹ In 1837 the Rev. Joseph Beazley, an Independent itinerating with the support of a newly-formed Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, found that the Broad Marsh - Green Ponds area was so badly served that he could make it a permanent area for his work; and, on visiting Swan Port (on the east coast), he was told that there had been only three religious services in the district in nine years.²

However, Van Diemen's Land did not have this problem on the same scale as New South Wales. On the mainland, settlement was constantly being pushed out beyond the boundaries of the 33,000 square miles in the nineteen counties; but the total area of the island colony was just over 26,000 square miles, and a very small section of that was settled in 1836-7. The Quakers, Backhouse and Walker, travelled between Hobart and the east coast in the mid-thirties, and found a number of settlers and settlements.³ But these were the exceptions. The Surveyor-General mentioned another exception - the Van Diemen's Land Company's grant in the north-west - but declared that settlement on it was only nominal. He went on to say that the settlements of the colony were limited to the country lying east of a north and south line drawn through the centre of the island, and that from this segment could be deducted the north-east angle, which was but little occupied, as well as the broad belt of mountains and thick forests extending along the whole of the

¹Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4.

²Second Report of the Van Diemen's Land Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, Hobart 1838, pp.8-10.

³J. Backhouse, op. cit. As well as the text, passim., see its map.



- Anglican clergyman
- 3 Three Anglican clergymen, etc.
- Catholic clergyman
- Wesleyan clergyman
- Presbyterian clergyman
- Independent clergyman
- Baptist clergyman

--- 'The Districts' [from an 1834 map]
 V.D.L. Co's grants

There were also eight 'Lecturers and Catechists' in various places

east coast.¹ Not until the forties was there any extensive spread of settlement to the west.² In 1837 it was the small area of some 5,000 square miles shown in Figure 2 which held the inhabitants almost exclusively. What is more, the average size of land-holdings was large (so that few lived on them),³ and urbanization was high. The 1838 Religious Census revealed that, of a total of 23,244 free persons, sixty-one per cent lived in the two Police Districts of Hobart and Launceston.⁴ Also, the vast majority of the 18,268 convicts listed in the census were to be found in the main settled area (though not concentrated in the two big towns). The largest concentration outside the area was at Port Arthur, and less than 1,500 convicts were held there.⁵

Hence the 45,846 inhabitants were very largely to be found within 5,000 square miles. The 97,912 inhabitants of New South Wales, on the other hand, were spread over perhaps twenty times that area - which by this time, included the Port Phillip District⁶ and the large numbers of people who were coming over

¹G. Frankland, Report on the Transactions of the Survey Department..., Hobart 1837, p.6.

²R.M. Hartwell, The Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land, 1820-1850, Melbourne 1954, p.60.

³Ibid., p.32.

⁴Printed in Government Notices, V.D.L., 1838, pp.144-6. There were 16 police districts. The military were excluded. The larger total figure (45,846) in the following paragraph is taken from C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents..., p.407.

⁵Blue Book, 1838 (CO 284/61, microfilm, NL), p.275. There were 1,453 at Port Arthur, compared with 12,221 in private service (as well as other classifications, such as in road gangs). Courier 3 Feb. 1837, p.2, c.5, advances this concentration of V.D.L. convicts in contrast to N.S.W. in explanation of the better discipline in V.D.L.

⁶I.e., the future Melbourne and its environs. Settlement began, from Van Diemen's Land, in 1834 and was sanctioned by the Imperial Government in 1836. (Glenelg to Bourke, 13 April 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 381). Services were occasionally held by visiting clergymen - the first being the Rev. Joseph Orton, a Wesleyan, and another being Bishop Broughton himself - until the first resident minister, the Rev. James Forbes (a Presbyterian) arrived in 1838. (R.D. Boys, First Years at Port Phillip, 1834-1842, Melbourne 1959, pp.50, 59-60).

from Van Diemen's Land to the new settlement.¹

To serve little Van Diemen's Land there were, in 1837, thirty-one ministers of religion,² - only six fewer than the New South Wales total.³ Fifteen of the Van Diemen's Land clergy were stationed outside Hobart and Launceston (see Figure 2), and their services were supplemented by eight Anglican catechists (as well as Wesleyan local preachers, and other part-time lay agents). Furthermore, the two Wesleyan ministers at Hobart were under instructions to alternate on fortnightly tours of New Norfolk, Back River, Glen Reith, Bushy Park, Bothwell, Green Ponds, Oatlands, Ross, Campbell Town 'and places adjacent',⁴ an itinerary which took them more than half way up the centre of the island. Taking only the ordained clergy into account, there was about one for every 1,400 persons in the whole island, and this - together with their stationing, their itinerating and the limited spread of settlement - did not leave an interior of insuperable magnitude.

New South Wales really did have an interior. It was this problem which greatly lessened the significance of the average number of people to clergymen. Just as the actual situation in crowded parishes made nonsense of the comfortable arithmetic average in England, so also the real position in the interior of New South Wales was not adequately described by simple numbers. Reference to Figure 1, in which clerical stations and churches are shown in contrast to the spread of the population, will show that the position in most counties, and beyond the counties, had to be assessed in terms of distance, roads and transport,

¹While this added to the New South Wales problem, it did not necessarily alleviate the burden of the southern colony's Churches. The Wesleyans, for instance, complained of the serious depletion of their congregations by the wholesale departures of their members to Port Phillip and to Adelaide - V.D.L. Dist. Min., 1 Nov. 1838, Appendix.

²See Appendix C.

³Tegg's Almanac, 1837, pp.117-119.

⁴V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 11 Feb. 1836. Cf. ibid., 1 Mar. 1837.

and a population roving or rudely settled here, there and everywhere, often too few to support a minister and too dispersed to build a church. A Catholic priest, stationed at Bathurst, found himself led on one occasion to successive sheep or cattle stations until he found himself three hundred and fifty miles from home. 'There were no residences,' he said, 'but many stations'.¹

The travel, of course, was hard. Roads were made by cutting down the most awkward trees and letting the drays do the rest. Rivers mostly had to be forded, a hazardous proceeding in time of flood. Clergymen, too, had frequently to keep to a schedule, even (when the weather was at the other extreme) in 'the suffocating atmosphere of an oppressive sirocco'. The road from Hunter's Hill to Lane Cove, to take one clergyman's route no further from Sydney than that, was described in the thirties as 'difficult and dangerous'. Anglican clergymen at Pitt Town regularly had to travel forty-six miles up the Hawkesbury by water; it was quite impossible by land. To cap it all, accommodation along the way was often poor and dirty.² The clergy did their best, but the sheer size and physical difficulty of their areas and travels severely limited their success. There was reason for complaint about the inadequacy of the Churches' means of ministering to the people.

At the same time, there were several mitigating factors. The first was the work of probationary clergymen and lay agents. An invaluable part was played by such men in all denominations. In 1836 the Catholic theological students were reading prayers and exhortations to prisoners; a subdeacon was sent as a catechist to Port Macquarie; and a deacon was assisting in Sydney.³ The Anglicans made considerable use of catechists

¹See John Kenny, A History of the Commencement and Progress of Catholicity in Australia, up to the year 1840, Sydney 1886, p.197.

²W.W. Burton, op. cit., pp.206-7.

³Polding to Bourke, 6 May 1836, V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. Polding to Heptonstall, 1 May 1836, in H.N. Birt, op. cit., I, p.291.

in both colonies,¹ and they also had the help of another group of men not so far taken into account - the ordained men without permanent or direct charge of parishes. Such were the Rev. W. Yate, temporarily serving at St James, Sydney, before going on to New Zealand; the Rev. Robert Forrest, headmaster of the King's School, Parramatta; and the Rev. L.E. Threlkeld, a missionary to the aborigines. The Presbyterians had the benefit of three licentiates in New South Wales who were brought out in 1831, primarily to teach in the Australian College, but who were able to assist in the conduct of services.² Wesleyans, as always, had their famous local preachers - such as J.J. Walker who, converted in 1835, went on to take as many as sixteen services a quarter.³ This kind of assistance for the regular clergy helped considerably to lessen the difficulties caused by too few ordained men - even if it could not possibly close the gap.

In addition to this, there was religious zeal or a sense of moral obligation among some settlers, even when far from a church or a clergyman. Presbyterian settlers had not waited for a minister to arrive before forming themselves into a congregation and building Ebenezer. Catholics assembled in William Davis' cottage, where Father O'Flynn had celebrated Mass, long after he had been deported. A Wesleyan 'society' waited to welcome the first minister to Sydney; an army corporal organized the first Wesleyan society in Van Diemen's Land; and migrating Methodists continued to form societies in the areas to which they came, quite on their own initiative. Laymen of the Particular Baptists formed a congregation in Hobart years before a minister came to them. Perseverance in faith, and even religious

¹Tegg's Almanac, 1836, p.51. Ibid., 1837, p.117. W.W. Burton, op. cit., p.164. Ross's Hobart Town Almanack, 1836, p.19, Melville's V.D.L. Annual, 1837, p.27.

²A.C. Gilchrist, John Dunmore Lang, An Assembling of Contemporary Documents, 2 vols, Melbourne 1951, I, p.129.

³Memoir of John Joseph Walker, by Aaron Walker, Methodist Church Papers, Uncat. MSS., Set 197, Item 4, (ML).

organization, by no means entirely depended on the presence of clergymen. Even W.G. Broughton, when it suited his argument, claimed that such was not uncommon among his Anglicans in the interior. He described, as no solitary instance, an elderly Church of England minister's visit to an isolated home ('almost beyond the limits of civilization') where he found that the mother had taught her ten or eleven children to repeat the lessons of devotion which he had taught her twenty years before in his school on the Hawkesbury.¹

Although the New South Wales problem had to be seen in terms of the interior, the distribution of population (as shown in Figure 1) prompts another cautionary comment on spiritual destitution in the colony: the problem was never that of having the vast majority of the people quite out of the Churches' reach. On the contrary, the badly neglected settlers constituted the lesser proportion of the community.

In 1836 over half the total population lived in Cumberland County alone - nearly 40,000 of the total 77,000. In the neighbouring county of Northumberland, where there were churches and clergymen of three denominations, lived another 5,000 persons. In Bathurst county, again one of the best served by the Churches, there was a population of 1,700. Hence almost two-thirds of the whole population lived in three counties where, one way or another, they had a very fair chance of effective contact with the Churches.

Religious deprivation and neglect were therefore far from absolute. Yet this, like the favourable comparison between English slums and Australian bush, did not mean that religious provision was anything like sufficient. Many colonists in Van Diemen's Land, and forty per cent (or more) of those in New South Wales were extremely ill-provided with the means of grace. Many were remaining irreligious, or were becoming careless in religious practice, and moral standards were commonly low. The

¹The Speech of the Lord Bishop of Australia in the Legislative Council..., Sydney 1839, p.9.

officers of state, as well as the leaders of the Churches, were well aware of the problem and were apprehensive of the probable consequences. Hence, when the churchmen stressed their needs, the governments responded by offering state aid through the far-reaching Church Acts of 1836 and 1837.

CHAPTER 2THE PASSING OF THE CHURCH ACTS, 1836-37, AND
THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATHEnglish opinion

The Church Acts of eastern Australia remained in unqualified force only for a few years, six years in the one colony and thirteen in the other. Yet they were highly significant laws, their importance lasting much longer than it took to impose restrictions upon them. Temporarily, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were committed by these acts to a costly financial support of religion. The aid was soon limited, and was eventually abolished; but the support was great enough to be a strong stimulant to the institutional development of the Churches (even, perhaps, to the cause of religion in the most spiritual sense), and - as will be suggested later¹ - the manner in which the aid was given helped to determine which Christian denominations were to become strongest in the colonies. The legislation also committed the state permanently to the principle of the equality of all denominations. Small ad hoc grants had been made to non-Anglicans before 1836-37, but it was the passing of the Church Acts which finally dashed Anglican hopes for the establishment of the Church of England alone.

Years afterwards, Bishop Broughton reported his conviction that Australia was a remote quarter favoured as a testing-ground for doubtful legislation before it was attempted in England.² It was at least true that government policy at Westminster, and British public opinion, vitally influenced the passing of the Church Acts; and this was so, not merely because of colonial office control over colonial governments, but also because parliamentary grants in aid of religion, and

¹See the section on 'Religious Observance' in Part III below.

²Broughton to Coleridge, 15 Jan. 1849, B.P.

the question of establishment, were important domestic issues in England.

In the early nineteenth century, British governments (especially Tory cabinets) were willing to give considerable aid to religion. Their motives were mixed, reflecting both charity and prudence.¹ The upheavals in Europe after the French Revolution alarmed the upper classes of England, for they feared that the English might take the same path as the infidel and democratic French. In many haughty eyes, Methodist and Dissenting chapels were little better, being regarded as hot-beds of radicalism. Therefore the Church of England was bolstered as a safeguard against social and political radicalism.²

As well as this calculating motive, there was also one truly charitable and religious. As the nineteenth century progressed, religious seriousness increased among middle and upper classes, and many had a high sense of the duty of the Established Church. This was the last era in which it was seriously suggested that the national Church was under obligation to provide church-room for the entire population. The long years of neglect were admitted, and the response was 'on a scale that renders any later response amateurish'.³ The first Government step was the appointment in 1818 of Church Building Commissioners⁴ to administer the act of Parliament granting one million pounds for the building of Anglican churches in crowded parishes. A second parliamentary grant of half a million pounds was made in

¹Cf. A. Blomfield, op. cit., I, p.234.

²See, e.g., M.H. Port, op. cit., pp.9-10; F.D. Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ [1842], 2 vols, London 1958, II, p.318; K.S. Inglis, op. cit., pp.46-7; J.L. and B. Hammond, The Town Labourer, London 1920, pp.270, 277. Cf. the passage of an act to increase the supply of clergy in densely populated parishes after Chartist disturbances in 1843 - see Asa Briggs (ed.), Chartist Studies, London 1959, p.403.

³E.R. Wickham, op. cit., p.108.

⁴The Church Building Commission (1818-1857) is not to be confused with the Ecclesiastical Commission (1835-1948), which was concerned with estates and revenues. On the latter, see Olive J. Brose, Church and Parliament, Stanford 1959, p.120ff.

1824. As a result, by 1836 the commissioners had built two hundred and fourteen churches and chapels.¹

Upon these grounds, the Lord Bishop of Australia and his clergy might very well hope that the colonial Governments would be given full permission to adopt more vigorous policies of state aid. Yet such church aid was already almost a thing of the past. By 1837 the one and a half million pounds had been issued in exchequer bills,² and for the remaining twenty years of its life the Commission was sorely handicapped by lack of money.³ The 'Million' and the 'Half-Million' acts were Tory measures; the Whigs were not of quite the same mind, and they were in power in 1836.

Despite the class - and Church - from which the leading Whigs came, they tended to reflect another, and very different, spirit abroad in the thirties. In a way curiously adopting the role of the old 'High and Dry' Tory churchmen, the Whigs cared above all for the union of Church and state; and they inclined towards an Established Church which accorded to the wishes of most of the people rather than the prelates, and to the needs of the present rather than the facts of the past.⁴

They were accused of irreligion, and not altogether without reason; but the accusation went too far. Even Lord Melbourne, of whom it can be said that 'he doubted Christian doctrines and disapproved of Christian morals', made sure that 'every new theological work found its way to his shelves, its margins

¹Sixteenth Report of Commissioners for building Churches, p.3, Commons Papers, 1836, xxxvi, 171.

²Seventeenth Report, p.8, *ibid.*, 1837, xxi, 1.

³See M.H. Port, *op. cit.*, pp.95, 115ff.

⁴G.F.A. Best, 'The Whigs and the Church Establishment in the Age of Grey and Holland', *History*, Vol. xlv, p.110ff. Cf. C.J. Fox, who had said that he 'should ever be a decided friend to our established religion, but it should be ever founded on the opinion of the majority of the people' - quoted, p.15, by M.J. Jackson and J. Rogan (eds.), in 1962 edition of Thomas Arnold, Principles of Church Reform [1833].

scrawled with his notes'. He was fascinated with the writings of the Church fathers; and it was not only an intellectual exercise: he had a mystical strain which 'cried out against a purely rationalistic interpretation of the universe'.¹ He was not un-typical of the Whigs on the whole, whose religion

seems to have been a blend of the classical precepts of morality and the moral sense of the Scottish philosophers, improved by Christ's special injunctions to toleration and forbearance, and substituting for the dreamy ambition of establishing Christ's kingdom on earth, the nearer but no less desirable objective of the Reign of Liberty.²

Hence the Whigs were not without religion - of a sort - but devotedly orthodox supporters of the Establishment feared for the Church of England when the Whigs came to power.³

The Church of England, in its early nineteenth century form, came under strong contemporary criticism from many quarters. An unreformed Church was unpopular in an age of reform, and it is an appropriate comment (though not proof) to point out that, while Birmingham rioters in 1791 had 'Church and King' for their slogan, and took their temper out on Dissenters, the Bristol mobs of 1831 burnt down the Bishop's palace.⁴ Until the reforms within the Church after 1835, the Establishment was in particular ill-odour and talk of disestablishment was loud and frantic. The moods of mobs and demagogues quickly changed, but ideas and groups remained to issue in steady and powerful influences against the Established Church.⁵

¹David Cecil, Melbourne, London 1955, pp.46, 151.

²G.F.A. Best, op. cit., p.107.

³M.H. Port, op. cit., p.99.

⁴S.C. Carpenter, op. cit., I, p.47. Cf. T. Arnold, op. cit., pp.106-7. Sheffield had not shared the views of Birmingham in 1791, but celebrated French success with an ox roasting - E.R. Wickham, op. cit., p.61.

⁵For the 'noisy section' in Parliament, cf. E. Halevy, op. cit., III, p.132. For Bethnal Green inhabitants' change from loosing a bull to baring their heads, see A. Blomfield, op. cit., I, pp.244-5. For steady antagonism to Establishment from many sides, cf. W.E. Gladstone, The State in its Relations with the Church, London 1838, pp.1-3.

Dissent emerged as a political power in the nineteenth century. Lord Sidmouth's attempt to secure legislation against 'unqualified' preachers in 1811 had to be given up in the storm of protest which resulted: it was 'a conclusive and spectacular victory' for Methodism, Dissent and Liberal peers.¹ All direct penalties on Protestant non-conformists - the remains of such legislation as the Clarendon Code - were, in fact, removed early in the century.² Where Dissent did not win an immediate victory, its opinions were still forcefully expressed. The 1818 'Million Act' had been opposed by Lord Holland because it said to Dissenters, 'You, gentlemen, who pay for yourselves...shall also contribute to the creation of those churches in which you have no interest whatever.'³ Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century this was a cry taken up in the battle against the 'Church Rates' and the Establishment generally.⁴

From the fashionable philosophy of the day - liberalism, the cult of liberty - came ideas which, in practice, favoured Dissent rather than the Establishment. 'No power of Government', Jeremy Bentham wrote, 'ought to be employed in the endeavour to establish any system or article of belief on the subject of religion'. Nor, he went on, had Jesus anywhere taught men to 'give money to those who say they believe in what I have said'.⁵ Even the Tory, Sir George Murray was influenced - though more

¹M. Edwards, op. cit., pp.75-82. See also J. Waddington, Congregational History, continuation to 1850, London 1878, pp. 221-2; J. Stoughton, Religion in England from 1800 to 1850, 2 vols, London 1884, I, p.16ff; E. Halevy, op. cit., I, pp.430-1.

²For a recent discussion, see U. Henriques, Religious Toleration in England, 1787-1833, London 1961.

³Quoted in A.W. Dale, History of English Congregationalism, London 1907, p.583.

⁴Cf. M.H. Port, op. cit., p.115. In 1841 the Tory Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, considered that religious difference would prevent any extension of the Church of England by increased use of the public revenue.

⁵Constitutional Code, 1830, quoted in A. Bullock and M.S. Shock (eds.) The Liberal Tradition, London 1956, pp.44-5.

moderately. Speaking on the colonies, he declared that while England had an obligation to provide the means of religious instruction for the colonists, any exclusive establishment of one denomination would be 'bad and dangerous'.¹ No establishment, or no exclusive establishment, were common cries.

Staunch Anglicans of various hues contributed to the flow of iconoclastic opinion. The broad-church Arnold of Rugby argued for the extinction of Dissent by comprehension within the Church of England, and put forward truly radical proposals for re-organization and for generalizing the articles of belief.² At the other extreme, the Tractarians were emerging to point the Church of England to the Catholic elements in its faith, and to oppose so staunchly the interference by Government in the Church's affairs that they protested against state grants for building churches. They wanted, in M.H. Port's words, 'to see the people themselves building them, in a manner they imagined churches were built "in truly Catholic Days"'.³ Nor was it only the Tractarians who lauded personal donations. There was a very great emphasis at this time on the unrivalled moral benefit of voluntary private gifts and on self-help. It was the voluntary and well-supported Church Building Society - and other similar appeals to private charity - which came to the rescue when the Church Building Commission's funds had been

¹Speaking in Parliament in 1832, quoted in J. West, The History of Tasmania, 2 vols, Launceston 1852, I, p.198n.

²Thomas Arnold, op. cit. The book was not well received.

³M.H. Port, op. cit., p.117. Ironically, it was the High (and not Dry) Church group centred upon Joshua Watson which gave most support to the Church Building Commission (ibid., pp.2-3; see also, A.B. Webster, Joshua Watson..., London 1954). The dichotomy in the High Church attitude is largely explicable in terms of a distinction between state support and state control (cf. G. Faber, Oxford Apostles, London 1954, p.167). The beginning of the Oxford Movement was dated by Newman from 1833 when Keble preached his Assize Sermon against Government suppression of Irish bishoprics (J.H. Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua /1864/, London 1959, p.122); in line with this, the Tractarians would not have objected to the restoration of the lands and revenues lost at the Reformation.

used up, and no more could be squeezed from the Government. The Whigs themselves were generous private donors; and the Government's unwillingness to continue paying for Churches by means of large special grants was not attributable only to a Whig cabinet or to a mere social theory. The cold facts of practical politics and public finance also contributed to it; even when a Tory cabinet entered office in 1841, no large new grant was forthcoming, and one of the reasons was budgetary.¹

There was one other area in which the principles of liberalism and the practice of politics led to the same point. This was in the matter of Roman Catholicism. Liberalism was tolerant; liberalism was confident; it was a common Whig belief that in an age of 'enlightenment' and of extensive and rapid change, Catholics were being affected as much as anyone, and that religious differences would come to an end.² In politics, even the Tories had been forced by the Catholic question to act in an unexpected way. Peel had told the King in August 1828 that to withhold Catholic emancipation would 'imperil the royal authority in Ireland, and the King's reputation in Europe'. The ministry was helpless, and the Tories had to act on this advice or immediately wreck their party.³ The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 was the result.

Therefore the England of the thirties was torn over the right way to deal with religion. On the one hand there was considerable support for state aid to religion and to the Church of England in particular. But on the other hand there was a considerable body of opinion against the Church Establishment, and an even greater belief in tolerance and the rights of all who dissented from the Anglican Church.

When English opinion was in this state of flux, and with the Whigs in power in 1836, Australian churchmen might hope for

¹M.H. Port, op. cit., pp.108-117.

²G.F.A. Best, op. cit., pp.109-110.

³J.A. Reynolds, op. cit., pp.161-62.

help from the state; but Australian Anglicans might tremble at the possibilities.

Colonial Practice: New South Wales

For New South Wales, from its foundation to the passing of the Church Act, the story of the Anglican cathedral at Sydney - St Andrew's - provides an allegory. In the time of Governor Lachlan Macquarie the foundations, and only the foundations, were solidly laid. But later

from the imperfect manner in which the plan of the Town was at first designed, the line of George-street was found actually to intersect one of the angles. To the town itself it must ever have proved a source of deformity, not of ornament. There was, therefore, no hesitation in removing the entire foundation, and His Excellency the Governor, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Bourke, was pleased on the 16th of May, to lay the first stone of the proposed new building.¹

The time of Macquarie was the time of Anglican ascendancy when, to a greater or lesser degree, every other denomination had to get around the solid Church of England authority. Macquarie and the Anglican chaplains (of Evangelical bent) had welcomed the Wesleyan, Samuel Leigh, sincerely enough, and they had helped him; but the Methodists were reprimanded when they trespassed on what were regarded as Anglican prerogatives of time and place in holding services.² The schoolmaster, Joseph Harpur, was reprovved for allowing W.P. Crook to preach his Independent doctrines in the school; and Harpur, and others, were threatened with loss of their government salaries.³ When the Catholic priest, Jeremiah O'Flynn, arrived in the colony in 1818 without the permission of the Secretary of State, he received no sympathy and was sent home; and even the two approved priests, Therry and Conolly, were warned by Macquarie

¹A compressed and slightly paraphrased version of the account in S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, pp.23-4.

²See Methodist Church Papers, Uncat. MSS., Set 197, Item 1 (ML).

³Crook to Tracy, 16 May 1814, B.T. Miss., Box 49, p.312 (ML).

against proselytizing, and forbidden to interfere with Catholic orphans in the Church of England orphanages.¹ Macquarie's successor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, refused aid from the Treasury to Presbyterians in a letter which cast aspersions on their responsibility; although the decision was reversed by the home Government, and Brisbane was motivated by personal pique, such a criticism would not have been levelled at Anglicans.² The possibility in 1825 of penalties under the 'Rogues-and-Vagabonds Act' for ministers of religion who did not send a return of baptisms, marriages and burials to 'the [Anglican] minister of the parish', and other instances of inferior status, were described by Dr Lang.³ In 1825, also, Anglican privilege seemed assured by the Church and School Corporation, established by royal charter, to hold one-seventh of the land in each county, and to use the income derived from it for the maintenance of the schools and clergy of the Church of England.⁴

But Anglican supremacy had reached its highest point, and was soon to decline. In both New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land (the latter lacking a Body Corporate to administer the income⁵) areas of land were set aside for the Church of England, and some financial advantage resulted. In Van Diemen's Land some 1,400 square miles were reserved in the 1826-29 surveys, and land was sold to the value of over £8,000 and rented to an annual value of £1,145.⁶ But soon this reserved land - a

¹H.N. Birt, Benedictine Pioneers in Australia, 2 vols, London 1911, I, pp.119-20.

²A.C. Gilchrist, op. cit., I, p.47; Bathurst to Brisbane, 16 Aug. 1827, H.R.A., xi, 346-7. It might be noted that English Presbyterians were commonly feared as radicals, and that prayers for French victory over England had been offered in Presbyterian churches in Belfast.

³J.D. Lang, op. cit., II, p.251ff.

⁴Bathurst to Brisbane, 1 Jan. 1825, and Enclosure No. 1, H.R.A., xi, 438-9, 444ff.

⁵Murray to Darling, 25 May 1829, ibid., xiv, 789.

⁶Arthur to Bathurst, 26 Sept. 1828, GO 25/3 (TA); G. Frankland, op. cit., p.10.

very large slice of the settled area - was withdrawn from the hands of the Church, and made available to the colonists on quit rent.¹ In New South Wales the Corporation was granted 435,765 acres, with some consequent benefit to the Church of England, yet not with the benefit the grant would suggest. For three years after the erection of the Corporation no land was secured because of survey difficulties and antagonistic land interests. Of the land finally granted, much was useless because it was in areas where sale or rent was difficult.² Soon afterwards, to the wrath of such stalwarts as Judge Burton, the whole idea was given up: in 1829 the Corporation's charter was suspended, and, although Broughton found a technical fault which rendered that suspension illegal, the Charter was finally revoked in 1833.³ Most of the promised provision had simply evaporated,⁴ and Anglican pre-eminence was passing away.

Although it had been partly the complaints of Archdeacon T.H. Scott that the Church and Schools Corporation was not producing the desired financial benefit, which had influenced the Secretary of State in his decision to have the Corporation

¹ Ibid., p.11; J. Burnett to Surveyor-General, 27 May 1831, LSD I/47 (TA).

² W.W. Burton, op. cit., pp.28-9, who mentions the 168,000 acres in Gloucester. The Australian Encyclopaedia, 10 vols, Sydney 1958, II, p.364, includes Bathurst county and declares 304,272 acres to have been useless.

³ Authentic Documents illustrative of the Resources actually possessed by the Late Church and School Corporation for the Promotion of Education in this Colony, Sydney 1844, pp.3-4; Murray to Darling, 25 May 1829, H.R.A., xiv, 789; Darling to Goderich, 28 Sept. 1831, ibid., xvi, 381; Goderich to Bourke, 10 March 1833, and Enclosure, ibid., xvii, 34.

⁴ But by no means all. Relics of the Corporation grants remained for years. The average net proceeds of the estates in 1842-4 amounted to nearly £2,500, and were expected to increase. four denominations receiving aid under the Church Act, fin received a share of this amount. (See, P.R.O. copies of Enclosures to Despatches from Governor of N.S.W., 1845 (M pp.3306-8). The matter was only concluded in 1880 - see Walker, 'The Later History of the Church and School Land' J.R.A.H.S., Vol. 47, 4, pp.234-45.

dissolved,¹ there were stronger influences. Colonial governors and Imperial authorities realized that the grant of so much land to the Church of England would lose them much revenue, although the Anglicans' theory was that the grants would eventually relieve the state of the charge for religion. The authorities, in their Whig-liberalism, were also very sympathetic towards the other denominations, who were becoming bitterly vocal against the favoured treatment of the Church of England.²

The Governor of New South Wales in 1833 was Sir Richard Bourke, an Anglican but also an Irishman, with Catholic relatives, and a man with his full share of liberal opinions. When news was received of the order-in-council dissolving the Corporation, Bourke was not dismayed. On the contrary - to recall the cathedral allegory - he was as pleased to get the establishment of one denomination out of the way as he was a little later to get the foundations of St Andrew's out of George Street. Encouraged by the implication of the order, Bourke advised the home Government on what ought to be done about the Churches in the colony.

New South Wales, Bourke insisted, was not like England and Scotland, where Anglicanism could be established in one area and Calvinism in the other. The people of the different denominations were scattered and intermingled throughout the colony. Anglicans had a majority, but not an overwhelming one. About one-fifth of the population was Catholic,³ and there was a large body of Protestant Dissenters, especially Presbyterians, who were frequently numbered among the most respectable of the free migrants. The colonial Treasury was giving aid to several denominations, but the support was very unequal - in 1834 it was planned to grant £11,542 to the Church of England, £1,500

¹Murray to Darling, 25 May 1829, H.R.A., xiv, 789; James Macarthur, op. cit., p.216.

²Cf. Ronald Fogarty, Catholic Education in Australia, 1806-1950, 2 vols, Melbourne 1959, I, pp.15-16.

³This was almost certainly an under-estimate; 27% were Catholic by the 1836 census.

the Catholics, and £600 to the Presbyterians - and such an allocation could not long be continued, for it had been justly petitioned against.¹ So Bourke recommended that support be given to 'every one of the three grand divisions of Christians indifferently', and that provision also be made for aid to other denominations which might require it.² Amid changes of Government, the Colonial Office took some years to decide about the thorny proposal, but finally full permission was given for Bourke to go ahead.³

Bourke wasted no time, and the Legislative Council was quite as quick. On 22 July 1836, the Governor laid on the Council table a bill 'to promote the building of churches and chapels, and to provide for the maintenance of ministers of religion in New South Wales'. Seven days later it became an act - the famous 'Church Act',⁴ a product of the new tolerance, of the spirit of reform, and of the colonial religious admixture.

By the Church Act the Treasury was to grant sums (up to £1,000) equal to the amounts privately raised for the building of any church, chapel or clergyman's dwelling, provided that a minimum of £300 had been raised at the time of application. A scale of state-paid stipends was fixed for 'duly appointed' clergymen, which varied according to the number of adult residents who declared their desire to attend the places of worship under the charge of each clergyman. In areas where it was impractical to build a church, payment was to be made equal to the amount

¹For the petition, see New South Wales Parliament, Petitions, Etc., p.1, MSS. (ML). Actually the primary aim of the petition was to have government expenditure reduced so that import duties would not have been so high. Furthermore, the petitioners made 'protest against the principle of being compelled to support clergy out of colonial revenue'. Only after this was said did they 'respectfully contend, so long as any portion of it is so applied, that all sects have a right to an equal participation in it, according to their respective numbers.

²Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, H.R.A., xvii, 224ff.

³Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835 (No.81), ibid., xviii, 201ff.

⁴William IV, No.3. Printed in The Acts and Ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales, 1836.

voluntarily subscribed. In the regulations under the act, the Church of England, the Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, and the Roman Catholic Church were specifically named as the Churches which would participate, and there was also a clause authorizing the granting of aid to 'any denomination of Christians not named in these regulations'.¹

This was an act of tremendous significance. It forbade Anglicans to claim a monopoly of state support. It placed Presbyterianism and Catholicism on an equal footing with the Church of England. It opened the door wide for Dissent to claim state aid - if Dissent wanted it. Yet it was accepted with scarcely a ripple of opposition in the colony, so much was it in accord with Australian needs and opinions - and with similar moves in Canada, which were not lost upon the colonists in the antipodes.²

Bishop Broughton, indeed, was opposed to it. He had done his best for Anglicanism by first trying unsuccessfully, to claim for it the total proceeds of the sale of lands previously held by the Church and School Corporation.³ He also had declared frankly to Glenelg that he could not 'act in concert' with Bourke in effecting a scheme of state aid to 'three separate forms of Religion, and possibly to every congregation of Dissenters and Jews upon the same principle'. A phrase which the Governor had used to depict an increased observance of religion in the colony - the people becoming 'more attached to their respective Churches'⁴ - conjured up in the Bishop's mind a vision of decreased observance of Anglicanism, and met with his instant opposition and he delayed acceptance of the

¹N.S.W. Government Gazette, 12 Oct. 1836, pp.762-4.

²See William Mann, Six Years Residence in the Australian Colonies..., London 1839, p.213; J. West, op. cit., I, p.198.

³Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835 (No.82), H.R.A., xviii, 208.

⁴Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, ibid., xvii, 227.

bishopric to make his position clear to the Secretary of State.¹ After returning to the colony, he continued to represent to Bourke 'both in conversation and by letter his opinion of its iniquity and impolicy'.²

Yet Broughton seems to have expressed his disapproval hardly at all to the colony at large. This could have been only a tactical silence, adopted for three reasons. First, he considered it more important to form alliances and wage war against the proposals for education which Bourke had put forward at the same time. Secondly, the Anglicans were still expected to get the lion's share of the state aid - by means of their numbers and their wealth, and hence their ability to contribute the amounts which the Government would subsidize.³ This, in fact, is what did happen; and Broughton realized the value of the promised aid far too clearly to allow himself to be over-drastring in his opposition. Hence, in the following years, when Broughton spoke out more publicly, he could be heard both condemning the Church Act, and fighting to preserve it.

Basically in Broughton's opinion the act was wrong - as liberalism itself was wrong.

By the Government plan of aid encouragement is given to the lax and dangerous opinion that there is in religion nothing that is either certain or true. The Government virtually admits that there is no divinely-instituted form of church-membership, or of doctrine, otherwise that one would in preference receive its support. The consequence is that the most awful truths of Christianity, which have been acknowledged and preserved in the Church from the beginning, are now frequently spoken of as merely sectarian opinions, to which no peculiar respect is due.⁴

Yet if the Church of England could get assistance only, or chiefly, by means of the Church Act, Broughton was prepared to

¹Broughton to Glenelg, 3 Dec. 1835, *ibid.*, xviii, 700.

²Bourke to Glenelg, 8 Aug. 1836, *ibid.*, xviii, 476. Cf. undated, unsigned draft of letter (Bourke to Broughton?), Dixon Collection (Add. 118).

³Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835, *ibid.*, xviii, 200-201. Cf. Gipps to Russell, 8 Feb. 1841, *ibid.*, 218-9.

⁴Broughton to S.P.G., 18 Aug. 1838, quoted in W. Pridden, *op. cit.*, p.348.

fight for it against any legislative inroads. A few years later, when restriction was placed on the Church Act by means of Schedule C in the Constitution Act (1842), the main opposition to the decision was again to come from W.G. Broughton. If the bishop wanted as little state aid as possible to be given to other denominations, the main thing was to secure as much aid as he could for his Church.

The third tactical reason for Broughton's comparative silence in 1836 was that the measure had overwhelming support among the colonists. The Sydney Herald, no lover of Bourke and his policies, and extremely critical of the educational proposals which the Governor considered the complement to the Church Act, congratulated the colonists on the liberality of the scheme for Churches. It added that there appeared to be 'no dissenting voice on this subject'.¹ The claim was well supported by the fact that only one letter appeared in the Herald specifically on the bill for the Church Act. This was critical of minor details, but pronounced the bill good: 'All the evils of an Establishment will be removed, while the advantages of an Establishment are preserved.'²

The Colonist was also strongly opposed to Bourke's plan for education, and highly critical of the general standard of legislation passed in the 1836 session, but it hailed Bourke's recommendations about the Churches, and Glenelg's approval of them, as 'the Magna Charta of the Religious Liberty of this infant Empire' and excepted the Church Act from censure.³ A prevailing attitude was well expressed a little later, in the course of the education battle of the same year, by one who condemned Anglican ascendancy and pretensions in the words:

¹Herald, 4 July 1836, p.2, c.1.

²'A Spectator', ibid., 4 Aug. 1836, p.2, c.7. 'Nemo' (ibid., 13 Oct. 1836, p.2, c.6) did attack the Church Act as a 'feeler' towards a direct attack on Protestants by Catholics, but his main concern was with education.

³Colonist, 16 June 1836, p.185; 30 June 1836, p.201; 25 Aug. 1836, p.265. On 20 Apr. 1837 (pp.125-6), it urged the enlargement of the Act to include the Wesleyans.

It is too late in the history of the world...to transfer the antiquated institutions of England, which she labours to throw off, to a new Colony, where they have never existed.¹

Bourke, therefore, had good reason to report that, if opposition could have been aroused, the Bishop of Australia would have brought it up 'in array', but, as it was, the measure had met with 'the sincere and grateful acquiescence of all classes'.² It would certainly have been impossible for Broughton to have defeated the measure at that time. Even to try hard to do so in public would have been extremely damaging both to himself and to his denomination. Broughton was never intimidated, but he could be wise enough to choose his time and method, and sometimes even to admit defeat.

Part of the popular support was born - as church building in England was born - of a union of prudence and charity. As Bourke's successor, Sir George Gipps, was to tell the Legislative Council in his opening address, the numerous churches in progress (as a result of the Church Act) showed a very satisfactory desire to 'supply moral and religious instruction to the people'. Yet, he continued, much remained to be done before the bad impressions of the colony caused by the convict system could be dissipated in quarters where it was desirable to 'maintain a good repute', and before the standard of morals could, in actual fact, be raised.³ The earnest citizenry of New South Wales appreciated the value of getting a good name for the colony, they were aware of dangers to their own position and well-being unless the condition of the lower orders was improved, and they often had, also, a genuine sense of duty towards the less privileged.

The whole flux of opinion about the Established Church in Britain was transmitted to the colonies too. Very often the colonists cared as much for a good name and good morals as for any

¹'Catholic Protestant', Herald, 13 Oct. 1836, p.3, c.1.

²Bourke to Glenelg, 14 Sept. 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 537.

³V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

particular denomination of Christians, and were not inclined to favour one sect at the expense of others. Even sturdy supporters of their own denomination were seldom untouched by the century's tolerance, or could at least see that, if they wanted full rights - and Government financial aid - for their own Church, they had to grant equal rights to the others.

The Church of England could only aim at limiting or slowing this levelling tendency. The Presbyterian Church's contention was that, as the Established Church in Scotland, it was entitled to equal treatment, even if the Church of England had retained an aura of prestige, a weight of numbers and the advantage of direct official connection with the parliament at Westminster.¹ The Catholic Church was busy securing aid for itself; and a vigorous pamphlet war had been fought between Roger Therry and the Rev. W.B. Ullathorne on the one side, and Archdeacon Broughton and the Rev. Henry Fulton on the other, in 1832-3. The Catholics were winning, having secured increased financial aid in 1832 and receiving liberal gifts from Protestants in these years towards their cathedral;² but they still had to concentrate on demonstrating their loyalty and respectability, on better securing their own rights, and on pointing out the implications of their numbers in the colony and of Catholic emancipation.³ They had little chance of arguing against aid for other denominations. The Wesleyans were in no position to attack the legislation either; they had to see that they were enabled to share in it to the full, and they took their stand on two points - their orthodoxy (as opposed to Rome) and their independence (in defiance

¹It was because he seemed not to appreciate this point (though, as a Scot, he must have), that Governor Brisbane had been rapped over the knuckles (H.R.A., xi, 346-7).

²J.B. Polding, A Report, containing the Pastoral Address...at the Cathedral Church of St. Mary, Sydney, on Sunday, July 3, Sydney 1836.

³See, e.g., Polding to Bourke, 6 May 1836, V. & P., N.S.W., 1836; and R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years Residence in New South Wales and Victoria, London 1863, p.148ff.

of Canterbury).¹

The major non-Anglican denominations were naturally delighted with the Act. The ministers and elders of the Presbytery of New South Wales expressed 'unmingled feelings of gratitude and joy'.² The Catholics farewelled Bourke with an address which referred with 'the highest respect' to Bourke's adoption of 'that happy medium...best and fittest for the wants of the colony'.³ The Wesleyans welcomed Governor Gipps with an expression of their gratitude for the 'enlightened and liberal policy' of government which had never made them subject to persecution, and which had finally granted them 'the more formal and express recognition of their religious rights and immunities'.⁴ The Methodists, admittedly, were anticipating events by some months. They were at first kept from receiving aid because their chapels were not settled on the principles laid down in the Church Act, but in 1838-39 their legal position was cleared up and they received aid in the same manner as the other denominations.⁵

There was some conscientious objection to government assistance. From its first day of publication (1 January 1835) J.D. Lang's Colonist had spoken unfavourably of state aid, and there may have been more criticism of the principle if the colony had been less occupied with the schools question, or the Independents had been stronger. Yet even Baptists and Congregationalists were not un-moved by the scramble for aid and, although they maintained their principles on the whole, they were guilty of some

¹They welcomed Broughton with an address which lauded the Church of England as 'the instrument...of preserving to the British realm the blessings of Protestant Christianity' (Herald, 23 June 1836, p.2). But the earlier controversy over 'Church Hours' had shown their independent temper.

²Writing to Glenelg, 27 July 1837 (quoted in W.E. Gladstone, op. cit., p.271).

³Quoted in P.F. Moran, op. cit., pp.191-2.

⁴N.S.W. Government Gazette, 28 Mar. 1838, p.226.

⁵See 2 Vict. No.7 (1838), 3 Vict. Nos.2 & 7 (1839), Acts and Ordinances, N.S.W., 1838-42; N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1838, Misc. Q. 3; ibid., 1839, Q. 27. Cf. Col. Sec. to M'Kenny, 21 Nov. 1839, C.S.O.L. 4/3619, pp.172-3 (ML).

aberrations. The Rev. John Saunders and three of his trustees applied for help towards the Bathurst Street Baptist chapel, and the Independents at South Head also sought government assistance.¹ On entirely different grounds, the most conservative Anglicans deplored the Church Act in their hearts.² But they said little; no less than any other denomination, they needed state aid in their difficult task of building up institutional religion from the stump-strewn ground; it was far more important to get aid for themselves than to deny it to any other, far better to share it than to lose it altogether. Denominational attacks were to be made on the Church Act after 1836, but were to be aimed at getting either more aid or a greater share of existing aid. One thing which could not be changed was the acceptance of the principle of religious equality.

Colonial practice: Van Diemen's Land

Twelve months after the passing of the Church Act in New South Wales, a similar Act came into force in Van Diemen's Land.³ Colonel George Arthur had been sent a copy of Glenelg's despatch to Bourke and had been instructed to take similar steps in his colony. Arthur was in full agreement with the proposals, but his term of office was drawing to a close, and he had to leave the execution to his successor.⁴ Yet Arthur had helped push the legislation along by his own policy of ad hoc aid to non-Anglican denominations.⁵ The policy was opposed by such Anglicans as Chief Justice Pedder, but the Legislative Council as a whole desired the policy to continue. Indeed, the Council - by nine

¹Min. of Exec. Coun., N.S.W., 23 Feb. 1839, 4/1520 (ML). Cf. Gipps to Russell, 8 Feb. 1841, H.R.A., xxi, 218-9.

²See, e.g., W. Mann, op. cit., p.213ff.

³1 Vict. No.16, An Act to make provision for the Support of Certain Ministers of Religion and to promote the Erection of Places of Divine Worship, Hobart Town Gazette, 8 Dec. 1837, pp.1305-11.

⁴Arthur to Stephen, 3 Sept. 1836, CSO 16/28/687 (TA).

⁵Enclosures, Glenelg to Bourke, 13 Aug. 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 486-496; and Minute to Legislative Council, V.D.L., 5 Aug. 1836, Courier, 12 Aug. 1836, p.4, c.3-4.

votes to four - favoured the placing of Presbyterian ministers on the same footing as Anglican chaplains, after Hobart Presbyterians had petitioned for it in 1836.¹ The ground was therefore well prepared for the new Governor, Sir John Franklin, who set out to extend and systematize aid to the Churches in 1837.²

The Van Diemen's Land bill for a Church Act, in contrast to New South Wales, took a long time to win acceptance; it was laid on the table 10 July 1837 and passed the third reading 27 November. The final product was also more stringent than the mainland act. The Treasury in Van Diemen's Land was to grant sums, equal to the amount privately subscribed for the erection of churches, only between the limits of £300 and £700, and two hundred free bona fide members of the denomination were required to live within ten miles of the proposed church if it were to be built in Hobart or Launceston. The New South Wales act granted up to £1,000; it did not make Sydney a special case; it required only one hundred adult persons, living 'within a reasonable distance', to express their intention to attend; and it explicitly directed that convict servants could be included in the number.³ The southern colony's requirement of only eighty persons to form a congregation in places outside the two main towns did not give much in, since these eighty still had to be free persons and bona fide members of the denomination.

Stipends were not permitted to be as low in Van Diemen's Land as in New South Wales.⁴ On the mainland, the rate was £100

¹Courier, 12 Aug. 1836, p.2, c.2-3. The Tasmanian, 12 Aug. 1836, p.269, c.4, 'most heartily' congratulated the Scots, and suggested that the Catholics and the Wesleyans should do the same.

²Lieutenant-Governor's Address, 10 July, V. & P., V.D.L., 1837.

³This had been criticized in New South Wales on the grounds that convicts were too subject to removal - 'A Spectator', Herald, 4 August 1836, p.2, c.7.

⁴Lord Glenelg had been influential here, see Minutes of Executive Council, 15 Nov. 1837, EC 2/4, pp.507-10 (TA). It had also been 'presumed' that the people would supplement the state grant by an equal amount in N.S.W., but it was not always done (W.M. Cowper, op. cit., p.47).

per annum if there were one hundred persons associated with the church, £150 if there were two hundred persons, and £200 if there were five hundred persons. The lowest sum could also be granted, in special cases, where there were less than one hundred people in the congregation; and, where no place of worship could be built, but the scattered population (no number was fixed¹) desired the services of a minister, the Government was prepared to pay between £50 and £100 per annum, in amounts equal to voluntary subscription. The normal annual stipend of £200 fixed by the Van Diemen's Land act was the only item more generous than New South Wales provision - and even this, it was claimed,² was reduced by the higher cost of living in the island colony!

Stringency came out again in the Van Diemen's Land act in the matter of Government control. The ministers' appointments were to be confirmed by the Crown, and reason for dismissal had to be given to the Lieutenant-Governor. In contrast, the New South Wales act only required an annual declaration that the clergy were performing their duties well enough to justify the continuation of their stipends.

As in New South Wales, only the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Catholics were included in the Church Act of Van Diemen's Land. Any benefits the Wesleyans and other minor denominations received were to be by special annual votes, and they were not considered part of 'the Establishment'. Their exclusion was not because officialdom was unappreciative of the part they played in the community. Franklin, like Arthur before him, was quite emphatic in his approval of these denominations, and urged annual votes of assistance, especially for the Wesleyans, for whom Arthur had proposed a yearly grant of £400 in a lump-sum.³

The annual grant for the Wesleyans was approved by the

¹The minimum number of fifty free, subscribing persons was laid down in a similar provision in the V.D.L. Church Act.

²By the Chief Justice, Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4, c.4.

³Lieutenant-Governor's Opening Address, pp.4, 6-7, and Minute on Estimates, p.18, V. & P., V.D.L., 1837.

Secretary of State, and readily continued - later increased to £500 - by the Legislative Council.¹ In other ways, also, the Wesleyans received aid from the Government.² Furthermore, they were the fourth largest denomination in the colony,³ and, in the opinion of many, were not even Dissenters in the full sense of the term.⁴ It is therefore surprising that they were never included in the Church Acts. In New South Wales the difficulty over the manner in which the Methodist properties were held by trustees was overcome, and any similar difficulty could have been solved in the southern colony. Yet this was not the objection made in Van Diemen's Land; there, the Government's reason for exclusion was that the Wesleyans did not have a 'recognized governing body'.⁵ This was a peculiar notion. The Government may have been confused by an incident which occurred in 1836: members of a voluntary society formed to raise money to support Wesleyan missions⁶ foolishly claimed the right to administer the state grant of £400.⁷ Yet this was nonsense, and should have

¹See Abstract of Estimated Expenditure, V.D.L., 1837, and successive years, and Committee of Wesleyan Missionary Society to Chairman of V.D.L. District, 4 Nov. 1837, in V.D.L. District: Official Correspondence Ledger, Wesley Church, Hobart.

²For examples of money and land granted for churches, see Franklin to Glenelg, 30 Nov. 1835, GO 33/29 (TA), and Executive Council Minutes, 30 May 1838, EC 2/6 (TA).

³The five leading Churches in the 1838 Religious Census (of free persons), Proclamations, Government Orders and Notices, V.D.L., 1838, p.146, were: C. of E. 16, 094; Presbyterian 2,551; Roman Catholic, 2,288; Wesleyan 1,289; Independent 635).

⁴Cf. Courier, 5 Sept. 1837, p.1, c.4-5. On the other hand, Bishop Perry of Melbourne, to take one example, expressed doubts as to whether the Wesleyans, did not confuse enthusiasm and the appearance of religion with the substance (see The Church in the Colonies, No. XXIV..., London 1850, pp.126-7). Even Colonel Arthur doubted whether the Wesleyans did as much service to religion as to morality (H.R.A., xviii, 490).

⁵Opening Address, pp.3-4, V. & P., V.D.L., 1837. Col. Sec's speech, Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4, c.1, 4.

⁶The Hobart Wesleyan Missionary Auxiliary Society. When first formed, the Rev. William Bedford (Anglican) was on the committee! (See its Annual Report..., 1824).

⁷J. Orton to J. Bunting, 28 Nov. 1836, Joseph Orton's Letter Book, 1836-42, pp.27-8 (MSS A1719 ML).

been patent; for the governing body was the Van Diemen's Land Annual District Meeting, formally constituted by the British Conference in 1835 and meeting (for the first time) in October 1836. Prior to that, the governing body had been the united Annual Meeting of the two colonies. In spite of this, and in spite of various criticisms of the decision,¹ the Legislative Council excluded the Wesleyans from the Act and gave only the annual grant of £400.

Perhaps the Wesleyans were over-scrupulous. They had told the Executive Council that the phrase 'in communion' in the proposed legislation would shut them out from any assistance because only a small proportion of their adherents took Communion.² Probably, too, they included in their ranks numbers of persons who were dubious about accepting state aid; perhaps it was partly this which prompted the Courier to quote a passage from a British Wesleyan paper in which the principle of establishment was supported as a complement to voluntarism.³ Certainly the Wesleyans were wary when there was any possibility of the state, or state aid, interfering with their principles.⁴ But the main reason for Wesleyan acceptance of the grant, instead of pressing for full benefits under the Act, was simply the lack of a confident, aggressive spokesman. The Rev. Joseph Orton, the superintendent, wrote home suggesting that the matter could be taken up with the secretary of state, but he did not trouble to press the Wesleyan claims hard.⁵

Dissenters proper, particularly the Independents, were

¹Min. of Exec. Coun., 1 July 1837, EC 2/4, p.702 (TA); Courier, 29 June 1838, p.3, c.3; 27 July 1838, p.3, c.4.

²Min. of Exec. Coun., 10 Nov. 1837, EC 2/4, p.561 (TA).

³Courier, 18 Aug. 1837, p.3, c.2.

⁴See, e.g., V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 1 Nov. 1838, Q. 31; ibid., 3 Oct. 1839, Appendix.

⁵Orton to E. Hoole, 16 Aug. 1837, pp.66-7, loc. cit. Cf. J. West, op. cit., I, p.206. Contrast the Rev. W.B. Boyce (of N.S.W.) to S. Rabone, 28 June 1850, Meth. Ch. Papers, Uncat. MSS 197/3 (ML): 'I have so far gained every battle I have had with the Colonial Govt., and I hope to gain this'.

excluded from the Church Act in Van Diemen's Land quite as much by their own conscientious objection to connection with the state, as by any other consideration. In the Estimates for 1837, a 'gratuity' of £200 was provided for the Rev. Frederick Miller, the Independent minister at Hobart, but he refused to accept it.¹ There were compromises of this principle in the acceptance of grants towards the building of Dissenting chapels and in the payment of the Rev. H. Dowling, the Baptist minister at Launceston, for colonial necessity and denominational rivalry tended to make some members of these denominations depart from their principles.²

Pure voluntarism naturally retained some solid support. The Colonial Times thought that 'all ministers' ought to note the example set them by the Rev. Frederick Miller.³ 'An Independent' wrote to the Courier asserting, and then defending, the claim that voluntarism was scriptural.⁴ The Tasmanian gave publicity to the Voluntary Church movement in England.⁵

¹Abstract of Estimated Expenditure...1837, p.13; Colonial Times, 6 Sept. 1836, p.311, c.1, and Tasmanian, 9 Sept. 1836, p.300, c.1, both highly commended Miller for his action.

²The Particular Baptist layman, F.S. Edgar, writing to his parents, 8 March 1837, showed a willingness to accept Government aid - Twenty Three Unpublished Letters... (Tasmanian Collection, T.S.L.). Baptists petitioned for aid in 1836 and 1839 - cf. Franklin to Normanby, 19 Nov. 1839 (No.74), GO 25/8 (TA). Dowling's grant of £150 (which he justified on the grounds of his service to convicts) appeared in the Estimates for 1839, and following years. Miller's congregation accepted aid - J. West, op. cit., I, p.200.

³Colonial Times, 6 Sept. 1836, p.311, c.1.

⁴Courier, 2 June 1836, p.3; 23 June 1836, p.3; 30 June 1836, p.3.

⁵Tasmanian, 27 May 1836, p.173; 7 July 1837, p.220. Birmingham Dissenters formed the Voluntary Church Society in 1836, with the object of persuading the Church of England to separate from the state. (R.G. Cowherd, op. cit., p.154). The Tasmanian also listed some names of members of 'The Protestant Association for the Protection of Religious Liberty'; these were mainly Anglicans, and included H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, Lord Holland, and the Speaker of the House of Commons; their principles included a belief that 'religion will most beneficially flourish where it receives only voluntary support'. These were signs of the times.

And the fact that the New South Wales Presbyterian, J.D. Lang, was speaking in favour of voluntaryism (though still, at that time, receiving his state stipend) did not go un-noticed in Van Diemen's Land.¹

It was not usual, however, for the colonists to favour complete cessation of state aid. Self-help was much admired, and the need to spare the Treasury of excessive ecclesiastical charges was widely recognized; but the typical conclusion was that there must be a compromise between establishment and voluntaryism, as, in fact, the Church Acts of both colonies were. As the Courier once put it, the Church Act could be supported because of 'the combination in it of a modified voluntaryism, with secured provision, on a frugal scale to the clergy'.²

There was really widespread agreement on the necessity of Government aid of religion. 'An Independent' drew several prompt opponents. A later correspondent to the Courier, claiming to be a humble member of the Church of England, looked with fearful eyes upon the spirit of infidelity and liberalism, Popery and latitudinarianism, which was lying like Milton's Satan, 'extending long and large - floating many a rood', and threatening the whole surface and framework of society. Only full Government support could save the situation.³

The Courier itself looked also upon prevailing trends with a sense of foreboding. Reproving an Anglican attack on the proposals for the Church Act, it hinted darkly that there was something more real to fight than the doctrinal differences among Christians, and spoke, in quotation marks, of 'things indifferent...set to overfront us under the banner of sin'.⁴

¹The Courier attacked Lang on this account 11 Mar. 1836, p.2, c.2; 27 May 1836, p.4, c.3.

²Ibid., 29 Sept. 1837, p.2, c.3-4.

³'Vindex', ibid., 24 Feb. 1837, pp.2-3.

⁴Ibid., 5 Sept. 1837, p.1, c.5. The pamphlet attacked was An Appeal to the Members of the Legislative Council of Van Diemen's Land, by 'A Member of the Established Church of England', internally dated Launceston 12 Aug. 1837.

It considered that there was in England a 'contest between the principles of Constitutionalism and Republicanism' which could be reduced to a contest 'between infidelity and Christianity'.¹ The colony was not immune and, although the paper wanted no 'extravagantly sustained ecclesiastical establishment', it questioned the efficiency of voluntaryism 'in a country having so meagre and divided a population',² and declared that no man would question the need for increased Government aid.³ Even the Colonial Times, although filled with admiration for Frederick Miller, condemned Broughton's salary on the grounds that a considerable number of desirable itinerant preachers could have been supported on the episcopal stipend.⁴ Those who believed in the necessity of state aid clearly were in a majority, and they also favoured aid for all denominations.

In the discussion of the Church Act in the island, where the measure was very well aired for over four months, there were constant appeals to the principle of equality, and much sympathetic consideration for the practical difficulties of the various denominations. The Council passed resolutions to clarify a section of the act dealing with appointments to Anglican churches, but the Colonial Treasurer dissented from them because they appeared to deny the principle of 'the absence of all distinction whatever between the three Churches' - a sentiment which was echoed by the Tasmanian in an editorial.⁵ Similarly, when a special case was pleaded for allowing Wesleyans to sell buildings to which the Government had contributed, Captain Forster objected: he understood that the whole object of the legislation was 'to sink all sectarian differences'.⁶ The Courier attacked failure to make the salary of the minister of St Andrew's Church,

¹Ibid., 9 June 1837, p.2, c.3.

²Ibid., 28 July 1837, p.2, c.3.

³Ibid., 26 May 1837, p.4, c.1.

⁴Colonial Times, 5 July 1836, p.221.

⁵V. & P., V.D.L. (29 Nov.), 1837; Tasmanian, 1 Dec. 1837, p.386, c.3.

⁶Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4, c.3.

Hobart, equal to that of the Anglican Archdeacon.¹ Even Chief Justice Pedder, a bigoted Anglican, thought that fairness required a higher salary for Presbyterians, who were married men with families, than for celibate Catholic priests.² A suggestion that people in thinly populated areas would be better served if various denominations were allowed to go in together to get a church built was opposed by the Protestants, Matthew Forster and the Colonial Secretary; it would be unfair, they said, to Catholics, who could not unite with any other denomination.³

Such consideration for the Catholics was quite common. In New South Wales in 1836 there had been a virulent anti-Catholicism which, though not much in evidence in the brief period taken to pass the Church Act, was made very clear in the matter of education. In Van Diemen's Land there was much less bitterness. Some explanation of this lies in the fact (though the fact itself is unexplained⁴) that virtually all Irish convicts were sent to New South Wales before 1840. Governor Arthur described the Catholics in 1836 as having been 'an inconsiderable body',⁵ and free Catholics in 1838 were less than six per cent of the total population, compared with twenty-seven per cent of the New South Wales population constituted by Catholics (both bond and free) in 1836. The Catholic cause had also suffered by the ineptness of the lonely and alcoholic priest, Philip Conolly. As the Courier said, there was 'little to fear from this Church',⁶ and the sheer weakness of Catholicism in the island damped down the fires of anti-Catholicism.

The pure spirit of toleration and the optimistic opinions of the age of enlightenment were also in evidence. William Gore

¹Ibid., 29 Sept. 1837, p.2, c.5.

²Ibid., 28 July 1837, p.4, c.4. Pedder was probably more against Catholics than for Presbyterians.

³Ibid., 1 Dec. 1837, p.2, c.6.

⁴See L.L. Robson, op. cit., Appendix 5, pp.xxii-xxiii.

⁵Arthur to Glenelg, 26 Jan. 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 489.

⁶Courier, 5 Sept. 1837, p.1, c.6.

Elliston, the editor of the Courier, maintained that the moral claims of the Church of Rome upon a Protestant state were equal to those of any other Christian denomination.¹ When this drew a retort from 'A Protestant' that Rome was anti-Christian (such attitudes were not, of course, absent), the Courier replied with the lofty dictum that principles were never to be surrendered to expediency - not even when dealing with a group of people who maintained that faith did not have to be kept with heretics. The principle in this case, said the paper, was that denominations should be treated equally, with no sect dominating; and it denied that Catholics in Van Diemen's Land in 1837 would fail to keep faith. 'A Protestant' and one other writer reiterated the charge that Rome was treacherous, but the Courier was not to be shaken. Maintaining that no Catholic action in the dark ages could be worse than intolerance in the enlightened age of the nineteenth century, it went on to express its sympathy with the Catholic predicament in a sardonic passage.

Because the Roman Catholic religion is the prevalent one in Ireland, the misrule, the anarchy, the discontent, and starvation pervading that country, are to be ascribed to it, and British neglect, or injustice, is to be accounted as nothing.²

Striking examples of the same sentiments are to be found in other Van Diemen's Land newspapers of the period.³ Another supporter emerged, rather unexpectedly, in the Rev. John Lillie, minister of the Scots Church (St Andrew's), Hobart. Equal treatment - the national establishment of religion, rather than of one denomination - was urged by the newly-arrived Lillie in his induction sermon. He admitted that he thought there was an anomaly in giving aid to Catholics, and he certainly intended to combat the 'error' of Rome; but he wanted no 'artificial

¹Ibid., 4 Aug. 1837. (Apparent from later issues; actual issue missing from file consulted).

²Ibid., 18 Aug. 1837, p.3, c.2; 25 Aug. 1837, p.2, c.3; 5 Sept. 1837 (Supplement to 8th), p.1, c.6.

³Tasmanian, 3 June 1836, p.181, c.2-3; ibid., 21 Dec. 1838, p.404, c.4; Colonial Times, 21 Sept. 1840, p.4, c.4.

advantage' such as the denial of Catholic rights.¹ Lillie's position was a very common one in Van Diemen's Land. Even the letters of 'A Protestant' and 'Pro Ecclesia Dei' were couched in academic terms compared with the billingsgate of the Sydney Herald. Anti-Catholicism had little to feed on in the island.

Yet the introduction of the Church Act into Van Diemen's Land was not all plain sailing. It took nearly five months while New South Wales had taken only seven days, and there are a number of explanatory facts. There was a solid block of opponents in the Anglican clergy, and they were much more outspoken than their counterparts on the mainland. This was partly because the opposition was given more time to become vocal by the bickering over details in the Council, and by the uncertainty about the real numbers of the denominations (so that a religious census was taken in 1837, and re-taken in 1838). But there were more significant reasons. The lack of a large block of Catholics was one; while this reduced bitterness, it also reduced the ability to challenge Anglican claims. Secondly, the New South Wales act was smothered in a violent controversy over education, and there was no equivalent in Van Diemen's Land in 1837 to consume Anglican energies. Thirdly, the situation with regard to the provision of churches and the spread of population in Van Diemen's Land was not so urgent as in New South Wales, and less urgency left room for more bargaining.

The Anglican ministers presented their case against the Church Act at length. Archdeacon Hutchins and ten of his clergy, following the Archdeacon's initial expression of disapproval at an Executive Council meeting,² presented a petition against the bill to the Legislative Council. The main ground of the objection was that the bill committed the state to compromise and error. It was wrong in principle for the Government to

¹A Sermon preached by the Rev. John Lillie upon his introduction to the Pastoral Care of St. Andrew's Church, together with some Preliminary Observations in reference to the Ecclesiastical Arrangement for the Australian Colonies, Hobart 1837, pp.1, 6-7.

²Min. of Exec. Coun., V.D.L., 28 June 1837, EC 2/4, p.691 (TA).

support Roman Catholicism, or any other sectarian error.¹ Their case was publicized by an anonymous pamphlet which developed the argument at considerable length. It claimed that the different proportions of the denominations in Van Diemen's Land made any Church Act like that of New South Wales quite inappropriate; it deplored the iniquity of placing truth (the principles of Protestantism) and error (those of Catholicism) on the same level; it accused the modern liberals of trying not only to level all distinctions, but also to 'cast away all Creeds and Articles', and thus to leave men more open to error; and it denounced the bill as one which would weaken Anglicanism against 'those attacks which Romanism, aided by worldliness and Infidelity', would too surely direct against it.²

The pamphlet and the petition should not be judged too harshly. There was no appeal for state interference with, or direct penalty upon, Catholicism.

THEY would be left at full liberty to worship God in the way they deem most agreeable to the Divine Will; you would merely refuse to ASSIST in propagating opinions which to you appear dangerous to the best interests of themselves and others.³

Toleration was complete; only the principle of equality was resisted, and this partly for reasons which were not altogether unworthy. Catholicism in the clergy's eyes was not only wrong, but positively evil. Many nineteenth-century Protestants regarded Catholicism with the same mixture of superiority and fear with which many twentieth-century democrats regard Communism. In both cases, a wary toleration would be one thing,

¹Received by the Council, 20 Nov. 1837. Printed in Courier, 24 Nov. 1837, p.2, c.4. The absence of three names was hailed by Captain Forster in the Council - Tasmanian, 1 Dec. 1837, p.386. The three were W.H. Browne, R.R. Davies and W. Morris.

²'A Member of the Church of England', An Appeal to the Members of the Legislative Council of Van Diemen's Land against the 'Church Act', dated internally from Launceston, 12 Aug. 1837. At the time it was attributed to various people, but later was considered to be the work of Archdeacon Hutchins himself.

³Ibid., p.11.

but a state subsidy would be quite another.

The point in Van Diemen's Land in 1837, however, was that the state was committed to supporting one denomination financially. If one, and if - in fact - more than one had received assistance, why should not all be supported? Not only England, but Scotland and Ireland also were significantly represented in the colony. Nearly one third of the free inhabitants owed no allegiance to the Church of England, and many - possibly a majority - of the Anglicans were so in name only. Van Diemen's Land was not a theocratic, but a liberal state. It was obliged to place greater weight on the rights of citizens than on the rights (or wrongs) of sectarian theology. Distinctions between sects, it was felt, had to be based on questions of numbers, orderliness, the wishes of the sectarians themselves, and whether the sects contributed to the general welfare of the community or not. The Anglican clergy might have very well feared that toleration was just another name for indifference - at that time or in the future; they might have been genuinely repelled by what they considered the profound errors of Catholicism; but, as the Courier put it, the Government could not be a court of cardinals and pronounce on doctrine.¹

Anglicans had their special reasons for resisting the Church Act. The legislation was to deny them the prestige and pecuniary advantage of being the State Church - a position they had more or less assumed in the colony by official connection and habit (not by any explicit legal enactment). But this attitude only made many colonists specially resistant to the Church of England. The Presbyterians were vigorous fighters for their rights. A layman, James Thomson, had published a pamphlet in 1835 in which he argued forcefully for the full recognition of the Presbyterian Church because it was as much an Established Church in Scotland as the Anglican Church was in

¹Courier, 5 Sept. 1837, p.1. It flayed the pamphlet as 'a specimen of narrow bigotry' such as it had not expected to meet in the nineteenth century.

England.¹ An even greater debate between the Rev. John Lillie and Archdeacon Hutchins was to follow in the period immediately before and after the Church Act.² So much did the Presbyterians speak up that the Archdeacon felt that they were entirely to blame for its introduction and support.³

The newspapers encouraged the public to oppose exclusive Anglican aid. The Courier, no foe to the Church of England, still gave plenty of space to the Church Rates controversy and other pleas for reform of the Establishment in England;⁴ and it declared that since the Dissenters appeared to be getting the best of the battle at home, the whole question of establishment ought to be debated in Van Diemen's Land 'before the question is decided from above'.⁵

The consecration of W.G. Broughton in 1836 produced some vicious attacks in the Van Diemen's Land press. The Colonial Times, the Launceston Courier and, perhaps above all, the Tasmanian denounced the appointment in unmeasured terms. It was difficult to know how any ministry

¹James Thomson, Remarks on the Status of the Presbyterian Church, in the British Colonies, addressed to the Scottish Presbyterians of Van Diemen's Land, Hobart 1835.

²Lillie's pamphlet (previously cited) was followed by A Letter to the Rev. John Lillie from the Archdeacon of Van Diemen's Land, containing some Observations on the Preliminary Remarks to that Gentleman's Introductory Sermon, Hobart 20 Oct. 1837; A Letter from the Rev. John Lillie, in Reply to the Observations made... by the Rev. William Hutchins, Hobart 20 Dec. 1837; and (apparently) John Gregory, Review of the Public Correspondence between the Venerable the Archdeacon...and the Reverend John Lillie.... (The has not been seen, but was surveyed at length in the Tasmanian, 2 Feb. 1838, p.36, c.1).

³A Letter to the Rev. John Lillie..., p.13. This, of course, was a gross exaggeration. The Presbyterians were very critical of some of the details, and petitioned for alterations which they did not succeed in introducing - see Executive Council Minutes, 1837, EC 2/4, pp.512, 560 (TA) and Mackersey to Colonial Secretary, 4 Oct. 1837, CSO 5/94/2125 (TA). But there is no doubt about their strong support of the act in general.

⁴See, e.g., Courier, 14 April 1837, p.4, c.1; 17 May 1837, p.4, c.1.

⁵Ibid., 26 May 1837, p.4, c.1.

whether Whig or Tory, could have made such an appointment...when the Mother Country was convulsed...by the conduct of the Bishops in the House of Lords.¹

The United Kingdom was, indeed, demanding 'almost with one voice, the abrogation of the "order" of Bishops altogether'.² The ministers of the Church of England in the colonies, while they might with justice be described as 'the Clergy of the Revenue', were 'not an Established Clergy'.³ There was 'not BY LAW any Established Church' in the island; the Anglican clergy formed 'a military commissioned corps, of which the soi distant [sic] Mr. "WILL G. AUSTRALIA" [was] merely the senior officer'. J.B. Polding, the Catholic, having another bishopric to which his colonial diocese was attached, had 'infinitely greater claims to write himself JOHN AUSTRALIA'.⁴ Why should the people 'be taxed ONE FARTHING' for the support of this 'Wellington-man', whose motto ought to be 'BIGOTRY AND BLOOD', and who would only 'intrigue against the people, in favour of the Priests' and walk 'down to the Treasury...to receive his THREE THOUSAND A YEAR'?⁵

Scurrilous though much of this comment was, taken together with the more sober comments of the Courier (such as its statement that the 'political parson' was the most anomalous of all men living⁶), it contributed very much to public opinion about the Church Act.⁷ Whatever sympathy for the Anglican Church

¹Colonial Times, 5 July 1836, p.221, c.2.

²Tasmanian, 3 June 1836, p.180, c.3.

³Launceston Courier, quoted fully in ibid., 1 July 1836, p.214, c.2.

⁴Tasmanian, 15 July 1836, p.228, c.4.

⁵Ibid., 3 June 1836, p.180, c.3-4. Broughton's salary, in fact, remained at £2,000 per annum - Gipps to Stanley, 7 Aug. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 444. For rather more sophisticated attacks in the Sydney press, see Colonist, 9 June 1836, pp.177-8, and Sydney Gazette, 10, 23 June 1836.

⁶Courier, 1 July 1836, p.2, c.2.

⁷A comment on the influence of the press was made by a new paper, the Hobart Town Herald, 18 July 1845, pp.3-4; 'The influence of the periodical press is very great upon persons in the middle classes of life who are destitute of leisure or capacity to form

might have been called forth in reaction to these attacks, they were certainly unlikely to result in Catholics and Presbyterians being kept off the Government's ecclesiastical list. The Governor and Legislative Council had no need to fear that the basic principles of the Church Act would be widely opposed, even though the Anglican clergy were against them.

Questions of detail, not of principle, were the main subjects of debate, and the cause of delay, in the Council. On 24 July the main aim of objectors was to get a better deal for the rural areas. Let two or more sects combine in the erection of a place of worship, said Mr M'Lachlan. Reduce the minimum sum to be raised voluntarily to £150, urged Mr Kerr. They were countered by a mixture of practical and idealistic views. A congregationally divided group could give too little security; it was not intended to cover the country with 'twopence half-penny chapels'; the measure should not encourage carelessness about denominational loyalty (that would be indifference, not liberality); and there would be quarrels - the Quakers not liking to be kept waiting in the rain because the Presbyterians had preached too long.¹

This was typical of the debates. On principles nearly all the councillors were agreed: they wanted the greatest religious benefit of the community, by the equalization of the status of the different Churches and by a happy compromise between Government aid and congregational support. The Courier, in pointing this out, also claimed to have 'canvassed the sentiments of all classes' and to have found that the principles were 'heartily concurred in'.² With the Anglican clergy glaringly excepted, the newspaper was certainly right. And, at long last,

7 (continued)

their judgements from original information. In this colony the majority of the population, members of the Church of England, are almost wholly subject to periodical teaching adverse to her principles.

¹Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4.

²Ibid., 5 Sept. 1837, p.2, c.1.

on 27 November 1837 the Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council passed the Church Act by ten votes to one.¹

The immediate aftermath

Theoretical rights were not the main point of the colonies' Church Acts: they were meant to be practical, and immensely practical they were, although in both colonies they naturally took time to become fully effective, and never completely satisfied the Churches' wants. Two years after the New South Wales act was passed (i.e., in 1838), witnesses before the Committee on Immigration still described a great want of churches in the remoter areas, and pointed to some of the difficulties of church building. James Bowman's ability to contribute towards the erection of churches was limited to one place; he had made new purchases of land in other districts, but until they began to pay their way he could do nothing about churches in those areas. James Coghill considered that isolation would make it impractical for settlers in St Vincent to build a church, although they could enable an itinerating minister to keep a horse. The nearest clergymen (an Anglican and a Presbyterian) to Lachlan Macalister's place in Argyle were twenty-two miles away, and he thought that the means of religious instruction were very deficient. W.H. Dutton, who had stations at Maneroo, the River Hume, and Portland Bay, spoke of the lack of places of worship in almost the entire counties of Camden, Argyle, Murray, King and St Vincent. A.C. Innes, speaking of the other side of New South Wales, said that the country west and north of Port Macquarie - beyond the boundaries - was quite without religious provision.²

¹Archdeacon Hutchins had always refused to take his seat on the Council, and this day was no exception - see Franklin to Glenelg, 10 July 1839, GO 33/32 (TA). The Chief Justice and Thomas Anstey were absent. The single dissident was Captain Swanston who - until the last minute - had been a supporter of the bill; his objection was, once more, based on questions of detail. (Or apparently so; the reader is invited to make what he can of the report of the debate in Tasmanian, 1 Dec. 1837, p.386, c.1).

²Report from the Committee on Immigration, with the Minutes of Evidence..., p.814ff, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

Two years later still, the Diocesan Committee of the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. spoke in similar terms. The county of Bathurst had only one Anglican minister. The Liverpool Plains, many parts of the Hunter River district, the county of St Vincent, and other areas were either 'entirely destitute' or lacked 'all regular and certain administration of the ordinances of religion', and Bishop Broughton was becoming caustic about the failure of the Church Act to provide for such areas, where the minimum of £300 was unavailable.¹ Even in little Van Diemen's Land, the sister society was describing the period as critical, and urging the need to push forward and rectify 'the scantiness of the means of grace' in various parts of the colony.² A year or so later still, in a report signed by C.J. La Trobe, some 3,000 white settlers were described as being 'almost destitute', and 5,145 'entirely destitute of religious ordinances', in the Port Phillip District.³

Yet there had been much improvement, and there was real hope for more. The Church Acts worked no miracles, but they worked. James Bowman, waiting for his new properties to become profitable, knew that when he could contribute towards church building the Government would back him pound for pound - if he and his neighbours could raise £300 - and also pay the minister. The Macarthurs in 1838 were about to build a church on their estate. A month or two previous to Charles Campbell's giving of evidence, a clergyman had come to live in his district for the first time. There was general confidence that such clergymen were not only needed, but would be welcomed and provided for.⁴

The S.P.G. reports gave vivid glimpses of this other side, too. In one were reported nine new churches 'in different

¹S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.43.

²S.P.G. Report, V.D.L., 1841, pp.6-8.

³Religious Condition of the British and Native Population in the Interior of the District of Port Phillip, Report of Church of England Lay Association, New South Wales for 1844-5, pp.62-4.

⁴Report from the Committee on Immigration, loc. cit.

degrees of advancement', steps taken towards the erection of three others, and the arrival of two more Anglican clergymen in Van Diemen's Land;¹ and for the building of these churches full use was made of the Church Act.² From New South Wales was reported a growing seriousness about religion, the immediate taking up of all the sittings in the new churches, and the arrival of ten additional clergymen of the Church of England.³ The Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission in New South Wales, the Rev. John M'Kenny, said in 1839 that the last two years had seen 'a wonderful change' in things religious and moral. He attributed this to two things. One was the 'great number of religious persons' who had arrived as migrants and spread out into areas where there were no regular means of grace. The other reason he gave in these words:

The late stir that has been made in England and here, respecting the religious interests of the convict population, has led the settlers generally to desire the instruction and moral improvement of their assigned servants.⁴

The Church Acts - important parts of 'the late stir' - were clearly being put to much use. The Rev. Nathaniel Turner was deeply impressed by the obvious improvement in Sydney, to which he returned in 1839 after some years in New Zealand, and he reported that on the day of the opening of a new Wesleyan chapel at Parramatta, the foundation stone of another, on the opposite side of the river, was laid.⁵

For New South Wales, the Anglican report of progress from the beginning of 1837 to October 1841 included eight

¹S.P.G. Report, V.D.L., 1841, pp.5-6.

²Reference, by no means exhaustive, to the Minutes of the Executive Council 30 July 1838 - 4 Dec. 1838, showed seven of the nine churches as recipients of aid under the Church Act - EC 2/6 (TA).

³S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, pp.22-3, 42.

⁴Wesleyan Missionary Report, 1840, pp.28-9.

⁵N. Turner, Personal Narrative, II, pp.392-3 (MSS A1836 ML).

consecrated¹ churches, four churches opened by licence, fifteen churches in progress, twelve parsonages completed and eight in progress. There were buildings begun or finished as far out as East and West Maitland, Goulburn, Limestone Plains, Paterson, Mudgee and Melbourne; and the numbers may be compared with the ten churches and five parsonages built up to the end of 1836.² The Catholic Church 'made great strides' during the years 1839 and 1840 by taking full advantage of the Church Act 'without delay'.³ The result was that in 1841 they had nine churches completed and six in the course of erection, as well as some 'small chapels' either built or being built - twenty-five churches and chapels in all.⁴ Like the Anglican churches, these were concentrated in the most densely populated areas, but some - Goulburn, Bathurst, Hartley, Paterson - were fairly well out, and there was also a church being built at Melbourne.⁵ The total of twenty-five (built or being built) was a large advance on the 1836 total of five completed places of worship.

Presbyterian progress is indicated by the fact that in 1841 they had eighteen ministers (compared with five in 1836) and eight licentiates in New South Wales.⁶ There were also in the

¹Before consecration, Anglican churches had to be fully furnished. The Order for Consecration a Church, with a Church-yard, ordered to be adopted 18 April 1839, began: 'The Church is to be pewed, and furnished with a Font, and a Communion Table, with linen and vessels for the same; also with a Great Bible and Book of Common Prayer, a reading desk, a pulpit and cushion, and one or more surplices'. For an even fuller list of requirements, see Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, p.249 (12 May 1843).

²W.G. Broughton, A Charge delivered...6 October 1841, Sydney 1841, Appendix A.

³John Kenny, A History of the Commencement and Progress of Catholicity in Australia, up to the year 1840, Sydney 1886, p.185.

⁴Polding to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, 12 Mar. 1842, quoted in P.F. Moran, op. cit., p.240.

⁵Report of the Rev. Dr Murphy, quoted in ibid., pp.229-30, has been used here. Murphy's figures would suggest an even higher number of churches and chapels than Poldings.

⁶Minutes of the Synod of Australia, October 1841, Sydney 1841, p.40.

colony about forty-four Anglican priests and deacons (of whom twenty-nine had been appointed under the Church Act), twenty-four Catholic priests, eight Wesleyan ministers (excluding two missionaries to the aborigines), a Baptist and an Independent minister.¹ In round figures, and not excluding probationary ministers, there were about one hundred ministers of religion in New South Wales in 1841. The census returned 130,856 inhabitants,² making an approximate ratio of one clergyman for every 1,310 people. This was the best ratio since the first few years of the colony's existence. The Church Act and, in the case of the Anglicans, the splendid assistance of the S.P.G.,³ had been highly effective.

At Port Phillip the Churches received considerable help under the New South Wales Church Act. By 1840, when there were 5,822 people in the settlement, the denominations were well on the way towards proper organization. The Rev. James Forbes, the Presbyterian, was being paid £117.10.0. by the New South Wales Treasury, and nearly £1,000 had been collected towards a church. The Rev. J.C. Grylls, of the Church of England, received £150 from the Treasury, and a permanent church was being erected under the Church Act. The Rev. P.B. Geoghegan and the Rev. Richard Walsh served the Catholics, and the former received £150 from the Treasury. They had a temporary chapel made of the flooring boards they intended to use in a permanent church. The Wesleyans had a brick chapel, seating 150 persons; they received nothing from the Government, having no resident minister; but they were served to some extent by two ministers from Buntingdale aboriginal mission, which received £500 per annum from the state. The Independents had a brick church - not roofed - seating 400 persons, and were ministered to by the Rev. W. Waterfield, whose salary had been paid up to that time by the Hobart merchant,

¹Tegg's Almanac, 1841, pp.188-193. Cf. The figure of 106 in Gipps to Russell, 1 May 1840, H.R.A., xx, 605.

²V. & P., N.S.W., 1841.

³See S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1839, p.32.

Henry Hopkins. Independents excepted, the value of the assistance under the Church Act was high for all denominations.¹

In Van Diemen's Land there had been about thirty ministers of religion in 1837; by 1841 there were approximately fifty, of whom thirty-five received full state support, as distinct from the annual grants to the Wesleyans and the Baptist, Dowling.² With some 51,500 people in the colony, there was a minister for every ten or eleven hundred people - a marked improvement on the nineteen hundred to one in 1836.

The improvement in the provision of churches on the island can be seen from the accompanying table.³

CHURCHES AND CHAPELS, VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, 1835-41

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Churches and Chapels</u>	<u>In-crease</u>	<u>Sittings</u>	<u>Percentage of Population Accommodated</u>
1835	18	-	8,369	20.8
1838	32	14	14,000	30.6
1841	55	23	19,986	38.8

The trend is clear. Church and chapel building was sixty-four per cent greater in the three years following the Church Act than in the three years preceding it, and the percentage of the population which could be accommodated had increased to a reasonable figure⁴ in spite of a large addition to the number of inhabitants.

¹R.D. Boys, First Years at Port Phillip, 1834-1842, Melbourne 1959, pp.100-102.

²The number of clergy in 1841 calculated from Blue Book, 1841, pp.293-311 (CO 184/64, microfilm NL), plus V.D.L. Wesleyan District Minutes, 1841; Q.6; Melville's V.D.L. Annual, 1838, p.16; Third Report, V.D.L. Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, 1838, Hobart 1839, pp.8, 12.

³Compiled from Statistics of V.D.L., 1824-1839, Hobart 1839, Table 24; Statistics of V.D.L., 1838-1841, Hobart 1843, Table 37.

⁴It will be recalled that the Church Building Commissioners in England had considered it necessary to provide church-room for one third of the population. The churches and chapels in the table did not include 'many places used for public worship, and not entirely devoted to that object, and also smaller temporary erections' - Statistics of V.D.L., 1838-41, p.xiii.

For both colonies the summing up of the situation in New South Wales by Governor Gipps can be accepted. He considered the legislation to have been successful from several points of view. It had achieved its object of advancing religious instruction 'in a very remarkable manner'. It had also benefited the Church of England financially and by preventing that Church from being an object 'of envy or hatred to dissenters'.¹ Both the cause of religion and the principle of equality were being advanced by the Church Acts. But the Church Acts were already proving too successful when viewed from the angle of Government finance. In the two eastern Australian colonies the Governors and their councillors were becoming worried men.

¹Gipps to Russell, 8 Feb. 1841, H.R.A., xxi, 218-9. Cf. Tasmanian, 20 July 1838, p.228, c.4, where it is declared that the term 'dissenter' has no place in the colony, but all are in a state of religious equality.

CHAPTER 3

AFTER THE CHURCH ACTS: (1) GOVERNMENT
PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

Treasuries at bay

The sheer cost of the Church Acts to the colonial Governments soon gave them concern. If aid was to continue, it had also to be kept within limits; but the Governments were not sure how this was to be done. The early hope seems to have been that the need for aid would prove to be temporary, and that the Churches would be able to stand on their own feet if helped over the initial stages of getting established. In the 1833 despatch which began it all, Sir Richard Bourke had expressed the guarded hope that, in time, a system of aid depending on the amounts raised by the Churches themselves would relieve the Treasury of 'a considerable charge'.¹ In less formal language, he once said that he anticipated the day when the Churches would 'roll off State support like saturated leeches'.² But such optimism quite under-estimated the extent of the Churches' growth and the constancy of their demands.

Far more realistic were those who saw at once that the Treasuries could easily get into difficulties over aid to the Churches. Van Diemen's Land legislative councillors pointed repeatedly to the limited nature of Government revenue. Clerical stipends could not be increased beyond £200, said Captain Montagu, because even payment on that scale would absorb one twelfth of the revenue. Captain Forster maintained that he did not much like a voluntary system, but without some voluntary giving 'the power of government would be crippled' by the costs of church building.³ An attempt was made to get more churches

¹Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, H.R.A., xvii, 227.

²Quoted in J.S. Gregory, 'Church and State, and Education in Victoria to 1872', Melbourne Studies in Education, 1958-9, Melbourne 1960, p.12.

³Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4, c.4.

built in country areas by permitting two or more denominations to combine to make up the required number; but this was opposed by the Colonial Treasurer, John Gregory, because it could lead to a drain on the Treasury which the colonial funds could not stand.¹

In the years following the passing of the Acts there were special reasons why the colonial funds had to be spared as much as possible, and why the people were watchful of Government revenue and expenditure. The entertaining Colonial Times was not merely indulging in hyperbole when, after applauding an Independent minister's refusal of a state stipend, it said:

Before long, we trust, others of the clergy will be obliged to seek support according to duties rendered, and that the famished people will not be...taxed in order to procure turtle and port for the over-fed preacher.²

Van Diemen's Land in the mid-thirties and early forties was economically depressed.³ The settlement of South Australia and Port Phillip, and a boom in England, turned 1836 and 1837 into middling good years, but by January 1838, distress was again in evidence.⁴ A contemporary historian, the Independent minister John West, claimed that the demands of the Churches on the Treasury in 1838 soon threatened the Government with serious difficulties.⁵ The modern economic historian, Hartwell, dismisses this as 'a novel theory', and it was a quite inadequate explanation compared with the shortage of coin, falling wool prices, an adverse balance of payments, and small land sales. Yet West (though biased by his Independent principles) had a

¹ Ibid., 1 Dec. 1837, p.2, c.6.

² Colonial Times, 6 Sept. 1836, p.311, c.2.

³ Van Diemen's Land, between 1820 and 1850, experienced three very depressed periods (1826-7, 1834-5, and 1841-5), three moderate depressions (1824-5, 1838, and 1848-9), one boom (1839-40), and four periods of mixed prosperity (1820-3, 1828-33, 1836-7 and 1846-7)', R.M. Hartwell, op. cit., p.190.

⁴ Ibid., pp.205-9.

⁵ J. West, op. cit., I, pp.209, 219.

valid point: for a Government deriving its income from customs and land sales, the needs of the Churches under the Church Act were a serious drain on its depression-reduced resources.

New South Wales had similar, if not so constant, economic difficulties. The Church Act began to operate in auspicious years (which probably helps to explain its adoption). The period 1834-40 was one of 'feverish expansion', with wool coming into its own, British private capital flowing into the colony, a tremendous demand for land, and boom conditions all round.¹ In 1841 this came to an end - dramatically illustrated by a fall in land sales receipts from £316,626 in 1840 to £90,388 in 1841 and £14,575 in 1842.² Depression stayed with New South Wales (and all Australian colonies) until 1845. Even before this slump, Sir George Gipps, who replaced Bourke in 1838, had been deeply concerned about the cost of the ecclesiastical establishment. He acted strictly on the principle that Downing Street looked with a favourable eye only upon Governors who balanced their budgets,³ and being a chronic worrier about deficits, he was mightily alarmed when faced with one amounting to £102,365 in 1839. He did better (despite his annual pessimism) in 1840 and 1841 when he had surpluses;⁴ but, to keep him nervous, wool prices were falling after 1836, a severe drought began in 1838 and the demand for Government services of all kinds was increasing.

Gipps was opposed neither to the Churches nor to state aid. He was driven, he said, 'by the consideration alone of the state

¹Brian Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, Melbourne 1949, p.31ff.

²Ibid., p.55. For the causes (largely external), see ibid., p.71, or A.G.L. Shaw, The Economic Development of Australia, Melbourne 1958, pp.55-7.

³S.C. McCulloch, 'Unguarded Comments on the Administration of New South Wales, 1838-46. The Gipps-La Trobe Private Correspondence', Historical Studies, Vol. 9, No. 33, p.31.

⁴For the three years mentioned, see Governor's Minute on Finance, 6 July 1841 and 26 July 1842, V. & P., N.S.W., 1841, 1842.

of our finances' to protest against the amount of aid given to religion.¹ Soon after Gipps' arrival in the colony, he rashly reported that there was 'no want in the Colony of Clergyman of any denomination'.² The Home Government, not displeased to have this assurance, informed the S.P.G. (which was actively trying to recruit clergymen) that the amount being paid from the Treasury to churches in the colonies could not be increased, and that no guarantee could be given even of replacing men in vacancies which occurred.³ The denominations were notified that they must look for future support to the people themselves,⁴ and Gipps was told that the appointment of additional clergymen had been postponed.⁵

This drastic action was not persisted in, however, and the final result was in favour of the Churches rather than the Treasury. Bishop Broughton protested strongly against this violation of the Church Act, by-passing Gipps in writing to deny his statement that the number of clergy was adequate.⁶ The Governor was subsequently told that, although the funds of the colony might have to be spared temporarily, it was clear that there was need for an even larger measure of religious instruction, and that he must make the utmost effort to meet the cost.⁷ The Catholics also acted quickly, and were successful in getting more priests approved by the Government on the grounds that the quota allowed for in earlier years had not been filled.⁸ The victory remained with the Churches, and the problem with the Governments; but the Governors continued to protest or threaten.

¹Gipps to Normanby, 3 Dec. 1839, *H.R.A.*, xx, 408-9. Cf. Gipps to Russell, 1 May 1840, *ibid.*, xx, 605.

²Gipps to Glenelg, 9 Nov. 1838, *ibid.*, xix, 656.

³Normanby to Gipps, 26 Aug. 1839, and Enclosure, *ibid.*, xx, 294-5.

⁴Russell to Gipps, 31 Dec. 1839, and Enclosures, *ibid.*, xx, 464-7.

⁵Russell to Gipps, 20 June 1840, *ibid.*, xx, 673.

⁶Bishop of Australia to Russell, 5 April 1840, *ibid.*, xx, 813-5.

⁷Russell to Gipps, 11 Sept. 1840, *ibid.*, xx, 812-3.

⁸Russell to Gipps, 11 Sept. 1840 (Separate), and Enclosure, *ibid.*, xx, 815-6.

Gipps drew attention to the fact that in 1838 the cost of clerical stipends and of aid towards the erection of churches and parsonages had amounted to £21,303 - or more than one third of 'the expenses of Government' (Public Offices, Collection of Customs, Legislative and Executive Councils, Pensions, etc.) which were £51,914.¹ Furthermore the Governor expected a rapid growth in the Estimates, and he suggested that the time must soon come when Government contribution to clerical stipends would have to be proportioned to voluntary support - as was done in the case of church buildings. 'At present', he remarked, 'the Government is called upon to provide Salaries for Clergymen, without having the smallest power of setting limits to their numbers'.² By the end of 1839 Gipps was claiming that the cost to the Government of churches and clergymen in New South Wales had almost tripled, going from £13,242 to £34,066 between 1834 and 1840.³ His estimate for 1840 was too great, but the actual expenditure (£26,574) was double the 1834 figure,⁴ and - since new churches and clergymen made their appearance each year - £33,600 (or about eight per cent of the total ordinary expenditure) was spent in 1841.⁵ Gipps was very persistent. Several years later he returned to the attack and, in asking once more that no more clergy be sent to the colony, pointed out another example of the Government's lack of control over ecclesiastical expenses. Of the 104 clergymen of all denominations in the colony, about half had come out 'without any express authority from Her Majesty's Government'.⁶ This

¹This did not include such things as Administration of Justice, Police and Gaols, Public Works and Buildings, or Public Education. Total expenditure, excluding commissariat expenditure defrayed from the Military Chest, was £463,162. Ecclesiastical expenses amounted to only 4.5 per cent of the whole.

²Governor's Minute on Ways and Means, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

³Gipps to Normanby, 3 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 408-9. Cf. Gipps to Russell, 1 May 1840, ibid., xx, 605.

⁴Abstract of Revenue...and of Appropriation, V. & P., N.S.W., 1841.

⁵Governor's Minute on Finance, ibid., 1842.

⁶Gipps to Stanley, 3 Oct. 1843, H.R.A., xxiii, 171ff.

appeal was as futile as the earlier pleas, but there were instances of real Government obstruction of applications for permission sought by clergymen to go to the colony.

Archbishop Polding found himself enmeshed in red tape when he asked, while in England in 1842, to send out two priests as replacements for two who had died. Although this meant no addition to the number of priests, Lord Stanley was still referring the matter to the New South Wales Governor in 1844.¹ Another classic case, from a little later time, is that of F.T.C. Russell, an Anglican candidate for ordination. The S.P.G. recommended him and received a sharp note from the office of the Secretary of State: would the Society have the goodness to explain why it thought there were vacancies for chaplains in New South Wales? It took four months, and much consultation and correspondence, before Russell finally received permission to go out to Australia.² Examination of the letters covering Russell's case makes it quite clear that there was no real doubt in anybody's mind about the need for more clergymen; and that the real concern in governmental circles was about the cost to the Governments. It was always a matter of costs rather than of religious antipathy. When there was a surplus in 1844 and there appeared a strong likelihood of another surplus in 1845, Gipps himself recommended a request by Archbishop Polding for six priests to be sent out; and the Secretary of State, assuming that Gipps had made sure of the availability of funds, approved the recommendation.³

If the New South Wales Treasury was truly having a difficult time, the cost of the Churches to government in the characteristically depressed Van Diemen's Land was not any easier -

¹ Stanley to Gipps, 8 Mar. 1844, and Enclosures, *ibid.*, xxiii, 443-4.

² Grey to Fitz Roy, 27 Feb. 1847, and Enclosures, *ibid.*, xxv, 371-5. The final touch of irony was that Russell eventually proved to be a thorn in Broughton's flesh.

³ Gipps to Stanley, 15 Sept. 1845; Gladstone to Gipps, 24 Feb. 1846; *ibid.*, xxiv, 555, 787.

despite the 1839-40 boom. Governor Franklin told his Council in 1839 that 'the excess expended in 1838 under the operation of the Church Act' amounted to £1,901, and warned that this type of claim could be expected annually.¹ The Blue Books proved him right. From 1837 to 1842 the claims of the Churches increased from about £12,000 to over £15,000 because of 'contributions under the act' and 'additional clergy and erection of churches'.² Echoing an earlier lament from New South Wales, Sir John Franklin told his Council in 1842:

I have proposed the sum of £2,000 in aid of the erection of Churches and Parsonages under the Church Act. This is a large item of expenditure, for which no specific provision has been made in former Estimates. It has, however, been introduced under rights vested in the parties upon whose application it has been authorised by the Colonial Law, and is therefore beyond the control of the Government.³

It is significant that such amounts continued to be voted. The link between Church and State was still too close, and the Christian religion was too highly regarded as a moral asset, for the real difficulties of the colonial budgets to result in the Churches being cut off. But the Governments were seeing what they had not seen clearly enough at the time of the passing of the Church Acts. They were committed to meeting increasing claims without any safeguards; somehow they had to regain control over their own creations.

Restricting the Church Act in New South Wales

Control of its Church Act was secured by the New South Wales Government when the Imperial Government granted the colony a new constitution in 1842. The Constitution Act, together with Schedule C annexed to it, fixed £30,000 as the figure to be voted annually for public worship.⁴ The colonial Church Act was

¹Governor's Minutes on Estimates, V. & P., V.D.L., 1839.

²Duplicate Blue Books of Statistics, CSO 50/? [unnumbered addition to file/ to 50/6 (TA).

³Finance Minute for 1843, V. & P., V.D.L., 1842.

⁴5 & 6 Vict., c.76, An Act for the Government of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, Statutes At Large, Vol. xvi.

not formally amended; it remained in force in the sense that applications and grants were made according to its provisions, but it was no longer an 'indefinite appropriation act' - or, more strictly, the Government could, and did, choose to work within the limit laid down in the Imperial legislation. The Church Act was, in effect, radically amended.

The clear intention of the Secretary of State was to provide a means of escape for the colonial Treasury, although he did not advise Gipps on the point - apparently hoping that the colonial Government would take the initiative in clutching at the straw (or the nettle). The New South Wales Attorney-General, J.H. Plunkett, was in England at the time the Constitution Act was drawn up, but his advice on the colonial Church Act was contradictory, and left the Secretary of State confused and wary. Plunkett first stressed the popularity of the Church Act in the colony, and advised against any interference with it before the elections under the new constitution. He was afraid that there would be a religious outcry which would vitiate the whole arrangement. These comments so deeply impressed the Secretary of State that he underrated a second opinion which Plunkett gave.¹ Obviously sharing his Government's concern over the cost of the ecclesiastical department, the Attorney-General studied the Church Act again and, lawyer-like, discovered a loop-hole. The act had an introductory clause which enabled the money to be granted 'with the advice of the Executive Council'. By appealing to this phrase, and persuading the Executive Council to advise against the granting of additional money, the Church Act could be rendered inoperative with far less difficulty than Plunkett had at first thought.²

The thirty thousand pounds limit went into Schedule C, but

¹Stanley to Gipps (No.124), 24 Aug. 1844, H.R.A., xxiii, 732-4.

²Memorandum by J.H. Plunkett, 8 Oct. 1842 (Enclosure to preceding). K. Grose, '1847: The Educational Compromise of the Lord Bishop of Australia', Journal of Religious History, Vol. I, No. 4, pp.244, is therefore wrong in describing Plunkett's decision in 1845 as a 'remarkable volte face'.

no alteration was made to the Church Act. What enabled the transition to be made with reasonable ease by the New South Wales Council was the depression of 1841-45, which kept the demands of the Churches within the limit. The actual expenditure on the Churches in 1842 was a little over £31,000 (including £977 arrears).¹ In 1843, the year in which the Constitution Act came into force, the Estimates for 1844 based on expectations under the Church Act amounted to over £36,000. The Legislative Council flatly refused to vote more than £30,000.² But, as it turned out, the £36,000 was an over-estimate; private contributions in the depressed colony fell off, only a limited number of applications could be made, and there was a surplus of over £4,000 in 1844.³ The same thing happened in 1845.⁴ This played right into the hands of the Government, but it was only temporary relief.

If the £30,000 was to be voted and no more, it was necessary to decide how it was to be allocated among the denominations when their demands increased beyond that limit. A series of moves by the Churches added to the urgency of coming to a firm decision. By 1839 the Wesleyans were fully in the picture, and the significance of their inclusion was shown immediately. The £2,800 tentatively allowed in 1838 for the Wesleyans, Independents and Baptists rose in 1839 to £3,350 for Wesleyan aid alone (the others having rejected systematic state aid).⁵ The Presbyterians of the Synod of New South Wales (a large break-away group from the Presbytery of New South Wales) successfully petitioned in 1838 for salaries which the Government had withheld on the grounds that only ministers in connection with the Presbytery

¹Abstract of Revenue and Appropriation for 1842, V. & P., N.S.W., 1843.

²Gipps to Stanley, 21 Jan. 1844, H.R.A., xxiii, 348.

³Gipps to Stanley, 7 Aug. 1845, ibid., xxiv, 442-3.

⁴Total expenditure in 1845 was £27,900. V. & P., N.S.W., 1846.

⁵Ibid., 1838 and 1839.

were to be recognized.¹ The leading spirit of the Synod, J.D. Lang, renounced State aid in 1842 (after toying with voluntarism for years) and hived off once more; but, even after the Disruption in Scotland in 1843, it was usual for those Australian Presbyterian ministers who favoured the Free Church to hold on to their Government salaries.² Virtually all Presbyterians formed a charge upon the Government until the formation of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (Free Church) in 1846.

The Catholics were restive under the operation of the Church Act. One incidental dissatisfaction was that Bishop Broughton - 'the head of another denomination' - had an ex officio seat on the Executive Council, and thereby had a preview of, and a vote on, Catholic plans.³ But in 1844 the Catholics came up with a really significant proposal. Archbishop Polding told a meeting of Catholics that projected buildings at Abercrombie Street (Sydney), Goulburn, Maitland, Queanbeyan and Geelong would be delayed, although the conditions required by the Church Act had been met, unless a greater share of the funds was given to their Church. The meeting consequently passed resolutions pressing Gipps for a division of the £30,000 according to the numerical proportions of the denominations shown in the 1841 census. By the Catholic proposal the Churches would receive annually these amounts: Church of England, £17,581; Presbyterian, £3,136; Wesleyan, £772; Catholic, £8,511. Both the Church of England and the Catholic Church would get some three and a half thousand pounds more; and the Presbyterian quota would be reduced by several hundreds, and the Wesleyan allowance by £480.⁴ Put another way, the Catholics would have a seventy per cent increase, and the Wesleyans a forty per cent decrease.

¹For memorials and counter-memorials, see ibid., 1838. For the Act granting aid (2 Vict. No. 16) see Acts and Ordinances, N.S.W., 1838-42.

²J. McGarvie, Diary, 6 Jan. 1843 (MSS ML).

³The Humble Petition of the Catholic Inhabitants..., 14 July 1839, in H.N. Birt, op. cit., I, p.429ff.

⁴H.N. Birt, op. cit., II, p.71.

Gipps was well aware of the problem of distribution, but this suggestion did not at first meet with his approval. In reporting the request, he expressed a fear that allocation according to numbers would lead to proselytism and to difficulties being made over the numbers of each denomination among the assisted migrants. Thinking that the celibate Catholic priests could well be paid less than other clergy, and believing that some degree of favouritism towards the Church of England would not be unjust, he suggested that the proportion be fixed at the prevailing rate in the estimates, or at an average of the past few years, and not according to numbers.¹

The Secretary of State also favoured this proposal. When the British Government had passed the Constitution Act in 1842, he had intended (until deterred by Plunkett's uncertainty) to advise Gipps that the £30,000 should be divided at about the same rate as in the Estimates.² In 1844 Lord Stanley, still remembered Plunkett's initial doubts rather than his second thoughts (although the latter were expressed in the only written opinion Plunkett had given him). He thought Plunkett's opinion had changed radically and recently; but that did not displease him. He agreed to the £30,000 being allotted in the same proportions as in 1843. The amounts, he suggested, could be paid to representatives of the various denominations, who (subject to the Governor) could be responsible for appropriation; and surpluses could be invested to form a capital fund for each denomination. Furthermore, if Gipps desired it, Stanley was prepared to obtain advice on the legality of such a proceeding.³

But Gipps and his Executive Council finally chose another way. They reassured themselves that the £30,000 was to be

¹Gipps to Stanley, 21 Jan. 1844, and Enclosures, H.R.A., xxiii, 346-52.

²Stanley to Gipps (No. 124), 24 Aug. 1844, ibid., xxiii, 732-4.

³Stanley to Gipps (Confidential) 24 Aug. 1844, and Enclosure, ibid., xxiii, 736-8.

regarded as fixed by appeal to their own law officers,¹ and then decided - on 4 August 1845 - to make the allocation in the way the Catholics had requested.² The Denominations were to receive aid according to their numbers as shown in the 1841 census. So anxious were the authorities to be free from difficulties that they laid down that this division was to be fixed, and would not be varied if the relative numbers in the denominations changed with the years. They allowed, however, that no existing stipend was to be reduced, although they claimed that this meant the Wesleyans getting more than their share for some years. Since five-sixths of each denomination's grant was to be used for stipends, and only one-sixth for the building of churches and parsonages,³ here was restriction on the Church Act with a vengeance: only £5,000 each year for church building!

Applications for aid were still to be made according to the Church Act's provisions, and at that time actual applications were still falling short of the upper limit, but if church development speeded up as the depression passed and population increased, the Government of New South Wales was well secured against exorbitant claims. The act was less than ever what it appeared to be.⁴ The scheme was approved by the Imperial Government, but the Secretary of State (now W.E. Gladstone) was rather sceptical. He agreed that relatively stable arrangements were desirable, but doubted whether the allocation could be considered as fixed and final.⁵ He was right. Both the

¹Plunkett and Manning said: 'The Act of 7 Wm. IV No. 3 is not in our opinion repealed or in any way affected by the passage of the Constitutional Act, except that the amount of revenue out of which the payments under the former Act may be made without the express sanction is limited to the £30,000 before mentioned.' - PRO copies of missing Enclosures to Despatches from Governor of New South Wales, 1845, pp.3311-2 (ML).

²There was general public support, much to Broughton's disgust. See Broughton to Coleridge, 3 Jan. 1844, BP.

³Gipps to Stanley, 7 Aug. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 440ff.

⁴The colonists were well aware of this, of course. See, e.g., Report of the Church of England Lay Association for New South Wales, 1844-5, Sydney 1846, pp.3-4.

⁵Gladstone to Gipps, 17 Jan. 1846, ibid., xxiv, 712-5.

determination to keep to the £30,000 and the method of dividing it were greeted with denominational protests.

The Wesleyans objected to the claim that they were receiving more than their due, and challenged the accuracy of the 1841 census. Many persons actually connected with the Methodists, or whose children received instruction from them alone, had described themselves simply as Protestants, or had claimed their old denominational allegiances. Hence many who were served by the Wesleyans (and content to be so served) were excluded from Methodist numbers in the census. The Wesleyan District Meeting of 1845 resolved to circularize their members and adherents in an attempt to avoid in the 1846 census the damage done to their interests in 1841. In 1846-7 they put their claims before the Government itself. The census of 1841 had shown 3,236 Wesleyans in the colony, including the Port Phillip District. The Rev. W.B. Boyce, the Methodist Superintendent, estimated that the number which would be revealed by the 1846 census would be between seven and eight thousand, and claimed that the number in actual fact was more like nine thousand. Methodists, in other words, were four or five per cent, not two and a half per cent, of the population. Boyce was proved extremely accurate by the 1846 census, which returned 7,935 Wesleyans (4.2% of the total).¹ The Governor (Sir Charles Fitz Roy) was therefore memorialized for division according to the 1846 census - Anglicans to get less, and the other three more. The Wesleyans scoffed at the notion that they had increased by one hundred and forty-five per cent since 1841 while the Anglicans had increased by only twenty-eight per cent (as the figures seemed to show). Their cynicism was almost certainly justified. If, for instance, Methodists had increased between 1846 and the next census (1851) by one hundred and forty-five

¹R. Mansfield, Analytical View of the Census of New South Wales for the year 1846, Sydney 1847, p.81.

per cent their numbers at the latter would have been nearly 20,000. The actual number in 1851 was 15,000.¹ Although 'Other Protestants' showed an even greater real or apparent increase than the Wesleyans in 1846 (the increase since 1841 was given as one hundred and sixty-two per cent), and although emigration among respectable Nonconformists almost certainly increased in the 1840s, it seems likely that the Wesleyan numbers were seriously underestimated in the 1841 census. The Governor gave no proof of his claim that the later 'increase' was simply due to more Methodist migration; and examination of the lists of assisted migrants between 1837 and 1844 gives not the slightest indication of an increase in the small proportion of Methodists among them. There were 'Catholic' ships and 'Presbyterian' ships, but no 'Wesleyan' ships; the highest number found was seventeen Methodists among the two hundred on the Champion in 1842.² Fitz Roy was just trying to overcome the practical difficulties of re-allocation every few years. He did not want the Churches to be tempted to try to inflate their numbers in each census year; and he did not want the possibility of ministers being suddenly deprived of their salaries because the allocation to their Church was reduced.³

The Secretary of State recognized the justice of the Wesleyan case, and also the inconvenience of changing the system just before the proposed division of the colony. He recommended that the Council make a special grant to the Wesleyans, but the Methodists refused the offer before it reached the Council, being 'willing to suffer the loss of a few hundreds annually rather than disturb the religious peace of the colony'.⁴

¹Census of the Colony of N.S.W....1 March 1851, Sydney 1851, shows 10,008 Wesleyans. Census of Victoria...1851, Melbourne 1852, shows 4,988 Wesleyans.

²CS Immigration Lists 4/4826-7, 4/4860-1, 4/4885, 4/4891-3 (ML) were examined.

³Boyce's claims and Fitz Roy's retorts may be found in Fitz Roy to Grey, 27 Feb. 1847, and Enclosures, H.R.A., xxv, 376-87.

⁴Grey to Fitz Roy, 8 Oct. 1847, W.B. Boyce to Colonial Secretary, 3 June 1848, ibid., xxvi, 3,539.

There was a more significant and less relenting opposition than that of the Wesleyans. The Rt. Rev. W.G. Broughton, bishop of a Church with larger responsibilities, was not so ready to submit. His patience had been strained to breaking point by Government policy ever since the Church Act came into force. He had found in 1836 that no part of the Government allowance could be used to buy more than an acre for a church site, or one and a half acres for a house and garden; he argued that land was cheap and to keep a horse was a necessity for a clergyman, but he was told that to grant more would be to go further than the Church Act contemplated. He proposed (in 1841) to erect a number of small wooden churches at various points, at the cost of about £100 each; but the Government refused assistance - they were not the kind of building envisaged in the Act.¹ Broughton's report to the S.P.G. in 1840 was full of complaint about the refusal of Government assistance where the full amount of £300 could not be raised. Bungendore, Gundaroo, Braidwood, Marulan, and Carcoar were given as instances. On the River Lachlan and in the Durall and Castle Hill areas the scattered nature of the settlements, combined often with a contempt for religion and lack of principles among the people, meant that voluntary giving would continue to be insufficient; yet the Government, apparently preferring the ultimately much greater cost of putting down crime, refused to help those least likely or able to help themselves.²

On top of this had come the 'direct departure' from the Church Act itself by the fixing of the £30,000 limit. Broughton opposed this from the beginning. The Church Act had made provision for 'a perpetual appropriation of an indefinite portion of the General Revenue' which depended not on numbers, but on complying with the conditions of the Act. The Catholics, with

¹W. Pridden, op. cit., pp.351-2.

²S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, pp.33-39. Broughton also mentioned a church on the McDonald River being delayed for three years, waiting on a Government decision on a site (p.38). Cf. 'Clericus', Courier, 9 July 1841, p.3, c.1.

their celibate clergy, would gain a great advantage from their suggested arrangements, and the Anglicans would be injured.¹ So Broughton had argued at the time of the Catholic petition and the Legislative Council refusal to vote the full Estimate. He made similarly strong and bitter claims during the course of the Executive Council discussion in 1845.² Soon after the final decision went against the bishop, he resigned his seat.

Yet Broughton by no means gave up. The problem of the interior kept troubling him, and he kept troubling the authorities. While still an ex officio member of the Legislative Council (that is, before January 1843 and the introduction of the new constitution) he had proposed a tax on stock to raise money for religious purposes in the outback. The suggestion had been received - to his surprise, he said - with a degree of indifference which disheartened him.³ This particular suggestion he never renewed, but the revision of the system of selling Crown land between 1844 and 1847 gave him an opportunity to press the claims of the interior on the Government again. This chance he seized with characteristic vehemence.

He described the Church Act as 'vitally defective in principle, and the most absurd and mischievous example of Legislature in the annals of the world', because it did not make possible much state aid for the districts beyond the boundaries - the minimum of £300 could seldom be raised among scattered settlers and squatters who would make no improvements to their 'own' land while they lacked security of tenure.⁴ His desire to see the land securely held, but bought at a price which would provide funds for Government support of the Church, brought him once, and at one point, into agreement with Governor

¹Broughton to Gipps, 18 Jan. 1844, H.R.A., xxiii, 351-2.

²'Copy of a Paper entered on the Minutes of the Executive Council ...4 August, 1845', PRO copies of missing Enclosures to Despatches, 1845, pp.3312-3315 (ML).

³Broughton to S.P.G., 3 April 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 495.

⁴Broughton to S.P.G., 22 June, 1844; Broughton to 'a Private friend in England', 17 Feb. 1846, ibid., xxiv, 496, 782.

Gipps. Yet the bishop - trying to remedy both policy and situation - continued to paint a dark picture of the effects of Government practice.

The situation in April 1845, as Broughton described it, was that five Anglican clergymen had charge of eight districts beyond the boundaries¹ and of two counties within the boundaries.² Ten other districts were 'altogether destitute'.³ Within the eighteen districts beyond the boundaries there were at least 14,000 people and, apart from occasional visits from Catholic and Presbyterian clergy to parts of the area, only the five Anglicans served them. The Government had only spent about £400 altogether on religious provision, while the annual expenditure for civil purposes was nearly £15,000 and the revenue from the area was very much more than that. It seemed to the bishop that it was Government policy to allow 'the Establishment of the dominion of Atheism'.⁴

Broughton managed to get the Archbishop of Canterbury and the S.P.G. to press his claims upon Imperial authorities, so that the Secretary of State told Gipps to try to improve the situation by suitable provision from land sales revenue.⁵ This does not seem to have been done. A House of Commons Bill was then being prepared to amend the Act regulating the sale of waste land in the colonies, and Gipps recommended that a clause be included in it to the effect that one sixth of the rents and royalties could be granted in aid of public worship outside the nineteen counties.⁶ But his despatch went unanswered and no

¹Moreton Bay, Darling Downs, Clarence River, McLeay River, Maneroo, Murrumbidgee, Murray River and Portland Bay.

²Stanley and Auckland.

³New England, Liverpool Plains, Bligh, Wellington, Lachlan, Murray, Western Port, Bourke, Grant and Gippsland.

⁴Broughton to S.P.G., 3 April 1845, *H.R.A.*, xxiv, 494-5. In 1844 the four itinerating Anglican chaplains beyond the boundaries were maintained by the S.P.G. - Gipps to Stanley, 3 April 1844 (no.75), *ibid.*, xxiii, 510. Cf. *S.P.G. Report, N.S.W.*, 1837, pp.27-8; 1838, pp.34, 47.

⁵Stanley to Gipps, 30 Aug. 1845, *ibid.*, xxiv, 493.

⁶Gipps to Stanley (No. 5 and 6), 10 Jan. 1846, *ibid.*, xxiv, 689-97.

such clause appeared in the amending Act¹ or in the Order in Council establishing the rules and regulations under the Act.² Aid for the interior remained smaller and less certain than this.

One source of income was a grant which had been given to clergymen ministering to convicts in remote parts since 1836 - an annual grant totalling £450.³ Broughton's protests when Fitz Roy proposed to discontinue the grant upon the break up of the convict establishment resulted in the allowance being continued until 31 March 1850. It was granted in the proportion of £300 to Anglicans, £100 to Catholics and £50 to Presbyterians.⁴ Some help was also given from the surpluses under Schedule C in various years. Destitute areas and clergymen beyond the boundaries benefited from the surpluses of the years 1844-45,⁵ and, from surpluses carried over into 1847 and 1848, contributions were made to such remote projects as an Anglican personage at Cooma and a Catholic church on the Darling Downs.⁶ But the help was limited. The Legislative Council was not going to create additional difficulties for its Treasury just after it had managed to reduce the embarrassment of its Church Act. While the Council had itself evaded the letter of that law, its officers dealt with applications for aid strictly according to regulations. When Presbyterians at Bathurst asked for £57

¹9 & 10 Vict., c. 104 (28 Aug. 1846), Statutes at Large, 360-2.

²Order in Council, 9 Mar. 1847, V. & P., N.S.W., 1847, I

³Actually £500 had been sanctioned - Glenelg to Bourke, 12 May 1836, H.R.A. xviii, 418. Broughton had been the moving spirit behind this decision, which enabled a like grant of £300 for Van Diemen's Land.

⁴Fitz Roy to Grey, 12 Feb. 1848, and Enclosure, ibid., xxvi, 229ff; Grey to Fitz Roy, 10 Nov. 1848, ibid., xxvi, 675ff.

⁵Fitz Roy to Gladstone, 29 Sept. 1846, ibid., xxv, 199-200.

⁶Statements of Expenditure...for...purposes specified in Schedule C, 1846 and 1847, V. & P., N.S.W., 1847 and 1848. One source from which help did not come was from the money collected by the Agent for Church and School Lands. In 1850 this amounted to £4,832 and was devoted to a house for the Bishop of Melbourne, to National Schools (Sydney District) and to Denominational Schools (Port Phillip) - ibid., 1851 (First Session).

towards the erection of a church tower, they were refused because more than three years had elapsed since their previous request for aid. Up to £200 would have been available (at least in theory) if application had been made within the three years.¹

Even the Lord Bishop of Australia could not pry the door of the Treasury further open, and the Bishop of Melbourne was in an even worse plight until the passing of the Constitution Act for Victoria in 1851. This appended a 'Schedule B' which allowed an annual grant of £6,000 towards 'Public Worship'.² Until then (to take only the Anglican crisis) all the funds in the New South Wales 'Schedule C' were exhausted after the bishop and three of his clergy were paid.³ The remaining clergymen - approaching a score - had to be supported voluntarily, from S.P.G. funds and other uncertain sources, to the very grave concern of Dr. Perry.⁴

Government support for religion continued, and was far from negligible. The New South Wales Churches shared their £30,000 until aid was abolished in 1862. The new colony of Victoria had state aid associated with its Constitution Act, increased that aid to £30,000 in 1853, and gave it until 1870. The spirit of the original Church Act in New South Wales had by no means vanished. Yet the new colony was initially committed to a very small sum, and the increase in 1853 (after gold had brought new wealth) actually resulted from an attempt to abolish aid.⁴ There was considerable addition, here, to the writing which had appeared on the wall of the older colony's council chamber in the mid-forties, when New South Wales imposed a firm restriction upon

¹ Memos, 17 and 20 Sept., on W. Stewart to Col. Sec., 18 Aug. 1847, CSIL 2/1717 (ML).

² 13 & 14 Vic. c. 59, Statutes At Large, xx.

³ Statements of Expenditure...1850, V. & P., N.S.W., 1851 (First Session).

⁴ The Church in the Colonies, No. XXIV..., London 1850, p. 15; Perry to Broughton, 4 June 1850 (Seperate), BP. The English funds of S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. were also virtually exhausted - see, Report of...Lay Association, 1844-5, p. 4; First Report of Melbourne Diocesan Association, 1849, p. 9: cf. K. Grose, op.cit., pp.244-5.

⁵ See J.S. Gregory, op.cit., p. 33ff.

the Church Act. Within ten years of the passing of that measure, in spite of the continuation of aid, it was widely accepted that all state aid to religion must eventually cease. This opinion was not the same as Bourke's optimistic expectation that the Churches, once afloat, would happily hoist their own sails; it was the sterner resolve that, for the sake of government finance, the Churches must be cut adrift and left to make their own way.

The problem in Van Diemen's Land.

Definite limits to the Church Act did not come so quickly in Van Diemen's Land, but the Legislative Council tried very early to get safeguards. The island's Church Act was amended three times between 1838 and 1841, two of them being restrictive. The first amendment was an extension of aid: it allowed the payment of a minister before a church was erected, so that he could encourage and organize the project. Three years later, however, a second amending act protected the Government against abuse, or excessive use, of this provision by enabling the salary to be stopped unless a church had been commenced within six months.¹

A more significant amendment was that of 1840, which gave the Governor and Executive council power to refuse aid, even when an application conformed with the requirements of the Church Act, if they considered that the church or minister's dwelling was not strictly necessary.² The contemporary historian, the Rev. John West, was close to the truth when he described this as a subversion of the Church Act: it made aid depend on the impartiality of the administration rather than the needs of the Churches.³ There had been in the New South Wales Act from the beginning the clause 'with the advice of the Executive Council'

¹These were the acts 2 Vict., No.17 (1838) and 5 Vict., No. 9 (1841), Hobart Town Gazette, 7 Dec. 1838, pp. 1125-6, and Acts of the Lieutenant-Governor and Legislative Council, V.D.L., 1841

²4 Vict., No. 16 (1840), ibid., 1840.

³West, op. cit., I, p. 209. Here, and on p. 207, West has confused the 1840 and 1841 amendments.

(to which Plunket appealed in 1842), so the Van Diemen's Land amendment was not a radical innovation. The significant difference between the two colonies was that the clause had been included formally in the New South Wales Act and largely overlooked, whereas in Van Diemen's Land the amendment was deliberately passed two years before the mainland remembered and used its own clause. Clearly the southern colony was set on securing a way of escape from exorbitant demands. This was further revealed in the very close watching of various claims for aid. The Executive Council recommended in 1838 that forage be allowed only to ministers in country areas.¹ Repeatedly applications for aid for church building were refused, or referred back to the claimants, because not all the requirements of the Act had been met.² In 1843 the Audit Office advised the Colonial Secretary to insist that detailed contractors' bills be included with applications for assistance.³

Yet the Churches were still supported by the Government at a large and increasing cost, and this was quite as significant as the attempt to limit aid. As in New South Wales, the Government was in a dilemma; it agreed that the Churches should be given substantial aid, yet knew at the same time that the ever-growing drain on colonial funds had to be checked. The Van Diemen's Land amendment of 1840 was really mild, and was a sign of the importance the Government attached to the support of religion when compared with a proposal which had immediately preceded it. Charles Swanston, manager of the important Derwent Bank, and the only dissident at the original passing of the Church Act, wanted the measure repealed altogether because of the 'enormous and increasing' cost to the Treasury.⁴ Seen from this angle, the actual amendment was not even a compromise: it was a clear decision in favour of the Churches, in spite of the Treasury's difficulties.

¹Min. of Exec. Coun., 15 June 1838, EC 2/6 (TA).

²See, e.g. *ibid.*, 10 Oct., 1838, 8 Jan., 17 April, 29 April, 8 May, 2 July 1839.

³CSO 8/85/1943 (TA).

⁴V. & P., V.D.L., 1 Sept., 1840.

Transportation caused additional problems in the colony. Between the ending of transportation to New South Wales in 1840 and its beginning for Western Australia in 1850, Van Diemen's Land (and its Norfolk Island dependency) became 'the great moral drain of the Mother-country'.¹ Yet the colony had to carry the cost of police and gaols which had been thrown upon it by the British Government in 1836, and which increased with the convicts, and also cope with the abolition of the assignment system for male convicts in 1840. Instead of the prisoners being assigned to private settlers, they were to be employed only in Government probation gangs. This made the problem of costs worse because settlers were denied the cheap labour which contributed to their prosperity, the agricultural products of the convict settlements were sometimes dumped on the market and, in general, the system proved more expensive to the colonial Government.

On top of this the colony was in the grips of serious depression from the end of 1840 to the beginning of 1846, and the proceeds from the sale of Crown Lands fell off to nothing. In one sense the presence of the convicts helped, for Commissariat expenditure (by England, for the military garrisons, etc.) made the depression easier and the recovery quicker; but the fear of a labour shortage as a result of non-assignment of convicts, and the unrealistic economic theory that an increased labour supply would lower wages and increase profits, involved the colony in an expensive and immediately harmful immigration programme. In an attempt to make ends meet, under pressure of the Home Government's balanced-budget theory, Sir Eardley Wilmot resorted to borrowing, salary-cuts and the recommendation of various taxes. The borrowing annoyed the Colonial Office, and the proposed taxes, the salary-cuts and the whole difficult position incensed the colonists. Already the latter were deeply resentful of having to pay for the keep of Britain's criminals and had political aspirations for responsible government. The cry 'No taxation

¹So described in Eighth Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, Hobart 1844, p. 4.

without representation' was raised, for the Legislative Council consisted of 'official' and nominated 'non-official' members only. Council members, opposed to taxation and resentful of their inferior status, repeatedly challenged the votes for the expenses of the Police Department, and resolved that much of this charge should be paid by the Home Government. In 1845, after refusing to vote for Wilmot's revenue bills, the six non-official members resigned, to be hailed by the colonists as heroes and the 'Patriotic Six'. The worst was over by 1846. The Council was reassembled, the Imperial Government again shouldered part of the cost of police and gaols, and the depression was passed. But the finances of the colony were still not easily managed, for the system was basically unsatisfactory and 1846-7 were moderately depressed years. Such a situation made it hard to continue state aid and encouraged attempts to limit this expense.¹

In 1844, with more vigour than polish, Wilmot said: 'the Colony has provided for religious instruction more liberally than the present state of its finances admits of'. One sixth of the colonial income (or £18,492) was given in support of the Churches. He admitted the Government quandary: the 'greatly disproportioned' charge was a necessity caused by the convict population.² In this he was supported by the Finance Committee which reported in January 1845, saying quaintly:

...in practice it is found impossible for the Colony to refuse its aid, even more liberally than its limited means will justify. To do otherwise would be a reproach.

On the other hand, since aid could not be carried much farther,

¹This summary has been based on Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Sir John Franklin in Tasmania, 1837-1843, Melbourne 1949, pp. 222ff, 308ff; W.A. Townsley, The Struggle for Self-Government in Tasmania, 1842-1856, Hobart 1951, p. 71ff; and R.M. Hartwell, op. cit., pp. 97, 190, 237ff, 254.

²He also said that the main difficulty was the cost of police, gaols and judicial establishments - Governor's Minute, 23 July, V.& P., V.D.L., 1844.

the Committee urged refusal of 'all fresh applications for assistance under the Church Act.'¹ Later in the year, when the Estimates were being reduced all round, Wilmot reported to the Council a reduction in the allowance for Church expenditure - chiefly due to disallowing forage for clergymen's horses. The Governor recalled the Secretary of State's despatch of 31 December 1839, which had warned that the continuation of stipends could not be absolutely guaranteed, and he expressed the opinion that the time was 'rapidly approaching' when it would be necessary to stop all clerical stipends paid by the state. He softened the blow by remarking that he thought that such independence would 'raise the Clergy to a higher level, and give them greater influence'.² This was, of course, no comfort to such men as Bishop Nixon (who, in fact, petitioned against any reduction). The real point of Wilmot's remarks was that he had succeeded in reducing the Estimates.

A further result of the continued transportation to Van Diemen's Land was that its constitution was left unchanged; it was still a penal colony. In one way this very much helped the colonial Government and the Churches. As well as 'Convict Chaplains' and other religious instructors appointed specifically for work among the convicts in the gangs, the Imperial authorities also agreed to appoint 'Missionary Chaplains' for work among the convicts and ticket-of-leave men dispersed throughout the community. Both categories were paid from the Military Chest but the British Government agreed to the practice of the 'Missionary Chaplain' taking one area and the free, and the prisoners and the ticket-of-leave men in it, and the Colonial Chaplain (whom the colony paid) doing the same in another area - the difference being that the former possibly went to an area in which the proportion of convicts was higher.³

¹ Report of Finance Committee on Revenue and Expenditure, *ibid.*, 1845.

² Address on Estimates, 21 Oct., *ibid.*, 1845.

³ Report of Committee on Convict Expenditure, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848; Denison to Grey, 26 Aug. 1848, GO 33/63, Denison to Grey, 4 Nov. 1848 GO 33/65 (TA).

In 1848 there were four Anglican 'Missionary Chaplains' (and two vacancies),¹ and the consequent saving to the colonial funds was large enough to be worthwhile. For the support of Anglican ministers the colonial Treasury paid out £7,904 and the British Government granted £4,355 in 1849.² The advantage was made even greater when the Catholic Bishop of Hobart was granted the large concession of five new priests (thus nearly doubling the number in the colony), for these were to come under the Convict Department.³ To that department were attached ten of the thirteen priests in the island in 1849, and the British Treasury was responsible for £2,322 annually, compared with only £1,328 paid by the colony.⁴ It is small wonder that the scheme had been very favourably received by the press when it was introduced.⁵

This was only one, if a very bright, side of the fact that Van Diemen's Land remained a convict colony. The other side was that it failed to secure a limit upon the money to be granted to the Churches - there was no Schedule C for Van Diemen's Land. Hence reducing the Estimates was one thing, and keeping the claims to that figure was quite another. The Legislative Council, if not provided with an easy way out, was prepared to try to force a way. When told in 1846 that four additional Anglican chaplains were being allowed for in the Estimates by Direction of the Home Government,⁶ the Council reacted strongly. Allowances in lieu of fencing glebes for several Anglican clergymen and one Presbyterian were struck out. The Catholic Vicar General was granted £100 house rent only because Bishop

¹Report of Committee on Convict Expenditure, Appendix 10, *loc.cit.* The vacancies were soon filled - see Estimates in V. & P., V.D.L., 1849, 1850.

²Statistics of V.D.L. for 1849, Hobart 1850, Table 44.

³Grey to Fritz Roy, 28 Oct. 1847, H.R.A., xxvi, 25ff.

⁴Statistics of V.D.L. for 1849, Table 46.

⁵See, e.g., Examiner, 1 July 1843, p. 411, 9 Sept. 1843, p. 561.

⁶Finance Minute, 24 Aug., V. & P., V.D.L., 1846.

Willson was abroad on half-pay. The culminating resolution, moved by O'Connor and Steiglitz, was that only the clergymen included in the Estimates were to be paid by the state until the financial affairs of the colony were in a better condition; No additional appointee, or any denomination, was to draw a stipend from the Treasury. Since all these motions were passed by a majority of ten to four, the temper of the Legislative Council was made plain enough.¹

Despite the efforts of Governor and Council, there was an increase of £521 in the actual expenditure in Van Diemen's Land in 1847, due mainly to the payments made in aid of the erection of churches commenced in previous years under the Church Act (and in spite of a saving of £407 through the absence of the Catholic bishop). The Estimates for 1848 provided for an increase of nearly £1,000. Included in it were advances to be made under the Church Act for two new Anglican churches, some allowances in lieu of fencing glebes (by instructions from the Secretary of State) and £147 for house allowance and forage granted to the Catholic bishop.² The Council rejected the Governor's Estimates in toto,³ and in the end the actual expenditure on Church Aid in 1848 was £13,266 (or £914 less than the Estimate), but it was still a tenth of the total Government revenue of £131,000.⁴ At about this high level the claims of the Churches on the Treasury remained during the period under review. For 1849 the Estimate, including the annual donations of £500 to the Wesleyans and £150 to the Baptist, was £13,435 - although £12,607 was the actual expenditure.⁵ The amount of £16,125 2qw

¹Proceedings of 11 Sept., *ibid.*

²Finance Minute, 17 Mar. 1848, *ibid.*, 1847-8.

³On 21 March, by seven votes to four. It was not primarily an anti-Church aid move. The Secretary of State summed it up as an attempt to throw back charges on to the Home Government, rather than as mere concern about the cost of Government departments (Grey to Denison, 30 Jan. 1849, *ibid.*, 1849).

⁴Abstract of Revenue...and Appropriation...1848, *ibid.*, 1849.

⁵Abstract of Revenue...and Appropriation...1849, *ibid.*, 1850. (A higher estimate of £14,246 is given in Summary of Estimates for 1849 compared with 1850, *ibid.*, 1849.)

estimated for 1850,¹ and £15,925 for 1851.²

While assistance on this scale was being granted, there was, at the top level, a continuing quest for other solutions. For this the irrepressible Anglicans were frequently responsible. Archdeacon Hutchins in 1838 had imperturbably asked that the Church of England be granted the lands previously reserved for it, his argument being that the principle of aiding the Church of England had been agreed to before the 'Church Act principle' had been decided! Franklin refused to recommend the claim.³ Hutchins' successor, Archdeacon Marriott, proposed another solution in 1845: let land endowments by settlers be met by equal endowments from the British Government from Crown land, and let convict labour be used free of charge. The Secretary of State refused this request also; but he and Wilmot both were inclined to favour the Government paying pound for pound according to voluntary gifts of money to endow the Church. In 1847, nothing having been done in the interval, Governor Denison favoured land endowment. His argument was that the land position had altered, and that endowment was the happy middle way between voluntaryism (which turned pastors into the people's slaves) and stipends from the Treasury (which made pastors sycophants of state). All denominations then in receipt of aid were to be included, and 'their exertions should be stimulated' by a warning that all direct aid would cease after about five years had elapsed.⁴ When Lord Grey finally gave an answer, it was non-committal.⁵ Nothing, therefore, came of this drawn-out discussion, but it illustrates the continual worrying of the Government by the Churches' needs.

Eventually, in 1850, Van Diemen's Land had a limit imposed

¹Detailed Estimates for 1850, pp. 24, 34, *ibid.*, 1849. (Summary of Estimates in the same volume gives the lower figure of £15,880.)

²Estimates for 1851, *ibid.*, 1850.

³Franklin to Glenelg, 28 Feb. 1839, and Enclosures, GO 33/31 (TA).

⁴See Denison to Grey, 7 Oct. 1847, V. & P., V.D.L., 1850.

⁵Grey to Denison, 11 April 1850, *ibid.*

on state aid similar to that of 1842 for New South Wales. In the third part of Schedule C attached to the Imperial Act for the Government of Her Majesty's Australian Colonies, £15,000 was set down as the sum to be annually allocated for religious purposes.¹ With aid continuing on this scale until 1869,² the Van Diemen's Land Government could not be accused of indifference to religious provision. Financial reasons made it restive under its commitments, and anxious to have them reduced, but it was reluctant to stop all state aid even when it would have been much easier to balance the budget by doing so. Extreme suggestions to this effect, made from time to time, were resisted, and sympathy for the Churches was shown to the end.³ If the Churches were not of overriding importance to the Government, they were far from unimportant. The Councillors were simply practical men, neither saints nor unbelievers, who tried to balance Church claims with other demands while balancing the budget. Yet there was a trend away from the Church-state connection. State aid was henceforth to be limited, and a question-mark had been placed alongside the whole matter. In Van Diemen's Land, no less than in New South Wales, the continuation of Government assistance to the Churches was in doubt.

A cargo of bishops, and a problem of command.

'Free institutions are demanded by the Colonists', grumbled the Colonial Times, 'and behold by the first opportunity, a cargo of bishops, priests and archdeacons are [sic] sent out.'⁴

¹13 and 14 Vict. c. 59, Statutes At Large, Vol. 20, pp. 180-90.

²The Church Act was disposed of by 26 Vict. No. 17 (1862), which divided the £15,000 among the Churches (and Jews) in a fixed annual proportion. State aid was abolished by 32 Vict. No. 30 (1869), which commuted aid by the payment of one lump sum of £100,000 to be divided among the denominations.

³In 1849, for instance, they passed a Minister's Residence Bill, enabling loans from the Treasury for repairs to parsonages (13 Vict. No. 1, in Hobart Town Gazette, 11 Sept. 1849, pp. 617-8).

⁴Colonial Times, 5 July 1836, p. 221 c. 2.

By the middle of 1836 there were two colonial bishops, W.G. Broughton of the Church of England and J.B. Polding of the Catholic Church, both resident in Sydney, and other bishops were added to the colonial establishment in the forties. They increased the cost of the Churches to the Governments, for bishops were more expensive than colonial chaplains (and Anglican bishops more expensive than Roman). A colonial chaplain under the Church Acts might be paid £200 per annum, but Polding received £500 and Broughton £2,000. Hence the Colonial Times' displeasure at the coming of these expensive prelates.

Charles James Blomfield, the Bishop of London, was one of the prime movers in getting more Anglican bishops to the Australian colonies. He urged the need to plant the Church 'in all its integrity' among the colonists and proposed the raising of a fund to make more bishoprics, since there seemed little possibility of the Government being able to do much.¹ In 1841, after a meeting called by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the fund was commenced and grew, within a week or two, to thousands of pounds.² As one result, Francis Russell Nixon was consecrated Bishop of Tasmania in August 1842 and £5,000 was made available towards the establishment of his bishopric from the funds.³ From earlier provision allowed for the late Archdeacon Hutchins an income of £800 was provided, eventually to be enlarged to include a £200 house allowance and forage for two horses.⁴ In July 1843 Nixon arrived in Hobart to be greeted with an address of welcome signed by thirteen hundred people who apparently did not mind over-much about his salary.⁵ Even the Colonial Times

¹C.J. Blomfield, A Letter to His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, upon...endowing Additional Bishoprics in the Colonies, London 1840.

²Proceedings at a Meeting...called by...the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury...27 April, 1841, for the Purpose of Raising a Fund..., London 1841. See pp.37-40 for list of contributions.

³Courier, 21 Oct. 1842, p.3. This money, and other gifts, were invested in land - Denison to Grey, 7 Oct. 1847, V. & P., V.D.L., 1850.

⁴Ibid., and Wood's Royal Southern Kalendar, Hobart 1850, p.85.

⁵Courier, 4 Aug. 1843, p.2.

greeted him kindly, though it was soon to return to its attack on the huge sums expended on the clergy - especially on the Anglican bishop.¹ Little was heard about this, however, in the island. The bigger problem was the provision of additional bishops for the vast mainland diocese, and to this Bishop Broughton next addressed himself.

Broughton proposed a division of the colony into three sees, one centred on Sydney, one on Melbourne and one on Newcastle, and offered to reduce his own salary by one half (i.e., by £1,000) to help make this possible. Except in the matter of his salary, the Lord Bishop of Australia did nothing by halves; while Gipps was writing to the Secretary of State at Broughton's request, the Secretary of State was writing to Gipps after the Archbishop of Canterbury had approached him at Broughton's request!² The outcome was that Broughton's salary was reduced by one quarter (to £1,500 per annum), and two new bishops were permitted. Each was to be paid £500 annually from the Church of England's share of the colonial funds, and about £330 from the Colonial Bishops' Fund.³ Accordingly, in June 1847, Letters Patent were issued erecting the Sees of Sydney (W.G. Broughton, bishop), Newcastle (William Tyrell, bishop) and Melbourne (Charles Perry, bishop).⁴ Tyrell arrived on 16 January and Perry on 23 January, 1848.

To meet the cost of the new bishops, the 'Building Fund' (one sixth of the £30,000 allowed by Schedule C) was invaded, but it was used in the expectation that one sixth would become available again on the retirement or death of ministers who drew abnormally high salaries from the 'Stipend Fund' because they had been appointed before the Church Act. As these died out, the

¹Colonial Times, 25 July 1843, p. 2; 13 Aug. 1844, p. 2. Cf. F.S. Edgar (a Baptist) writing to his parents, 21 July 1843: 'A very unnecessary charge on the funds of this Colony is that of a Bishop' (Tasmanian Collection, TSL).

²Gipps to Stanley, 29 Aug. 1845, Stanley to Gipps, 29 Aug. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 444, 491.

³Stanley to Fitz Roy, 30 Mar. 1846, ibid., xxiv, 836-8.

⁴Grey to Fitz Roy, 27 Aug. 1847, and Enclosures, ibid., xxv, 717-27.

bishops could be paid without drawing upon the proportion intended for church building. The bishops had to be housed, and the Secretary of State proposed that £4,000 be made available from the surpluses which had been accumulated in the years when the claims had been less than the £30,000 allowed. Except for a few hundreds of pounds used to complete the parsonage at Morpeth as a temporary home for Bishop Tyrell, this suggestion was rejected. Broughton persuaded Fitz Roy to keep to an arrangement by which the 1844-45 surpluses were to be used for the erection of churches in destitute areas and for the payment of clergy beyond the boundaries.¹ Fitz Roy's alternative proposal was accepted: the net sum at the credit of the Church and Schools Lands estate in February 1848 was over £15,000, of which nearly £9,000 was for the Anglican Church, and from this a sum of £6,000 was allocated to the building of the bishops' residences.² By these means the Government juggled its finances so that, with help from private donation and personal sacrifice, the additional Anglican bishops were allowed for in the ecclesiastical department.

The Catholic Church also increased the number of its bishops, and more - the Hierarchy was erected in Australia in 1842. Bishop Polding became the archbishop, and Robert William Willson, of Nottingham, was consecrated Bishop of Hobart. The attitude of the Colonial Office was said to be, 'Do what you like, but don't come to us about it'.³ Bishop Willson arrived in Hobart in May 1844. In December 1848 Charles Henry Davis arrived in Sydney as Bishop of Maitland and Coadjutor of the Archbishop. James Alipias Gould, a young priest (thirty-five years old) who had been in New South Wales since 1838, was consecrated Bishop of Melbourne in August, 1848.⁴ Polding was being paid annually £500 by the Government. Willson in 1850 was receiving £400 and £100

¹Fitz Roy to Gladstone, 29 Sept. 1846m ibid., xxv, 199-200.

²Fitz Roy to Grey, 31 Mar. 1849, and Enclosures;
Grey to Fitz Roy, 30 Sept. 1848, ibid., xxvi, 310-4, 619.

³P.F.Moran, op. cit., pp. 225-7.

⁴Ibid., pp. 264, 334-5, 724.

house allowance (as well as extras for forage and a grant 'in lieu of fencing glebe').¹ Davis and Goold - at least in 1849 - received £250 each from the state.²

Perhaps the greatest embarrassment caused by the 'cargo of bishops' was not financial, but administrative. Most prominent was the question whether Governor or Bishop should control chaplains paid by the Convict Department in Van Diemen's Land. The surprising thing is not that this happened, but that clashes between ecclesiastical and civil authorities did not occur earlier and more often. The Rev. Richard Johnson had been commissioned as chaplain to obey the orders of the Governor or any other superior officer 'according to the rules and discipline of war'.³ Later chaplains were similarly commissioned and were nominated to chaplaincies by the Governor. In 1810 Macquarie omitted the military clause from the commissions and vested immediate control and superintendence of the clergy in the Principal Chaplain. Upon the appointment of an archdeacon in 1824 the 'whole administration of the Chaplains passed from the hands of the Governor to those of the Archdeacon'.⁴ The Governor retained a formal right to appoint and to suspend, but in both cases only upon the archdeacon's recommendation, and the bishop of the diocese was to have the ultimate decision.⁵ When Australia was erected into a self-contained diocese, and the bishop (W.G. Broughton) was resident within it, the Letters Patent gave him full power 'according to the Ecclesiastical Laws of England' and the Governors were commanded to assist him to carry

¹Wood's Royal Southern Kalendar, 1850, p. 88.

²Statement of Expenditure...Schedule C...1849, V. & P., N.S.W., 1850, Vol. II. These amounts came from the 'Unexpended Balance on 31st December, 1848, of Funds appropriated for the Maintenance of Public Worship'. V. & P. for 1851 and 1852 do not acknowledge the existence of either Goold or Davis, presumably because all the money under Schedule C had been allocated.

³H.R.N.S.W., Vol. I. Pt. 2, p. 27.

⁴H.L. Clarke, Constitutional Church Government in the Dominions beyond the Seas.... London 1924, pp. 77-8.

⁵Bathurst to Brisbane (No. 47), 21 Dec. 1824, H.R.A., xi, 421.

out his functions.¹ Somehow through all these years the gradual changeover was effected without very violent clashes.

The most dangerous challenges came from an individual member of the Legislative Council, Robert Lowe, and a group of Low Church (and, possibly, no Church) citizens who were opposed to Broughton and his ideals. In 1846 Lowe Proposed a Bill to confer on Anglican clergymen a freehold in their benefices and invest control of each benefice in a lay committee. This would have struck at the root of the bishop's power, but Broughton secured permission to address the Council and the Bill was subsequently 'cast to the moles and to the bats'.² In 1849, after the bishop had suspended the licenses of two deacons (F.T.C. Russell and P.T. Beamish), Lowe again attempted to get the Council to intervene.³ But the Bishop of Sydney and the Government of New South Wales were not to be drawn into such a conflict.

In Van Diemen's Land however, a head-on collision occurred between Nixon and Governors in the 'forties. Convict chaplains and religious instructors (usually hoping to be ordained) had been placed under the direction of the Comptroller-General of Convicts, and were thus removed from the control of the bishop. Nixon, of course, objected; he refused to ordain men who would not come under his jurisdiction - even if some were already deacons, or if convict stations had found it necessary to call upon a Catholic priest to administer the last rites.⁴ In 1844 he despatched Archdeacon Marriott to England to get this matter - among others - put to rights.⁵ Marriott blundered. He personally accepted the new appointment of 'Superintendent of

¹ Document H in R.A. Giles, op. cit. See especially pp. 223-4.

² Broughton to Coleridge, 3 Oct. 1846, BP.

³ 7 Aug., V. & P., N.S.W., 1849. Cf. K.J. Cable, 'Religious Controversies in New South Wales in the Mid-nineteenth Century', JRAHS, Vol. 49, Pt. 1, pp. 66-7.

⁴ Wilmot to Stanley, 29 Jan. 1845, GO 25/11 (TA)

⁵ See Anna Nixon to Charles Woodcock, 3 April 1844, in N. Nixon (comp.), The Pioneer Bishop in Van Diemen's Land, 1843-1863, Hobart 1853, p. 24.

Convict Chaplains' in 1845. The Superintendent, although the archdeacon did not seem to realise it, was 'essentially a civil officer, appointed by the Crown...and removable by the Crown'. He was to maintain among the chaplains 'uniformity of practice in the performance of their spiritual duties' and to give 'directions as to their conduct'. At first the convict chaplains could be summarily dismissed by the Governor without reference to the bishop, and appeal was to be made only to the Secretary of State. This power was soon modified, but only to the extent of the Governor being 'advised' to communicate with the bishop. The state had not only denied the Bishop of Tasmania control over some of his clergy and lay instructors (six clergymen and two lay teachers had accompanied Marriott on his return), but it had vested that authority in the bishop's archdeacon.¹

This was the last straw. Nixon left for England himself in 1846 to plead his case for a better deal for the Church of England and its Tasmanian bishop. He was successful in getting the abolition of the office of Superintendent,² but not in securing full control of the convict chaplains. The Secretary of State directed that Nixon was to station the 'Colonial Chaplains', and the Lieutenant-Governor the 'Convict Chaplains'.³ He did come to an agreement with Denison, however, that convict chaplains suspended for insufficient ecclesiastical reason would have their passage home paid, and would receive half-pay until their passages were secured. This being guaranteed, he agreed to ordain those religious instructors who were suitable.⁴

This was easily the worst clash between rival authorities which occurred in these years, and it was the result of an administrative blunder rather than a deliberate interference with

¹F.R. Nixon, A Charge, delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Primary Visitation...23 April, 1846, London 1848, pp.43-49. Nixon excused Marriott of any bad motive.

²Ibid., p.84.

³Grey to Denison, 16 Dec. 1847, GO 1/67 (TA).

⁴Denison to Grey, 26 Aug. 1848, GO 33/64 (TA).

the Church of England. The Governments were both anxious to avoid meddling with the internal affairs of any Church and unwilling to favour one at the expense of any other. Hence Robert Lowe's attempts failed, but Anglicanism became merely one Church among several. Typical examples of government policy, one large and one small, were the permitting of a Catholic Hierarchy in New South Wales, the first actually to be erected in British dominions since the Reformation, and the payment of ministers of the Presbyterian Synod of New South Wales in spite of the protests of the other section of that Church. Therefore very little trouble was caused either by the subordinate position of the original chaplains, or the later opportunities for interference offered by the Church Acts.

It was argued at the time by men like Broughton and Nixon that government policy revealed no positive virtue, but only a negative approach to religion. As bishops of a Church solely established and, once, exclusively tolerated in England, and as Christian men convinced that their own creed embodied the maximum of truth and the minimum of error, their view was reasonable. From another aspect, government policy could not be called negative; there was a positive respect for the right of every body of Christians to their creeds, and Government financial aid was positive - the Churches received over half a million pounds under the Church Acts between 1836 and 1850. The Governments, indeed, were preparing to rest on their laurels, they were imposing restrictions upon state aid and were soon to abolish it altogether; but they had made, and were for a time still to make, a solid contribution towards religious provision in the colonies.

CHAPTER 4AFTER THE CHURCH ACTS: (2) PUBLIC
OPINION AND SUPPORTThe people's reaction to state aid.

Even in the undemocratic days of the Colonies, public opinion was important. The Imperial Secretary of State for the Colonies, the colonial Governors and the Legislative Councils, consisting of a few score officials and prominent citizens, each and all made their decisions; but these were very much affected by the attitudes of the colonial press and people. Petitions to Governor and Council, often numerous and bearing many signatures, were the order of the day and were treated seriously by those in authority, even before a majority of the legislative councillors were elected instead of nominated. Nearly all the big questions were finally decided by the pressure of popular opinion, especially by the wishes of the most powerful and vocal - but still private - citizens. Of this aspect of colonial life, the ending of transportation, the squatters' victory in securing their land, and the effects of pressure groups upon state education, are three important examples.

State aid for religion is another. Sir Richard Bourke, as well as consulting his own liberalism, gauged the state of public opinion before making his recommendation in 1833; and the colonial Government kept wary eyes not only on their finances, but also on the popularity of the Church Acts. Within a few years of the passing of these measures, the purse-watchers could have detected some reassuring signs, for public opinion became increasingly divergent about the Acts. Very much use was gladly made of them, and general support for them was not withdrawn, but there was growing public criticism of their effects. If the Governments' attitude was an amalgam of two conflicting aims (support of religion and relief of the Treasuries), public

opinion was no less so.

It may be recalled that, six years after its enactment, the Church Act in New South Wales was described by the Attorney-General as 'the most popular of all Colonial Acts', and that he warned against any direct interference with it, lest the attempt 'raise a religious cry.'¹ The number of Colonials who had been transported, together with their propensity to crime and their religious ignorance, continued to weigh heavily in the scales on the side of Government support of religion. James Macarthur dismissed legal reforms, the provision of police and reliance on punishment, as negative measures. In preference, the colony needed

a sound religious education for the entire youthful population of the colony, and...the provision of pastoral religious instruction, and the means of religious observances, for its entire adult population.

If these were adequately provided, they would 'implant religious and moral principles...instead of merely keeping down the outward manifestations of evil'.²

This reason for supporting the Church Acts, and any other measure which helped the cause of religion and the reformation of society, shaded into the outlook of citizens who were not religious in the true sense. As John West expressed it, the people of Van Diemen's Land were 'generally anxious for some form of worship, both as a moral agency and from its tendency to raise the respectability of a township'.³ Of people in the interior of New South Wales it was said not only that they usually welcomed and generously entertained itinerating clergymen,⁴ but also that they willingly received any traveller who had 'even the slightest appearance of being respectable'.⁵ Even lower motives were alleged to prevail at times. 'It would appear', said a newspaper, in discussing an application for

¹Memo by J.H. Plunkett, 8 Oct. 1842, H.R.A., xxiii, 735.

²J. Macarthur, op. cit., pp. 211-2.

³J. West, op. cit., I, p. 208.

⁴J.O. Balfour, A Sketch of New South Wales, London 1845, pp.80-1.

⁵Courier, 24 May 1839, p. 2, c. 5.

Government aid,

that the ready zeal with which they attached their signatures, proceeded more from the prospect of gain, which the building of a church seemed to diffuse so suddenly among them, added to the prolonged vision of a steady stipend to be consumed by the resident clergyman, rather than any abstract love or devotion to the Presbyterian faith, to which they hesitated not¹ to announce themselves such unflinching adherents.

Not only the trader in the settlements, but the landowner prepared, for one reason or another, to donate hundreds of pounds towards the erection of a church in his district, might well approve of an Act which obliged the Government to contribute an equal amount. If he had to pay his 'taxes' and pay for his land, here was a congenial way of getting some of his money back.

Both zealous and jealous motives prompted numerous applications under the Acts. Nine claims for assistance towards new churches came before the Executive Council of Van Diemen's Land between 30 July and 4 December 1838 - a rate of one application every fortnight.² New South Wales Wesleyans, looking at the religious scene in 1839, were very anxious to use their newly-acquired right to participate in the Church Act, for the Episcopalians and Presbyterians were making great use of it, and the Catholics were taking so much advantage of the measure that the people were in danger of being 'consigned to the awful and destructive errors of Popery'.³ Bishop Broughton reported, fifteen months after the New South Wales Act was passed, that contributions had been made towards nearly forty Anglican churches; his only complaint was that 'a very enormous rise' in the cost of materials and labour prevented the building of parsonages as well.⁴ A few years later, however, he was dismayed by the increase in church buildings of other denominations, and was irately describing the situation produced by

¹Courier, 24 May 1839, p. 2, c. 5.

²EC 2/6, pp. 225-365 (TA).

³N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., Jan. 1839, Q. 27.

⁴Broughton to Coleridge, 19 Oct. 1837, B.P.

'the most non-sensical church-law' thus:

...in almost every paltry little town (for example in one which I noticed lately containing 70 houses) you see the Church of England, the Roman Catholic, the Wesleyan and Presbyterian meeting-houses, all perched in a row...

Behind the bishop's caricature lay the reality of intense competitive activity among the Churches.

This did not always have bad results even for the Rt. Rev. W.G. Broughton. Picture him conducting Divine Worship at Braidwood in May 1840. Consider the reason for his face being set and stern, and for the service being held at the house of Dr. Wilson, outside the town. After the Court House had been prepared for the Anglican service it was taken possession of by a Catholic priest! Yet, trumpeted the bishop, the only effect would be to make the members of his Communion 'more zealous and determined to possess a church of their own'. As his report was going to press, he was able to add, 'In proof of the correctness of this persuasion, I have this day (2nd July) received information that the full amount has been raised'.² How much longer, one wonders, would this have taken if a priest and a bishop - and an imp? - had not visited Braidwood on one hilarious day?

Very often, however, denominational rivalry and congregational jealousies damaged the Churches in the public eye and further jeopardized the continuation of state aid. Cases of obstructive rivalry and of exploitation of the Church Acts by dissident splinter-groups did not go unnoticed. Bishop Broughton found the Anglicans at Paterson frustrated by the jealousy of their brethren in the Upper Paterson and Allyn area; the latter refused to co-operate because they were determined to secure a church in their immediate locality, but the only result was that a church could be built in neither place.³ Such a

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 2 Apr. 1844.

²S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, pp. 34-5.

³Ibid., p. 25.

situation was unsavoury, but matters were even worse when it seemed that the public purse was called upon for unnecessary contributions. It was reported from Launceston that part of the congregations of both the Anglican and Presbyterian churches had fallen out with their respective clergymen, and that each defecting group had applied for aid from the Government towards a new church.¹ The tendency for congregations to 'leave their late pastors to their salaries and their solitude', and apply for aid towards other churches and pastors, was one reason for the amendment of the Church Act in Van Diemen's Land in 1840, so that aid depended upon the discretion of the Government.

When the Churches moved out into the smaller communities, each trying to out-do the others in claiming the allegiance of the inhabitants, the inter-denominational clashes often had deplorable social consequences. According to John West, the rivalry caused 'serious discord' and had the 'lamentable' social effect of neighbours being divided from neighbours, who had previously worshipped together.² The Courier's imputation of mercenary motives to the signatories of an application for aid for the erection of a Presbyterian church at Oatlands was based on a claim that only eighteen of them did belong to the Church of Scotland. The others consisted of fifty-nine Anglicans, two Catholics, six Dissenters, two children under ten, two holders of tickets-of-leave and thirteen persons unknown in the district - or so the accusing, pro-Anglican paper claimed.³ At O'Brien's Bridge, in contrast, the Presbyterians claimed to be the injured party. An application of theirs was challenged by the Wesleyans who claimed that some of the signatories were members of the Methodist Society. The Executive Council withheld its approval until eleven adults and four children had affirmed their intention of remaining on the

¹ 'H.D.', Courier, 28 Aug. 1840, p. 4. c. 5.

² J. West, op. cit., I, p. 208.

³ Courier, 24 May 1839, p. 2 c. 5.

requisition list. The inclusion of certain supplementary names, proffered in the meantime, was opposed by the Chief Justice because there was nothing to show that, in the previous census, they had not described themselves as Anglicans!¹ Campaigns such as these could not possibly be waged without engendering local feuds and wide-spread dissatisfaction with the working of the Church Acts.

It was all very well for a Presbyterian to claim that 'the overwhelming majority' of the inhabitants could not 'with any approach to truth, be said to belong to any Church' and were, thus, open to the approaches of the first minister in the field.² But claim always called forth counter-claim. Hence the Presbyterians were accused, and perhaps with justice, of hunting up and down for contributions, and then claiming the donors as bona fide members.³ The unedifying spectacle of denominations thus wrangling, the cases of clear abuse of the Church Acts, and the cost of legitimate claims to the Government (whose subjects found the payment of duty always irksome), encouraged the opinion that state aid should cease altogether.

In New South Wales, after the details of the new Constitution Act had been announced, the Colonial Observer prophesied complete voluntaryism among Presbyterians within ten years and bitterly attacked the £30,000 allowed for religion in Schedule C, accusing Broughton of engineering it when he knew that the local representatives of the people would not have voted the money.⁴ The Rev. Dr. John McGarvie recorded that the

¹Min. of Exec. Coun., May--Aug. 1839, EC 2/6, pp. 544, 599-60, 611 (TA).

²Courier, 16 Aug. 1839, p. 2. From the beginning the Presbyterians had opposed the bona fide members clause - see Min. of Exec. Coun. 15, 20 Nov. 1837, EC 2/4, and J. Mackersey to Col. Sec., 4 Oct. 1837, CSO 5/94/2125 (TA).

³Courier, 21 Aug. 1840, p. 2 c. 5.

⁴Colonial Observer, 12, 22 Oct. 1842. The Herald (11 Oct. 1842) was content to condean the amount involved in the civil list without singling out the provision for public worship.

public mind seemed unsettled, and that there was such a crusade against establishment that he doubted whether the principle was still worth contending for.¹ During the elections for the new Legislative Council in 1843, James Macarthur and Roger Therry charged one of their principal opponents, the conservatively Anglican Charles Cowper, with religious intolerance and a desire to subvert the Church Act; but this was successful only in getting Therry elected (for Camden); in Cumberland, Macarthur lost to Cowper.² Even among Catholics, W.A. Duncan of the Chronicle being one, there was some growing admiration of the principle of voluntaryism.³ In diverse quarters there was criticism of the Church Act and its implications, and public support of it could no longer be quite relied upon.

In Van Diemen's Land, the Presbyterian-aligned Launceston Examiner spoke caustically of the situation.

Rival sects display the temper of mastiffs over a bone; and instead of one taking the blade, and the other the shank, they quarrel about possession. Nor will the conflict cease till religion is left to its own resources.⁴

It was probably a Baptist who condemned the Church Act, not only as illiberal to all but the 'revenue churches', but also as a measure which 'must prove an embarrassment to the Government, and inflict upon the country an irremediable pecuniary incubus'.⁵ The Courier, with Church of England sympathies, condemned the 'expensive habit of placing two or three ministers unnecessarily in every village'.⁶ Fifteen months later, after reporting that four more Catholic priests were arriving and that new

¹J. McGarvie, Diary, 2, 4, 6 Jan. 1843 (MSS ML).

²Election for the County of Camden. The Speeches of James Macarthur and Roger Therry..., Sydney 1843. Cf. J.F. Castle, Private Journal, 3 July 1843 (MSS ANU Archives 7/13).

³M. Roe, op. cit., pp. 330-1.

⁴Examiner, 3 July 1844, p. 419 c. 3.

⁵'H.D.' (perhaps the Rev. Henry Dowling or his son), Courier, 28 Aug. 1840, p. 4 c. 5.

⁶Ibid., 24 May 1839, p. 2 c. 5.

Presbyterian churches had been proposed for O'Brien's Bridge, Sorell, Hobart and Launceston, the paper condemned the 'ungodly strife' and 'indecent race', and said bluntly, 'The Church Act should be repealed'.¹ The Colonial Times, attacking the amount spent by the state on religion, felt that voluntarism must come soon.² The Launceston Examiner was also ready to recommend that state aid cease - since one sixth of the revenue went to the Churches, truth and error were indiscriminately favoured, jealousy and bigotry were excited, the contributors to the Government revenue had no voice in its distribution, Government expenditure exceeded its receipts, and state aid had a 'chilling influence' on the Churches themselves!³

Nevertheless, while there was no lack of newspaper criticism, the matter did not really become a burning issue. When these papers really took up a matter, they devoted to it columns of print in issue after issue. It was not so in this case. The amending acts in Van Diemen's Land in 1838-41 were passed over with the briefest of comments in the press. The Courier perfunctorily remarked that the 1840 amendment was 'no small triumph over the bona fide school' (by which cryptic comment it presumably meant those who scoured the districts for names to be claimed as bona fide members) and that the Act had been 'the means of introducing much bad feeling in religious matters'.⁴ The Colonial Times was even more offhand, mentioning the discussion in the Legislative Council, but not reporting it.⁵

Nor were the papers consistently or irrevocably opposed to the continuation of state aid. Although predicting the end of all Government subsidies, and claiming that far too much was granted from the Treasury, the Colonial Times directed its real

¹Ibid., 28 Aug. 1840, p. 2 c. 2.

²Colonial Times, 13 Aug. 1844, p. 2 c. 3.

³Examiner, 16 Apr. 1845, p. 243.

⁴Courier, 4 Sept. 1840, p. 2 c.5.

⁵Colonial Times, 8 Sept. 1840, p.3 c.4.

attack against abnormally large salaries. Far from condemning state aid, or the Church Act, as such, it was content to put forward a plan of stipends by which the highest dignitary should get only £400 (including travelling expenses) and no other clergyman was to receive more than £150, a house and a glebe.¹ The Courier, which asked for the repeal of the Church Act on 28 August 1840, had asked only three weeks before for the Wesleyans to be put on the same basis as other denominations under the Church Act.²

Public opinion was simply torn between two ideals. Government assistance in making adequate religious provision was desired; but it was very strongly felt that state aid should be moderate, for prudent financial reasons. Governments, watching this public reaction, could be sure that their efforts to restrict aid would be supported; but they could not yet feel that the abolition of all aid would be widely approved. The Churches themselves could see that time was not on their side; they had to make the best use they could of the aid which was temporarily assured.

The People's Support of the Churches

Fairness to the Churches requires the plain statement that none of them was just living off the state, or dissipating their energies in futile rivalries. On the contrary, all the major denominations did a great deal to help themselves as they steadily pushed farther out with the settlements of the forties. Petitioners to the Van Deimen's Land Legislative Council in 1843 boasted that non-Anglican Protestants had provided nearly as many church-sittings as the Anglicans and that, in contrast, with the latter, 'by far the largest proportion' of their churches had been 'chiefly erected at their own expense'.³ In that year

¹Ibid., 13 Aug. 1844, p. 2 c.3.

²Courier, 7 Aug. 1840, p. 2 c.4.

³Petition of the Inhabitants of Hobart Town, 3 November 1843, Against the Proposed Change in the School System, Courier, 17 Nov. 1843, P. 3 c.2.

there were 12,058 sittings in Anglican Churches and 10,667 in other Protestant churches and chapels (compared with 745 in Catholic churches). Furthermore, of these other Protestant buildings, only ten Presbyterian churches (seating 2,977) had benefited fully by the Church Act; the other, largely unassisted chapels were twenty-four belonging to the Wesleyans, twelve to the Independents and two to the Baptists.¹ In addition it must be remembered that the Government had contributed only on a pound for pound basis towards the churches assisted under the Church Act, so that the greater part of the cost of the eighty-three churches and chapels in the island, and much of the year's expenditure of £14,432 in 1843, was met by voluntary giving.

Nor was it only the Wesleyans and Independents who were prepared to build churches without Government subsidies. Between 1842 and 1848 no less than twenty Anglican chapels were built in Van Diemen's Land without calling on Government aid. The total cost of these buildings (mostly built in places 'where no great amount of aid could be expected from the inhabitants') was over £36,000. Although these facts were brought together in the course of an application for increased Government help to 'Missionary Chaplains',² the achievement remains impressive. In the light of such efforts, the denominational scramble for aid falls into truer perspective, and is far less dominant in the story of Church growth.

In the Church of England - the denomination most inclined to look to the Government for support - the need for self-help was increasingly stressed in the forties. Late in 1843, Bishop Nixon announced his intention of restoring the weekly offertory, a practice which had very largely fallen with disuse in the colony (and in England). He did this 'in the hope of

¹Statistics of Van Diemen's Land, 1842-44, Hobart 1845, Table 36.

²Account of Churches, Chapels or Schoolrooms built by Members of the Church of England in V.D.L., since the Establishment of the Bishopric without any contribution from Colonial Funds, enclosed in Denison to Grey, 4 Nov, 1848, GO 33/65 (TA).

eventually making the Church provide more and more for Herself, and of teaching Her to rely less upon the Government for Her support'.¹ This was not done without opposition. The bishop's wife reported that bad times were dinned into her ears by wealthy members who could spend lavishly on entertainments, even if they could not contribute towards a schoolroom in the neglected Goulburn Street area.² From the other end of the colony came complaints that the offertory was a Tractarian innovation.³ But the offertory was restored and remained; and the need for voluntary giving, whatever provision was made by the Government, continued to be stressed. Bishop Broughton also encouraged the offertory, and over it had differences with some of his clergy and people - again because its introduction was alleged to show Tractarian sympathies.⁵ The bishop secured editorial support in the Herald,⁶ but the columns of the relentless Atlas blossomed into verse against 'Will G. Australia'.

I'm Pope Bill! Here's my system voluntary,
 For Schedule C can't cram us all.
 Of raising money you're so cursed chary,⁷
 I now insist you'll let it fall.

Broughton published a pamphlet on the question to quell the opposition,⁸ and he won the day - the offertory was taken up in most Anglican churches.

The need for voluntary support was far greater than the mere

¹Nixon to Woodcock, 24 Feb. 1844, N. Nixon, op. cit., p. 23.

²Anna Nixon to Woodcock, 30 Dec. 1844, ibid., p. 17.

³R.R.Davies, 'The Offertory' Not an Innovation: a Sermon preached at Christ's Church, Longford, on Sunday 18 May 1845, Launceston 1845, Appendix A.

⁴Report of S.P.G. meeting, Herald of Tasmania, 18 July 1845, p.2. Lack of support for its funds was bemoaned in Hobart S.P.G. Report, 1849, pp. 7-9.

⁵See, e.g., Broughton to Coleridge, 15 Aug. 1844, BP; Herald, 11 Aug. 1849, p. 3 c. 5.

⁶Herald, 29 Feb. 1848, p. 2.

⁷Atlas, 6 May 1848, p. 223.

⁸W.G. Broughton, A Letter to Henry Osborne...on the Propriety and Necessity of Collections at the Offertory, Sydney 1848.

re-introduction of the offertory could meet. The drying up of the English S.P.G. and S.P.C.K. funds, and the restriction of Government aid, called for special efforts, and met with some response. In 1844 the Church of England Lay Association was formed with the object of procuring supplementary assistance to governmental and other support; it appealed to the members of the Church of England to re-develop 'that generous disposition of former days' as prosperity returned and religious needs increased.¹ Even W.G. Broughton, so critical in inadequate provision in the colony and of the indifference of many influential members of society, was not always censorious. He once had to say that there was 'a very earnest desire on the part of the people everywhere to have churches' and that they usually did their best to build them.²

The depression of 1841-1844 hit the Churches very hard, the Anglicans not least. 'We are in danger', wrote Broughton, 'of losing much of the advantage we have acquired during the past seven years'. Nearly all the churches and parsonages which were in the course of erection were suspended, so that sixteen churches were left without roofs, or otherwise unfinished, for people who had property could not raise money and many who had committed themselves to the building of churches could not fulfil their promises.³ In 1844 Broughton was actually refusing his permission for about a dozen Anglican Churches to be commenced because, with a like number unfinished, there were insufficient funds to see them through.⁴ That the trouble was the depression, and not an ominous unwillingness to contribute, was demonstrated by the fact that by the beginning of 1846 the churches unfinished in 1842-3 were completed (or nearly so) and about twenty more had been commenced.⁵

¹Report of Church of England Lay Association for New South Wales, 1844-5, Sydney 1846, pp. 3-4, 9, 39.

²Broughton to Coleridge, 12 June 1846, B.P.

³Broughton to S.P.G., 5 May 1843 and 2 July 1843.

⁴Broughton to Coleridge, 24 June 1844.

⁵Broughton To Coleridge, 30 Jan. 1846.

In the southern colony the committee of the Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society reported that the depression had prevented any increase in the number of its agents, although they had opened a church in the Cambridge district.¹ Their Wesleyan fellows spoke often of their difficulties. Pleased at first with the liberal contributions in spite of 'the unparralled [sic] commercial distress',² they were soon reporting chapels heavily encumbered with debt, a problem made worse by the high interest rates.³ In 1844 they could not raise the stipend for an additional minister,⁴ and in the next two years suffered serious losses from emigration to the 'more prosperous' colonies of South Australia and Port Phillip.⁵ Not until 1847 did the Hobart Wesleyans speak of an 'encouraging share of temporal and spiritual prosperity', and the Launceston Wesleyans of an improvement in financial affairs.⁶

Which section of the population gave most financial support to the Churches is difficult to determine. A possible way of classifying persons according to occupation is that of the 1841 Census in New South Wales and the 1848 Census in Van Diemen's Land. There were seven divisions:

Landed Proprietors, Merchants, Bankers and
Professional Persons.
Shopkeepers and other Retail Dealers.
Mechanics and Artificers.
Shepherds and others in the care of Sheep [sic].
Gardeners, Stockmen and Persons employed in
Agriculture.
Domestic Servants.
All other Persons.

¹Eighth Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary and Christian Instruction Society...1843, Hobart 1844, pp. 7-8, 10.

²V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 4 Nov. 1841, Q. xviii.

³Ibid., 13 Apr. 1843, Appendix.

⁴Ibid., 2 Jan. 1844.

⁵Ibid., 7 Oct. 1845, 26 Aug. 1846, Appendices.

⁶Ibid., 20 July 1847, Appendix.

The last four categories can be ruled out as comparatively insignificant donors to the Churches. Many must have given their mites - it has gone on record, for instance, that an aborigine, J. Tindal, donated 2/6 to the S.P.G.¹ - but they could not give much. The Wesleyans might be thought to have collected a considerable total sum from the poorer classes. A Wesleyan report from Launceston said that 'a great proportion' of their hearers in several places were, or had been, prisoners; and, at Portland, Bishop Perry found that 'the most devout among the shopkeepers and labouring classes were almost all connected with the Wesleyans'.² But such statements can easily be exaggerated or misinterpreted. More typical were a Hobart description of large 'and respectable' congregations,³ and a remark passed by the New South Wales Wesleyan superintendent, the Rev. John M'Kenny, 'There are more shopkeepers and mechanics amongst us than there are of the lower orders'.⁴ It was not from the humblest classes that most support came for the Wesleyans, but from the middle and lower middle groups.⁵

Catholics almost certainly had the lowest average income of all denominations. They had their few prominent citizens such as J.H. Plunkett (Attorney-General), Roger Therry (Supreme Court judge) and Thomas Anstey (Legislative Councillor). They had, too, their members who had 'made good'; such were the emancipist Murphy who, wealthy and respected, was elected one of three lay trustees for St. Mary's, Sydney, and the emancipist Watson, donor of the land and £300 for St. Joseph's, on the McDonald River.⁶ Yet the Vicar-General to the Archbishop

¹First Report of the Associated District Committee of the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. [Appin, etc.], Sydney 1840, p.18.

²V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 4 Oct. 1844, Appendix; The Church in the Colonies, No. XXIV..., London 1850, pp. 28-9.

³V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 6 Oct. 1842, Appendix.

⁴Lowe Committee, Evidence, p. 112.

⁵Cf. K.J. Cable, 'Religious Controversies...II', J.R.A.H.S., Vol. 49, Pt. 2, pp. 137-8.

⁶H.N. Birt, op. cit., I, pp. 205, 452.

welcomed the extension of the franchise in 1850 because it would help 'the labouring and trading classes' to counter the influence of 'the wealthy landholders and capitalists' who were 'almost exclusively Protestants'.¹ The Catholics had more of the poorest classes among them, in proportion to the wealthier, than any other denomination.

Presbyterians and Independents tended towards the higher income brackets. The most famous editor and publisher of the Sydney Morning Herald, John Fairfax, was an Independent; Robert Campbell, though later acquiring both land and membership of the Church of England, began in Sydney as a merchant and a Presbyterian; the salary of the first Congregational minister at Port Phillip was paid entirely by the Hobart merchant, Henry Hopkins; and such men had numerous counterparts. Sir George Arthur's early description of the Presbyterians in Van Diemen's Land as being 'very respectable' and quite as able as the Anglicans 'to meet the necessary expenditure in the erection of Churches'² was true, and remained true, of both denominations in both colonies.

From the Church of England, which included the widest range of classes in its membership, as well as contributing more than any other Church to the upper classes, there emerges some evidence that the financial support given by the colonial middle classes may have been greater than that given by those holding the more important offices or the most land. The classes, as always, are impossible to define neatly, but it is possible to make several generalizations. First, it was easier in the mid-thirties to distinguish between the men whose main interest was in land and sheep, and those mainly concerned with trade and manufactures, than it had been earlier; by this time, a man

¹H.G. Gregory, Account of the Mission in New Holland, c. 1851, ibid., II, p. 171.

²Arthur to Glenelg, 26 Jan. 1836, H.R.A., xviii, 488.

tended to be either in one camp or the other.¹ Secondly, the big land-holders were usually higher on the social scale than the urban manufacturers and merchants, for land gave a prestige which mere money did not, and the origins of the prosperous townsmen were more likely to have been in humble ranks - among tradesmen and shopkeepers. Therefore it is not inappropriate (though it is only approximate) to describe those with land-interests as upper class, and the merchant-manufacturers as middle class. Thirdly, it may be permissible to lump together the men with land and, for convenience sake, call them all 'squatters'. There was, in fact, an important distinction, which reflected different values and caused clashes of interest, between the 'gentry' who first acquired land by grant or purchase, and the squatters proper who got their land, almost entirely and very simply, by putting stock on the crown land beyond the boundaries.² Yet this division, which was never complete, became more blurred in the forties when the landowners had to become squatters themselves if they were to survive,³ so that Governor Gipps remarked that 'almost everybody, who has any property at all, is a Squatter'.⁴ In the following discussion, therefore, 'squatter' is a blanket term to cover all men with large interests in land and consequent social prestige; while 'middle classes' is used for men with mainly urban interests, who were making money but not the social register.

Broughton claimed that it was not the squatters and their upper class allies, but the middle classes who were giving him financial support. In 1846, £1,600 was collected towards the cathedral, but contributions had come from hardly any men who had 'the entree at Government House, or any of the tokens of

¹J.D. Lang, Transportation and Colonization..., London 1837, p.129. Cf. M.J.E. Steven, 'The Changing Pattern of Commerce in New South Wales, 1810-1821', Business Archives and History, Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 153-4.

²See M. Roe, op cit., pp. 80ff, 159ff, where the 'squatters' are seen as the destroyers of the conservative order represented by the landed 'gentry'.

³Ibid., pp. 134, 188-9.

⁴Gipps to Stanley, 3 Apr. 1844 (Separate), H.R.A. xxiii, 518.

colonial rank or distinction'. Earlier, when he had called a meeting to try to clear a debt on one of the Sydney churches, the only 'person of station' present was the Chief Justice, while half the debt (of £3,000) had been wiped off at the meeting itself by an ironmonger, an auctioneer, a linen draper, a brewer and a customs agent.¹ Two years earlier the same lack of support by 'the influential people' had been reported by one 'in the middle class of life' himself.² Earlier still, in the middle of the depression, two Sydney congregations had managed to subscribe a total of £1,200 to complete Christ Church, St. Lawrence, and Robert Campbell, Jr., made a loan which enabled temporary church accommodation to be provided in Sydney.³ In 1847 Charles Kemp was rejoicing in two things; first, that from working in a carpenter's shop for fourteen shillings a week, he had advanced to the editorship and joint-proprietorship of the Sydney Morning Herald; and, secondly, that by his exertions and personal gift of £250, an Anglican school had been erected in Trinity Parish.⁴ As a final example, the building of St. Thomas's, Enfield, was made possible by the substantial gift of Thomas Hyndes, a merchant rather than a landowner.⁵

In contrast, religious inertia among 'those...called squatters' (according to Broughton) was such that, unless they could be recalled to a sense of duty, the squatting districts would 'speedily become one vast continuity of flagrant infidelity'.⁶ He was not very hopeful of success in that quarter. As he said,

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 3 Oct. 1846, B.P.

²J.W. Jones to Coleridge, 26 Oct. 1844, ibid.

³Broughton to Coleridge, 5 May 1843; S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1842, pp. 20-21.

⁴C. Kemp, Diary, 2 June, 19 July 1847 (MSS ML).

⁵S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1849, p. 13.

⁶Broughton to Coleridge, 9 Jan, 1847.

...there is something which does absorb all the anxieties and faculties in one intense effort to grasp unbounded acres and uncountable flocks; and attending on this, is an appalling remissness and indifference as to how the fear and worship of God, or belief in Christ, or the sacred institution of his Church, are to be introduced and upheld among the (in that point of view) unhappy dwellers in those solitary places.

His consolation, he repeated, was in the 'very singular' fact that among 'the middle classes' there was 'a visible increase of religious earnestness'. It contrasted 'remarkably with the careless liberalism of those in higher stations'.¹

Men whose wealth was almost entirely invested in land had a special excuse during the depression years of 1841-4; as Broughton himself had said, persons of property could not raise money. But this difficulty was not confined to depressed years. Shortage of cash continued to be the chronic complaint of many squatters - particularly as opportunities for true squatting became less, and outright purchase at increasingly high prices was forced upon them. An example from Victoria is that of the Joyce brothers. In 1851 they purchased a run of 50,000 acres for £2,000 (exclusive of the sheep) which had been bought from the first owner in 1845 for £25 - or, actually, for one hundred ewes. They had bought their own first station in 1844 for £50. There was a vast potential of wealth in their hands, but not much ready money. They had been forced to wait for years before they had enough money to buy their second station.²

The squattocracy may also have been less disposed to build churches because of their antagonism towards Bishop Broughton over his support of Governor Gipps on the land question.³ Gipps, though not objecting to the squatters' free use of Crown

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 6 Mar. 1847.

²G.F. James, op. cit., pp. 123-5.

³For a claim that this support was not the result of any bargain made between the bishop and the governor (although such was alleged), and that Broughton had little to bargain effectively with, see my forthcoming article, 'The Gipps-Broughton Alliance, 1844-45', Historical Studies, Nov. 1963.

land, did not want the land to pass permanently into their hands at a price based on its immediate value as unimproved grazing land.¹ On the contrary, he insisted upon maintaining a high price for actual purchases, and upon costlier licences and more stringent regulations generally. He was all the more convinced of this by the primitive standard of housing, and the lack of facilities for education, worship and the maintenance of law and order in the squatting districts.² Here he came into line with the opinions of the bishop. Broughton wanted to see the squatters given security of tenure to facilitate the development of holdings and the building of proper homesteads - and Anglican schools and churches; but he did not want the formation of 'a monstrous pretty oligarchy'³ by selling too much land too cheaply to the squatters. High prices, and hence a revenue which would assist the introduction of more people and more religious provision into the area, were what he argued for.⁴

In so far, however, as the opinion of Broughton coincided with that of Gipps, squatter resentment - and finally successful squatter resistance - would not advance the Bishop's aims for increased support for the Church of England. Broughton was, in fact, attacked by Robert Lowe in these bitter words:

When we find him fighting side by side with the Governor, in the endeavour to counterwork the laws of nature, and concentrate the population of this Colony, we find him embarked in a cause which he well knows is injurious to its material interests. ...But he also knows that the policy, though ruinous to the State, is beneficial to the Church. Concentration may depress the Colony, but it will elevate the hierarchy. Dispersion may be a condition of pastoral greatness, but masses are essential to clerical dominion. ...The solemn pomp of Cathedral worship - the weekly appeals from the pulpit - the numberless ways in which the clergy teach their flocks, not only to respect religion but to look with awful veneration upon those set apart for its ministration.

¹Gipps to Stanley, 17 Jan. 1844, H.R.A., xxiii, 336ff.

²Gipps to Stanley, 3 Apr. 1844 (No.75), ibid., xxiii, 507ff.

³Broughton to Coleridge, 18 May 1844, BP

⁴Broughton to 'a Private friend in England', 17 Feb. 1846, H.R.A., xxiv, 780ff.

These things cannot be carried into the desert... religion may be there, but ministers of religion cannot. 1

Much of this feeling must have been common among the squatters. It possibly contributed to a long persisting outback opinion that all clergymen are 'on the make'.² Certainly it helps to explain why Broughton found at the time that his best support was coming from urban middle classes.

If there was this tendency for the squatters to withhold their support from the Churches, it must not be erected into a cast-iron law.³ There were far too many exceptions. George and Edward Cox were the main contributors to the Anglican church at Mulgoa (where they lived),⁴ and George Cox enabled a church to be built at Mudgee (where he had a station).⁵ E.C. Close built a 'handsome and capacious' brick church at Morpeth.⁶ On the Lower Hawkesbury, land and money were given by Mr Wiseman for an Anglican church.⁷ St Paul's Church at Cobbity was erected largely through the liberality of Charles Cowper. The Church of St John, Camden, was built at the expense of the Macarthurs. It was chiefly through the exertions of William Dumaresq that a

¹ Atlas, 10 May 1845, p.277.

² 'I don't know what you parsons want to come round this back-country for at all. ... You only come about once in seven years, and you wouldn't come then if there wasn't money in it. You're all on the make, the whole ---- lot of you, and for all the good you do when you do come, you might just as well stop at 'ome.' - C.H.S. Matthews, A Parson in the Australian Bush, London 1908, p.16.

³ Nor must it be confined to churches. For a comment on squatter parsimony towards schools, see A.G. Austin, Australian Education, 1788-1900, Melbourne 1961, pp.61-2.

⁴ Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, I, p.69 (13 Sept. 1938). Cf. J. Hassall, op. cit., p.163.

⁵ S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1938, p.26.

⁶ Ibid., p.25.

⁷ Ibid., 1837, p.41.

church was secured for Scone.¹ St. John's, Limestone Plains, was made possible by Robert Campbell's gift of £300 and one hundred acres of land for the support of a clergyman.² In the provision of an Anglican school at Peel, near Bathurst - and such a project was second only to church building, in Broughton's eyes - the name of W.H. Suttor was most prominent.³

These instances range through the late 'thirties and the 'forties, and feature men with squatting interests. All the churches mentioned were within the boundaries, and the donors were 'gentry' rather than upstart squatters; but this only suggests two important factors in determining squatter contribution or non-contribution - how much real money the squatters had, and how many people there were in any district. The evidence of James Bowman before the New South Wales Committee on Immigration may be recalled in this connection. Bowman was willing to give £200 towards building a church in Vane, near his established property. He thought that as the population increased his neighbouring proprietors would also help to provide a parsonage for a resident minister; and as soon as his new purchases began to pay their way he would be willing to consider giving money towards churches in their vicinity.⁴ The evidence of the next witness, John Coghill, was quite as suggestive. He wanted a clergyman in his district (St. Vincent), but one who would itinerate and not be bound to a particular place of worship - the population was spread too far and too thinly to make any other arrangement practicable.⁵

These factors - the scantily peopled districts, the insecurity of tenure in squatting areas proper, and the time needed to develop and make profitable the land actually bought -

¹ Ibid., 1842, pp. 20-21.

² Ibid., 1840, p. 34. (At heart a merchant, Campbell had land here and elsewhere).

³ Ibid., 1849, p. 12.

⁴ Minutes of Evidence, pp. 814-5, Report from the Committee on Immigration, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

⁵ Ibid., p. 816.

all contributed to the squatters' unreadiness to give money for churches. When they were securely established, and their districts became better settled, they were often willing enough to build churches. A good illustration of this comes from the Western Districts of Victoria, where the largely Presbyterian squatters long considered it impossible to establish a clergyman (let alone build a church) in their midst. In 1847, however, the squatters themselves took the initiative in calling the Rev. William Hamilton to Kilnoorat, and undertook to pay him £200 a year and to build a manse. By the end of the forties the general situation was much improved, and it has been described in these words:

The different churches and their ministers though situated in towns were in fact usually adjuncts of the neighbouring homesteads, for in traditional style as lords of the colonial manor the Western District squatters supported their chosen churches.¹

The squatters had to become secure and established, little colonial lords (with their ladies at their elbows), before they could be expected to give of their largesse. This may cast some doubts upon the depth of their religion, but it also casts some coolly practical doubts upon the charge of gross irreligion among them.

The noticeable increase in middle class support for the Church of England was described by Broughton in 1847 as 'very singular'. Had he forgotten that he had deliberately set out in 1839 to woo them? Cautiously, after long deliberation, he decided to propose the inclusion in the management of the Diocesan Committee of the S.P.G. 'a class of persons not heretofore held in sufficient account to be admitted: that is of the better description of tradesmen'. He gave his reasons. Many tradesmen were wealthy and respectable. They had influence, and the bishop thought that they were favourably disposed towards the Church of England, but they had not found

¹M. Kiddle, *op. cit.*, pp.110, 172, 300. Cf. C.S.Ross, Colonization and Church Work in Victoria, Melbourne 1891, pp. 183-4, for similar settling of the Rev. T. Hastie at Bunniyong.

'any medium of positive or personal communication with it', and therefore could not show their goodwill. Since the Church had not been 'enabled to operate on them', they and their families were allured away, and went 'to swell the torrent of dissent'.¹ The Bishop of Melbourne set out in 1849 to follow Broughton's example. He hoped to win over 'respectable tradesmen and others of the middle class' by adding a number of them to the St. James's Church Committee. The Diocesan Committee, also, had been made 'too exclusive' - by 'an oversight'. Bishop Perry strongly deprecated the possibility of the Church acquiring 'anything of an aristocratical and exclusive character'; and, besides, it was impossible not to notice how few from the middle class had subscribed to their funds.²

Here was more than a hint of the old story of supporting the denomination in which one can count, and of moving 'up' one when increasing income brings greater respectability, and the added attentions of the 'state' Church.³ The normal squatter of the 'forties was often more secure socially than financially; before giving to the Church he would wait a few years. The man emerging, through wealth, from the ranks of the tradesmen was socially insecure; he could both satisfy his religious feelings and become better accepted in society by donating large sums to the Churches - and if to the Church of England, so much the better for his social status. A combination of social and financial influences of this kind affected very much the pattern of public support for the Churches in the forties. Contributions from the colonial upper classes, among whom the squatters were prominent, were large and important, but were

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 14 Oct. 1839, B.P.

²First Report of the Melbourne Diocesan Society...1849, Melbourne 1848, p.7. It may be noted that several respectable tradesmen refused to go on the committee 'on account of their time being so much occupied with business'.

³Cf. J.D.Lang's complaint that 'Episcopal domination' weaned Scotsmen of the official and higher classes away from Presbyterianism - Historical and Statistical Account...(1834), II, p.278.

often slow in coming. In total, the donations from the middle classes, including many who were newly respectable and prosperous, may not have been any larger, or even as great; but they must have been more numerous and were, apparently, given more willingly and steadily through years of financial difficulty for both squatters and Churches. It is not impossible indeed, that the middle class support was actually greater than the colonial gentlemen's in the forties.

These economic and class factors help to explain the history of the Churches; but they do not, in themselves, constitute an interpretation. The bishop who cut his salary by £500 to make other bishops possible, and who was forced to get into a cheaper house and not keep his own horses,¹ is hard to fit into a materialistic interpretation of history. When a glimpse is given of the same bishop, as late as 1849, holding confirmation at Montefiores (in the Wellington Valley area) in a church of slabs and preaching at Nureagh in the inn,² his concern about money is shown to be not only necessary, but also desirable.

The truly religious motive can be clearly and continuously seen in the people's support of the Churches. Prominent in the Appeal to the Public made by Anglican laymen in 1844 was their genuine horror at the thought of wide districts getting only an odd visit from a clergyman whom the settlers would probably never see again and could not send for 'in the hour of misfortune and death'.³ The dreadful possibility that 'the knowledge of Christian doctrine would be almost lost, and all traces of religious worship and observances nearly obliterated' among those in the interior of the Port Phillip district prompted a similar appeal over the signature of C.J. La Trobe.⁴ It was religion pure and simple which brought out

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 5 Jan. 1848, B.P.

²Sydney S.P.G. Report, 1849, pp. 11-12.

³Report of the Church of England Lay Association for New South Wales, 1844-5, p. 37.

⁴Printed in ibid., pp. 62-4.

the Wesleyan layman John Fidler when he heard of spiritual neglect in New South Wales; he thought he 'could manage to get a living and preach about...on Sundays', and he always managed to get congregations and to have chapels erected, and then enlarged, as he moved from place to place in the colony.¹ Among their laymen the Wesleyans in New South Wales, alone, had seventy-seven lay preachers and 127 other religious instructors in 1846.² The Rev. William Waterfield, an Independent minister, was kept at work along the north-west coast of Van Diemen's Land not by prestige or profit. He preached from tree-stump pulpits, and his ignorant hearers had nothing to give but 'their good wishes and their attention'. What kept him among them was that he managed to persuade many to read the Bible, to keep the Sabbath and to agree that their de facto marriages ought to be legalized.³ Catholics in the interior of New South Wales regularly came twenty or thirty miles to assist at Mass whenever a priest was due (or had simply ridden in).⁴ In 1848, when a Jubilee was granted at the accession of Pope Pius IX, 'the number of penitents was so great that the duties of the confessional were utterly beyond the power of the Sydney clergy, and the Archbishop was compelled to call in the assistance of priests from the country'.⁵

Bishop Broughton could complain of lack of support among the squatters. All Christian men looked with apprehension and pity on the neglect of religion in the remoter areas. Much will be said later of the prevalence of irreligion among the people in general. Some support of religion was undoubtedly due to the inferior motives of personal prestige or public respectability.

¹John Fidler, 'Recollections of Methodism in Illawarra', Methodist Church Papers, Uncat. Mss. Set 197, Item 4 (ML).

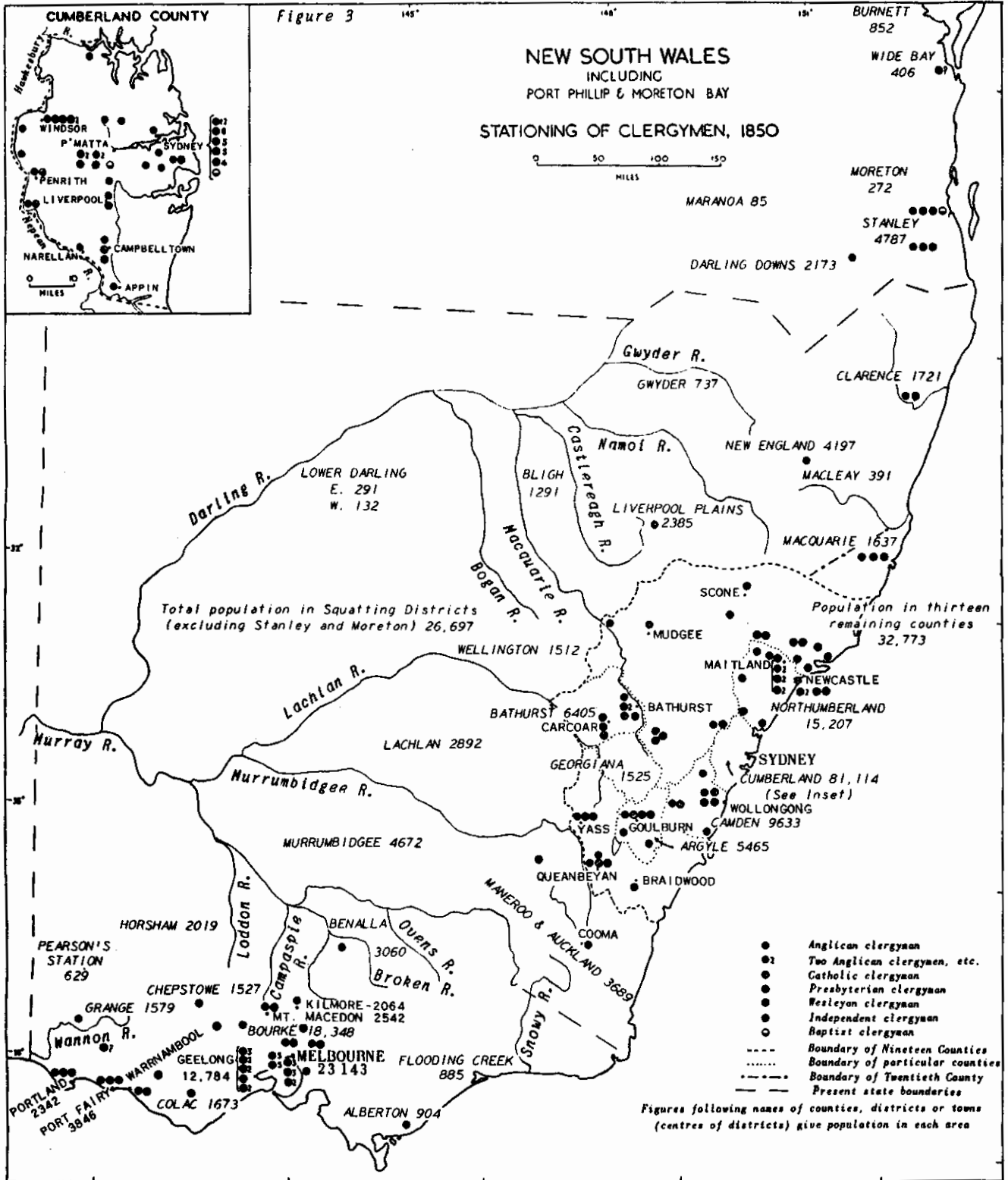
²W.B. Boyce to Colonial Secretary, 10 Oct. 1846, H.R.A. xxv, 385.

³Colonial Times, 28 May 1844, p.3 c.3.

⁴Report of the Mission to New Holland..., 1842, P.F. Moran, op. cit., p. 238. Cf. John Kenny, op. cit., p. 197.

⁵Account of the Mission in New Holland, c.1851, H.N. Birt, op. cit., II, p. 174.

But these truths are not the whole truth. It was the people's demand for churches which threatened to make the Church Acts more than the Governments could cope with, and, even where the Acts applied, heavy private contribution was also called for from the colonists themselves. This demand was too great to be adequately explained by pointing to state aid, the gifts of generous well-wishers in England, and motives of local monetary gain or personal prestige - and to these alone. In addition, there was a large amount of purely private giving to the Churches in cases where the Church Acts did not apply, or were rejected on principle. As the few instances here listed (in anticipation of Chapter 13) may have sufficiently indicated, there was, in every denomination, a true and tenacious religious feeling behind much of the people's support.



CHAPTER 5RELIGIOUS PROVISION IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA, 1850.

Very seldom do Churches have sufficient resources or flexibility to let them work in the best way in every area. Normally there are churches and clergymen in places where there could be retrenchment, and no churches or clergymen in new areas which urgently require them. In this sense, religious provision is hardly ever adequate. The situation in the eastern Australian colonies was no exception to this general rule, for there were some areas very well supplied, and other areas very badly neglected, right up to 1850. Yet, by that time, the public and private efforts made since 1836 to provide adequate religious provision had borne much fruit. The great majority of the people could call in a clergyman without undue delay, and attend a service of worship with reasonable regularity, so that it cannot be claimed that the Australian character and outlook were for long, or in large measure, formed in the absence of ministers of religion and of churches. Colonists may have been often absent from church, but, except in the remotest settlements, the Church was not absent from them.

In New South Wales the churches had multiplied until they could accommodate about 60,000 persons - most room being provided by Anglicans (15,700 seats), Catholics (12,150) and Wesleyans (10,000). The total was four and a half times the number accommodated in 1836, while the population had increased only one and a half times (to 187,000), so that almost one third of the people, instead of seventeen per cent., could be contained in the churches. Cumberland County, with 81,000 people and 30,000 sittings, could accommodate thirty-seven per cent., and the other 'settled districts', having 29,000 sittings for 79,000 people, could seat the same high proportion. The commonly accepted standard for reasonably adequate church-room had

therefore been reached. Closer analysis, distinguishing the favoured centres like Sydney and Maitland from the many smaller settlements without churches, would take some of the comfort from these averages; but, on the other hand, there was large additional accommodation in temporary chapels and other meeting places. The Free Presbyterians offered 1,700 seats in such buildings, compared with 1,650 in their churches. The Anglicans at Braidwood (where the church, though subscribed for, was only about to be built) held service for forty-five persons in the court-house, and for three hundred and fifteen people in nine other preaching-places in the district. As well as their 10,000 sittings in sixty-three chapels, the Wesleyans had 2,500 sittings in seventy-six preaching-places. In many settlements Divine Service was regularly held in irregular buildings, and the people could go to 'church' if they wanted to.¹

The problem was still in the squatting districts, beyond the county boundaries. In 1850 more than 27,000 people lived in these outback areas, and they were almost entirely without churches. To the churchman who believed it desirable, even essential, that people should be able to assemble regularly in the company of other Christians for the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, these neglected station-folk were a grievous worry. It was no relief for the churchman to know that, more often than not, it was simply impractical to build churches, and that out there lived less than fifteen per cent of the total population. But it is important for an appreciation of the development of Australian religious habits to realize how small this percentage was, and to know that by 1850 a large majority of people in New South Wales had churches in their towns and districts. If it is true that the mateship of the bushman proper was widely adopted as a substitute for the fellowship of

¹Return of Number of Churches, Livings, etc., N.S.W. Blue Book, 1850, p. 611ff. Population figures, here and in the following pages, have been taken from the Censuses of N.S.W., Vict. and V.D.L. in March 1851 (i.e., close to the end of 1850, and before the gold rushes).

the Churches, his influence was disproportionate indeed. It seems better to say that the Churches had to face the task of winning men from an indifference bred in various quarters - in the bush, the convict system and the British social and urban background.¹ In any case, whatever the sociologist of religion may decide about the Churches' success or failure, and wherever he may allot the most influence, the simple fact remains that churches were within the reach of most New South Welshmen by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The colonists in the Port Phillip District were not so fortunate. This region had much the same population in 1850 as New South Wales had in 1836 - about 77,000; but it had acquired this number of people in sixteen years, whereas New South Wales had taken nearly fifty years to do it. The rapidity of the migrant intake, plus the handicap of inferior 'District' status, inevitably meant that church-building in the Port Phillip area lagged. The position was far from hopeless, for thirteen per cent of the inhabitants could be accommodated in the churches, which had over 10,000 sittings (more than half of them in Wesleyan and Anglican buildings), and, as always in Australia, the bulk of the people were in a few main centres - over 54,000 living in the three districts of Melbourne, Bourke (immediately to the north) and Grant (Geelong), where the churches were also concentrated.² Still, church accommodation was seriously inadequate, and the churchmen were worried, acknowledging the 'fearful lesson' of England, where it seemed that recent efforts to provide more adequate church-room were failing to overcome many generations of neglect.³ The gold rushes of the next year were greatly to aggravate the problem, flooding new migrants into the land and throwing the Churches

¹Russell Ward, while emphasizing the first, by no means overlooks the other influences - see, The Australian Legend, Melbourne 1958, pp. 84ff, 169ff. The problem of indifference, and its origins, is discussed below, in Chapter 13.

²Statistics of the Port Phillip District...1850, Melbourne 1852, p. 6.

³First Report of the Melbourne Diocesan Society, 1849, pp. 19-20.

into confusion, before new-found wealth (and full colonial status and increased state-aid) improved the situation.¹

The position in the Port Phillip District in 1850 suggests a further point for the sociologist's consideration: Australian religious habits may well have been influenced, strongly and permanently, by the lag which usually occurred between the settlement of an area and the possibility of getting a church built. Men who had got along without a church for years would be very conscious of the eventual building of one, and would be likely to react strongly. They might determine to stay out of it; they might welcome its advent with an eagerness whetted by the years of denial; they might deliberately steer a middle course; but none was likely to watch unmoved the erection of a church in his neighbourhood. When two churches were erected in a small community (as instances from Van Diemen's Land particularly have shown), the divisive effect upon the locality was often obvious to both the zealot and the more detached, and gave food for thought. Many in England grew up within sight of an old church spire which was part of the scenery; but it was very different in Australia, where a church building was usually a new achievement. Attitudes to the Churches were more likely to be jolted in the colonies than at home.

Compared with the mainland, there was a slow increase in population in Van Diemen's Land. Its 70,000 people at the end of 1850 were only sixty per cent greater than the number in the mid-thirties, and were 7,000 less than Port Phillip District's current population. The smaller population-growth and the limited area of the island made the provision of church-room less difficult. Consequently, there were seats (28,000 - over 16,000 of them in Anglican churches) for forty per cent of the people by 1850.² This compared more than favourably with both the twenty-four per cent accommodation in 1836 and with the

¹Cf. W.L. Blamires and J.B. Smith, The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria, Melbourne 1886, pp.56-60.

²Statistical Returns for V.D.L., 1849, Hobart 1850, pp.27-32.

accepted minimum standard of provision. Now was there the same problem, in this much more compact colony, of the man outback. The situation in particular localities was, of course, sometimes bad - and the locality did not have to be in the remote settlements. The minister of St. John Baptist's parish in Hobart published two sermons in 1851, advertising that the profits, if any, would be devoted to the erection of a church in the parish which then had only a licensed school-room.¹ But the position generally was good in Van Diemen's Land. Indeed, in the colonies as a whole, the provision of churches had vastly improved since the mid-thirties, and it was sufficient for the needs of the people in many places. The religious zeal of private citizens (and the calculating motives of personal advantage) allied to the Church Acts had battled with an enormous problem with considerable success.

The number of clergymen in the colonies had also increased greatly by 1850. There were about one hundred and fifty ministers of religion working in New South Wales - seventy-two Anglican, twenty-nine Catholic, twenty-eight Presbyterian, fourteen Wesleyan, four Independent and three Baptist.² The ratio of clergyman to people was, therefore, one to 1,250 - which may be compared with one to 2,200 in 1836, or one to 1,125 as recently as 1961.³ The improved position in 1850 did not mean an ideal situation. Twelve hundred and fifty people - say two hundred and fifty families - can keep a clergyman fairly busy under the best of circumstances; and the circumstances in New South Wales were not the best. In 1848, Bishop Broughton wrote to a friend in England in a vein which well illustrates some of the difficulties.

The day after tomorrow I am to start again to the district of Illawarra; where I have two Churches to consecrate, confirmations to hold, and other duties to discharge. How to get there is more than I can

¹F.H. Cox, Perseverance and Endurance..., Hobart 1851.

²N.S.W. Blue Book, 1850, p. 612ff.

³Population approx. 3,920,000. Preliminary estimate of clergymen (Occupational Code 055) - 3,484.

tell at present. Roads there are none; and I am not like Parson Adams and the Bishop of New Zealand who prefer 'the pedestrian expedition'. It has been raining two days incessantly and seems likely to continue six days longer; so that the country will be all in a flood. And as to the Steamer, she is such a tub that I verily believe if overtaken by a southerly gale she would not hesitate to go to the bottom even with the whole bench of bishops on board. However we do in the Colonies contrive to manage these things in a way which would be more wonderful than agreeable to you who live in a country of railroads.¹

But the people of Illawarra were lucky - they had churches to be consecrated, and clergymen to prepare candidates for confirmation. Beyond the boundaries of location were at least ten thousand persons without a clergyman stationed among them or anywhere near them. Some twenty-thousand persons beyond the boundaries (excluding those in Stanley and Moreton) had a grand total of only seven clergymen actually stationed within their sprawling districts, and even one of the counties - Georgiana, with over fifteen hundred inhabitants - lacked a resident minister of any denomination. (See Figure 3) The Churches could have used many more clergymen, not simply to ease the burden on those they had, but to supply people who had no ministerial attention whatever, or had only occasional visits from itinerating chaplains.²

Once more, however, it must be stressed that the great majority of New South Welshmen were confined to very restricted areas. Over forty per cent lived in Cumberland County alone, over sixty per cent in the five counties of Cumberland, Northumberland, Camden, Argyle and Bathurst, and the clergy were stationed at fairly close intervals among them. Mitigating the effects of too few parochial clergymen, were also such persons as two Anglican ministers who were heads of schools, three Presbyterian ministers who were 'professors' at the Australian

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 5 Jan. 1848, BP.

²Itineration is discussed below, in Chapter 12.

College,¹ three Wesleyan catechists at Camden, Wollongong and Scone (as well as ninety-four local, or lay, preachers) and a Baptist 'deacon' ministering at Goulburn. A minority of the colonists were well beyond the normal reach of clergymen, but the majority had ordained men within reasonable riding distance, and also the sprinkling of lay and part-time pastors in their midst.

In Port Phillip, between 1848 and 1851, the number of ministers suddenly expanded. Bishop Perry arrived to find only three men stationed in his diocese, but he had twenty under him in 1850. In addition to the Anglicans, there were fifteen Presbyterians, eight Catholics, five Independents and four Wesleyans - a total of fifty-three clergymen in active work in the District.² Among 77,000 people, this meant a clergyman for every 1,453 persons, a remarkably good ratio when compared with the contemporary New South Wales figure, or with the present-day Victorian ratio of one to 1,055.³ Although eighteen of the clergymen in 1850 lived in Melbourne, so also did 23,000 people (see Figure 3). If the Melbourne clergy had a big advantage in compact parishes, each of them had - by an over-all average - just about as many people to look after as any other of the clergy and some of them, indeed, made tours from Melbourne into the districts. The people on the stations following the rivers out to the Murray had, of course, only the occasional visits of itinerating clergymen - and sometimes they missed even these. The Rev. W.B. Clarke (on an expedition as a geologist rather

¹J.D. Lang, Address, on behalf of the Australian Presbyterian Church Society..., Sydney 1850. The same author's Historical and Statistical Account..., 1852 edn. II, p.245, suggests that two more ministers - at Wide Bay and on the Manning River - could be added.

²N.S.W. Blue Book, 1850, p.642ff, plus supplementary sources - N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1850 (ML); Registrar's Book, Diocese of Melbourne; P.F. Moran, op. cit., p.730ff; and Anglican and Presbyterian secondary sources listed in the bibliography. There had also been one Baptist minister.

³Population, 1961 census, approx. 2,930,000. Preliminary estimate of clergymen - 2,776.

than as a minister) held a Christmas service in 1851 on the banks of the Indi River, the upper limit of the Murray, and among the small group of pioneers who attended were two men who had not seen a clergyman for eleven and eighteen years respectively.¹ There is no doubt that this was true for far too many colonists; but it is equally true that many more colonials - always the great majority - had a fairly regular sight (if they sometimes avoided the sound) of the clergy.

The case of Van Diemen's Land heavily underlines this point. For its population of 70,000 (prisoners and all) it had eighty-seven clergymen (convict chaplains and all), or a minister for every eight hundred people in 1850.² The position is worse today, when there are 1,074 persons to each minister,³ and had been much worse in 1836, when the ratio was 1,900 to one. The simple average is probably a better guide in Van Diemen's Land than it is elsewhere, for in the two districts of Hobart and Launceston there lived almost half of the population (34,000) and about half of the clergymen, while - even more than on the mainland - most of the remaining people were concentrated in districts where they could be served by some clergyman. (See Figure 4) The Van Diemen's Land clergy were predominantly Anglican; of the grand-total of eighty-seven, fifty belonged to the Church of England, while the next highest number was the twelve Catholic priests. So well served, indeed, was the Church of England that one minister who arrived in 1850 soon went on to New South Wales, believing that he was not really needed among the 'numerous and well organized' Anglican clergy in the island colony.⁴ There were also eleven Presbyterian, six Independent, six Wesleyan and two Baptist ministers, so that the people were reasonably likely to find a pastor to suit them, though there was always the chance of, say, several Baptist families living

¹W.B. Clarke, Researches in the Southern Goldfields of New South Wales, Sydney 1860, p. 119n. (reference supplied by Ann Mozley.)

²Wood's Royal Southern Kalendar, 1850, pp. 85-9.

³Population, 1961 census, 350,340. Preliminary estimate of clergymen - 326.

⁴J.D. Mereweather, op. cit., pp. 75-6.

where only an Anglican parson (possibly a High Churchman!) was stationed. Such ill-fortune apart, Van Deimen's Land colonists were well supplied with pastors,

The position in this colony highlights one other aspect of religious provision in Australia which may well have left a permanent mark on the nation's attitude to religion. Two-thirds of the Catholic priests and one-fifth of the Anglicans were attached to the 'Convict Department' and were, therefore, paid from Imperial funds and associated with the Government even more closely than most ministers. In one sense, these were imposed upon the colony: many of the prisoners, especially Protestant prisoners, had no desire to be supplied with clergymen - both convicts and chaplain were where they were because authority willed it. In another sense, the convict chaplains were given to the colony: they were not present merely in response to the spontaneous demand of the colonists, though they often ministered as much to colonists as to the convicts - by the grace of the Government. A not dissimilar effect was produced by the Church Acts in both colonies. If colonists contributed half the cost of a church, the state supplied the remainder, and often paid the whole of the clergyman's stipend, so that religious provision was almost as much the gift of the Government as it was the achievement of the colonists. All this may have played a big part in determining Australian attitudes to religion.¹

Belief that the Churches are on the side of privilege and authority rather than on the side of the workingman, and the idea of the Churches as feeble bodies, old and in need of crutches, instead of pulsing with vigorous life, are probably widespread in modern Australia. Some of this opinion would have its remote origins in old England, with its Church by law established and its chapels attended by the middle classes; but the idea could have sprung partly from the Churches' history in eastern Australia up to 1850; for in that period (and for longer)

¹In Chapter 13 below, it is argued that state-aid helped determine the denominational structure in Australia.

the Churches were not a part of the traditional scenery, but were very much a part of the official establishment. It was precisely because of this that they managed to become so well represented in the colonies.

The churchmen themselves had reason to be pleased with the institutional development of their several denominations between 1835 and 1850. Yet an improved number of churches and clergymen did not guarantee that Christian doctrine would be thoroughly disseminated among the people. Conscious of a great religious ignorance among many inhabitants, the Church leaders gave anxious thought throughout the period to other means of spreading the gospel. Their greatest hope lay in training the young, for the children were impressionable even when parents were hardened in sin and indifference, and clerical eyes were jealously watching the schools. While most of the clergy were battling to keep state-aid for their Churches, they were battling no less to keep out a state-directed, secularized system of education - for they feared this as much as any shortage of ministers and churches.

PART II

THE CHURCHES AND EDUCATION IN EASTERN AUSTRALIA,
1835-50

CHAPTER 6

CHURCH SCHOOLS OR STATE SCHOOLS?

(1) NEW SOUTH WALES.

The Protestant defeat of Bourke's Irish school system, 1836

The matter of the schools aroused the crusading fervour and absorbed the energies of the Christian denominations, in this period, more than almost any other public issue - more, even, than the issue of state-aid. Especially was this true of the Anglicans, for it was from them that the Governments set out to wrest control in this era of active entry by the British state into the field of popular education. In both Britain and Australia, the Church of England and the Nonconformist bodies resisted one Government proposal after another, in their jealousy for their own position and doctrines, and their apprehension lest all Christian doctrine should be excluded from elementary education. The popular demand for secular knowledge was stronger than the desire for church schools and denominational instruction, so the Churches finally lost their battles; but they fought so hard and long that the education question is one of the most prominent elements in the Church history of the age.

From the foundation of the colony of New South Wales, the public schools were essentially Anglican,¹ though there were limitations to the Church of England's influence which were not unimportant. Thomas Bowden, headmaster of the main public school in Sydney, used a system developed by Nonconformists in England,²

¹V.W.E. Goodin, in 'Public Education in New South Wales before 1848', J.R.A.H.S., Vol. xxxvi, Pts 1-4, denies this, saying that, if the Anglican chaplains inspected the schools, the chaplains were controlled by the Governor (pp.8-9). This is to overlook the difference between theoretical authority and actual supervision, and the fact that gubernatorial authority was fundamentally Anglican.

²Ibid., p.193. Bowden used the Lancastrian, later known as the British and Foreign School, system.

and he was himself a Methodist, as were other teachers sent out from the United Kingdom.¹ Under Governor King, who retained control of the school and appointed the master, a Catholic school at the Rocks was granted state aid in 1793. This ceased when Captain Bligh came to the colony, but in 1822 Sir Thomas Brisbane agreed to pay one penny per week for every Catholic child attending Andrew Higgin's school in Sydney. This was 'the first direct subsidy for a denominational school' not controlled by the Government.² Yet such phenomena were either accidental or incidental. The Imperial authorities had no intention of allowing the basic control of elementary education to pass from the hands of their Established Church. In response to Macquarie's request for teachers 'untainted with Methodism or other sectarian opinion',³ the Rev. Thomas Reddall, an Anglican, was appointed to take charge of the schools and to introduce the method and content of teaching favoured by the Church of England at home.⁴ When Arch-deacon Scott was appointed, he was to be the 'Visitor of all Schools maintained throughout the Colony by His Majesty's Government'.⁵

Elementary education was still in the hands of the Church of England on 8 August 1836, a day on which Sir Richard Bourke signed two despatches, one of them marked 'separate and confidential', both of them written in a rage. Bourke had a plan for education, and it was being obstructed - most prominently by the Right Reverend, and the right formidable, Dr W.G. Broughton, Lord Bishop of Australia. The Governor packed his despatches with criticism of the bishop which revealed, not an impatience at temporary delay but all the bitter fury of potential defeat.⁶ Towards the end of this August day, after a clear noon, Sydney-town was swept by

¹Edward Eager to George Howe, 20 June 1812, B.T. Miss. Box 49, p.312 (ML).

²V.W.E. Goodin, *op. cit.*, pp.102, 191.

³Macquarie to Bathurst, 15 May 1818, *H.R.A.*, ix, 777.

⁴Bathurst to Macquarie, 13 May 1820, *ibid.*, x, 304. Reddall was to insist upon the Bell, or National Society, system.

⁵Bathurst to Brisbane, 21 Dec. 1824, *ibid.*, xi, 419-20.

⁶Bourke to Glenelg, 8 Aug. 1836, *ibid.*, xviii, 466ff.

wind, a fitting symbol of the opposition which was rising to tear at Bourke's plan until he was forced to let it go. For some years Bourke had been promoting the idea of copying the scheme in operation since 1831 in Ireland. A system of elementary schools aided and directed by the state had been introduced there to overcome the inadequacy of the existing schools, mostly run by Christian denominations. The new schools concentrated on providing a basic education for all, without distinction according to religious creed. No specifically denominational teaching was given except at stated times when clergymen were entitled to come and teach the children of their denomination. It was a system roughly of the kind familiar in Australia today - although the lesson books contained much more general religious teaching. It was adopted because Ireland was fundamentally divided over doctrine, the people being largely Catholic and the ruling caste (and many of the northerners) being Protestant.¹ Governor Bourke, an Anglican who was both an Irishman and a liberal, saw freedom as the right and tolerance as the duty of all, and was impressed by the intrinsic value of literacy. The colony he governed urgently needed a better provision of education, and was peopled by a medley of denominations (and indifferentists), so an adaptation of the Irish system seemed an ideal solution for New South Wales.

Therefore, when Bourke proposed (in 1833) the policy which was to lead to the Church Act, he also proposed the Irish system for schools. He was confident of his case and of its acceptance. The dissolution of the Church and Schools Corporation seemed to confirm the principles of religious equality and enlightened education, and to enable their implementation. Furthermore, the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time was Lord Stanley who, as Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1831, had first introduced the Irish system. Bourke pointed reproachfully at the unequal support given by the Government to the Anglican and Catholic schools in the colony, and tactlessly maintained that the schools

¹There is a brief description of the system and its introduction in James Murphy, The Religious Problem in English Education, Liverpool 1959, pp.22-32.

would have to give way to something better, since they were quite inadequate for the 'sacred duty' of giving a general education to the children of the colony. He was sure that Government schools 'regulated after the manner of the Irish Schools' would be both suitable and acceptable to the colonists.¹

It was these optimistic plans, not the Church schools, which failed. In the first place it was over two years before the Governor received a definite instruction. Seventeen months after the date of his despatch, Lord Aberdeen (a new Secretary of State) wrote that he was not yet prepared to give any instructions, but was discussing the case with W.G. Broughton who was then in England.² The fact that Broughton was fully in the picture does much to explain the delay; for Broughton was not the one to surrender any Anglican advantage that could be retained. But also contributing to the lack of firm direction were 'the importance of the subject' itself, the successive changes in Government - from Whig to Conservative and back to Whig, and the fact that Lord Stanley thought of the Irish system as one to be confined to Ireland. Though the method was sometimes called 'Lord Stanley's system', that noble lord 'should never have thought of recommending [It] as in the least applicable to the very different state of England'.³

Yet the scheme had an appeal to the Whigs, and Bourke had insisted that Australia was not like England. Although the decision was not easily made, even by the new Whig cabinet, the Secretary of State finally approved Bourke's suggestion.⁴ On 22 July 1836, the Governor laid on the table of the New South Wales

¹Bourke to Stanley, 30 Sept. 1833, H.R.A., xvii, 224ff.

²Aberdeen to Bourke, 13 Feb. 1835, ibid., xvii, 656-7.

³Stanley to Adam Hodgson, English Chronicle, 13 Aug. 1836, reprinted in Colonist, 19 Jan. 1837, p.23. (Cf. William Foster, 'Education in New South Wales under Governor Sir Richard Bourke', J.R.A.H.S., Vol. 47, Pt. 5, p.267). In 1834 Stanley went over to the Tories.

⁴See Glenelg to Bourke, 3 Aug. 1835, and enclosure, H.R.A., xviii, 58ff, and Glenelg to Bourke, 30 Nov. 1835 (No. 81), ibid., 201ff.

Legislative Council two distinct documents.¹ One was the bill which became the Church Act; the other was a minute proposing a general system of education. The Council voted £3,000 for the establishment of 'national' (i.e., general system) schools,² but the vote was a gesture rather than a real achievement. The figure was placed on the Estimates, a contract was let for building a school at Wollongong, and a request was made for teachers to be sent out from England, but no persistent attempt was made to implement the Irish system. Even the teachers when they arrived turned out to have been trained, not for the Irish, but for the British and Foreign system! By the time Sir George Gipps arrived as Governor, early in 1838, Bourke's plans 'were considered to be virtually abandoned'.

Instead of the general system decided by the Council, Gipps found that an extended denomination schools system had 'tacitly grown up', without the due sanction of law, after Bishop Broughton had managed to persuade Bourke to support Anglican schools in much the same way as the churches were being subsidized.³ The principle had been acted upon in the case of all new schools, and extended to every denomination, while the Anglican and Catholic schools established before 1837 continued to receive a fixed annual grant. The result had been that the Anglicans had promptly claimed Government assistance (and used money given by the English S.P.G.) towards a school built to rival the new

¹Recent writers have tended to regard the Church Act as having been directly connected with education - e.g., R. Fogarty, Catholic Education in Australia, 1806-1950, 2 vols. Melbourne 1959, I, pp. 31-2. This was not so: neither the Act nor the regulations under the Act mentioned schools. Only the 'principle of equality' accepted in the Act was appealed to - see Governor's Minute on Education, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

²V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. In Colonist, 11 Aug. 1836., p.250, it was claimed that the 'vote was thus framed to leave the main question still open', i.e., whether the Irish system or the British and Foreign system should be introduced.

³Gipps to Normanby, 9 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 426-7; Broughton to Bourke, 26 Nov. 1836, CSIL 36/10579 (Dixson); Col. Sec. to Broughton, 19 Dec. 1836, CSOL 4/3618/28 (ML). I was made aware of the bishop's role by K. Grose, op. cit., pp.240-1.

Government school at Wollongong! A Catholic school had followed, and plans were in hand for the erection of a Presbyterian school there; so the startled Gipps chose to leave the general-system school empty, rather than add to the religious dissension.¹

The Churches' attitudes and actions are the real explanation of the fact that Bourke's proposal for state aid to all denominations was accepted, while his plan for schools remained, as it were, gathering dust on the table in the Council Chamber. Bourke's proposals had been made in the same despatch, approved in the same despatch from the Secretary of State, brought before the Council on the same day, and both favourably regarded by that body. The two measures were considered to be complementary by the liberal Governor and by the Whig Government at home, since they gave proper opportunity for all in the new, pluralistic society emerging in an age of enlightenment and reform. But the leaders of the Protestant Churches, especially, saw the two measures as being radically different. The ground for Protestant opposition was prepared in 1834 when a group of Nonconformists² decided to foster education along the principles of the 'British and Foreign' schools in England, the main tenet being the use of the whole Bible, but without note or comment, as a reading book. An Australian School Society was consequently formed to support these principles, and in January 1835 a school was opened in Hart Street, Sydney. By the beginning of 1836 there were one hundred and twenty pupils in the boys' school, and twenty-seven in the girls' school.³ In the same year, moreover, the society successfully petitioned the Legislative Council for State

¹Gipps to Russell, 24 Oct. 1840, H.R.A., xxi, 58-9. In 1846 the Herald was to draw Governor Fitz Roy's attention to 'the monument of folly at Wollongong' as a reminder that enough money had been frittered away (12 Oct. 1846, p.2, c.2).

²The Chairman of the inaugural meeting was W.P. Crook (Independent). The Provisional Committee consisted of the Rev. H. Carmichael (Presbyterian), the Rev. Joseph Orton (Wesleyan), and Messrs J.T. Wilson, James Norton, J.E. Manning and G. Allen - Colonist 22 Jan. 1835, p.28, c.1.

³First Report of the Australian School Society, on the Principles of the British and Foreign School Society in London, Sydney 1836, pp.9-10.

aid.¹ In this way there was publicized in the colony a system of education described as non-sectarian and suitable for adoption by the Government. Before the Irish system was formally proposed to the Council - also as non-sectarian and suitable for adoption by Government - the rival system had won some support.²

The Irish system, what is more, had aroused the strong opposition of Protestant churchmen since it was considered to favour Catholicism by using only restricted portions of the Bible. Supporters of the British and Foreign system maintained

that the Holy Scriptures (the oracles of GOD) present us with the most perfect morality...and that as the education afforded by the [Australian School] Society is based upon the Scriptures, it is of a class sufficiently general to demand the co-operation of men of diverse sentiments.... 3

Numerous Protestants were content to have no more religious instruction than Bible reading in the schools, but they would be content with nothing less. They were not made amenable to the Irish system by the knowledge that Protestants had worked with Catholics on the School Board in Ireland to produce a series of carefully selected and edited readings - the 'Scripture Lessons' - to be read during ordinary lessons. The fact remained that all other passages and versions could be read only at the specified time of religious instruction when the children of different denominations were segregated.⁴ It was the colonial Catholics who looked with more favour upon the Irish system. Father John M'Encroe attended one of the early meetings of the Australian School Society and insisted that Catholics could not co-operate in a system which placed the Bible - a difficult book in many

¹V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. Cf. Gipps' memo., 24 Jan. 1839, on Mansfield and Allen to Col. Sec., 15 Jan. 1839, CSIL, 4/2434.1 (ML).

²It did not get enough support (see Herald, 10 Mar. 1836, p.4, c.1), and was closed for want of funds perhaps as early as 1840 (Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.5) and certainly no later than 1843 (W. Foster, op. cit., p.266).

³Report of the Australian School Society, 1836, p.iii.

⁴Regulations printed in V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. For fuller explanation, see J. Murphy, op. cit., pp.25-7.

parts - in the hands of children without explanation, but he said that the Irish system might be acceptable to Catholics.¹ This preference only made the Protestants more determined than ever to oppose the introduction of the Irish system. They argued: compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism was 'manifestly wrong in principle, if attainable in practice', and New South Wales was a British, not an Irish colony.² And they lampooned:

There were guests of every rank and station,
Of every possible creed and nation;
Mahometan, Christian, Turk and Jew;
But the only dish was an Irish stew.

An Irish Roman Catholic priest
Got up in his place and blessed the feast,
And then helped himself, as he well could do,
To a trencher-full of the Irish stew.

He dived right into it all in a minute,
And showed there was never a Bible in it.
'For what', said he, 'had the Bible to do
Either inside or outside an Irish stew?' 3

When Bourke gave notice of his intention to introduce the Irish system in his opening address to the Council on 4 June 1836, the Protestants began to organize their resistance. A meeting was called for 24 June, at which the chairman was Bishop Broughton, who had returned from England earlier in the month, and the secretary was the Wesleyan, Ralph Mansfield. The battle was taken up as the cause of Protestantism and the Authorized Version against Catholicism, and Bourke's plan was attacked as 'subversive of the fundamental principle of Protestantism' by its denial of free access to the whole Bible.⁴ Bourke's intention to use the 'Scripture Lessons' was indeed a concession to Catholic opinion and a denial of a liberty in which Protestants gloried. They grasped it as a stick for beating Bourke and keeping the

¹Colonist, 5 Feb. 1835, p.44, c.4.

²Ibid., 5 May 1836, p.137. Cf. issues of 29 Jan., 5 and 12 Feb. 1835.

³Ibid., 26 Feb. 1835, p.69. (The work of J.D. Lang).

⁴Resolutions passed by the meeting are printed in H.R.A., xviii, 472.

Catholics in their place. A General Committee of Protestants was formed, which petitioned the Council against the Irish system and was supported from Protestant pulpits and by three similar petitions, including one from the bishop himself - who found himself temporarily excluded from his seat on the Legislative Council by the Imperial authorities' failure to issue a new warrant.¹ The four nominated members of the Council - representatives of the people in the sense that they were not members by virtue of holding colonial office - signed a protest against the system, two of them, Robert Campbell and Richard Jones, carrying their opposition to the point of issuing separate protests against a grant of money towards the foundation of a Catholic orphanage.²

The Colonist continued to back the opposition, and even more important was the Herald's campaign against the Irish system. Frequently its editorials damned Bourke's proposals.³ News from overseas papers of Irish crime and 'papist guile' was chosen for reprinting.⁴ Many letters of protest were printed in its columns, and letters from the other side were commented upon unfavourably in editorial notes.⁵ After 20 August, a third paper, the Sydney Gazette, passed into new hands and ceased to 'knock on the head every scarecrow argument that Bishop Broughton...and his small band of heterodox squire Thwackums' brought against the

¹The petitions are in V. & P., N.S.W., 1836, and Papers on Education, Etc., 1804-68 (MSS.ML). For the use of pulpits, see Bourke to Glenelg, 8 Aug. 1836 and 7 Oct. 1836 and Enclosures, H.R.A., xviii, 467, 565-70. For Broughton's exclusion, see Glenelg to Bourke, 1 Dec. 1836, ibid., 606-8.

²V. & P., N.S.W., 1836. The others were E.C. Close and H.H. Macarthur. Three were Anglicans; Campbell was moving from Presbyterianism to Anglicanism.

³Herald, 16 June, 4 July, 1, 11, 18 Aug., 10 Oct., 26 Dec. 1836.

⁴Ibid., 25 Feb., 11 April, 28 July, 4 and 15 Aug. 1836.

⁵Ibid., 27 June, 15 Aug., 13 Oct. 1836. For a later Governor's comment on the paper as pro-Anglican and influential, see Fitz Roy to Grey, 10 Jan. 1848, Enclosure No. 1, H.R.A., xxvi, 168. Oddly, much influence on the paper came from the Rev. John M'Garvie, John Fairfax and Ralph Mansfield - none of them Anglicans (Cf. M. Roe, op. cit., p.39ff).

Irish system, and devoted itself instead to attacking Bourke.¹ Other papers gave Bourke support, among them the Australian and the Monitor. The latter spread itself over several columns to denounce Bishop Broughton and the Protestants who had come under his influence. It warned that 'half a century' would not eradicate the religious antagonisms which were being aroused. It pleaded that the education of Protestants and Catholics together would lead to increased brotherliness in the next generation of men, and it condemned 'the unaffectionate assuming haughty spirit which refuses to consider the Roman Catholics as members of Christ's body'.²

This was not the attitude which had most influence. The opponents of the Irish system made the telling point that if Catholics were one-fifth of the population, Protestants made up the remaining four-fifths. This, they claimed, meant that the argument for the system in Ireland was an argument against the system in New South Wales: Catholics were the large majority in the first country, Protestants the large majority in the second, and the wish of the majority ought to prevail - both by right and by Lord Glenelg's instructions. By Bourke's plan the Protestants would not get the degree of 'tolerance' that the Catholics would get. Much was made of the English inheritance of the Reformation, and of the peril to which the proposed system exposed it by acknowledging Catholic objections and playing down Protestant principles. It was claimed that unless the children of the colony were thoroughly taught religion and morality at school, many of them would not be taught at all, since their parents were dissipated and too indifferent to care. And - the case against the system continued - since the Catholics were largely poor and of Irish convict origin, and most of the landowners were English and Scottish Protestants, the latter would have to pay for a system which would benefit

¹See issues of 11 Aug., 1, 3, 6, 15, 20 Sept., 25 Dec. 1836. I owe this information to W. Foster, op. cit., pp.271-2.

²Monitor, 26 July 1836, reprinted in Tasmanian, 12 Aug. 1836, p.269.

mainly the children of Irish Catholic convicts.¹ Highly inflammatory remarks were passed on this score, but it was clearly effective to make these appeals to the pockets and pride, as well as to the faith, of the 'mentally and morally superior' English and Scots, and to play up to the old issue of emancipist against free settler; for these were the arguments which won the day against the establishment of a comprehensive system of general education in New South Wales in 1836.

The essence of the protest was no concession to Catholics at the expense of Protestants; it was not an attempt to deny Catholics religious freedom or the right to education. This important distinction is the key to the acquiescence which made the Church Act possible and truly effective, and to the Protestant 'clamour'² which caused the shelving of the Irish system. The Church Act was accepted by all because it meant aid for all, when all had need and none could be denied. The Irish system was defeated because, by deferring to Catholic attitudes to the Bible, it meant that the state would enter the struggle on the Catholic side; and because, by imposing state control instead of merely granting aid, it would reduce the power and independence of the Churches.

The victory was to the Protestants, and was achieved by the Protestants, not merely the Anglicans. Every Protestant Church as such condemned the Irish system - witness those present at the meeting on 24 June, and also those who formed the sub-committees throughout the colony.³ It had been the Nonconformists who established the Hart Street School on the British and Foreign principles in 1835. It was a Presbyterian, the Rev. J.D. Lang, who

¹These and similar arguments were repeated. For a sober statement, see W.G. Broughton's petition; and for more entertaining, quite outrageous, statements see the Herald editorials cited above.

²One of those reproachful epithets which are so often taken up and turned against the originator - 'an unlucky word, Mr. Justice Dowling!' said the Herald, 1 Aug. 1836, p.3, c.2.

³Listed in H.R.A., xviii, 472-4. Cf. Colonist, 12, 19 Jan. 1837. The only Anglican clerical delinquent was the Rev. Frederick Wilkinson, whose opposition was mainly due to personal pique against Broughton. (See Wilkinson to Marsden, 12 July 1836, Marsden Papers, I, pp.601-3 (ML).)

set out in 1844 'to atone' for his opposition to the Irish system in 1835, when - he claimed - the system was not understood; henceforth he became an ardent supporter of the Irish Schools.¹ It was a Wesleyan, the Rev. John M'Kenny, who continued to believe it an honour to have opposed Bourke in 1836.² It was very largely the non-Anglican Protestants who (encouraged by Broughton) drew up a recommendation that the British and Foreign system be developed along with strictly denominational schools in 1836.³ Broughton, at the crowded meeting of Protestants, maintained that he had not thus stirred up the colony within ten days of his return from England, that the Rev. Samuel Marsden came out to the ship before he landed and told him that Bourke's plan was 'generally considered' to be the first step towards 'schools without the Bible', and that it was only after some Dissenting ministers took the initiative in approaching him that he gave his support (after explaining how far he could go with them).⁴

How truly the Protestants were united, and how well Broughton succeeded in using the Nonconformists for his own purposes, are other questions. The bishop was subtil to the point of lying in this campaign. In his anxiety to foster the feeling that this was not an episcopal manoeuvre but a Protestant spontaneous response, he asserted that, prior to his return to the colony, he had 'never written a line nor spoken a word' even to his own clergy 'to induce them to second or support' his opposition to the general system of education.⁵ In fact he had written to Marsden, and to others of his clergy, giving them a strong lead in opposing the embryonic

¹J.D. Lang, Historical and Statistical Account..., 1852 edn., II, p.514.

²Herald, 11 Sept. 1844, p.2, c.7.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.10-11, 17.

⁴W.G. Broughton, A Speech delivered at the General Committee of Protestants, on Wednesday, August 3, 1836, Sydney 1836, p.4; The Speech of the Lord Bishop of Australia in the Legislative Council, upon the Resolutions for Establishing a System of General Education, 27 August, 1839, Sydney 1839, p.3; cf. Herald, 11 Sept. 1844, p.2, c.7.

⁵A Speech at the General Committee..., pp.4-5.

movement.

In my last letter I think you had my opinion upon the tendency of this [Irish School] scheme; but let me repeat.... I am persuaded that the more these invasions of the Protestant faith are countenanced and sanctioned by others, the more it becomes us to stand aloof from them and resist them. 1

Broughton was also ambiguous in what he said to the Nonconformists in the colony, so that many of those on the General Committee thought that the bishop was their champion, and went on expecting Broughton to support the introduction of the British and Foreign system. True, Broughton told the Committee that he wanted Church of England catechism taught in his schools. He thought the Government could be induced to support him in this because the 'good man who had the first church here, had also the first school; wherein the catechism of the Church of England was taught', and he added that it would 'be useless to attempt combining in a general scheme of religious education' until they were agreed to such terms. But this was not all that Broughton said. The Government should support his schools 'so far at least as not to undo' those which had long been in existence - he said this also. The schools should include the Anglican catechism 'or some equivalent summary'. 'We might possibly agree,' the bishop went on, 'in a scheme which should employ the terms and phrases of Scripture without attempting to give them an interpretation'. It was an ambiguous speech indeed. Even if Broughton finished on a firmer note, it was still one which did not jar on all Nonconformist ears.

At the same time, as I know that there are some who cannot take part in the system to which I have declared my adherence, I shall be glad to see them provided for upon ground of their own. If I might be permitted to offer a suggestion, it would be that a Sub-Committee be formed to consider upon what common ground those who cannot unite with me, can agree among themselves.... I shall most cordially and sincerely wish God-speed to all who are engaged in so good a work; and will most

¹Broughton to Marsden, 25 Sept. 1835, Marsden Papers, I, pp. 584-5 (ML). See also, Broughton to Cowper and Hill, 26 June 1835, in The Speech...in the Legislative Council...1839, App. B. (By 1839 Broughton must have forgotten that he had denied such correspondence in 1836).

cheerfully contribute by influence and recommendation towards obtaining for you a share of the public support.¹

Some non-Anglicans saw through the bishop's speech at once. Bourke reported that after it was printed Nonconformists began to realize 'that, with a Churchman of the Bishop of Australia's principles, no Dissenter...[could] long remain united'.² Years afterwards the Baptist minister, John Saunders, confirmed this. He said that it had been generally expected in 1836 that all Protestants could combine in any system which included the whole Authorized Version of the Bible, but 'when it was found that the Bishop, who had lately arrived, had influenced the minds of his clergy contrary to our views, there was great disappointment felt, even by many of his own denomination'.³ Others continued to believe that the bishop was in favour of British and Foreign schools being introduced, as well as maintaining denominational schools. Ralph Mansfield, an intelligent Wesleyan, and secretary of the General Committee of Protestants, remained under that illusion until 1839. The bishop, said Mansfield, never resigned from the Committee of Protestants, but simply ceased to attend - much to his surprise. The recommendation that the Committee should work for the establishment of British and Foreign schools as well as church schools was indeed put on one side at the request of the bishop; but this was not because the bishop expressed disapproval, as far as Mansfield remembered, but because Broughton wrote suggesting that the matter be dropped until it was known what the Government was going to do.⁴

Perhaps this is a classic case of everyone believing only what they wanted to believe.⁵ Broughton gave, and obviously

¹A Speech...at the General Committee..., pp.19, 20, 22-3.

²Bourke to Glenelg, 8 Aug. 1836, (No. 86), H.R.A., xviii, 469.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.96-7.

⁴Ibid., pp.11-12.

⁵G.W. Rusden, National Education, Melbourne 1853, pp.170-1, admitted only to seeing the bishop's promises. W. Foster, op. cit., pp.270-1, curiously misses Broughton's encouragement of the non-Anglicans to agree together on the British and Foreign system.

intended to give, every opportunity for various interpretations of his position. He manipulated and managed the Protestant movement with great skill, and less honesty, so that his prime aim of a denominational school system (and hence Anglican schools) was not endangered.¹ But he did not instigate the movement. There was a spontaneous reaction on the part of all the Protestant Church leaders; and it may be true to say that, before the campaign was over, many of the rank and file who had been indifferent and had never given the matter a thought, discovered why they were Protestants.² Certainly it is true that the fate of the New South Wales schools in 1836 was decided, not by the liberal policies of the Government, but by the principles and pressures of the Protestant Churches.

The Anglican Rejection of Gipps' British and Foreign School System, 1839

The events of the year 1839 revealed the full extent of Protestant differences, and the dominance of Broughton and the Church of England. In 1838 Sir George Gipps set out, in his turn, to establish a general system of education. Like Bourke, Gipps favoured the Irish system, but, realising the futility of proposing it after the 1836 debacle, he chose the arrangement next best in his eyes - the British and Foreign system. This he intended to develop while allowing the Churches the option of continuing their own schools with Government support in amounts equal to private support.³ On 23 August 1839 the Governor laid on the table resolutions which may be summarized in this way.

1. All classes are entitled to equal assistance from Public Revenue in the establishment of Schools.
2. The extreme dispersion of the population demands a comprehensive system.
3. Such a system may embrace at least all Protestants.
4. If the Public Schools are Protestant, corresponding

¹In this sense it is true to say with A.G. Austin, Australian Education, 1788-1900, Melbourne 1961, p.35, 'As Bourke saw clearly, Broughton was the mainspring of the opposition'.

²'Nemo', Herald, 3 Oct. 1836, p.2, c.4.

³Governor's Address, 11 June, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

advantages should be secured for Roman Catholics.

Gipps informed the Council that the four resolutions formed a unity: all were to be voted for, or none.¹

The Governor might have expected opposition. Although the British and Foreign schools in England had secured royal patronage (in the persons of George III and William IV), their founder was Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, and they were supported by the Whigs, the Utilitarians and the Dissenters. The British and Foreign School Society was bitterly rivalled by the 'National Society for promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church', in which the key figure was the Rev. Andrew Bell, whose method of teaching was like Lancaster's,² but who insisted upon the catechism being taught in his schools. In England after 1833 both societies received annual grants from the Government, but the antagonism did not diminish between them. Though Gipps, as the Whig Governor of a religiously-divided colony, rather than as an Anglican,³ was prepared to recommend the British and Foreign system, it was a risky venture. In Gipps' opinion, however, the likelihood of opposition was very much reduced by a number of factors. He believed that the Protestants had been truly united in 1836 and would be in similar agreement in 1839. The British and Foreign system had been proposed by the Protestant sub-committee, approved by Glenelg in despatches, and favourably mentioned by James Macarthur in evidence before a select committee of the House of Commons in 1837.⁴ With Macarthur's evidence again

¹Resolutions on Education, 23 Aug., ibid.

²Each developed independently the method of using the older pupils as 'monitors' or instructors of the younger, though the monitors soon gave place to teachers in both systems, and played little part in Australia.

³Brought up in the doctrines of the Church of England, and the son of one of her Ministers, ... I am attached to her communion; but... I am no less attached to the principles of civil and religious liberty' - Gipps' Reply to an Address presented by Wesleyan ministers, N.S.W. Government Gazette, 28 Mar. 1838, p.226.

⁴Macarthur, however, had clearly stated that his preference was for a denominational school system - Minutes of Evidence, p.180, Report of Select Committee on Transportation, Commons Papers, 1837, xix, 1. Cf. J. Macarthur, op. cit., pp. [229-36].

as a guide, Gipps thought to overcome the anti-Catholicism of 1836 by placing Catholics outside the comprehensive system.¹ In the event, his expectations misfired. Truly, as a writer to the Sydney Herald remarked, the advocates of the comprehensive system mistook the materials with which they had to work.²

Like many Nonconformists themselves, Gipps misunderstood Broughton's position and charged the bishop with inconsistency when the latter came out against his plan.³ But it was not inconsistency in 1839, but duplicity in 1836, which Broughton indulged in. Too late Gipps realized that the bishop was only prepared to work with Nonconformists in opposing the Irish system, and not in introducing the British and Foreign system. It was not among the Anglicans so much as among the non-Anglicans that a change of ground had been made. Gipps might well have thought that they would be sure to back his scheme to the hilt. They were less exclusive in their doctrines and practice with regard to the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments. They stressed their Bible rather than their catechisms. One minister, at least, was prepared to claim, 'The Bible alone is the religion of Presbyterians', in the course of campaigning for a general system.⁴ The British and Foreign system allowed the whole Bible to be freely read, it was actively supported by Dissent in England, and the school in Hart Street was still in existence. What more could the Nonconformists want?

They wanted their own schools. Some of the Presbyterians, such as the Rev. James Fullerton, gave Gipps active support after being incensed by the demand that children, if attending the Church of England day-school in their district, must also attend Anglican worship on Sunday.⁵ But they were exceptions to the general rule.

¹Gipps to Normanby, 9 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 427-8.

²'Oudeis', Herald (Supp.), 12 Aug. 1839.

³See The Speech of the Lord Bishop...in the Legislative Council..., p.3.

⁴Letter from the Rev. James Fullerton, Herald, 19 July 1839, p.2, c.2.

⁵See petitions from the Goulburn Kirk Session and from Parents and Guardians of Children, and other Inhabitants of Goulburn, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

The Governor complained that although the 'Presbyterians and Dissenters' did not actively join the opposition, neither did they give him any support. Again too late, he saw that 'the prospect opened to them of obtaining separate Schools for themselves' had changed their attitude since 1836.¹

Nor was this simply due to changed colonial circumstances. Denominational rivalry in England influenced the colonial Churches also. Lord John Russell agreed with Gipps that the British and Foreign principle ought to be acceptable to all Protestants, but suggested that the Governor should know that in fact it was not so.² Russell certainly knew, for he was at this very time in the thick of attempting to establish a comprehensive system in England, and was not having a happy time of it. The Wesleyans in Great Britain provide a good example of what Russell was up against. Having been staunch opponents of the introduction of the general system into Ireland in 1831,³ the Methodists came out, in 1837, strongly in favour of their own schools in England, wherein they could give their children 'a purely scriptural and Wesleyan system of education'.⁴ Their powerful leader, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, said at the next Conference that Lord Russell 'was acting under a coalition of O'Connell and Home Papists, etc., not to say infidels' in attempting to establish state schools.⁵ One Wesleyan supported the Government's plan because it would save the schools both from complete secularization and also from the domination of the Anglican clergy;⁶ but his second claim only underlined the tension between rival denominations. This sectarian ambition and controversy in England influenced the course of events in New South Wales.

¹Gipps to Normanby, 9 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 428.

²Russell to Gipps, 25 June 1840, ibid., xx, 686. Cf. John Earl Russell, Recollections and Suggestions, 1813-1873, London 1875, pp.372-5.

³B. Gregory, Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism, 1827-52, London 1898, p.116ff.

⁴Annual Address..., Minutes of the Methodist Conference, held at Leeds, 26 July, 1837, pp.232-3.

⁵B. Gregory, op. cit., p.275.

⁶Ibid., pp.268-9.

The colonial Wesleyans, believing that they should have their own day schools, welcomed the English Conference's declaration and appointed a committee (to be assisted by local sub-committees) to foster this aim.¹ Some years later, the Rev. John M'Kenny explained the Wesleyans' position at some length. They had not intended to offer opposition to the British and Foreign system, he said, but they were not satisfied with it, either; experience in England had shown that there was insufficient guarantee that the morals and evangelical beliefs of the teachers would be what they should be, the exclusion of prayers and catechisms was deplored, and the English Conference had prepared its own catechism and was developing its own system of schools. A modification of the British and Foreign systems, such as operated in Van Diemen's Land in 1844, the Methodists would not have objected to; but they preferred their own schools wherever practicable.² M'Kenny's review of 1839 thus illuminates the failure of the Nonconformists to rally to Gipps' aid.

Gipps came to grief, too, in his attempt to escape Protestant antagonism by making separate provision for Catholics. The Anglicans did not long leave him with any such consoling thought. They had long-established and numerous schools, from which Gipps meant gradually to withdraw aid.³ They faced the prospect of a complete exclusion of their clergy from the 'Protestant' schools, which were intended to replace their own in the long run, yet the Catholics were to be aided to build schools - perhaps next door to the state schools - into which their priests could freely come and go; and Bishop Broughton sharply drew attention to the effect this could have upon the alert minds of children.⁴ The Governor had

¹N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 9 Jan. 1839, Q.27; 25 Sept. 1839 (Special Meeting).

²Minutes of Evidence, pp.113-5, Lowe Committee. M'Kenny added that the Irish system did not work well for Wesleyans in Ireland.

³Governor's Minute on Education, 23 July, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839. Gipps was supported in this by the Secretary of State - Russell to Gipps, 25 June 1840, H.R.A., xx, 686.

⁴The Speech...in the Legislative Council..., pp.25-6.

been misled by a cry in 1836 that the British Government ought to provide separate schools for the offspring of Irish convicts; but it was widely recognized in 1839 that the colonial Treasury could not grant aid to one denomination which it denied to all others.¹

The Anglicans set out to make this, and various other arguments, clear to the authorities. The Legislative Council received no less than nineteen Anglican petitions against the British and Foreign system. The signatures of most of them were headed by clergymen; but not the least compelling was one from some laymen of Kurrajong. They prayed for the continued support of the Anglican cause in their district, on the grounds

That your Petitioners reside in a remote District ...and that during many years they were, in consequence, as sheep having no shepherd. That during such time no attempt was made by any sect or denomination whatever, for their religious instruction and improvement, except by the Church of England, whose ministers came among them, and obtained for them the erection of a substantial School-house, wherein not only are their children carefully and religiously instructed, but Divine worship is regularly solemnized. 2

It was a petition which lent weight to Broughton's claim that there was great attachment among the people - 'the people in the strict and proper sense' - to the Church of England.³

On Tuesday 27 August 1839, the Governor's resolutions were debated in Council for six and a half hours. It was Broughton's day. After the bishop had delivered a long and powerful speech 'his Excellency withdrew all the proposed Resolutions'.⁴ Gipps remarked that if they were carried after all the opposition that

¹The Secretary of State agreed with the Anglicans that Gipps made an inroad on his principle of equal opportunities at this point - Russell to Gipps, 25 June 1840, H.R.A., xx, 685-6.

²V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

³The Speech...in the Legislative Council..., p.27.

⁴V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

had been shown, he did not think that, in his executive capacity, he would be able to put the system into effect.¹ So another Governor was defeated in an attempt to establish a system of comprehensive schools in New South Wales. Although Gipps objected to the denominational system, 'tacitly' supported by the Treasury on the 'half-and-half' principle, this still had to be continued, the only alteration being the introduction of a new method of payment (a penny-a-day per pupil) from January 1842.²

Again the victors were the Churches. The Governor wanted a general system of education, and the gradual abolition of denominational schools, not only for the sake of giving children education but also to save the Government money. Gipps thought the denominational system so expensive that it could only be described as a 'mischief', and what had happened at Wollongong was a perfect example of it. The Anglican school was especially mischievous, since only £50 was contributed locally, while £150 came from the S.P.G. and, therefore, £200 from the Government. As Gipps pointed out, when grudgingly granting this pound for pound aid, such a method of raising the money was no test of local feeling at all, and the Government could not keep up with sums donated by large public bodies or incorporated societies. He warned that no more gifts from the S.P.G., or similar groups, could be applied in this manner; the contributions must come from private and local citizens.³ This was a bitter disappointment to the Church of England,⁴ but they - and the other Churches - had little to complain about. Basically, their demands had prevailed. Church influence

¹Herald, 28 Aug. 1839, p.2, c.3. In Gipps to Normanby, 9 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 427-9 (from which the other references to Gipps' opinion are taken) it was explained that only the Attorney-General and Sir John Jamieson really supported him, although the resolutions could have been carried because all but one of Bourke's 'friends' had, reluctantly, agreed to vote for them.

²Public Education Regulations....24 Sept. 1841, Enclosure to Gipps to Stanley, 17 Dec. 1842, *ibid.*, xxii, 427-8.

³Gipps to Russell, 24 Oct. 1840, *ibid.*, xxi, 58-9. His decision was upheld - Russell to Gipps, 19 April 1841, *ibid.*, 327-8.

⁴Cf. S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.49.

was obviously very strong in the formation of Government policy in these years. In particular, 1839 was an Anglican victory. The failure of Dissent to co-operate with Gipps was not without its effect, but the main cause of his defeat was that the strength of the Church of England was directed against him.

Catholics and the proposed general systems, 1835-9.

The Catholics were comparatively quiet amid the storms which raged about them in 1836 and 1839. There was a good deal of uncertainty in their own minds at this period, due both to the fait accompli in Ireland and also to their difficult position in the colony. One thing they never doubted was that they must oppose the adoption of the British and Foreign system - and this they made clear during the formative years of the Australian School Society, when Ullathorne, as well as M'Encroe, stated their objections.¹ At this time, the Catholics showed at least a preference for the Irish system.

Bishop Polding once wrote to the press, under the pseudonym of 'Catholicus Ipse', arguing that the Irish system had smoothed down animosities in Ireland, and could do the same in New South Wales. He went on in terms which suggested very little fear of contact in the schools between Catholics and Protestants.

Open schools to us unhampered and unfettered, on the principles of equality. We ask no more - and the form of religion that perishes under the test ought to perish, for it has within it the germ of mortality. 2

Well after 1836, responsible Catholics could support the Irish system and claim that their priests did also. In 1844, the layman, Roger Therry, could ask his fellow-Catholic, William Duncan, 'are you not aware that the Roman Catholic clergy sanctioned the Irish system when proposed by Sir Richard Bourke in this colony?', and

¹W.B. Ullathorne, Observations on the Use and Abuse of the Sacred Scriptures..., Sydney 1834, p.3.

²Australian, 23 Aug. 1836, quoted in W. Foster, op. cit., pp.272-3.

receive the answer, 'I have always understood that they gave it a sort of tacit approbation'.¹ Therefore it is not surprising that, in 1836, Protestants jumped to the conclusion that the Catholics had a great ambition to secure the Irish system, or that a newspaper issued a warning that non-Catholics must be on the alert 'if they would not behold Roman Catholic and Irish Convict ascendancy in New South Wales'.² Full credence continued to be given to this interpretation of 1835-6, for Gipps, as late as 1845, spoke of 'a remarkable change having taken place' in the sentiments of the Catholic clergy since the earlier years;³ and the Colonial Observer sought to explain this by declaring that in 1835 the Catholic Church 'to all intents and purposes' had Sir Richard Bourke as its 'head', but Polding had since taken up that position, wanted his share of 'denominational spoils' to continue, and had forced M'Encroe to retract.⁴

The idea, and not only the Observer's style of writing, was exaggerated. Despite the bland assurances of 'Catholicus Ipse', the Catholics had never been certain that they would ask for no more than the Irish system, or that they had nothing to fear from it. It was not a liking for the Irish system so much as a dislike of the condition of their schools which caused them to speak favourably of the proposed system in the mid-thirties. As M'Encroe explained later, the Catholics had 'only two or three very indifferent' schools in 1836, and therefore they 'were not opposed to any experiment in education that promised to improve the then very defective education of Catholic children'.⁵ So poor, in fact, were the Catholic schools, that Polding had been sickened by their 'disgusting unruliness' when he came to the colony in 1835;⁶

¹Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.23.

²Herald, 1 Aug. 1836, pp.2-4.

³Gipps to Stanley, 1 Feb. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 232-3.

⁴Colonial Observer, 15 Aug. 1844, p.1.

⁵J. M'Encroe, in a letter to the press, 1844, quoted in P.F. Moran, op. cit., p.864. Cf. Dr Tierney's statement on Catholic attitudes in Ireland, Herald, 8 Sept. 1844, p.3.

⁶Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.44-5.

and it was to prevent any school in the colony being so run-down, as well as to avoid the extravagance of separate denominational schools, that the influential layman, Therry, came out - and continued unwaveringly - in support of the Irish system.¹ But M'Encroe maintained that even at the time when Ullathorne and he were supposed to be championing the scheme, they had already decided against it. They had both agreed that there were not enough priests in New South Wales for real opportunity to be taken of the time allowed for religious instruction. With insufficient clergy, the system would have been 'very dangerous to the Catholic children'.² Polding was equally explicit by 1844; the Irish system was suited to Ireland, he said, but he would not choose it voluntarily for New South Wales. There were sufficient priests and capable parents in Ireland to teach the children; but in the colony the priests were few and the bulk of the parents had to learn their religion from their children rather than the other way round.³ The Catholic clergy had never been enamoured of the Irish system; they, as much and more than other denominations, wanted Church schools. The Catholic attitude had not developed to the point reached after the publication of Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors (in 1864), but the die was being cast even in New South Wales as far back as 1836.

The Catholic Church took no part in the 1836 controversy. The only Catholic petition for educational rights came from the congregation of St Mary's, and merely prayed (with success) for a grant of money towards establishing an orphanage of their own, to save Catholic children from being instructed as Anglicans in the established orphan schools.⁴ A letter from Polding was laid before the Council, pointing out the desperate shortage of priests in the

¹R. Therry, Explanation of the Plan of the Irish National Schools..., Sydney 1836. Cf. R. Therry, Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria, London 1863, p.155ff.

²P.F. Moran, loc. cit.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.46-8.

⁴V. & P., N.S.W., 1836.

colony and asking for aid in securing more.¹ There was nothing presented in favour of the Irish system, or against it.

The Catholics were naturally more outspoken when Gipps made his proposal in 1839. J.H. Plunkett, a Catholic, was one of the four members of the Council who declared their support of the resolutions,² but the official Catholic verdict was unfavourable. At first sight the idea of giving a special grant in aid of Catholic schools appeared to be something the Catholics would support. A more careful consideration suggested that to be put in a special category was really to be put out on a limb which could be chopped off after a strong system of non-Catholic schools had been developed all over the colony. Catholic schools could not hope to keep up with British and Foreign schools in reaching out into the country, and the granting of special assistance would result in even more animosity against Catholics. The pretty scheme did not show much sign of lasting beauty. Bishop Polding and Dr Ullathorne discussed the proposals with Gipps, telling him that the conditions were such that no Catholic could accept them. Gipps curtly ended the interview with the words, 'In short I must adhere to the strongest party, and I don't think you are the strongest'.³ The Catholics had no cause for worry. If they did not command the strongest party, neither did Gipps. What they wanted was won for them - quite unintentionally - by the Church of England. The Catholics simply waited, sending in no petitions and making no other formal protest.⁴ They were to become loudly vocal only in 1844.

¹Polding to Bourke, 6 May 1836, ibid.

²Herald, 28 Aug. 1839, p.2, c.2.

³W. Ullathorne, Autobiography..., London n.d., p.167.

⁴Ullathorne wrote, 'After that we determined to make a public demonstration for we knew that, if not the strongest by numbers, we were by our union'. A large scale procession was held, and judged a great success, but it was not held until 25 August 1840, when Gipps' proposals had long been laid to rest. A.G. Austin, op. cit., p.42, quotes Ullathorne's account very misleadingly by not making this time-lag clear.

Clergymen versus a Select Committee, 1844

The year 1844 saw the third big move in the field of education. In spite of continued encouragement for Gipps from the Colonial Office,¹ it was not the Governor but the Legislative Council itself which took the initiative. Members met unofficially on 19 June, agreed to appoint an investigating committee, and even named the members of it.² A general system of education was strongly favoured by the Council as a whole which, since the new constitution, had a majority of elected members - and no Bishop Broughton. On 21 June the Council officially appointed a Select Committee, under the chairmanship of Robert Lowe, 'to devise the means of placing the education of youth upon a basis suited to the wants and wishes of the community'.³ The Report, presented in August recommended the Irish system, tactfully described as 'Lord Stanley's System'.⁴

The Council supported its Committee. Early in September, John Robinson gave notice of motion to the effect that the Council accept generally the opinions of the Committee. A month later, the Council voted, by thirteen to twelve, in favour of an amendment moved by W.C. Wentworth. This provided for the introduction of the Irish system, with the curious modification that, instead of the clergy going into the schools, the children should go out of them on one week-day for religious instruction.⁵

¹It was recommended that, if possible, a committee to promote a general system of education be formed from among 'the most enlightened and temperate men of different religious persuasions' - Russell to Gipps, 19 April 1841, H.R.A., xxi, 327-8.

²Colonial Observer, 27 June 1844, p.1.

³V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, I. The other members were Cowper, Lang, Mitchell, Nicholson, Robinson, Therry, Windeyer, the Attorney General and the Colonial Secretary.

⁴Report of Select Committee on Education (Lowe Committee), ibid., II. Note Herald, 4 July 1836, p.2, c.1: 'Being Englishmen, it may be imputed to our national feelings, when we say, that we do not like the name, 'Irish system of education'.

⁵10 Oct., V. & P., N.S.W., 1844. (See also report of Wentworth's speech, Herald, 11 Oct. 1844, p.3. The puzzle is that anyone thought this a workable compromise).

The almost even division of the Council on the issue showed the support still commanded by denominational schools. So did a decision to continue aid to church schools which were then in existence, although the requirements that they must have an average attendance of fifty, and that their property be conveyed in trust, were rather stringent. The Council's vote for the Irish system was given, too, in defiance of the many hostile petitions which bombarded it almost from the first. Robinson, on the sitting-day after he gave his notice of motion, presented a petition in favour of a system 'adapted to all denominations' from the mayor, aldermen and councillors of Melbourne, and this was supported by another from Dr Lang's break-away congregation of Presbyterians. However, the opposition was even quicker off the mark: on that day there were also presented three petitions against the recommendations of the Committee, and this was the pattern of the days which followed. Eighty-one¹ petitions were presented; twenty-eight were in favour of the general system, fifty-two were against, and one cut across both.² The number of signatures opposed to the Committee's recommendations was also far greater than that in favour. The Governor reported that there were 15,118 signatures in protest and only 2,120 in support, and although these figures were not completely accurate, the trend was unmistakable.³ The colonists who could be organized against the Irish system still exceeded those who could be organized in support.

Twenty-eight petitions were explicitly originated by Anglicans, and these, without exception, were against the Select Committee's recommendations.⁴ The Catholics, in contrast to their silence on

¹An index in *ibid.*, lists 82 petitions, but one (from St Philip's Parish) could not be found in the Proceedings.

²The Synod of Australia (the Presbyterians other than Lang's Scots Church) perversely prayed for what amounted to something like the British and Foreign system.

³Gipps to Stanley, 1 Feb. 1845, *H.R.A.*, xxiv, 232. Gipps only reported 50 petitions against, and 24 in favour; but a similar proportion of signatories (8 to 1) emerges from the petitions which were printed in full in *V. & P., N.S.W.*, 1844. *Herald*, 14 Oct. 1844, p.2, gave the number as 25,000 for, and 4,000 against.

⁴The Rev. Frederick Wilkinson, the only Anglican person to vote for the Irish system in 1836, was with the majority this time.

previous occasions, sent four petitions against the proposals, the Wesleyans sent three, and seventeen others came vaguely from 'certain Inhabitants' of various places (some of which, when examined immediately proved to be Anglican petitions). Thus the fifty-two petitions against the recommendations were chiefly Anglican, Catholic and Wesleyan expressions of opinion. The sheer number of them eclipsed even the 1839 opposition (nineteen petitions) and caused Gipps to write, 'The Clergy throughout the Colony are at present even less disposed to co-operate in the establishment of a general system, than they were on the [previous] occasions...'¹

Yet this was not the whole story: there were the other petitions, supporting the Lowe Committee. Sixteen came from Melbourne and the wards of the city of Sydney - from precisely those heavily populated areas where, it was usually claimed, the denominational schools could best operate.² From Sydney also came a number of petitions from denominations which would not enter the Anglican-Catholic-Wesleyan camp - from Lang's Presbyterians, from two congregations of Independents and Baptists and from the congregation of the 'Australian Methodists'.³ Another petition came from 'Members of the Faith of Israel'. There was a significant increase in the number of these petitions in favour of the general system - from two in 1839, which favoured the system only for lack of something better, to the twenty-eight much more whole-hearted petitions in 1844. The demand for a state system of non-sectarian schools had at least become more vocal and effectual, and had probably gained an actually wider support.⁴

¹Governor's Message, 27 Nov., V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, I.

²See, e.g., Governor's Minute on Expenditure, ibid., 1838, and Lowe Committee, Evidence, passim.

³These were a small group of seceders from the Wesleyans. One account of their origin is given in a letter from John Garrett, Herald, 26 June 1844, p.2, c.2.

⁴It was frequently claimed that, while the number of signatures was not great, many of the most respectable inhabitants had signed these petitions - see, e.g., J.D. Lang's letter, ibid., 16 Sept. 1844, p.4.

Gipps, having been soundly thrashed five years before, strongly discouraged the Legislature from persisting. He urged that the time was not yet ripe, believing that there was not a real majority in favour of the Irish system even in the Council itself.¹ But the Council asked for £2,000 sterling to be placed on the estimates for 1845 towards the establishment of schools on the principles of a 'General System of Education' under the superintendence of a board favourable to Lord Stanley's system. This was passed by the overwhelming vote of twenty-two to five.² Next day, the Council negatived Cowper's motion for a further £2,000 to be included for the erection of schools 'for the humbler classes of society...according to the existing regulations' - that is, for denominational schools.³ The Council was steadfastly determined to foster a state system of education. Gipps dealt the death blow to the Council's hopes on 19 December, when he wrote that he did not think that alterations to the estimates could be made to any advantage.⁴

One of his reasons was financial. There was already an estimated deficit due to supplementary votes, and the colony could not afford this additional expense. In August he had complained about the Council, which was always at logger-heads with him. Referring to the matter of the schedules, the police and the gaols (education was not his only problem!), he had written peevishly, 'The object of the Legislative Council is evidently to weaken the government: and at the same time to run it if possible into debt'.⁵ However, it was a second reason which was the decisive one for Gipps: denominational organization and influence were

¹Gipps to Stanley, 1 Feb. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 232. For a contrary view, see Colonial Observer, 17 Oct. 1844, pp.2-3.

²On 17 Dec., V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, I.

³18 Dec., ibid.

⁴Governor's Message, 19 Dec., ibid. Approval came in Stanley to Gipps, 29 Aug. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 492.

⁵Gipps to La Trobe, 17 Aug. 1844, quoted in S.C. McCulloch, op. cit., p.31.

still too strong.¹ The Governor genuinely wanted to see the Irish system established, but the opposition, he said, had really 'in no way diminished'. He therefore concluded:

Without the co-operation of the Ministers of Religion, it seems to me scarcely possible to establish any system of Education, with a prospect of its being extensively useful... 2

Most ministers of religion had shown their hostility to the Select Committee's recommendation. Since the Catholics were fighting openly on the same side as the Anglicans and Wesleyans, the anti-Catholicism of 1836 and 1839 was played down.³ Instead, the opposition set out to repudiate the claim that 'an impassable and indelible line should be drawn between secular and religious education'.⁴ As the Rev. Robert Allwood said, 'We hold that the principle upon which all education should be based is religion'.⁵ 'In our schools,' said Archbishop Polding, 'every hour when the clock strikes, the children cease from their work, and raise up their minds to Almighty God'. This was done because 'religion should entwine and mix itself up with education'.⁶

The Select Committee was prepared to admit that denominational schools might be a good thing in theory, but in fact the

¹Reference might again be made to my denial of any collusion between Gipps and Broughton - 'The Gipps-Broughton Alliance, 1844-45', to be published in Historical Studies, Nov. 1963.

²Governor's Message, 27 Nov., V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, I. Gipps added a third (and highly theoretical) difficulty - the fact that the District Councils, which were required by the Constitution Act of 1842 to carry any such change into effect, had not been developed.

³'...the only difference I can see between a Polding and a Broughton is a wife' - correspondent from the interior, Colonial Observer, 19 Sept. 1844, p.2.

⁴See Petition of the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Australia, V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, II.

⁵Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.34.

⁶Ibid., pp.47, 49.

cost was prohibitive.¹ The original argument of Bourke, that the Churches' adherents were mixed and mingled in almost every scattered community, still applied.² Denominational schools could not be adequately provided, and perhaps half of the children between the ages of four and fourteen (i.e., 13,000) received no education. On the other hand, many supporters of the general system stressed the principle of the separation of the Church and state. For some, this was a strongly religious protest; the Rev. Dr Robert Ross, the Independent, spoke of the Dissenting objections to aid from the state for religion in any form, and the Rev. Dr James Fullerton reported that the Presbyterians were divided over the issue.³ Many other colonists, not necessarily very religious, were far more convinced of the state's duty to educate in a general sense than they were of the state's duty to bow to the doctrinal demands of the various sects. This was the argument of W.A. Duncan, of the citizens of Bourke Ward, Sydney, and Legislative Councillor Young; and the Select Committee agreed - the state's role was one of neutrality between sects.⁴

The people in general probably wondered what all the fuss was about. The Herald pronounced that the Select Committee had fulfilled one of the terms of its commission by making an enquiry; but that it had failed to fulfil the other - it had not recommended a system which accorded with the wishes of the community.⁵ The formal victory of the petitions must be conceded, and so must Gipps' conviction that there was such general opposition that the Irish system was unworkable. But it is unlikely that the people disliked the system, or wanted denominational schools.

¹Expense was 'the first objection' to the denominational system - Lowe Committee, p.i. Cf. J. Normington-Rawling, Charles Harpur, an Australian, Sydney 1962, p.79, where he says of Singleton in 1842 (population 500), 'and if there were six inns there were also six schools'.

²Cf. Gipps to Normanby, 9 Dec. 1839, H.R.A., xx, 430.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.101, 29.

⁴Ibid., p.24, for Duncan. V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, II, for the citizens' petition. Herald, 7 Oct. 1844, p.2, for Young's speech. (Cf. R. Therry, Reminiscences..., p.143).

⁵Herald, 7 Sept. 1844, p.2.

One of the defences of the denominational system was that the failure attributed to it was really attributable to the people's indifference to education.¹ The more truth there was in this claim of community carelessness, the less truth there was in maintaining that the people wanted denominational schools. Many in the colony were certainly indifferent. Anglican zealots could claim only that the 'deeply rooted hereditary attachment' of the great bulk of the people was 'latent'.² Asked if many people were not connected with a religious denomination, Alderman George Allen (a Wesleyan) replied, 'I think many of the parents of the lower orders are careless about it; they neither care for their own souls nor for the souls of their children'.³ The Rev. James Fullerton (Presbyterian) agreed that the children of the 'humbler classes' would remain in spiritual ignorance unless taught at school, and added that many of their parents were unwilling to send them to a school of any kind.⁴ The emancipated, land-owning Solomon Wiseman said that education 'was a point on which he was not particular'.

I have four sons; and I say to Richard, 'There's a herd of cattle for you', and to Tom, 'There's a flock of sheep - look after them'; so in five years time they become rich.... Now that's what I call education. 5

Although Archbishop Folding deplored a not uncommon attitude of seeking education for children so that they could rise above the 'disgrace' of labouring, and become 'clerks', it is clear that many of the working classes did not care a straw for education, let alone Church schools.⁶ This unsurprising fact should be given full

¹Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.83; Petition of Broughton and his clergy, V. & P., N.S.W., 1844.

²Report of the Church of England Lay Association...1844-5, Sydney 1846, p.1.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.5.

⁴Ibid., pp.29, 28.

⁵R. Therry, Reminiscences..., pp.121-2.

⁶Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.51. An undesirable kind of interest was aroused in 'the great unwashed from the emerald isle' (Colonial Observer) or 'illiterate persons, chiefly Irish' (if the Herald's description is preferred) when they twice broke up a meeting, chaired by the Mayor of Sydney, which was called to pass a resolution in favour of the Irish System. See Observer, 5 Sept. 1844, p.1; Herald, 3, 4, 7, 9 Sept. 1844.

weight, and not lost amid the welter of debate among other classes.

One classification of the witnesses before the Select Committee gives a further insight. Nine witnesses decidedly favoured a general system; two were Dissenting ministers and seven were laymen. Eight witnesses were equally decided in favour of Church schools; four were clergymen (Anglican, Catholic and Wesleyan), and of the four laymen, one was the master of St Philip's school, one was a Catholic school-master, and a third was a member of the Society of Christian Brothers. Four other witnesses were either uncertain, or expressed a hope for some sort of combination of Church schools and a general system. Of these, two were laymen, one a former Wesleyan minister and the fourth a Presbyterian minister. The suggestion is that the laity, even of those denominations which petitioned for Church schools, were to a great extent ready to accept a state system - unless, perhaps, they were teachers in Church schools.¹ It was, in fact, claimed that, except for a few exceptionally zealous laymen,² the opposition had been whipped up by the clergy. Alderman Henry MacDermott said that the laity were prepared to accept scripture 'selections' even if their Anglican bishop was not.³ Peter Steel and William Macarthur told the Select Committee that opposition was to be found 'chiefly among the clergy'.⁴ William Duncan explained the matter by saying that the clergy did 'not like to give up power'.⁵ If only the clergy trusted the lay teachers more, complained W.T. Cape, the teaching of religion in the colony would be quite satisfactory.⁶

¹Even then, they may have been merely opportunists. Joseph Harpur was the main proponent of a state school at Jerry's Plains in 1848, although he had been a Catholic for some years. Soon after, he became the master at a Catholic school at Maitland. (J. Normington-Rawling, *op. cit.*, pp.161-2, 96).

²Especially Mr Charles Cowper. He was 'Broughton's man Friday' and the so-called Anglican petitions were really 'Cowper Petitions' - *Colonial Observer*, 24 Oct. 1844, p.1; 19 Sept. 1844, p.2.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.19.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp.19, 60.

⁵*Ibid.*, p.23.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.55.

There can be no serious doubt but that the clergy were at the heart of the opposition.

It was even denied that the signatories of the petitions against the Select Committee's recommendations really cared about, or understood, the issue. In one place the parish clerk was sent around by the clergyman to collect signatures; when asked what was wrong with the proposals, he said he did not know. There was said to be much misrepresentation, and people had been told they were signing petitions to have their children educated, or a petition against Catholic Government, or a petition against an 'infidel system', and so on. There can be no doubt that many names appeared on the petitions which strictly should not have been there.¹ Many were really indifferent but lacked the strength of purpose, or the knowledge, or the wish, to defy their pastors and risk flouting 'authority'.

Even so, there was considerable uncertainty about how far the people would follow the clergy. Some of the witnesses before the Select Committee thought the clergy would be able to keep the people with them, others thought they could not.² Probably the true answer was William Macarthur's. He did not believe that the community at large was really behind the clergy. By dint of great exertion the ministers could influence the laity for a time, but support for the clergy against a general system would not be permanent.³ The obedience of Anglicans and Catholics to their respective leaders had been, in many cases, willing enough, the Colonial Observer admitted.⁴ But, a correspondent asked, would the willingness continue? The 'Church party' did not like the terms of the Governor's message, for it did not speak of the attitude of the people, but of the clergy. Yet the Governor was honest: it was the clergy, not the people who were opposed. And the Governor was wrong: the dark ages had not returned, and the clergy

¹See Herald, 22 Nov. 1844, p.4; Colonial Observer, 21 Nov. 1844, pp. 2-3, 19 Sept. 1844, pp.1-2.

²Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.3, 29, 67, 78.

³Ibid., pp.125-6.

⁴Colonial Observer, 19 Sept. 1844, p.1.

were not to be feared.¹ If the clergy so far had sufficient strength to resist a general system, there was also a strengthening resistance by the people to the clerical aim; the leaders of the Churches had been winning battles, but slowly losing the war.

The Establishment of a National Schools' Board, 1847-8

After the Churches had won their 'famous victory'² in 1844, the matter was never left to rest by the friends of the general system, especially by Robert Lowe - that 'unruly member', as the Herald called him in disgust.³ Lowe, an appointed member when he resigned immediately after presenting the Report in 1844 (having quarrelled with Gipps), was back in the Council as an elected member in 1845. When the vote for education was proposed in the Estimates, he moved that it be applied under the system of Lord Stanley, but withdrew his amendment when it appeared that nothing could be done at that time.⁴ But Lowe's party believed that only 'the parsimony and over scrupulousness of Governor Gipps' had defeated them.⁵ In October 1846, with Gipps gone, the Council renewed the attack. It requested the new Governor, Sir Charles Fitz Roy, to include £2,000 in the Estimates for 1847 for schools based on Lord Stanley's system, and to appoint a board to carry it into effect. It was Lowe again who moved the resolution, which was carried by twelve votes to ten.⁶ Governor Fitz Roy hedged. He replied that even if the colony's financial position would

¹'An Observer', ibid., 12 Dec. 1844, p.4-5.

²'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.

'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he;
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

Robert Southey, The Battle of Blenheim, Stanza II.

³Herald, 12 Oct. 1846, p.2, c.2.

⁴Ibid., 10 Oct. 1846, p.2, c.5. This did not appear in the proceedings because it had occurred in Committee.

⁵Atlas, 1 Jan. 1848, p.2.

⁶9 Oct., V. & P., N.S.W., 1846, I.

permit such an addition, he was not prepared to act until he had opportunity to study the educational situation.¹ But his hesitation soon passed. He agreed to the inclusion of the sum in June 1847, and appointed a board to undertake the development of the 'National System'.²

Progress was slow, but progress was made. The board applied for a master and mistress to be sent out from England, and set up a model school in the old military hospital in Fort Street (which eventually became the famous Fort Street High School). The board itself became properly established by the passing of a bill to incorporate the Board of Commissioners for National Schools in 1848.³ The sum of £3,000 for the development of schools beyond the settled districts, originally intended for both denominational and national schools, was finally voted for the latter alone.⁴ In 1849 the board reported that four schools had been established, and applications had been received from ten other places.⁵ At last a general system was fairly launched and under way - and it was the Irish system proposed by Bourke in 1836!⁶

The denominational schools were not disturbed, but were allowed to continue in receipt of state aid and in competition with the state schools. In January 1848, a denominational schools' board was set up for New South Wales, and another for Victoria:⁷ but these were to control 'fiscal and temporal' arrangements only,

¹Governor's Message, 15 Oct., *ibid.*

²Governor's Message, 23 June, *ibid.*, 1847, II. The members were J.H. Plunkett, Charles Nicholson, M.D., and W.S. Macleay.

³18 May, *ibid.*, 1848.

⁴*Herald*, 6 June 1848, pp.2-3.

⁵Report from the National Board of Education, 7 May 1849, printed together with its Regulations and Directions in V. & P., N.S.W., 1849, II.

⁶For the National Board's story, see A.G. Austin, *op. cit.*, p.45ff, and the same author's George William Rusden and National Education in Australia, 1849-62, Melbourne 1958.

⁷N.S.W. - C.D. Riddell, G. Allen, T. Callaghan and G. Miller. Vic. - R.W. Pohlman, D. Ogilvie, E. Curr, R. Smith and S. Stephen.

leaving the question of religious instruction to the clergyman who had the oversight of the school in his locality.¹ These schools continued to teach the great majority of pupils in New South Wales - Anglicans listing 5,375 pupils, Presbyterians 3,720, Catholics 3,445, Wesleyans 1,590 and Independents 323 towards the end of 1848. The total of nearly 13,500 was not only far greater than the national board schools could claim, but was also twice as many as the colleges and private schools catered for.² They hung on tenaciously (state aid not ending until the 1872-80 period)³ and - from the point of view of secular education alone - were invaluable while the state was developing its own schools.

Yet the Churches accepted the coming of the state schools comparatively quietly after the peak of opposition in 1844. Lowe was emboldened by the lack of any petitions against his known intention in 1846.⁴ Two years later, he made a joke in very poor taste while defending the payment of denominational school teachers at half the rate granted to national schoolmasters. He scorned the quality of the first, and made the Council laugh by adding that perhaps they made up in grace what they lacked in gifts.⁵ He was rebuked by only one letter in the Herald.⁶ Where was the 'clamour' of earlier years?

There are some obvious reasons for this comparative silence. The national schools were far from impressive in their early years; the Church schools were numerous and long established, and some of their supporters claimed to be unafraid of comparison - though they complained that too much was being spent per school on the

¹Col. Sec. to M'Garvie, 12 Jan. 1848, CSOL 4/3622 (ML).

²N.S.W. Blue Book, 1848, p.568ff.

³State aid was ended by the Education Act in Victoria 1872, the State Education Act in Queensland 1875, and by the Public Instruction Act in New South Wales 1880.

⁴Herald, 10 Oct. 1846, p.2, c.4.

⁵Atlas, 13 May 1848, p.241.

⁶Herald, 23 May 1848, p.2, c.4.

national schools.¹ In 1846 the prospect of the revival of transportation to New South Wales was more horrible to contemplate than a few national schools. Protest against this kept the letter writers and leader writers busy in the Herald, and actively involved Broughton's man Friday, Charles Cowper.² To some degree the Churches had despaired of their cause. Bishop Davis, of the Catholic Church, considered the Legislative Councillors to be 'a fearful set of infidels' who would soon succeed in destroying religion by their system of education and in their aim of withdrawing all support from the Churches.³ The attitude of Bishop Broughton has been described as a new readiness to compromise, forced upon him by tremendous financial difficulties and the need to continue to receive state aid. It was quite impossible to persuade the popularly elected Legislature to support only Church schools; all that remained was to conciliate that body by not opposing the setting up of state schools to operate beside Church schools.⁴ Even in a pamphlet, produced anonymously at this time to argue for the denominational system, it was admitted that in some places the Irish system would have to be adopted 'on account of its neutrality and greater comprehension'.⁵

Yet it is not to be thought that opposition from the Churches suddenly collapsed. When Broughton wrote to the Governor about the schools in 1847, his letter could almost as well be described as a dogged rear-guard action as an implicit compromise - he insisted upon Church of England schools.⁶ The newspaperman and Anglican, Charles Kemp, intensely gratified by his success in

¹ George Allen, ibid., 6 June 1848, p.3, c.1.

² See ibid., Supplement 5 Dec. 1846, p.2, c.7.

³ Davis to Heptonstall, 22 Aug. 1850, in H.N. Birt, op. cit., II, p.166.

⁴ K. Grose, op. cit., pp.239-45.

⁵ 'Catholicus', An Original Essay on Popular Education..., Sydney 1843, p.10.

⁶ Broughton to Fitz Roy, 3 May 1847, 47/4785, CSIL 2/1717 (ML).

getting a Church of England school built, was confiding to his diary bitter remarks about Robert Lowe and the nominal Anglicans who would desert the Church of England, and reduce her to the level of a sect, and was allowing a faint hope to rise in his breast that the tide was about to turn in the Church's favour.¹ In 1848, a group of Sydney Anglicans was still convinced that none of their clergymen should be without a school, and were reporting the development of new Church of England schools throughout the colony, while their Melbourne counterparts were no less intent on increasing the number of their schools.² One of the agents for the National Schools Board was G.W. Rusden, the son of the Rev. G.K. Rusden and a practising Anglican, but, when he visited the Hunter Valley in 1850, the Bishop of Newcastle refused to see him, and he received similar - or worse - treatment at the hands of the Anglican clergy in many of the places he visited.³ In the Council, the tireless Cowper came into the lists periodically on behalf of the Church schools.⁴ A concerted Catholic effort was made (unsuccessfully) in 1849 to get a larger share of the denominational grant, by asking that aid be allotted according to numbers instead of the amounts subscribed,⁵ and the Wesleyans annually re-appointed their vigilant education committee throughout the period. Denominational opposition died hard.

However, the Atlas was not far wrong when it claimed that men like Charles Cowper were shaken by the strength of the opposition, and had lost their confident, contemptuous tone (something the Atlas had not done!).⁶ As a tactical move in a debate on schools beyond the boundaries, Cowper claimed that 'the spirit of the age' called for aid to every kind of school - Cowper, of course,

¹C. Kemp, op. cit., 19, 22, 30 July 1847, 7 Feb. 1848.

²Sydney S.P.G. Report, 1849, and Report of the Melbourne Diocesan Society, 1849, passim.

³A.G. Austin, Australian Education..., p.51.

⁴See Herald, 12 May 1848, p.2; 6 June 1848, p.3; Atlas, 13 May 1848, p.241.

⁵Sixteen Catholic petitions were received by the Council.

⁶Atlas, 20 May 1848, p.246.

looking for aid to Anglican schools; but, tactics or not, this was very different talk from the kind the Council had heard from Cowper in 1844. The need to live with the national system was becoming obvious to its opponents, and they had to resign themselves as well as they could to its existence. Nor were they helped when Lowe was able to declare in triumph that the Bishop of Melbourne favoured a general system.¹ The hard core of neither party really changed, but the situation changed, and the Irish system won more support. Lowe and W.C. Wentworth made some remarkably anti-clerical speeches in the Legislative Council in 1848, probably made far less guarded by their sense of growing support.² The state schools had come to stay, and grow and be appreciated by the colonials. The Church schools, receiving state aid, still continued; but many people besides W.C. Wentworth must have only 'tolerated the nuisance'.

¹Ibid., 13 May 1848, p.241. (Cf. The Melbourne Church of England Messenger, June 1852, pp.166-8).

²Herald, 10 Oct. 1846, p.2; 6 June 1848, p.3 (for Lowe). Ibid., 6 June 1848, p.3 (for Wentworth).

CHAPTER 7
CHURCH SCHOOLS OR STATE SCHOOLS?
(2) VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

The Anglicans Resist Change, 1835-1838.

Algernon Frederick W. Pilkington had been goaded into complaint.

The schoolmaster and private tutor are...to subsist upon a mere pittance...are despised by their employers, and shunned by all whose social circle they would ornament, and whose habits and¹ manners they would ameliorate and even polish.

He could be sure of some sympathy for his plight. Others in Van Diemen's Land deplored the obsessive interest of their fellows 'in the appreciation of the carcass or the fleece, of a sheep, in the size of a bullock, or the value of a horse, in making a good bargain, and laying a safe bet',² and explained the colonial love of malicious gossip by pointing to 'the paucity of rational conversation and a disrelish for mental culture'.³ This was both foil and cause for attempts to provide better schools and to safeguard religious instruction in them.

As in New South Wales, education in Van Diemen's Land in 1835 was basically in the hands of the Anglican clergy. In 1820 P.A. Mulgrave had been sent out by the British Government to introduce the Bell (or Anglican 'National Society') system.⁴ He superintended schools between Ross and Launceston, and the Rev. William Bedford had the oversight of those between Hobart and Ross.⁵ By 1835,

¹Tasmanian Weekly Dispatch, 7 Aug. 1840, p. 7.

²'Learning and Education', Elliston's Hobart Town Almanack..., 1837, p. 85.

³Courier, 5 Aug. 1836, p. 2 c. 3.

⁴Goulburn to Macquarie, 23 Nov. 1820, H.R.A., x, 372.

⁵Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 23 May 1845, GO 33/51, p. 962 (TSA).

Archdeacon William Hutchins was in control of the schools - which were aided by the state. Anglican oversight was not always strict, for the better of the two boys' schools in Hobart was conducted on the British and Foreign system, though a departure from that system's principles was made in the use of the Book of Common Prayer and 'a small catechism book', and in the weekly inspection by the Anglican Rural Dean. Thirty-five of the sixty-three boys were sons of Dissenters, and the standard of religious instruction was not considered to be high.¹ But the hand of the Church of England was inclined to grip the schools more tightly. In 1834, after the S.P.G. had made a gift of money towards the foundation of a school, the trustees applied for additional aid from the Government while intending to insist that the pupils should worship on Sunday in St David's Church.² Intrusions upon children's denominational associations were always possible while control of the schools was vested in one Church.

A change was brewing. The schools' efficiency and suitability were questioned, and Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur asked the Colonial Treasurer and the Chief Magistrate to investigate them and make recommendations. The former (John Gregory) recommended Anglican schools 'at the risk of offending Roman Catholics and other Dissenting parents'. The latter (Matthew Forster) favoured the British and Foreign system.³ Arthur made up his own mind, recommending the British and Foreign system for Protestants and separate aid for Catholic schools.⁴ He was convinced that the Anglicans could not have it all their own way, and warned the Council (before the Church Act) that legislation would have to be

¹This was Mr Jones' school in Campbell Street - Report of Board of Inquiry upon the state of the Government Schools in Hobart Town, 31 Dec. 1835, CSO 1/843/17847 (TSA). Cf. J. Backhouse, op. cit., p.474.

²Arthur to Bourke, 2 Feb. 1836, Papers of Sir George Arthur (MS A1962 ML).

³Ibid.

⁴He had already approved a grant of £35 p.a. for rent of a room used as a Catholic School, and £15 for furniture. £50 had also been approved towards the salary of the teacher, John Kenny; but in January 1836, the Rev. P. Connolly was still writing aggressive letters trying to secure it - CSO 1/817/17458 (TSA).

passed 'as regards both churches and schools'.¹ Despite earlier rumblings from W.G. Broughton,² the Lieutenant-Governor thought that the British and Foreign system - with 'such catechisms as may be approved' - would be acceptable in the colony, and he asked for teachers trained in the system to be sent out.³ He was recalled before anything came of his proposals, but he had prepared the way for a challenge to Anglican direction of schools.

Sir John Franklin, who followed Arthur, left the system unchanged throughout 1837, but gave notice of his intention to go into the matter.⁴ In the middle of 1838, admitting the discontent of Dissenters, he expounded a solution which turned out to be no solution. Appealing to the Church Act passed the previous year, Franklin declared that the same principle of equality had to be adopted for the schools. He did not recommend a definite denominational system, with the Churches establishing their own schools and receiving aid from the state; nor did he propose a general system in which the Churches had no direct control over any school. He tried to compromise in a plan which might be labelled semi-denominational. Each school was to come under the control of the denomination which happened to have a majority among the pupils at its commencement, but each was to have a separate class or classes in which the minority were to be taught their catechisms. All of the thirty-two public schools in the colony,⁵ were to come under the control of a huge board including many persons holding office under the Crown and all the clergy of every denomination.⁶

¹Governor's Minute, 5 Aug. 1836, Courier, 12 Aug. 1836, p.4.

²Broughton to Arthur, 24 Jan. 1834, (A2172 ML).

³Arthur to Glenelg, 4 May 1836, GO 33/22; Arthur to Stephen, 3 Sept. 1836, CSO 16/28/687 (TSA).

⁴Opening Address, 10 July, V. & P., V.D.L., 1837.

⁵An average of 843 children attended, and the cost to the Treasury was £3,000 per annum. Franklin hoped to double the number of both schools and pupils, without raising the cost to the Government above £4,000, by paying teachers according to the sums they raised from parents (up to a normal maximum of £50 per annum) - Minute upon the Estimates, 5 July, V. & P., V.D.L., 1838.

⁶Opening Address, 30 June, ibid. Cf. Min. of Exec. Coun, 17 May 1838, EC 2/6 (TSA).

That Franklin's scheme really pleased no party, is shown by its peculiar reception in the Legislative Council. On 12 July the plan was voted out by six votes to five, and ('will our readers believe us?' as the Tasmanian asked) was re-introduced and passed by nine votes to one on the next day.¹ Clearly the Council was in utter confusion over the scheme. The reasons were not merely the clumsy constitution of the proposed board, or an 'ignorance of the intention...and the probable effects' of the proposal. There was a collision between rival opinions and between theory and practice. The Attorney-General said that, since the content of religious instruction could not be agreed upon, it should be left in the hands of parents and ministers and out of the schools altogether. The Chief Justice wanted precisely the opposite: money should be allotted to each denomination to allow each to develop its own schools. The Colonial Secretary, who would not vote a farthing towards a school which taught no religion, argued that a denominational system was too expensive. And such was the Council's dilemma that Matthew Forster could persuade it to vote in what it had voted out the day before.²

There was a long interval between the vote in the Council and any move to implement it. After three months even the Tasmanian asked what had become of the 'ponderous scheme' and suggested that the Government ought to at least try it.³ Two more months passed before the board was constituted and the regulations drawn up.⁴ These were to take effect from 1 January 1839, but were never made operative. Franklin's first plan for the schools faded out.

Its cumbersome machinery was a bad, but not the worst, feature.

¹Tasmanian, 13 July 1838, p.228, c.3. The paper opposed the teaching of religion in schools because compromise was 'the very parent of infidel doubts, uncertainties and evasions' and because turning religious training into class-work meant the loss of spirituality and the development of 'enduring repugnance'.

²Courier, 20 July 1838, pp.2, 4. Thomas Anstey, a Catholic, remained firm, voting - he said - against 'the cumbrous machinery'.

³Tasmanian, 5 Oct. 1838, p.316, c.1.

⁴Government Notice, 13 Dec., Proclamations, Government Orders and Notices, 1838, p.270ff.

The board, it is true, was to consist of two judges, the Executive and the Legislative Councillors, the clerk of the Council, all the police magistrates, all the assistant police magistrates and all the clergy of every Church (except the Baptist). But five were to be a quorum, and the board need not have been hamstrung by the difficulty of assembling sufficient numbers. The main trouble was that the measure solved nothing as far as the Churches were concerned. There was a good reason for objection by non-Anglicans. As the Tasmanian expressed it, the scheme was 'vitality at war' with the very principle of equality it was designed to serve. Anglican children would usually be in a majority and the Church of England could claim most of the existing schools for itself. More often than not, the children of other denominations would have to attend schools which were essentially Anglican.¹ Yet there was also ground for non-Anglican support. The Anglican monopoly was being challenged in all schools, and there were new possibilities of state aid for non-Anglican schools. A decision on a Catholic application for grants of £50 per annum to each of its two schools had been deferred until the arrangements for schools generally had been made.² These schools could benefit by the new proposal. Similarly the Wesleyans commenced a school in Hobart at the beginning of 1839, and hoped to get Government aid for it.³ The Presbyterians, while apparently not very much wanting the new arrangement, were willing to co-operate.⁴

It was the Anglican Church which caused the rejection of the scheme.⁵ It had quite as good reason. Not only was the arch-

¹Tasmanian, 21 Dec. 1838, p.404 c.3. It went on to argue that a public school should be a public school 'exempt from everything narrow or sectarian'.

²Min. of Exec. Coun. 30 May 1838, EC 2/6, p.147 (TSA).

³Waterhouse to Forster, 1 May 1839, CSO 5/190/4602 (TSA). V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min. 3 Oct. 1839 (Appendix).

⁴Min. of Exec. Coun. 8 Jan. 1839, EC 2/6, p.412 (TSA).

⁵The opposite is usually asserted - that the Anglicans supported, and the Dissenters rejected Franklin's plan; see, e.g., Clifford Reeves, A History of Tasmanian Education: State Primary Education, Melbourne 1935, p. 25; A.G. Austin, op.cit., p. 71ff; R. Fogarty, op. cit., I, p.35 n. 84. Fogarty has not only overlooked evidence; he has also misread it.

deacon being compelled to relinquish exclusive control of most schools, but the Anglicans demanded a fully denominational system on principle. Although the immediate effect of the measure might have been to leave the schools very nearly as they were, the trend was away from Church of England, and towards Government-board control of education. This the Anglicans determined to nip in the bud. At the very first suggestion of Franklin's scheme, Archdeacon Hutchins opposed any change; if some alteration had to be made, he added, it should be to give each denomination aid in proportion to its numbers.¹ When the Government Notice was issued on 13 December 1838, the archdeacon immediately wrote to his clergy. By 24 December all but one had informed him that they would withdraw altogether from schools managed on the plan of the Governor. They would cooperate only if they received aid for schools which were truly their own.² It was this Anglican obstruction which forced the Executive Council to advise Franklin against bringing the new regulations into force until the matter could again be referred to the Legislative Council.³ As the True Colonist very properly put it:

When the Government attempted to establish a co-operation and union, as regarded secular education, by entrusting the management to a conjunct board, composed of all denominations, the Church of England ministers alone refused to act. 4

The Anglicans Boycott a British and Foreign System, 1839-1842.

In 1839 the Lieutenant-Governor tried again. By May he had come back to the system which Arthur had recommended - the British and Foreign system.⁵ In August more detailed information was given.

¹Min. of Exec. Coun. 25 June 1838, EC 2/6, p. 191 (TSA).

²Ibid., 8 Jan. 1839, EC 2/6, p. 411 (TSA).

³Ibid., 4 Feb. 1839, EC 2/6, p. 466 (TSA).

⁴True Colonist, 29 Nov. 1839, p.4 c.4.

⁵Gov. Notice, 6 May, Hobart Town Gazette, 10 May 1838, p. 471.

There was to be a small lay committee in place of the board, and the clergy and the police magistrates would be invited merely to visit the schools and suggest improvements. The Bible in its entirety was to be read and, as a further aid to religious training, the Governor proposed some financial help for Sunday schools.¹ In September the new board's position was consolidated by a minute to the Council from Franklin, and by the issue of further detailed regulations. Franklin quoted Sir John Herschel, of the Cape Colony, on the principles of a new arrangement for schools there.²

I would only remark in general that, so long as Christian principles are broadly laid down as the basis of all proceedings, every thing calculated to perpetuate religious or civil distinctions between members of the same community, or to foster a spirit of domination on the part of any religious sect, ought to be most studiously and pointedly avoided.

This declaration, taken from documents forwarded by the Secretary of State, was a great encouragement to Franklin, and he stressed that there had been 'a remarkable coincidence of opinion' at the Cape, in New South Wales (where Gipps was advocating the British and Foreign system) and in Van Diemen's Land. The chief remaining difficulty, according to Franklin, was a shortage of suitable teachers.³

This was not the chief remaining difficulty at all. Once more the main trouble was the intransigent stand of the Anglican clergy. The British and Foreign schools rejected all catechisms as categorically as the Anglicans insisted on the need of them. Also, while the whole Bible was read, the scripture lessons were reduced to mere reading lessons, the master simply questioning the children to see if they understood the literal sense of what was read. He was given the task, and the warning, of 'explaining Scripture by Scripture, and never seeking by any expression of his own opinions

¹Govt. Notice, 6 Aug. ibid., 9 Aug. 1839, p.923.

²This system, outlined approvingly by Courier, 30 Aug. 1839, p.3, c.4, provided for the daily reading of the Bible, for pupils to be given instruction by their own pastors, and for children to be exempted from religious instruction if their parents objected.

³Lieut-Governor's Minute, 2 Sept., V. & P., V.D.L., 1839.

to draw away any child from the tenets of the particular Christian communion to which the child's parents may belong.'¹

In June 1839 Archdeacon Hutchins said plainly that his clergy could neither approve nor support the system. He would not deny useful secular knowledge to those who could not be instructed in religion, but he would not support a system based on 'loose and indefinite principles' for the sake of a small minority. He could not see 'either the wisdom or the propriety of risking the stability of nine out of ten for the mere chance of improving the tenth'.² Eleven Anglican clergymen supported their archdeacon. In a memorial to the Governor they resented their exclusion from the schools, and claimed that their Sunday duties kept them from Sunday schools, that the proposal was disapproved of by the heads of their Church both in Australia and England, and that it went further than the home Government had intended. Denominational schools were what they wanted, and they claimed that such schools would save the Treasury the cost of a board and its machinery.³

Anglican clerical opposition did not, on this occasion, prevent the introduction of the British and Foreign system. The board appointed in August 1839 duly took charge of the schools and issued its instructions.⁴ But two exceptions to British and Foreign principles were allowed by the board, in an effort to mollify the Anglicans. Early in March 1840 the masters were instructed to allow any clergyman who requested it, an opportunity of giving special religious instruction to his children.⁵

¹Instructions to Masters...18 Feb. 1840, Appendix E, Report of the Board of Education, *ibid.*, 1840.

²W. Hutchins, A Letter on the School Question addressed to Sir John Lewes Pedder..., Hobart 1839, *passim*.

³Addresses for and against Government Schools, pp.39-41, V. & P., V.D.L., 1840.

⁴The members of the board were: M. Forster, J. Kerr, C. Swanston, C. M'Lachlan, H.G. Jones, P. Frazer, W. Sorell. The secretary was Edmund Hobson, M.D. (Hobart Town Gazette, 9 Aug. 1839, p.923). W.E. Nairn soon replaced Hobson as secretary.

⁵Report of the Board of Education, 1840, Appendices F and G, loc. cit.

In addition, the board departed from the 'no catechisms' rule. The S.P.C.K. in England had produced a book of selected texts from the Bible followed by questions of a far more searching kind than those normally asked in British and Foreign schools. It was a modified catechism in the sense that while it contained no specially written statements of the faith, the combination of texts and questions built up a very systematic outline of the faith. It did not depart very far from the British and Foreign principle of 'explaining Scripture by Scripture', and was really an admirable compromise.¹ Yet although the board approved its use in the Government schools, the Anglican clergy, with a few exceptions, remained adamant and unco-operative.²

They did not succeed in blocking the introduction of the system partly because they were themselves under criticism at the time. The True Colonist sniped at them continually. The salary and allowance of the Rev. Dr Browne, it suggested, could easily stand reduction by an amount which would endow a first class school at Launceston. Sarcastically, the paper said it presumed that the twenty acres of school land held by the Anglican chaplain at Campbell Town would be placed at the disposal of the board. Such possessions, it added, made the public say that this was what came of 'the Archdeacon being a member of the Executive Council; if Father Therry had a seat at the Board, the Catholics would have valuable glebes, and large allotments, too'. The resignation of T.H. Braim from the head-mastership of the Hobart Town Grammar School after being instructed to see that all pupils attended Anglican service on Sundays, had given some publicity to the pressures sometimes applied by the Church of England to scholars in its schools.³ The True Colonist smelled out another instance. The Presbyterian, James

¹The contents of this book, The Faith and Duty of A Christian, Digested under Proper Heads, and Expressed in the Words of Scripture, will be discussed below, in Chapter 9. The edition seen was printed in Hobart 'for the Van Diemen's Land Schools' in 1851.

²Report of the Board of Education, 1840, pp.2, 3.

³Tasmanian, 20 July 1838, p.227.

Thomson, had written pamphlets attacking the ecclesiastical monopoly of the Church of England. When it reached the papers' ears that Thomas Wilkinson, schoolmaster of Bothwell, had refused to act as agent for the sale of Thomson's publications, it suggested that this was because Wilkinson was afraid that the archdeacon would put him out of his job if he handled the pamphlets. In this way the paper actively fostered public resentment of the Anglican clergy, who could not be certain how far the public - though a majority was nominally Anglican - would go with them.¹

The Anglicans also had some strong press support. The True Colonist had Presbyterian associations, but the Courier had Anglican sympathies and sturdily followed the clergy's lead. The Board of Education's regulations, issued in September 1839, opened with a statement that the free day schools were

to be conducted as nearly as may be, on the British and Foreign School System, excepting that the entire Sacred Scriptures were to form part of the daily² course of reading; with the consent of the parents.

The Courier fastened like a leech on the last phrase - 'with the consent of the parents'. Such a provision, it said, would quickly turn the children into 'youthful polemics', and it would be better to 'do away with the Bible altogether, and every semblance of religious instruction' than to highlight such religious differences in schools. With the sublime illogicality of haste or partisanship, the Courier concluded:

If parents cannot be reconciled to the perusal of the scriptures, the best plan would be to afford assistance as proposed by the Archdeacon, according to the number of children, whether of Protestant, Presbyterian [sic], or Catholic denomination, to follow their³ own course of education as each may see fit.

¹True Colonist, 12 July p.6, 2.Aug., p.6, 9 Aug., p.7, 16 Aug., p.6, 1839. (It may be noted that Cobbett's Legacy to Parsons was reprinted in Hobart in 1845.).

²Hobart Town Gazette, 27 Sept. 1839, pp.1133-34.

³Courier, 27 Sept. 1839, p.2 c.2.

The colonists had a fair choice. They could collect arguments against the Government system from the Courier, or they could continue to accept instruction from the True Colonist - the latter having gone on to find pleasure in the Governor's Minute to the Council in September, being pleased that no particular Church was to be given preference and that the schools were to be superintended by the lay committee.¹

The counterblast to the Anglicans was not confined to the editorial column of a newspaper. The petition of the Anglican clergy provoked an immediate retort from Nonconformists and others. The Independent ministers, Price and West, and the Baptist pastor, Dowling, wrote from Launceston to support the Governor's proposal. 'We have herein expressed', they said, 'the views of our respective congregations'. The Rev. John Lillie wrote to say that the Presbytery of Van Diemen's Land had unanimously decided in favour of the system, and the Rev. Frederick Miller informed the Colonial Secretary of the support of the Congregational Union, since the plan afforded 'a Scriptural education without investing it with a sectarian character'. Thomas Anstey forwarded an address from residents of Oatlands in support of Franklin; he himself approved of the scheme, and pointed out that the address was signed 'by members of the Churches of England, Scotland and Rome; by Methodists (both Calvinistic² and Armenian [sic]), Independents, and Baptists'.

Within the first six months of 1840, eight other addresses came in supporting the British and Foreign system. Altogether over 900 male persons signed them, among whom (as well as

¹True Colonist, 13 Sept. 1839, p.6, c.1.

²These must have been very few, and were probably connected with the 'disaffected persons' who had 'crept in' and then separated from the Wesleyans to form the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1838 - V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min. 1837, Q. xxxi and Appendix; Courier, 28 Sept., 9 Nov. 1838. They rejoined the Wesleyans in March 1840. Calvinistic Methodists had their main stronghold in Wales, and were as much Presbyterian as Methodist, preaching predestination. The Wesleyans taught the so-called 'Arminian' doctrine of the universal love of God and the offer of salvation to all.

Independent and Presbyterian ministers) was at least one Wesleyan minister, and one Israelite. The addresses were stereotyped - drawn up by the Board of Education, the Anglicans were later to accuse, and the board to deny - and expressed the view that a community composed of all denominations, few in number and dispersed over a wide extent of country, could not support Church schools. The new system did away with 'the exclusive system', and laid a sure foundation for the daily reading of the Bible.

Thus provision is made for securing to the rising generation an habitual acquaintance with that 'form of sound words' contained in the Word of God, who will thus be furnished with a perfect rule of conduct, and an effectual safeguard against error. 1

In contrast, only two petitions, bearing eighty-eight names, came in on the Anglican side up to the middle of 1840. In spite of the Anglican majority, the Church of England clergy apparently had not found it easy to convince their people that the Government system was an accursed thing.²

It is not to be supposed that the proposed British and Foreign system was condemned only by the Anglicans and that the other denominations considered it to be ideal. The True Colonist was critical of the scheme from the point of view of costs, courses and teachers' qualifications and believed that the Presbyterian Church was accepting it only for want of something better. It felt able to say in block letters that the Presbyterians were not opposing the system, but went on to say that it had been forced on them by the refusal of the Anglicans to co-operate

¹For this, and preceding, see - Addresses for and against Government Schools, pp.1-35, V. & P., V.D.L., 1840.

²J.D. Loch, An Account of the Introduction and Effects of the System of General Religious Education established in Van Diemen's Land in 1839, Hobart 1843, Section II, pp.17-18, offers an explanation: no attempt was made to organize petitions; the clergy spoke for the people, and were the proper representatives of the people on religious subjects. If so, Mr Loch was rather overstepping the mark in producing a pamphlet of 200 pages. The policy of letting the clergy speak for the people was not adopted in New South Wales in 1839, and Loch's explanation may be viewed with some suspicion.

in a more positive system.¹ It was perfectly true that many non-Anglican Protestants were not enamoured of a general system. The archdeacon was soon to make effective use of strong statements made about this time by both the Presbyterians and the Wesleyans in Great Britain against general systems on the grounds that schools divorced from the Churches would foster scepticism and unbelief. As far back as 1837 the Wesleyans in this colony had declared that the institution of day schools at their principal stations would 'tend materially to advance the cause of Methodism'. They had commenced a school in Hobart in 1839, and their real desire is shown by the wish, achieved in 1850, for a similar school at Launceston.² It was not a difference in ideals, but in dominance and strength, which made the Church of England so unready to enter a general system and the Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches so much more ready.

In 1840 the Catholic attitude was made finally and abundantly clear. In August 1839 the Catholic schoolmistress, Mary Miller, had been granted Government money towards her salary and the rent of her schoolroom, but only until the Government board took up its duties.³ Towards the end of 1839 the Vicar-General, the Rev. J.J. Therry, taking a calculated risk in the hope of getting guaranteed state aid, applied for the Catholic schools at Hobart, Richmond and the Springs to be classed as Government schools. This was refused on the pretext that there were already Government schools at two of these places and that a decision had been made, prior to Therry's application, to establish one at the Springs.⁴ Therry, like all the Australian priests, was forced into some acquiescence in Government schools by having a minority

¹True Colonist, 16 Aug., p.5 c.4; 4 Oct., p.4 c.2; 29 Nov., pp.4-5 (1839). Franklin's first proposal had been more positive in allowing catechisms to be taught in every school.

²See V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min. 1837 (Q.31), 1845 (Appendix), 1850 (Appendix). The Hobart school was closed in 1840 for want of funds (ibid., 1840, Appendix).

³Min. of Exec. Coun., 10 Aug. 1839, p.607, EC 2/6 (TSA).

⁴W. Nairn to Therry, 10 Dec. 1839, cited in P.F. Moran, op.cit., pp. 251-2.

and a generally poor people. He had recommended Catholic parents to send their children to the British and Foreign schools, believing that Catholic scruples would be respected. When it was pointed out to him that Catholic children in Hobart Town schools were joining with others in prayers and Bible reading, he threatened to have them withdrawn. This he was not anxious to do, and he only asked that the regulations be strictly observed. In the same letter, indeed, he asked that either a Catholic assistant to the Hobart Town schoolmaster be appointed, or a branch-school be opened under a Catholic teacher.¹ If he could have introduced Catholic teachers and influence into the system, he would have gone along with it. But this was to some extent a manipulation of the system, and it was repeatedly refused.

When Therry found that nothing could be done to make the Government system more acceptable to Catholics, he began in earnest to organize his own schools. Similar steps were taken by the priest at Richmond. He provided the Catholic children at the Government school with books to read instead of the Bible. When the Board heard of this, it ordered the books to be withdrawn. They were; and so were the Catholic children.² There was never any question in Catholic minds about the ideal principles of education, and they were not the principles of the new general system. As Therry told the Colonial Secretary:

To persons believing that all religions are equally good in the sight of heaven, this system must appear unobjectionable, but to those who believe, as all sincere Catholics do, that there is but one true faith, a system of education calculated to alienate or even diminish their attachment to it must appear dangerous.³

In August 1840 the board directing the Government schools was one year old. This was a great month in the education battle; the board presented its first report, Anglican petitions were presented against the continuation of the system and the Lieutenant-

¹Therry to Sec. of Board, 21 Oct. 1840, ibid., pp.254-5.

²Letter from W.J. Aislabie, Courier, 14 Aug. 1840, p.3 c.2.

³Therry to Forster, 17 Oct. 1840, cited in P.F.Moran, op.cit. p.253.

Governor spoke out. Two of the petitions were from private citizens praying for Anglican schools. They were signed by thirty and one hundred and twenty-three persons respectively, and were some indication of a wider public support for the Church of England than had been shown previously. Yet the one hundred and twenty-three included wives (no other petition had resorted to this), and the total signatories of the Anglican memorials between August 1839 and August 1840 amounted to only about two hundred and fifty - wives, archdeacons and all. Compared with the nine hundred signatures attached to the petitions in favour of the British and Foreign system, the Anglican effort was far from impressive. W.E. Nairn, a secretary of the Board of Education, was right when he said that the system of education 'was received...without disfavour by many of the laity of the Church of England', and that the lower classes did not take much interest - they talked about it, but neither clearly understood what was involved nor thought it important.¹

A third petition was from the archdeacon himself. As might be expected of a mathematician and former Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, Hutchins made out a good case - though marred by some finicking arguments and touches of arrogance.² He made four significant claims. Anglican children were being denied their rights by the relegation of their ministers to the category of mere visitors. British and Foreign principles had been departed from by permitting ministers to give instruction, and by the introduction of The Faith and Duty of A Christian; to grant aid to Anglican schools would be no more inconsistent. There had been no expansion under the board, but only the re-opening of some schools which had closed through Government (not Anglican) ineptitude. Finally, the archdeacon appealed to contemporary statements in support of fully denominational schools made by Wesleyans and Presbyterians in the British Isles and fossicked

¹Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 1845, GO 33/51, p.988 (TSA).

²E.g., he quibbled that Anglican petitions had come in after the system had been introduced, whereas those in support had come in before its introduction; and he spoke of 'Ministers of Religion (so-called)'.

among old books to find an apt passage in the works of the early Nonconformist divine, Richard Baxter:

He is not worthy of the name of a Christian Schoolmaster who maketh it not his chief work to teach his scholars the knowledge of Christ and life everlasting.

These were awkward quotations for colonial Nonconformists.¹

The Report of the Board of Education was not altogether a satisfactory counter to the archdeacon's petition. It claimed that the number of scholars in the twenty-seven schools had increased from 785 to 1,145; that three of these schools were new; and that the erection of another three had been recommended. Since there had been thirty-two schools, with an average attendance of 843 children in 1838, Archdeacon Hutchins was close to the truth. The board attacked the Anglican-managed schools, saying that they had found them quite inadequate in curriculum, equipment and methods of teaching; but it had to admit it had continued to labour under most of these disadvantages, including a lack of suitable teachers. What told most against the Anglican clergy was the board's comments on their intransigency. Although the board had allowed the two significant modifications of the system to meet the objections of the ministers of the Church of England, only five of their number would co-operate in any way. In contrast, the board claimed 'the cordial support' of the other ministers of religion.²

There were three Anglican clergymen who had not signed the petition of protest in 1839 and, apparently, two others had at some time or another visited Government schools in their parishes.³ Clearly the three who had not put their names on the petition were the most significant, but even these - the Revs. P. Palmer,

¹V. & P., V.D.L., 1840:

²Report of the Board of Education, *ibid.*, 1840.

³'...they have also the co-operation of three Clergymen of the Church of England, and the valuable assistance of two others; who...have yet consented to visit the Schools...' - *ibid.*

R.R.Davies and H.Bishton - were not truly divided from their brethren. Bishton's very small school had an Anglican mistress and only Anglican pupils. Davies' school also had only Anglican pupils and an Anglican master: when a Wesleyan master was appointed, Davies immediately protested.¹ Failure to sign the petition, it was claimed with reasonableness, did not commit these men to the system; it only meant that they did not want to exclude themselves from visiting schools which were completely under Anglican influence anyway. In proof of how close together the Anglican clergy stood on the issue, the names of both Palmer and Davies appeared on the next petition sent in by the clergy (1842).²

Sir John Franklin, the originator of this bothersome scheme, had remained firm. He would not admit that religious instruction was inadequately provided in the schools, and argued that he was 'consulting the general interests of the Colony, both in a moral and social point of view, as well as the wishes of a majority of its Inhabitants'.³ He continued to minimize the number of the objectors, though confessing that they were drawn from a section of the community he could 'by no means overlook or depreciate'. But he was becoming dubious about the possibility of successfully continuing the system. In August 1840, he left it to the Legislative Council freely to decide whether or not to retain the British and Foreign school system.⁴ The mood of the Council was reflected in a unanimous resolution on the New College (to be established for the higher education of colonial youth, and not under the Board of Education). It declared that 'instruction in the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, founded upon the Scriptures' should be given in the College, but that the staff

¹See the correspondence, commencing in 1842, printed in Launceston Examiner, 6 Sept., 1845, and subsequent issues.

²J.D.Loch, op.cit., Section II, pp.10, 18-19, Cf. letter from W.J. Aislabie, Courier, 14 Aug. 1840, p.3 c.2.

³M. Forster to [Rev. W. Bedford?], 10 Dec. 1839, in Addresses for and against Government Schools, p.43, V. & P., V.D.L., 1840.

⁴Minute relative to the New College, 15 Aug. 1840, ibid. (It was this statement which prompted the archdeacon's petition.).

should use discretion about 'instruction in forms of Church Government, and in rites and ceremonies', giving the latter only to students whose parents wanted them to receive it.¹ There was not much hope here for Council support for Church schools instead of a general system. The British and Foreign system was retained, was approved by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was even spared the criticism of the Courier.²

In 1842 the Board of Education announced 'very important improvements'. Six couples trained in the British and Foreign system (including the now celebrated James Bonwick and his wife) had arrived from England and were settled in schools. The standard and scope of teaching had been raised strikingly, and 'even in the least effective' schools an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, as well as a knowledge of writing and arithmetic, was being gained. There was an average total attendance of 1,460 children, compared with 785 when the Board had taken over in 1839.³ But all was not well. The number of schools (as distinct from scholars) was not increasing - and was to continue to fall a little in the next few years.⁴ There was still a shortage of properly trained teachers. Above all, there was still the religious problem. Although most schoolteachers were Anglican,⁵

¹Resolution, 4 Sept. 1840, ibid.

²Courier, 30 Mar. 1841, p.2 c.4, reported the Secretary of State's approval. Ibid., 4 May 1841, p.2 c.4, printed this item: 'Government Schools - We understand that at these schools there are now upwards of 2,000 children receiving instruction, a great proportion of whom would in all probability be denied the advantage of education, either from its expense, or, in the remoter portions of the island, from the absence of all other schools for miles around them.'

³Report of the Board of Education, 1842, V. & P., V.D.L., 1842.

⁴The 22 schools at the commencement of the Board (as stated in the Report) should have been 27 (see Table A in Appendix). In 1842, 1843, 1844, there were 24, 24 and 23 Government schools respectively, with 1,493 scholars in the latter year - Statistics of Van Diemen's Land for 1842-1844, Hobart 1845, p.16.

⁵Thirteen schools were taught by Anglicans, one by an Anglican master and a Wesleyan mistress, four by Independents, three by Wesleyans, two by Presbyterians, and one by a master who attended Quaker meetings. (Return connected with the Public Day Schools, 21 Sept. 1842, V. & P., V.D.L., 1842.)

the ministers of the Church of England mostly refused to visit the schools.

In 1842 these clergymen launched another attack on the system. Twenty-one of them associated themselves in a petition for denominational schools.¹ Only two did not sign - Bishton, who had not signed the first, and a newcomer, the Rev. T. Spurr.² Since their numbers had increased since 1839, and the second petition was prepared in the absence of both archdeacon and bishop (for Hutchins had died in 1841, and their first bishop and a new archdeacon had not yet arrived), it was clearer than ever that the Anglican ministers were opposed to the Government system. It was clear, too, that the clergy were more anxious for an alteration in the system than were their people. Certainly the layman, J.D. Loch, was soon to publish (in collaboration with the Rev. Henry Fry) his long indictment of the Government system; but he was an exception. For the petitions to which the people attached their names in 1842 were not concerned with schools, but prayed for a 'Usury Law' to give them protection as they tried to weather the storm of economic depression.

Bishop Nixon against Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, 1843-47.

When the Right Reverend Francis Russell Nixon arrived in July 1843, he gave strong support to his clergy. He waited, perforce, until a new Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, had settled in, summoned a Legislative Council and declared to it his profound belief in religious freedom. Then Nixon struck. On 24 October 1843, the Bishop and his clergy petitioned that the money about to be voted for education be distributed among the denominations in proportion to their numbers for use in the development of Church Schools. Next day Nixon petitioned to be heard before the Council, and - the Council granting his request by

¹Petition of the Clergy, 14 Sept. 1842, ibid.

²J.D. Loch, op. cit., Section II, pp. 18-19.

eight votes to five - he was heard at length on 31 October.¹

The Council room was crowded by 'the most respectable of the Community', and several ladies, anxious to hear the bishop, were in a room behind the chamber.² He was old-fashioned enough, said Nixon, to believe that a country's prosperity depended on it having God's blessing. The statesman's duty was not confined to the temporal welfare of the people, but extended to the provision of an educational system which produced 'not moralists, but God's worshippers'. It was an evil to forbid catechism and comment on the Bible in the schools. Such a system acknowledged the objections of Romanist, Jew and Dissenter, but not the beliefs of the Church of England. 'The principle of liberty of conscience is for them, but the coercion of conscience for us', said the bishop. But, he asked, was conscience just Romish or Jewish? And was the Church of England fallen so far as to be a mere sect? The bishop began to condemn the schools on their practical working - and was interrupted by Eardley-Wilmot, who held up a copy of the Board's report and said that therein the charges were flatly refuted. The Bishop went on to suggest that the Church of England was established - and was interrupted by the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary. After a minor debate among members, Nixon moved on to his conclusion:

...posterity shall never say that the first Lord Bishop of Tasmania was afraid to speak his mind, that he was recreant to his trust, or that he did not raise his voice, solemnly and sincerely, in behalf of the church, before God, and before his country.

Obviously the bishop had impressed himself.

Unlike Bishop Broughton on a similar occasion, Nixon had not sufficiently impressed the Lieutenant-Governor, the Council or the people. The first result was the arrival of five petitions (with Independent and Baptist influences prominent) against any change. Two Wesleyan petitions were presented asking that no

¹Proceedings 24-31 Oct., V. & P., V.D.L., 1843.

²Courier, 3 Nov. 1843, p.2, c.4, from which source the bishop's speech has been summarized.

change be made until sufficient time had been given 'to all parties to explain their views on this important subject'. Only one petition in support of Nixon accompanied them.¹

A petition from inhabitants of Hobart gave well reasoned support for the general schools. The system had been recently introduced after much discussion and deliberation, and to alter it would disturb the children and violate the contract with teachers brought out for the schools. The system had been well received by the people, and to act on behalf of the clergy of one Church would be unreasonable. The board had introduced The Faith and Duty of a Christian, written by an Anglican dignitary and published by the S.P.C.K. Compared with other Protestants' efforts, Anglican activity in the colony did not emerge very favourably; eighty children attended Anglican Sunday schools in Hobart and eight hundred and fifty went to non-Anglican, and the Nonconformist provision for 8,916 persons in their churches was not far behind the Anglican accommodation for 9,870. To cap it all, the Anglicans maintained that it was satisfactory for Dissenters to attend Church of England schools, but unsatisfactory for Anglicans to have to attend non-Anglican schools.² A week later, the Rev. John Lillie prayed to be heard on behalf of the general system and, in the next day or two, four petitions were presented against any change. In support of Nixon, eight petitions - one signed by 1,200 inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land - were received.³ But up to the end of 1843 the petitioners praying for the general system to continue remained ahead, and, as the session continued into 1844, increased their lead. Four petitions, one bearing the signatures of 1,626 inhabitants of Hobart, supported the British and Foreign system; and only two - from certain of the Anglican clergy, and from 'Priest Fry and Squire Loch' (as the Launceston Examiner once dubbed them) - asked for the school

¹Proceedings of 3-14 Nov. V. & P., V.D.L., 1843.

²Presented 3 Nov., printed in Courier, 17 Nov. 1843, p.3 c.1.

³Proceedings 20-23 Nov., V. & P., V.D.L., 1843.

system to be reconsidered.¹

Since the Anglicans laid claim to well over half the total population of the island, the support received by their clergy was very limited indeed. It was the minor denominations which really rallied, and which were joined - or not opposed - by many members of the Church of England. Neither Loch's expose nor the Report of the Board of Education shed very certain lights on the real position, since both consisted of many dubious assertions and equally dubious refutations about the state of the schools. Apart from the many trivial instances appealed to, their significance lay in Loch's charge that there was gross religious ignorance in the board schools, and the board's countercharge that this could be true only of 'specific and distinct religious tenets', and that it was due to the non-cooperation of the Anglican clergy and their failure to develop Sunday Schools.²

It is small wonder that the newly arrived Sir John Eardley-Wilmot declared that he was not going to decide the matter. He certainly showed far more sympathy for the board than for the claims of the Church of England, but he simply concluded with the words,

...shall I, finding a system carried on for four or five years, of which no complaint has been substantiated, ...authorized by the home Government, and sanctioned by the Queen, consent that it be suddenly changed without consulting that authority at home, by which the system was originally established? To this my answer is, I cannot do so.

The documents for and against were to go to England; in the meantime the British and Foreign system was to go on.³

In the newspapers no one defended the actual condition of the schools. How could anyone? The school at Cambridge consisted

¹Proceedings 3-17 Jan. 1844, ibid.

²J.D.Loch, op. cit.; Report of the Board of Education, 1843, printed in Launceston Examiner, 25 Nov. 1843, pp.739-41.

³Address upon the Estimate for £4,000 for Day Schools, as reported (with special protestation of accuracy) in Colonial Times, 28 Nov. 1843, p. 3 c.2.

of two rooms - a 'skilling' and a sitting room - which housed the master and his family, as well as the pupils, and which was flooded in wet weather.¹ The problem of the teachers remained: the quality of the profession needed to be improved and teachers' salaries increased. The situation was not made easier by James Bonwick's resignation towards the end of the year from the key school in Hobart.² Dissatisfaction of this kind doubtless influenced the newspapers' treatment of Loch's Account. The Courier, as might be expected, gave it publicity,³ and it received respectful comment from unexpected quarters. The Colonial Times printed long extracts in successive issues, saying that, while Loch had been deceived by some of his informants, some of his claims were unanswerable.⁴ The Launceston Examiner also spoke about it with some approval.⁵ There was a lively correspondence in the press, in which the Anglican clergy had their defenders. One explained that the only way the clergy could hope to get the system changed was by complete dissociation, since 'a single visit...was always turned into an argument that they approved of the system.'⁶ This did not amount to a real swing in the Church of England's favour. Among the writers to the papers the clergy of that Church had even more numerous detractors, who set out to turn the Anglican boast into shame. Had they done what the board had made possible, the system would have been much better; but they had determined to smash it, no matter what other consequences came of their four years' neglect.⁷ Were Dissenters to go to Anglican schools 'upon sufferance' instead of to public schools 'upon principle'?⁸ How

¹Ibid., 1 Aug. 1843, p. 2 c.6.

²Launceston Examiner, 17 June 1843, p.379, 13 Dec. 1843, p.777.

³Courier, 7 July 1843, p.4 c.1.

⁴Colonial Times, 5, 9, 15 Aug. 1843.

⁵Launceston Examiner, 2 Aug. 1843, p. 483.

⁶'A Member of the Church of England', Courier, 18 Aug. 1843, p.3 c.3.

⁷'A Protestant', ibid., 11 Aug. 1843, p. 3 c.3.

⁸'A Protestant', ibid., 15 Sept. 1843, p. 3 c.2.

could the Anglicans say they were simply following the lead of their fellows in England, when the Bishops of Durham and of Norwich had favoured the British and Foreign system for England itself in 1839?¹ Altogether, both from the numbers and the arguments pitted against them, Anglican letter writers had a difficult time of it.

Nor did the Church of England get much editorial support. Their complaint about the want of religious education in the schools they would not visit was 'something very unchristianlike', the Colonial Times commented.² Even the friends of Bishop Nixon, it was said, thought his speech was 'greatly calculated to mar his usefulness'.³ The Launceston paper drew a moral from the defeat of Sir James Graham's Factories Education Bill in England: the objections of Dissent to granting the Church of England control of education had caused its withdrawal,⁴ hence the colony could not expect to change its system. A trump card - Tractarianism and its divisive effects - was produced. Sir Eardley-Wilmot was wished 'the joy of the task' of deciding which of 'the various opinions which stand between Geneva and Rome' formed the doctrine of a Church ranging from the Evangelical to the Puseyite.⁵ The Anglican clergy were ironically acquitted of all base motives, since they had been taught by the doctors of Oxford to cherish notions unsuited to their colonial circumstances; but who could be expected 'to expose their children to the instruction of a church whose creed no one knows, and no man pretends to know'? Eardley-Wilmot was warned: if one sect was set over another, and ministers were to be insulted who had laboured at Port Arthur when no Anglican could be found to fill the station, the first free Legislative Council would 'lay the axe to the root of ecclesiastical establishments, and resolve the dignity of a bishop into

¹'Key', Launceston Examiner, 12 Aug. 1843, p. 510.

²Colonial Times, 8 Aug. 1843, p. 2 c.5.

³Ibid., 14 Nov. 1843, p. 2 c.3.

⁴For this, see R.G.Cowherd, op.cit., pp.125-9.

⁵Launceston Examiner, 8 Nov. 1843, p.696.

its primitive nothingness'.¹ And the Churches themselves were warned against dividing into hostile factions contending for powers none could permanently possess.²

The Courier's restrained and infrequent reference to the education question was no less revealing. For this paper, the question was whether the colony was to train up 'a race of men either dead to all principles, excepting, perhaps, those of cold worldly morality, or a God-loving and God-fearing people'. Yet it said virtually nothing until 1843 was drawing to a close, and then contented itself with expressing a doubt about the suitability of the Anglican proposal - even if the existing system was a 'negative' one. Catholics and Presbyterians would be able to build only in Hobart and Launceston if aid was given only according to their denominational numbers. When the Lieutenant-Governor announced his intention to refer the whole matter to the Secretary of State, the Courier was content to let the matter rest.³ The tide of public opinion was not flowing in the direction the Church of England - and the Courier of 1839 - had hoped it would.

Therefore the Anglicans determined to by-pass the colonial authorities. Privately, they produced a pamphlet (lacking both title and author's name) which contested the board's claims and pressed their own. It may be true that the Legislative Council was asked to print the document and that the Council refused to be put to the expense. It may also be true that, after the clergy paid for the printing themselves, a copy was sent to the board, which did not reply.⁴ But this does not explain the division of the printing between the Advertiser and the Colonial Times (so that no undesirable hands could be laid on a complete copy?),⁵ or the

¹Ibid., 25 Nov. 1843, p.737. The Wesleyans, who had been in spiritual charge of Port Arthur from its commencement were peremptorily replaced by an Anglican in 1843. See, V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min. 5 Oct. 1843 (cf. CSO 8/101/2121 TSA).

²Ibid., 8 Nov. 1843, p.696.

³Courier, 3 Nov. 1843, p. 2 c.2, 1 Dec. 1843, p. 3 c.2.

⁴Claimed by the Rev. R.R.Davies, Launceston Examiner, 3 July, 1844, p.419.

⁵Asserted by True Colonist, 14 June 1844, p.2. The editor was unable to secure a copy.

pamphlet's existence being kept secret for six months until the Examiner accidentally got hold of one - and promptly printed a long extract.¹ It seems that the pamphlet was produced mainly for secret despatch to influential quarters in England - presumably by the hands of Archdeacon Marriott, who was being sent home partly to press the case for Anglican schools.² That the True Colonist was assured privately that the archdeacon's visit had nothing to do with schools,³ only adds to the likelihood of sheer duplicity in the Anglican party.

The news broken by the Launceston Examiner, and the subsequent letters from the Rev. R.R. Davies, were not well received. The paper received sufficient letters to make it say that the education question had aroused as much general interest as any matter in the colony.⁴ The Examiner was sure that the main body of Anglican people was not against the Government schools - though whole families had signed petitions against them when the forms had been carried around by police.⁵ But this did not mean that much progress was made by the Government schools.⁶ The Colonial Times published the report of the board gloomily, and pronounced it shameful that requests for schools had been refused for lack of money.⁷ The Courier quoted from the report, but waived all

¹Launceston Examiner, 5 June 1844, pp.355, 358-60; 12 June 1844, p.371.

²Anna Nixon to Charles Woodcock, 3 Apr. 1844, N. Nixon (comp.), The pioneer Bishop in Van Diemen's Land, 1843-1863, Hobart 1953, p.24. There were three matters entrusted to the 'faithful and good' archdeacon, according to Mrs. Nixon: endowing the Church; the education question; and superintendence of the Convict Chaplains.

³True Colonist, 14 June 1844, p.2.

⁴See Launceston Examiner throughout June-July 1844.

⁵Ibid., 31 July 1844, p.483.

⁶There were 23 schools and 1,493 pupils - Report of Board of Education, V. & P., V.D.L., 1844.

⁷Colonial Times, 13 Aug. 1844, p.2 c.4. It should be remembered that this was a time of depression (and of non-deficit economic theory). In 1840 the Land Fund had yielded £58,443; but only £2,000 was expected from this source in 1845 - Finance Minute, 27 July, V. & P., V.D.L., 1844.

discussion until the Secretary of State's answer had been received.¹

When that answer came, it was gentle but unhelpful. Stanley considered that there was sufficient weight in the charges brought against the schools to justify a commission of enquiry - not into the system, but into the working of the system. At the same time, while hasty changes were to be deprecated, Eardley-Wilmot might decide that the system needed changing; if so, the denominational system in operation in New South Wales might well be considered.² Bishop Nixon found this despatch 'more satisfactory than he anticipated',³ but pity Eardley-Wilmot - who had hoped to avoid making a decision, only to find that the Secretary of State claimed that relief for himself.

The Lieutenant-Governor shouldered his burden, and appointed a commission of enquiry.⁴ The commissioners were suspected of bias because they were Anglicans, and this was heightened by the fact of their enquiries being held behind closed doors and by Eardley-Wilmot's decision not to publish the report, or even place it before the Council at that time.⁵ It was sent to England with the Lieutenant-Governor's recommendation that the system continue and that the voluntary board be replaced by a superintendent and an official department.⁶ The commission, far from having an Anglican bias, produced a favourable report. The schools did 'not merit the full measure of censure...cast upon them'. If children and parents, in any cases, had come to disregard the Anglican

¹Courier, 9 Aug. 1844, p.2 c.3.

²Stanley to Eardley-Wilmot, 24 Aug. 1844, V. & P., V.D.L., 1847-8.

³Anna Nixon to Woodcock, 30 Dec. 1844, in N. Nixon, op.cit., p.41.

⁴Opening Address, 19 Feb. V. & P., V.D.L., 1845. The commissioners were W.D. Bernard, Dr. John Meyer and George Courtney - Hobart Town Gazette, 25 Feb. 1845, p.254. They were comparative newcomers to the colony.

⁵Launceston Examiner, 29 Mar. p.206; 9 Apr., p.226; 11 June, p.411; 20 Aug. p.534 (1845).

⁶Eardley-Wilmot to Stanley, 13 June 1845, GO 25/11 (TSA).

clergy it was a natural result of Anglican withdrawal from the schools; but it was commonly recognized that the parents were 'almost entirely' concerned about secular instruction and were 'frequently indifferent' to the religious instruction offered. Many improvements had been prevented merely by lack of money.¹

While word from England was again awaited, the board suffered from the Lieutenant-Governor's extreme caution: it was forbidden to increase the number of schools.² In the Estimates the amount proposed for Government schools was actually reduced by £1,000;³ but this was not really an educational matter, being rather one aspect of the position taken up by the 'Patriotic Six' who put the whole fiscal arrangements under fire before resigning amid the plaudits of the population.⁴ Hence economic difficulty as much as educational policy denied the board a fair chance of proving itself.

The dogged Anglicans managed to get sufficient money privately subscribed to engage in a school building campaign. In the south they did more building of schools than of chapels.⁵ In the Deanery of Longford, in the north, two brick and eight weather-board Anglican schools were erected before their funds were depleted; then, since six more schools were contemplated in areas where there was no board schools, the clergy asked the Government for financial assistance.⁶ Support for the Longford clergy's petition was given by the Courier, which argued that it was an economy of public funds, and that the board was never intended to prevent such voluntary efforts.⁷ Dissenting ministers from the

¹Report of Education Commissioners, 23 May 1845, GO 33/51, pp.591-5 (TSA).

²Report of Board of Education, 13 Aug. V. & P., V.D.L., 1845.

³Estimates for 1846, ibid., 1845.

⁴E.g. Launceston Examiner, 8 Nov. 1845.

⁵Herald of Tasmania, 18 July 1845, p.2; Hobart S.P.G. Report, 1844-5, pp.9-11.

⁶Petition of the Clergy of the Church of England...within the Deanery of Longford, 4 Aug. V. & P., V.D.L., 1845. It was claimed that 283 children attended 10 Anglican schools, and 247 went to board schools, in the area - Courier, 6 Aug. 1845, p.4, c.2.

⁷Courier, 9 Aug. 1845, p.2, c.2.

area petitioned against it, and the Examiner opposed it as an attempt to get public money in defiance of Government policy.¹ The Government ignored the request.

The year 1846 opened with the Government schools in stagnant existence, and the Anglican schools increasing in number and activity. In April, shortly before leaving for a trip to England, Bishop Nixon delivered his first charge to the clergy. He spoke 'in the language of regret rather than of complaint' about the deficiency of schools in an island which, year after year, had a mass of evil cast upon its shores. It was difficult to establish Anglican day schools, especially in country districts, but the Church of England must no longer be outdone in zeal by Dissenters in establishing Sunday schools.² There was little of either menace or hope in these words, and Sir John Eardley-Wilmot may have been pleased with the bishop's moderate tone. But Nixon was soon to have some of his difficulties happily removed, and the Lieutenant-Governor to suffer a grievous shock. The despatch dealing with schools came, not from Stanley, but from W.E. Gladstone in liverish mood. Unable to master his dislike of Eardley-Wilmot, the new Secretary of State had mastered the mass of documents sufficiently to turn them against the Lieutenant-Governor and the board schools.

Gladstone savaged Eardley-Wilmot for substituting laconic comments for the full report he had been asked for, and agreed with a Catholic complaint that the British and Foreign system gave 'an exclusive support to Independency'. He condemned the schools for their inefficiency and the whole system for its inadequacy. In short, he was less than fair; especially so, since he was not prepared to direct that a denominational school system be introduced. For all his denial of Eardley-Wilmot's claim of a popular

¹Petition of...Ministers of Religion, 21 Aug. V. & P., V.D.L., 1845; Launceston Examiner, 6 Aug. 1845, p.499. The paper objected also because the schools were used as preaching places - in confirmation of which see Return of Public Day Schools, Mar. 1848, V. & P., V.D.L., 1847-8.

²F.R.Nixon, A Charge delivered to the Clergy...at the Primary Visitation...April 23, 1846, London 1848, pp.31-2.

support which included that of many Anglicans, it was obvious that Gladstone was not really sure that the Lieutenant-Governor was wrong. But there were two things about which Gladstone was sure. A strict interpretation of the British and Foreign system's rules was to be insisted upon in Government schools; and aid from the Treasury, at the rate of one penny or a penny half-penny a day per child, was to be granted to the Church schools.¹

In this way the educational system came at last to be modified. Gone was all hope of simply adjusting the British and Foreign schools to allow more scope for denominational religious instruction. The Government schools proper had to be operated on the narrowest basis, while rival denominational schools were to be assisted from Government funds. The only safeguard for the Government schools was that they were regarded as catering adequately for Dissenters, and aid was given only to Anglican and Catholic schools.² Although Catholic objections had been taken fully into account by the Secretary of State, this sabotage of the board schools was essentially an Anglican achievement. It was secured by means of which that Church had small reason to be proud, for some of the clergy connived against the Lieutenant-Governor.

Part of the reason for Gladstone's unexpected attack on Eardley-Wilmot was that he gave shocked credence to rumours that the Lieutenant-Governor was a notorious lecher. The despatch on schools was soon followed by despatches removing him from his post. Ostensibly, and to some extent in reality, this was due to his mismanagement of the convict system and other inefficiency; but looming large among the reasons was the charge of irregularities in his private life.³ The sexual morals of the Lieutenant-Governor were perhaps not impeccable, but they were not notoriously lax. The staunch Anglican, Chief Justice Pedder, did not like

¹Gladstone to Eardley-Wilmot, 3 Mar. 1846, V. & P., V.D.L., 1847-8.

²Bradbury to MacCaig, 22 Aug. 1848, Board of Education Letterbook of Outward Letters, 1847-1851 (TSA).

³The relevant despatches are printed in Commons Papers, 1847, xxxviii, 513ff.

Eardley-Wilmot at all, in either public or private life, but he claimed that the 'infamous stories' charging the Lieutenant-Governor with 'the greatest immorality' were 'wholly without foundation'.¹ That injustice was done to Eardley-Wilmot (who died in 1847 before leaving the colony) was widely maintained in Van Diemen's Land at the time - even by such narrow persons as the members of the Hobart Wesleyan Leaders' Meeting² - and was admitted by Gladstone himself a little later.³

Eardley-Wilmot himself suspected that the rumours had been spread by free settlers who opposed the new probation system for convicts.⁴ Such persons doubtless contributed to the scandal-mongering, but one guilty person emerges more clearly than any other - the Lord Bishop of Tasmania. Nixon, in a letter quoted in the House of Commons when this matter was debated, declared that the rumours were 'utterly groundless'.⁵ But he was here beating a retreat, and Gladstone wrote to him in indignant reproof.

I consider that it was upon your Lordship's authority in no small degree, though perhaps not in a degree greater than upon any other authority, that I wrote...⁶

The best that can be said for Nixon is that Gladstone was shown letters written by the bishop to the Rev. Edward Coleridge, but Coleridge was known to have Gladstone's ear, and Australian bishops deliberately worked through Coleridge.⁷ It was known, or

¹Pedder to Arthur, 18 Feb. 1846 (A2170 ML).

²They referred to Eardley-Wilmot's 'injured character', and resolved to record the important service he had rendered religion in the colony - Minutes, 15 Feb. 1847, Hobart Wesleyan Leaders' Meeting Minute Books, 1830-1852 (Wesley Church, Hobart).

³See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, 'Mr. Gladstone and the Governor: the Recall of Sir John Eardley-Wilmot from Van Diemen's Land, 1846', Historical Studies, Vol.I, No.1, pp.31-45.

⁴Wilmot to Gladstone, 26 Sept. 1846, Commons Papers, 1847, xxxviii, 529.

⁵Hansard, 7 June 1847, Vol. xciii, c.201.

⁶Gladstone to Nixon, 24 June 1847, British Museum MSS, Catalogue Ms 44,365, folios 307-9 (microfilm lent by Dr. Michael Roe).

⁷Broughton to Coleridge, 15 Aug. 1850, BP.

suspected, in the colony that the Anglican clergy had a hand in reporting, and exaggerating, Eardley-Wilmot's misdemeanours,¹ but by fair means and foul they got their way as far as schools went.

A Triumphant Interval for Anglican Schools, 1848-50.

Wilmot's successor, Sir William Denison, knew what he had to do. He did not follow his own preferences. He did not try to gauge the public will. He simply announced a new scheme close to the ideals of Gladstone.² The idea was to ensure local supervision and control of each school, with the Government only having the power to inspect and make suggestions. Public opinion, speaking through the press, would guarantee the proper working of the system, said Denison, in apparent seriousness.³

The position at this time - early in 1848 - was that the board controlled twenty-two schools, the Catholics four and the Anglicans twenty-four (such had been their vigorous expansion). Just about half the 2,759 children on the school books were enrolled at board schools.⁴ Since there were 6,000 children between the ages of seven and fourteen in the colony,⁵ the cost to the Government, if it had managed to provide schools for them all, would have been £11,000 annually. The revenue could not stand this amount, said Sir William, and - even if it could - it would be at the cost of imposing an unacceptable rigidity of teaching upon the schools. He therefore proposed that a committee of ratepayers, elected annually for each district, should decide the type of education to be given in the local schools; and that a capitation tax of five shillings per annum be levied for education.⁶

¹cf. Courier, 20 Oct. 1847, p.2, for an editorial accusing Arch-deacon Marriott of retailing rumours against Eardley-Wilmot.

²Denison to Grey, 25 Apr. 1848, GO 33/63 (TSA).

³Opening Address, 26 Jan. 1848, V. & P., V.D.L., 1847-8.

⁴Report of the Public Day Schools, Mar. 1848, ibid.

⁵1848 Census, ibid.

⁶Minute of Education, 9 Mar., Minute on finance, 17 Mar. ibid.

The proposal was given dubious support, editorially and by letters, in the Courier,¹ but in the Legislative Council it was turned down by the unofficial members. They argued that the poll-tax would be ruinous, and that the scheme would increase religious dissension.² At this point the penny-a-day system for Anglican and Catholic schools was called into question from both sides. Dissenters raised the objection that the system

had the effect of punishing those Churches who concurred with.../the/ Council in the General System for the sake of peace and the common good, and of rewarding the disaffection of its opponents.

From the other side, the Rev. R.R. Davies pointed to the success of Anglican schools even with that small assistance, and asked that it be increased to not less than twopence a day.³ Other petitions came in also - two against the penny-a-day allowance, and three from Catholics seeking its continuation.⁴

The non-official Councillors drew up their own scheme, envisaging sixty schools, each supervised by a minister of the denomination to which a majority of the children in the school belonged. The Government should pay up to £60 per annum to each teacher, at a weekly rate of sixpence (in the city) and ninepence (in the country) for each child, and the teachers were to be allowed to charge fees to the extent of raising their salaries to £105 per annum. The councillors considered their plan to be one which would neither lead to schools in which the much needed religious instruction was not given, nor encourage Churches to build their own schools and so divide the population. It was by no means the worst scheme tried or suggested, but it was rejected by Denison

¹Courier, 11, 18 Mar. 1848.

²Ibid., 22 Mar. 1848, p.2. The Lieutenant-Governor was scathing about their unwillingness to help pay for lower class education - Denison to Grey, 7 Aug. 1848, GO 33/64 (TSA).

³Petitions, printed in V. & P., V.D.L., 1847-8.

⁴Not seen, but included in petitions listed in ibid.

and Grey.¹

Both the board schools and the Anglican and Catholic schools, on their penny a day, continued through 1848. By October there were twenty-five board schools with about 1,200 pupils, four Catholic schools with 350 pupils, and no less than thirty-three Church of England schools with over 1,300 pupils. The Anglican clergy were as determined to develop their own schools as they were to break the board schools, and they were succeeding. It was a strenuous attempt to do good, but both its ethics and its value were questioned. That nine of their schools were held in buildings used for the public services of the Church could be considered cheating; and they were paying a heavy price from the point of view of teaching standards. Only two masters and one mistress had been trained for teaching; five masters and three mistresses held tickets of leave; and five other masters had originally been transported. In contrast, all the teachers at the board schools were free persons, and eight masters were trained teachers.² That part of the Anglican argument for Church schools which rested upon the depravity of the parents was to some extent given away by their use of ex-convict teachers.

In September 1848, the Lieutenant-Governor announced yet another scheme - the last before 1854. The cost of the schools to the Government was to be reduced, and the demands of the Anglicans and Catholics met. Masters would have no fixed salaries but would be paid a penny-halfpenny per day for each child up to the number of sixteen and a lower sum for children above that number. The Government would establish a normal school to train teachers.³

In November the detailed regulations, to take effect from the beginning of 1849, were gazetted. The Lieutenant-Governor, through

¹Recalled by Fenton in 1849, whose speech may be read in Courier, 5 Sept. 1849, pp.2-3, and in Speech of Thomas George Gregson, Esq., in the Legislative Council, on the State of Public Education..., Hobart 1850, pp.13-14, as an appendix to Gregson's speech.

²Report of Board of Education, and Appendices, 23 Oct. 1848, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

³Address, 12 Sept., Finance Minute, 21 Sept., ibid. Circular to Masters, in Board of Education Letter Book, Jan.-Dec.1848, pp. 161-2.

the Inspector of Schools, was to appoint the teachers, but the recommendations of ministers of religion would be taken into account. The Inspector would have general charge of the schools, but supervision by ministers would also be asked for. The schools were to be opened to all denominations, and the British and Foreign system could be followed or a school could be connected with one denomination, whichever was chosen by the parents of the majority of children attending. As far as possible the Inspector was to carry out the wishes of the clergyman in any school placed in the charge of a denomination. Books were to be supplied by the Government, but not the buildings. As well as the Government grant, teachers could receive fees from the parents.¹

The Board of Education, feeling quite superseded, resigned in September 1848. The British and Foreign system teachers, who had been brought out from England, also resigned. And, although three petitions were presented against it in October, the system had come to stay.² It was in vain that in August 1849 T.G. Gregson tried to undo it. He successfully moved in the Council that no convict or emancipist should be allowed to teach in a public school, but he lost his motion (three votes to ten) that fixed salaries be paid to teachers and that education 'merely of a secular character' should be given in the public schools.³ They were not secularists, these Councillors, though they were only grudging supporters of denominational schools.

At the beginning of 1850 there were seventy-one schools assisted by the Government under this arrangement. Only eight were run on British and Foreign principles. There were still four Catholic schools. The other fifty-nine were Church of England schools. The Hobart branch of the S.P.G. and S.P.C.K., at its formation in 1838, had announced one of its principal objects to be the foundation of

¹Hobart Town Gazette, 7 Nov. 1848, pp.1109-10.

²Report by the Inspector of Schools, Thomas Arnold...for 1850, pp.1-2, V. & P., V.D.L., 1850.

³30 Aug. ibid., 1849.

public schools run by the Church of England.¹ In 1849 it called for the 'liveliest interest' to be kept up in this matter.² In 1850 it could be said to have achieved its object. While the Catholics had fought, they had been handicapped by their small numbers. It was essentially an Anglican fight and an Anglican victory. Between 1836 and 1850 the public schools in Van Diemen's Land moved from being almost exclusively Anglican, through eight years (1839-46) of being non-Anglican, and two years (1847-8) of being half-Anglican, to being principally Anglican once more.

Yet their victory was not complete. Catholic schools, while few, were well established and state-aided. Some schools had also been established by Dissenters (which received no state aid). It was possible for a majority of parents to decide to take the local school out of the hands of the Church of England. There were still some schools which had continued to use the British and Foreign system, and general systems of education were by 1850 well understood and not unappreciated by the colonists. Indeed the implacable opposition of the clergy had hardened the feeling (witness T.G. Gregson) that, if the state had a duty to educate, it would have to be along comprehensive, not denominational, lines.

Therefore their victory was not permanent. They were enjoying only a brief interval of triumph. In 1854 a modified form of the Irish system was introduced by the Government - and the Anglican and Catholic bishops were glad enough that the system was no worse than that.³ The end result was that the Churches were left farther outside the schools than they might have been if the Anglicans had not worked so hard to stay at the centre.

¹Rules and Regulations of the V.D.L. Committee of S.P.C.K. and S.P.G. Hobart 1838, p.3

²Hobart S.P.G. Report, 1849, p.5.

³See A.G. Austin, op. cit., pp.134-9.

CHAPTER 8

THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE: SOME FURTHER ASPECTS

Religious instruction in the day schools

The great objection to general systems of education was that the teaching of religion was hopelessly circumscribed in them. The retort from the other side was that public schools had to concentrate on basic religious teaching, acceptable to all Churches, and that specific denominational tenets could be added to that ample basis in Sunday schools and in special classes for religion. Supporters of the Irish system could present an excellent case for the sufficiency of religious instruction given in their schools. In our own day, only a school run on a religious basis would have a printed chart hanging on the wall, bearing the words:

Christians should endeavour, as the Apostle Paul commands them, to live peaceably with all men. Rom. ch. xii, 18. Our Saviour Christ, commanded his disciples to love one another. He taught them even to love their enemies.... Many men hold erroneous doctrines, but we ought not to hate or persecute them. We ought to seek for the truth and hold fast what we are convinced is the truth; but not to treat harshly those who are in error.... We ought to show ourselves followers of Christ, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. - 1 Pet. ch. ii, 23.

This was the lesson to be 'strictly inculcated' and kept before the scholars' eyes in printed form in schools run on the Irish system. Furthermore, one day a week (excluding Sunday) was to be allowed in every school for religious instruction superintended by the pastors of the various denominations.¹

The school books used in the Irish system were also heavily weighted with Christian sentiments and doctrine. A volume of sacred poetry used in the schools included the verses:

¹Regulations...for Aid towards the Building of School Houses..., Sydney 1849. The chart was copied from Ireland.

Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour,
 Once became a child like me;
 Oh that in my whole behaviour
 He my pattern still might be!

All my nature is unholy:
 Pride and passion dwell therein;
 But the Lord was meek and lowly,
 And was never known to sin.

Lord, though now thou art in glory,
 We have thine example still;
 I can read thy sacred story,
 And obey thy holy will. 1

Not in the series of scripture lessons, but in an ordinary reading book produced for the Irish system, there was a lesson on 'Milk, Butter and Cheese'. It had a conclusion startling to modern ears.

A sacred writer compares the word of God to milk, because as it belongs to milk to nourish the bodies of babes, so it belongs to the word of God to nourish the souls of those who have turned to God, and become as little children....²

This was quite normal in these school books. Lessons on natural history usually included biblical references. One, on 'The Dog', pointed out that 'the dog seems to be used as a name for Satan, Psalm xxiii, 20', and another, on 'Silver', moved from the use of silver in Solomon's temple to its use as a figure for 'the word of God (Psalm xii. 6)'. A lesson on 'Money' was even more frankly homiletic. After dealing with the use of money (its convenience in making exchanges), the lesson continued:

We are cautioned in Scripture against the love of money. It is a foolish and wicked thing for men to set their hearts on money, or on eating and drinking, or on fine clothes, or on anything in this present world: for all these are apt to draw off their thoughts from God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, tells us to 'lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven...'³

¹Quoted in W.A. Duncan, Lecture on National Education..., Brisbane 1850, p.9.

²The 18th lesson in the second section of the second book, quoted - with other startling examples - in Colonial Observer, 29 Aug. 1844, p.2.

³Third Book of Lessons for the use of Schools, reprinted for the V.D.L. Public Day Schools, Hobart 1845, pp.39, 124-5, 146. Two volumes of Irish system books were used in V.D.L. - General Report upon the Public Day Schools, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

In addition to seventy-five general lessons of this type, the same book contained twenty-four 'Religious and Moral Lessons' - 'The Birth of Isaac and Expulsion of Ishmael', 'Trial of Abraham's Faith', 'History of Joseph' and other similar tales which were little other than biblical passages paraphrased and made easily intelligible. Verse lessons included hymns by Dodderidge ('O God of Bethel! by whose hand thy people still are fed') and Heber ('From Greenland's icy mountains') as well as the more likely item, 'Tis the voice of the sluggard'. If only the contents of the ordinary school books are taken into account, the friends of the Irish system were hardly wrong when they claimed that the importance of religion was 'constantly impressed upon the minds of children' in their schools.¹

The Scripture Lessons prepared for the Irish system were paraphrases of Biblical passages, with obscurities and archaisms explained in footnotes. At the end of each passage there were many questions which were intended to elicit the general sense of the reading, not to teach doctrinal niceties. For example, in a lesson from Luke, chapter 9, it was explained that the appearance at the Transfiguration of 'Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah the chief of the prophets, both attending on Christ, showed the agreement of the law and the prophets concerning him, and their fulfilment in him'. Again, the saying of Jesus, 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God', was explained thus: 'It was a proverbial expression, that if a man who is ploughing looks back, he will not make a straight furrow. No person who purposes to follow the Saviour, and who looks wishfully back on worldly things, as loth to part with them, will be received by him as a disciple'. The questions - on the whole passage - included a group beginning with 'What question did Jesus ask his disciples concerning public opinion about him, and what was their answer?' and ending with one which required the answer that Peter declared Jesus to be 'The Christ of God'.²

¹Extract from the Second Report of Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, 31 Mar. 1845, V. & P., N.S.W., 1836.

²Scripture Lessons for the Use of Schools. New Testament, No. 1, Sydney 1849, pp.43, 46, 47.

These passages, explanatory notes and broad questions, taken together with the scripture references, hymns and moral teaching in the ordinary lesson books, and the provision for denominational teaching on one day a week, enabled a great deal of religious instruction to be given.

The rules for the British and Foreign schools more quickly show the reasons why there was so much objection to general systems. Here there was no provision for one day each week to be allowed to clergymen for the instruction of their children, and, although it was boasted that the entire Bible was taught in these schools, the Bible teaching was very limited. It was after the following manner that the masters were instructed to teach scripture.

...suppose the sentence to be read is, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near', the Master should ask questions as these - Who are to seek? Answer, All men. Whom are we to seek? Answer, The Lord. When are we to seek the Lord? Answer, While he may be found.... What is meant by seek? Answer, Enquire after. What name is given to the act of calling upon the Lord? Prayer. [sic] 1

Since instruction was strictly limited to this kind of teaching, and even daily prayer was not enforced,² it was denounced by the Anglicans and others. It was a system which was quite unsatisfactory, one would have thought, for any religious instructor. To the Rev. William Dry it was downright 'cruel to fill a child's mind with Scriptural phrases without teaching him the Christian faith'.³ Bishop Broughton wanted to know what was the use of enabling boys to 'acquire a kind of fluency in the use of Scriptural terms, without the remotest conception of what the sense is'.⁴ In British and Foreign Schools, the atonement of Christ was read about, but

¹Instructions to the Masters...of the Government Schools, 18 Feb. 1840, Appendix E, Report of the Board of Education, V. & P., V.D.L., 1840.

²Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 23 May 1845, p.598, GO 33/51 (TSA).

³William Dry, Sermons, Launceston 1850, p.82.

⁴The Speech of the Lord Bishop of Australia in the Legislative Council...August 1839, Sydney n.d., p.22.

not explained, since it was one of the 'nice points' into which the system did not enter - and yet, Broughton burst out, the representatives of the system claimed to teach 'the great truths of Christianity'.¹ Similarly, all that would be asked by a British and Foreign school teacher when 'Son of God' was read, would be 'Who is called Son?' and 'By whom?'.² The objectors were right when they declared this to be an inadequate system of religious education.

At the same time, these theoretical confines in British and Foreign schools were not necessarily observed in practice. Sometimes, 'through fear of giving too much instruction' teachers may have been content 'to give too little explanation'.³ But it could also work the other way. James Bonwick was educated in the Borough Road Model School of the British and Foreign School Society in London, and was a master for six years in other schools on the same system before coming to Van Diemen's Land to teach. He maintained that the masters were careful to avoid debatable subjects, but claimed that religious instruction had been much extended 'in recent years' (this was in 1845) and admitted that the masters were 'very unconfined' in reality. As for himself -

I would teach them the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonement and Justification, but I would not explain to them the Sacraments, or put any question concerning them.⁴

Faced with the curiosity of the child, a British and Foreign master would often go beyond the standard questions and answers if he thought it desirable and safe to do so.

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¹ Ibid., pp.19-21. Broughton was quoting from evidence before a House of Commons Select Committee on Education, 1834.

² Ibid., p.22ff. Cf. Memo. from the Lord Bishop of Tasmania to Commissioners of Education, 9 May 1845, GO 33/51, pp.900-901 (TSA).

³ Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 23 May 1845, GO 33/51, p.600 (TSA).

⁴ Ibid., pp.1060, 1065-6. It is doubtful whether Bonwick himself knew what to believe about the Sacraments. He was an Anglican until the age of seventeen, when he became a Baptist - and had 'continued so since'. But for a short time he attended the Quaker meeting in Hobart, and for the past eighteen months had been attending the Independent chapel.

In the modified form of the British and Foreign system operating in Van Diemen's Land after 1839, there was no need for a teacher to go beyond the law. Special instruction by ministers of religion was permitted, and The Faith and Duty of A Christian was provided for general use in the schools. The latter asked very leading questions, which were quite sufficient in themselves to form a catechism. Selected texts were arranged under headings covering a wide range of Christian doctrine - Religion, God, Church, Christ, Baptism, Redemption, Duty, Reward and Punishments, and more. One quotation was Romans, chapter six, verse four.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The question following it was 'Doth baptism engage to newness of life?'.¹ Other texts were followed by such questions as 'What constitutes the unity of the Church?',² 'Hath Christ promised to be present in his Church?',³ and 'Did Christ command the wine also to be received?'.⁴ These were questions of a very different order from 'Who are to seek? Whom are we to seek? When are we to seek?', and compare favourably with those in a book provided for the Anglican schools in England, which was content to explain Broughton's vexed question of 'Atonement' by simply substituting the one word 'Reconciliation'.⁵ Since The Faith and Duty of a Christian was the original product of the Anglican Bishop Gastrel and the S.P.C.K.,⁶ the staunchest Anglican critics of the system actually in operation in Van Diemen's Land were not justified in

¹The Faith and Duty of A Christian..., Hobart 1851, p.36.

²Ibid., p.34, after Ephesians 4:4-6.

³Ibid., p.35, after Matthew 18:20.

⁴Ibid., p.37, after 1 Corinthians 11:25.

⁵Frederick Iremonger, Questions for the Different Elementary Books used in the National Schools, London 1826, p.133.

⁶The V.D.L. reprint omitted these facts, but they were pointed out in Report upon the Public Day Schools of V.D.L., 1848, p.2, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

so roundly condemning it as a means of giving religious instruction. The Anglican clergy were, after all, quite free to arrange with the schoolmasters a suitable time at which they could come and teach from the prayer book.

There were weightier reasons why all general systems were condemned by so many of the clergy. A man like Broughton held his fundamental beliefs to be tremendous certainties - absolute truth - from which it was perilous, indeed sinful, to waver. On his way to Australia to take up the office of archdeacon in 1829, Broughton read the journals of the Indian missionary bishop, Heber. He deplored what he read, finding that it was the practice in the Christian schools to give the Indian pupils only the passages of moral instruction in the New Testament. 'I must ask,' he wrote, 'whether we have any warrant for expecting a propagation of the Gospel among them by such a mutilated exhibition and communication of it'. He insisted that 'the whole truth as it is in Jesus' was required - not just 'moral lessons'.¹ What was offered in schools on a general system tended towards moral lessons and a mutilated exhibition of the gospel, rather than the whole truth; and Broughton, who condemned Heber for witnessing pagan sacrifices without expressing 'abhorrence or even disapprobation', was a man who, faced with the inevitable watering down of doctrine in any general system, might be expected to break before he would bend.²

Ideas and circumstances were changing and many good and earnest men did not know what to make of it, or were afraid of what they did make of it. Australia had been founded only after Britain's American empire had broken violently away. The Church in France had been rocked to its foundations by the effects of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. God was their only

¹MSS Diary of Bishop properly, Archdeacon/Broughton on Voyage to Australia, entry for 26 June 1829, BP.

²Both the dignity and pathos of his stubborn maintenance of his ideals are revealed when he considered retiring, in the face of age and the uncongenial ideas of the times and the colonies, remarking that 'a new man, with ideas a little more modelled according to the form of things that are' might be desirable - Broughton to Coleridge, 4 July 1848, ibid.

hope, said the Rev. H.T. Stiles, on an anniversary of Waterloo:

Within the memory of some of ourselves, for instance, how was the dreadful convulsion of all the nations of Europe, which followed the French Revolution - a convulsion in which all that was venerable, and virtuous, and holy, seemed about to be swept away before the torrent of anarchy and infidelity - how were these fearful evils curbed and restrained by Him.... 1

But the troubles were not over, and were considered to result from faulty education. 'The present distracted state of continental Europe,' declared an Anglican meeting, 'affords but too powerful proofs of the fearful mischiefs arising from education without a due regard for Divine Revelation, and the inculcation of religious principles.'² In England itself the disciples of Tom Paine and other enemies of orthodox religion or - at best - of the Established Church were noisy enough to be alarming. The new industrial cities, Liberalism, Utilitarianism, Radicalism and Dissent all contributed to make the early nineteenth century a time of flux. Broughton warned that the popular notion of 'no privileges' would not be directed against the Church of England alone, but - unless checked - would be pushed forward until there was in Australia a republic without any Church or religion.³

The Anglicans genuinely feared for the future of their Church, and opposed general systems because they 'made Dissenters' by using only the Bible and rigorously excluding creeds, liturgies and catechisms.⁴ But they had an even wider fear, in which they were joined by some non-Anglicans: by the exclusion from schools of controversial doctrine (or, in other words, crucial doctrine),

¹H.T. Stiles, A Sermon, Preached at St. Matthew's Church, Windsor, ...18 June 1845..., Sydney 1845, p.9.

²Report of St. Philip's Parochial Association..., Sydney 1850, p.5.

³Speech...in the Legislative Council, 1839, pp.12-3. Cf. Hobart Town Advertiser, 11 Sept. 1849, p.2, c.5, where 'the whole civilized world' was described as being 'convulsed by efforts directed by misguided and godless intellect against the whole fabric of social order'.

⁴Broughton to Nixon, 27 Jan. 1844, and the evidence of Dr Bedford in Report of the V.D.L. Commissioners of Education, 23 May 1845, GO 33/51, pp.911ff, 967 (TSA).

vagueness or complete scepticism could be encouraged. It was not just Bishop Broughton who argued that a harmonious general system could be purchased only at the cost of breeding indifference.¹ The Wesleyan, John M'Kenny, maintained that denominational schools were essential 'if religion were not to be thrown overboard',² and 'Catholicus' cried, 'Neutrality and scepticism go hand in hand'.³ An Evangelical, the Rev. W.B. Clarke, agreed with his High Church bishop that all this was especially true for Australia, since the ignorance and vice of the convict population made it 'the very last country' which should allow experiments in education which were 'experiments upon morality'.⁴

In the churchmen's view, the popular belief in secular education as a panacea for men's ills - a feature of liberalism - had to be resisted. To 'make men wise for time, and to let them remain unwise for eternity' was, for Clarke, simply to 'prepare the seeds of national irreligion and of national sin, and, consequently, of national suffering'.⁵ The Rev. Robert Allwood, when asked if he did not think it 'a fearful thing for the rising generation to grow up without education', replied: 'If by this question is meant secular instruction, I would say that it is a far more fearful thing for them to grow up without religion'.⁶ A Catholic petition spoke similarly: 'No system...should be introduced which would, in any way, interfere with the sacred and inalienable rights of parents and pastors to impart religious instruction to their children'.⁷

¹Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.87. Cf. English fears, O.J. Brose, *op. cit.*, pp.182-3.

²*Herald*, 11 Sept. 1844, p.2, c.7.

³'Catholicus', *op. cit.*, p.9.

⁴*S.P.G. Report, N.S.W.; and the Anniversary Sermon...*, 1840, p.13.

⁵*Ibid.*, p.12.

⁶Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.36.

⁷*Petition of the Rev. J.T. Lynch and the Roman Catholics of Maitland, V. & P., N.S.W., 1844, I.*

Robert Lowe, former Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and chairman of the Select Committee on Education in New South Wales, posed the key question. 'Why,' he asked Allwood, 'is it necessary that religion should be coupled with the art of reading, when nobody considers it necessary that it should be coupled with the art of shoemaking?'¹ W.A. Duncan, a member of the Board of Education, put the same point of view positively.

Religious truth is as much a part of education, undoubtedly, as grammar or geography. But it does not follow that they are both to be taught at the same hour, or by the same person...it does not follow that the art of crochet and the science of crotchets are to be taught by the same individual, or at the same hour. 2

These were examples of a point of view well put - so that, for instance, the intelligent and previously confident Allwood floundered and talked all around the point, without quite getting at it, when faced with Lowe's sharp question.

Yet the churchmen had a point which was quite as sharp, and was indeed the spearhead of the denominational approach. The foundations which largely determined the child's later life were laid at the elementary school stage.³ Teach him at school not only to read, but to read the right books with the right approach, and he would be prepared for life, whether he became a shoemaker, a master of the science of crotchets, or even chairman of a select committee of the Legislative Council. In and by itself, the ability to read need only assist spiritual decline. As the Rev. John M'Garvie saw it, men were already 'less energetic for Religion' than they had been in the previous century:

Then the Church and pulpit were the vehicles of knowledge, now it is the daily Press.... They hear one Sermon, but read six newspapers weekly, the Bible never. 4

¹Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.35.

²W.A. Duncan, op. cit., pp.10-11.

³Cf. Polding's insistence that the early years were crucial, and that a general system was suitable only for teenagers - Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.46, 49.

⁴J. M'Garvie, op. cit., 4 Jan. 1843.

It was not that the clergy were opposed to education - Broughton, Allwood and M'Garvie, no less than Lowe, were university graduates (and M'Garvie, like Lowe, wrote newspaper editorials). The clergy had another overriding aim. Bishop Broughton expressed it in one way, by saying:

I would not be understood to say that the study of natural science...is inconsistent with a man's being religious - I should be ashamed to think so;...but I am of opinion that such studies, of and by themselves, will never lead any man to know or care for those truths which are of the highest importance of all.... In a word, we require the knowledge of a God...we cannot know by the powers of Science. He is above their reach. 1

As W.B. Clarke put it, on a more prosaic level, 'Instruction, without a proper religious balance,...can never fit a man for such a conduct and bearing in life, as shall make him...even an honest tradesman in the moment of commercial temptation'.² Clarke's argument approached that of some other persons in the colonies - that morality simply could not be taught apart from religious teaching. This was widely accepted as an axiom,³ and, although men like Broughton and Nixon distinguished between 'mere moralists' and 'God's worshippers',⁴ the importance of having teachers with good religious and moral standards was constantly stressed. W.A. Duncan might argue that music could be taught by one man and religion by another, but the characteristic Catholic view was that a teacher was not satisfactory just because he could give a formally correct lesson in anything - even in doctrine: he had also to be a man who would exert a good personal influence on the pupils.⁵ Wesleyans likewise complained about carelessness in

¹Church of England Book Society Report, Sydney 1841, pp.17-8. Cf. W.G. Broughton, The Present Position and Duties of the Church of England...1835, Canterbury n.d., pp.12-3.

²S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.12.

³'Catholicus', op. cit., p.6; An Address to Parents from...the Independent Sunday School..., Launceston 1837.

⁴Courier, 3 Nov. 1843, p.2, c.4; Broughton's MSS Diary of Voyage..., 26 June 1829, BP.

⁵Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.44-5.

enquiring into the strict moral standards (and the evangelical religious views) of persons before accepting them as teachers in general systems.¹

From a very specific religious view-point, a Wesleyan minister, the Rev. Jonathan Innes, maintained that by baptism a child became the responsibility of the Church which baptized him, and that it acquired thereby the right to watch over and improve the 'first dawnings of reason' in that child.² The Anglican clergy very firmly insisted that they were under obligation to instruct the children they baptized in the whole range of their creed, and claimed that the solemn baptismal vows could not be fulfilled in a general system of education.³ They feared that the exclusion of the clergy and their creeds from the schools would simply cause Anglican children to look indifferently or contemptuously at their pastors.⁴ As the Catholics were especially ready to submit, there were too few clergymen for full use to be made of rights of entry into the schools, and too many indifferent parents to make up for any lack of religious instruction at school.⁵

Duncan claimed that opposition from ministers of religion was simply due to their dislike of surrendering power.⁶ This was partly true, especially in the case of the Anglicans, for the advocacy of a non-denominational system of schools cut at the root of one of their traditional rights. Yet the power the Anglicans attempted to retain, and other clergy - Wesleyans and Catholics - tried to secure, was not sought for positively selfish motives. They wanted the power to instruct the young in the way of salvation; and if they were particularly jealous of the rights of the Church to which they belonged, that was natural and not altogether wrong.

The Catholics had their own peculiar difficulties. Just after

¹Herald, 11 Sept. 1844, p.2, c.6.

²Ibid., pp.2-3.

³Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.36, 84.

⁴Ibid., p.40.

⁵Ibid., p.46.

⁶Ibid., p.23.

his consecration, in Sydney, as Bishop of Adelaide, the Rt. Rev. Dr Murphy commented on the trial of the Irish system in Liverpool, England.¹ It had been found impossible, said Murphy, to train Catholic children well enough to overcome their own corruption, which was all the more enhanced by association with Protestant children.² But there was more to it than that. The Catholic difficulty was, perhaps, most vehemently expressed by the Rev. J.J. Therry in Van Diemen's Land.

In 1840 Sir John Franklin announced that the 'New College', designed to give higher education to youths intending to enter the professions, was to be established under the headmastership of an Anglican ordinand. This decision, and related ones, drew an explosive petition from Therry. The stipulation of attendance at College prayers was 'a practical exclusion of all such Catholics as were not disposed to barter conscience for the smiles of Local Authority'. The Protestant Bible was 'an evident mutilation of the Word of God', and had 'been condemned by that Authority in Spirituals to which Catholics were on earth directly amenable'.³ Catholics - including Therry himself - did a great deal of flirting with general systems of education, but they were always conscious of the great gulf between themselves and the Protestants, and were ever mindful of their own ideal for schools.⁴ When Bishop Willson arrived in Van Diemen's Land, he said bluntly that he was conscientiously opposed to anything but denominational schools.⁵

Despite the churchmen's fears for the future of religion, no one who entered the debate on public education spoke avowedly

¹Cf. J. Murphy, op. cit.

²Herald, 10 Sept. 1844, p.3.

³Petition from the 'Vicar-General for and in behalf of the Catholics of Van Diemen's Land and its Dependencies', V.&P., V.D.L., 1840.

⁴The fact that their ideal (denominational schools) in a sense coincided with the Anglican ideal, greatly muted Protestant antagonism when the petition was received. See, e.g., W.J. Aislabie's letter, Courier, 4 Sept. 1840, p.4, c.5.

⁵Willson to Bernard, 14 Mar.1845, GO 33/51, pp.897-8 (TSA)

as an unbeliever. 'Let it not be supposed,' wrote the Catholic lay champion of the Irish system, Roger Therry, 'that by the separation of religious from secular and moral instruction, it was part of the plan that religious and moral instruction should be neglected or excluded.'¹ Thomas Gregson, who moved that education 'merely of a secular character' be given in public schools in Van Diemen's Land, protested that it was only the fact that the colony was so divided by religion which forced him to propose leaving religious education, important though it was, to parents and ministers.² 'I am not an Indifferentist on this subject,' maintained W.A. Duncan, a Presbyterian converted to Catholicism, 'my creed is longer, I believe, than the creeds of most of you'.³ Robert Lowe may be heard at length:

Now he was ready to confess that he was an advocate for irreligious teaching.... God forbid that he should wish children to be brought up irreligiously...but what he wanted was, that religion should not necessarily be mixed up with instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic.... At the rate they were going on, they would soon be obliged to have different roads as well as different schools, in order that the Catholics and Protestants might not meet for fear they should attack each other. 4

The point always at issue was whether sufficient religious education could be given without denominational schools. The supporters of general systems claimed that it could be.

A picturesque explanation of one point of view was given by the Independent minister, Robert Ross. The finer difference between the Churches mattered little. Religion was truth conveyed by different denominations in different ways - 'a man may carry wheat to those who are starving either in a cart, carriage or a wheel-barrow, or on a donkey's back'.⁵ Dr Ross did not press

¹R. Therry, Reminiscences..., p.157.

²In the introduction to Speech of Thomas George Gregson..., p.vii-viii.

³W.A. Duncan, op. cit., p.10.

⁴Herald, 10 Oct. 1846, p.2.

⁵Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.102. (Ross, an M.D., had been a missionary to the Tartars before being driven out by - he said - another vested interest, the Russian Orthodox Church - Herald, 11 Sept. 1844, p.3, c.3).

the analogy so far as to suggest which denomination was the donkey, but clearly there was, for him, an essential spiritual food which did not depend on denominational pretensions.

Even more reasonable was the case argued by John Robinson, a Quaker member of the Select Committee on Education, against Broughton.

Robinson: Do you think it is possible to expect practical religion from any man not in a position to read his Bible?

Broughton: Yes; I should say that some of the best men I have ever known, so far as practical religion went, were among the old peasantry of England, who could not read their Bible.

Robinson: Did they reside in the neighbourhood of a church?

Broughton: Yes, close to a church, and under constant charge of the clergyman.

Robinson: Supposing a man to be two hundred miles from a church?

Broughton: Then, thinking as I do, that the teaching of the Church is necessary, he must be in a very embarrassing situation, to say the least.

Robinson: Do you not think it would be an advantage to such a person to be able to read?

Broughton: Yes; still I do not think merely reading the Bible would teach him religion, in any sense of the word, if he had no other source of instruction.

Robinson: Do you not think a higher power would assist him?

Broughton: That power would assist him only as he used proper means. 1

It might be pardonable to call Robinson the realist - even if he did have the advantage, over Broughton, of his uncomplicated Quaker creed and practice. The ideal might have been for all the colonists to be Protestants, or Anglicans, or Quakers; but they were not. The ideal might have been for the state to pay for four denominational schools and four teachers where one would do from the point of view of teaching the three Rs and some broad religious knowledge; but it could neither afford this nor find the teachers. The ideal might have been for no colonist to move further out than the Churches could reach him and instruct his children; but squatters and shepherds did not act in this way.

I

Ibid., p.87.

What the state was ready to offer was a system of education which could embrace as many children as possible by giving general instruction and as much religious teaching as the Churches held in common. This was a reasonable offer, when there were so many non-Anglicans, so many completely nominal Anglicans and so many illiterate persons in the colonies. It was also reasonable for Robinson to argue that, if a man were deprived of much religious exercise and consolation, it was better for him to be able to read his Bible (and catechism and prayer book) than to be unable to read at all. None other than Archbishop Polding remarked that 'it would be a very erroneous argument to contend that only those who attended divine worship were imbued with the principles of religion'.¹ Broughton himself had pleaded with isolated settlers to maintain the practice of family prayers, if nothing else were possible for them.² The bishop could be infuriatingly perverse when obstructing one thing in the hope of getting something else - as he was on this occasion. Met all along the line with this kind of intractable stand, it is no wonder that the Legislative Councils eventually lost all patience with the more rigid denominationalists.

An important element in the argument for a general system was precisely the belief that denominational intolerance and bitterness would thereby be reduced. Early in the controversy, when it was necessary to get schooling for Catholic children by desperate means, J.B. Polding (under the nom de plume of 'Catholicus Ipse') had argued this way, and others continued to do so - with more sincerity. The unrepentant Roger Therry was pleased to quote a former Prime Minister of France, M. Guizot, to this effect,³ and three witnesses before the Select Committee on Education expressed this hope.⁴

¹Herald, 10 Sept. 1844, p.3.

²Broughton to [a private friend in England], 17 Feb. 1846, H.R.A., xxiv, 783.

³R. Therry, op. cit., pp.161-2.

⁴Lowe Committee, Evidence, pp.20, 25, 124. The three were Henry MacDermott, W.A. Duncan and William Macarthur.

The main point of the debate (apart from the very important matter of the huge expense of duplicated or triplicated schools) was, however, of a different order. It is well illustrated by three letters which appeared in the Herald. The argument of 'A Subscriber' was that, however the Anglicans might resist, they would have to yield their exclusive attitude. Every child had a right to knowledge from which no test of 'orthodoxy' was to debar him: he was to have full LIBERTY, not presumptuous TOLERATION. Moving to another point - not infrequently accepted in the colony - 'A Subscriber' claimed that a child could not truly profess any creed; he had to reach maturity before he could make a genuine decision and accept a denominational label.¹

An answer came from 'A Christian': the general truths of Christianity had to be taught to children before their passions were awakened and their minds tainted; belief in reason was not enough, there had also to be faith in revelation; to strive to keep the child free from bias, and to talk only of liberating the mind, did not usually lead to lack of bias and wise decision in maturity, but to irreligion, anarchy and despotism - the fruits of Rousseauism.² 'A Subscriber', in his retort, moved to different ground. The question at issue, he said, was not the comparative excellence of different forms of religion, but whether secular education might not be separated from religious instruction to the advantage of both. Should not the Government make at least as ample provision for basic education as for basic religious teaching?³ Churchmen, in short, were not faced with any open repudiation of religion in the debate, but were afraid that this would come in fact unless they took steps to guard against it. Their opponents were usually far more impressed by the need to make the colonies' children literate than they were by the rights

¹Herald, 16 June 1836, p.2, c.6. Cf. George Hall and his wife who, in Census Returns for the District of New Town, 1837 (TSA), called themselves 'Protestants of the sect of the Church of England' and returned their children as of 'no sect yet', but intended for the Church of England 'when...old enough to understand'.

²Ibid., 23 June 1836, p.2, c.3.

³Ibid., 27 June 1836, p.2, c.3.

and wrongs of denominational creeds, though they valued instruction in religion and were often personally devout.

There was a strong tendency among the Anglican clergy to live in the past, and even to take action which to some extent belied their words. They spoke of their vows to instruct the young in the creeds and articles of the Church of England, and never seemed to realize fully that, as soon as Dissenters and Catholics had been granted equality as citizens, the Anglican clergy no longer had any right to control the state schools. They admitted the right of Dissenters' children to attend these schools and to withdraw from Anglican religious instruction; but, if they admitted this, and did not instruct all the children in their parishes, the Launceston Examiner wanted to know what became of their vows?¹ A stronger point was made by those who attacked the Church of England ministers in Van Diemen's Land for refusing, for years on end, to attend the board schools to instruct the Anglican children in them.² What then of their vows? Something could be said on the Anglicans' behalf along the lines that they were forced to make this sacrifice to avoid even greater cost, but it is highly questionable if this desperate decision was either necessary or realistic. After all their splashing attempts to swim against the tide of popular opinion, they eventually turned to swim with the current, wearier and farther behind than they might have been.

The denominational theory was immensely hard to practise - so hard, in fact, that anything approaching the Churches' ideal was very seldom achieved. Everywhere, the colonies' schools were handicapped by a shortage of teachers, by typically incompetent teachers, by squalid buildings and an acute shortage of equipment, and by the irregular attendance of the children. Amid these difficulties, the insistence upon denominational schools resulted,

¹Examiner, 9 Aug. 1843, p.499. The validity of this point really depended on whether the children had been baptized in the Church of England, but the Anglicans often spoke as if they had a proprietary right to all children.

²See, e.g., 'A Protestant', Courier, 11 Aug. 1843, p.3, c.3.

not in shining examples of what schools ought to be, but in perpetuation and extension of the general muddle.

School books provide a good example of the confusion. The Christian Brothers' text books recommended for Catholic schools 'were expensive, and in many ways unsuited for use in Australia'.¹ The books produced by the S.P.C.K. for Anglican schools were 'decidedly the worst series of School-books used in the Colony', in the opinion of Commissioner Wilkins.² In Victoria, the Denominational Board bought Irish system books from the National Board for use in its own schools!³ All over the colonies all sorts of books were used in all sorts of schools; parents chose the books which were the cheapest; all books were in short supply, and few schools had a complete set of any series. The result was 'that the variety of books brought to school by the pupils was so great that it often disorganized the work of the teacher and paralyzed completely any attempt at the simultaneous method'.⁴ This was something which would not have happened under a general system.

The Churches could not even claim that their own books were much superior to the Irish system school books in the religious teaching they contained. A Catholic reader, printed for New South Wales schools, contained a 'Hymn to the B.V. Mary'.⁵ But this was not exclusive to that Catholic reader; not only was it written by the Protestant, though ardent Tractarian, John Keble, but it had simply been lifted - like many another lesson - straight out of one of the Irish system school books.⁶ The striking thing is

¹R. Fogarty, op. cit., I, p.104.

²A.G. Austin, op. cit., p.57.

³Ibid.

⁴R. Fogarty, op. cit., I, p.104.

⁵The Second Reading Book..., published under the direction of His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney, Sydney 1850.

⁶That this was so in the case of the hymn, is apparent in Herald, 9 Sept. 1844 (Supp.). Many general lessons from the Irish system school books were taken over into this Catholic reader, but all the lessons could not be checked against the Irish system books, which continue in short supply!

the similarity, often indeed the identical nature, of the lessons printed in books of various types. Pre-eminent among the school books were those produced for the Irish system - denomination schools in Port Phillip, Catholic schools in New South Wales and British and Foreign schools in Van Diemen's Land all used some of the Irish books, or stole much material from them.

A comparison of two other books produced in the colony, one for denominational and the other for non-denominational schools, further reveals the similarity of approach - the regard for the importance of religion shown in non-denominational systems, and the subordination of religious to secular knowledge in a denominational system. In the geography book written by James Bonwick, the supporter of the British and Foreign schools, historical and descriptive paragraphs dealing with religion were sprinkled throughout. They ranged from mention of the thousands of converts made by Catholics in Japan until persecution swept Christianity away, through the explanation that no form of religion was supported by government in the United States of America, to the assertion that the 'Christian religion teaches us that it is only by the merits of Christ our Saviour, that we can hope for heaven'.¹ This might be described as a reasonable attempt to combine the teaching of geography with religion. The other book was an ancient history, prepared for the Wesleyan schools. It began with the Ark and made heavy use of the Old Testament (for which it included a chronology), but it was clearly intended to be history, and gave no more truly religious teaching than Bonwick's geography.²

The plain fact of the matter was that denominational schools often taught very little, if any, more religion than the state schools. It sounded well to report of Anglican schools in

¹J. Bonwick, Geography for the Use of Australian Youth, Hobart 1845, pp.38, 132, 161.

²W.B. Boyce, A Brief Grammar of Ancient History, for the Use of Schools, printed for the Wesleyan Committee of Education, Sydney 1850.

Van Diemen's Land that the Bible was read in every school, and that examinations were frequently held in the school-room by the local clergyman, and occasionally after prayers in the neighbouring church - at which 'in some localities' the children attended one or two mornings in the week.¹ This was vague, and the phrase 'in some localities' is not to be overlooked. If one of the arguments against the Irish system was the insufficiency of clergymen, and one of the objections to relying on Sunday schools was the busy round of duties the clergy had to perform, how often could the typical parson examine the children and take them to prayer? If he did spend a lot of time in the school, what of his scattered flock and the children who could not even come to school? The idyllic claims are suspect, and so are the teaching methods by which religion was often imparted in Anglican schools. Under the Bell (i.e., Anglican) system, children might be taught to memorize the order of the books of the New Testament by means of this jingle:

Read the Gospels and the Acts,
 If you want to know the facts,
 Rom - Cor - Cor - Gal - Ephe -
 Phil - Col - Thess - Thessalee -
 Tim - Tim - Ti - Philemon -
 Hebrews - Jacobus - Pet - Pet - John -
 John - John - Ju - Revelation. 2

It could not even be claimed that a significantly larger proportion of time was devoted to religious instruction in the denominational schools than in the general system schools. In the Government schools in New South Wales there were twenty-eight school hours each week, of which five were allotted to religious instruction.³ The St James' Model School (Anglican) allowed about four hours of each week for Bible reading, collect learning

¹Report of Board of Education, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

²L.S. Bethell, 'The Development of Education in Northern Tasmania', Papers and Proceedings, Tas. Hist. Res. Assoc., Vol. 3, May 1954, p.30. Admittedly Mr Bethell has this as a legacy from a grandfather - it is remembered!

³Sec. of Board to Teachers, 1 Mar. 1851, Appendix F, Regulations for the Establishment and Conduct of National Schools in N.S.W., Sydney 1853.

and so on, and about two hours for prayers and singing.¹ In Catholic schools, only about four or five hours a week were allocated to religious exercises and instruction.² Although particular tenets might have been taught, and frequent brief recollections encouraged, in the church schools, the general practice and actual achievement do not support the idea that the denomination schools were any more effective than schools run on the Irish - or some other - general system.

The unfavourable verdict passed in 1835 on the Hobart school visited each week by the Anglican Rural Dean, remained the typical verdict passed on the standard of religious teaching in the schools generally. Inspector Thomas Arnold could not find much knowledge of the Bible among school children anywhere in Van Diemen's Land in 1850, and found that religious instruction usually consisted merely of memorizing catechism, prayers and hymns. In New South Wales, in 1856, Commissioner Wilkins reported a 'deplorable' ignorance of religion in the schools generally. Both Wilkins and G.W. Rusden found that the catechisms were taught but not explained, and that consequently 'even the modicum learned was generally...not understood at all'. They were quite convinced that the state schools gave as much religious instruction as the denominational schools.³

The denominationalists had, therefore, a fine theory that they could not practise. It is likely that the Churches would have achieved more if they had pooled their resources with the Governments in the mid-thirties, and entered whole-heartedly into a general system which allowed plenty of scope for religious instruction.

¹Rules for the Church of England Schools of the Middle District, Sydney 1853. (The introductory note is dated 31 Jan. 1850).

²Regulations for Catholic Schools, 1848, in R. Fogarty, op. cit., II, pp.490-1.

³A.G. Austin, op. cit., pp.56-9; R. Fogarty, op. cit., I, pp.81-117.

The role of Sunday schools

Robert Raikes, the most famous of English pioneers of the Sunday school movement, arranged with four decent women to take the children he gathered on Sundays, and to instruct them 'in reading and in the Church Catechism'.¹ As the Sunday schools spread over England, they retained this double role of teaching religion and reading. In 1835, to take just one example, most of the eighty-six Sunday schools in Manchester (33,196 scholars) taught religion and reading - 'only', added the report, since it was going on to say that ten taught writing, three taught arithmetic, and thirty-nine had evening schools associated with them in which these subjects were taught.² Sometimes, indeed, it was religion which was dispensed with; Lancashire and Cheshire Sunday schools were entirely secular until the Churches entered the field about 1830.³ But, connected with religious bodies (as they usually were) or not, the Sunday schools were, for many of the working classes, 'the only instrument for the education of the Children...in universal use'.⁴ In 1833 there were more Sunday school scholars (1,548,890) than day school scholars (1,276,947) in England and Wales, and there were 1,238 Sunday schools in places where there were no other schools.⁵ If, therefore, English and Welsh children of the poorer classes learned to read, they stood a considerable chance of doing it at Sunday school rather than at day school.

On the whole, however, the Sunday schools were extremely inefficient. In the colliery districts some of the children attending 'the best schools' were found to have acquired sufficient reading to be of some real use to them, but most

¹Quoted in G.R. Balleine, op. cit., p.110.

²Report from Select Committee on Education, Commons Papers, 1835, vii, 870. To anticipate any criticism to the effect that adults attended Sunday schools, it may be noted that the parliamentary reports described the scholars as children.

³Second Report...Mines and Manufactures, ibid., 1843, xiii, 474.

⁴Ibid., p.477.

⁵Education Enquiry, ibid., 1835, xliiii, 398-9, 401.

children were 'in a state of total ignorance on all subjects secular and religious'.¹ Coal mining areas were notoriously degraded, and other regions were found to be better taught.² In the Staffordshire potteries district the Sunday schools were praised as sources of religious and moral benefit, stemming the torrent of infidelity, profligacy and drunkenness. But they were still condemned as a means of providing secular education. The short hours (in the sense of being confined to one day a week), the failure to teach writing and the inability of the worker-teachers to impart knowledge, left many children not knowing one letter from another.³ Nor was the religious teaching always very successful. 'I go to the Methodist-school,' said Anna Mountain, a fourteen years old card-setter of Mirfield, 'I read the Testament. I don't know why Jesus came on earth, but I know he was the Son of God; but they never question us or tell us what things mean. I don't know who it was that was nailed to the Cross.'⁴

The matter was well summed up by a Wesleyan, the Rev. John Henley of Sheffield, when he said that too much had been expected of the Sunday schools, and too great a reliance had been placed on them. They had prevented much Sabbath-breaking, and had taught many to read their Bibles, but they could not possibly cope with the immense numbers who attended, or overcome the effects of the children's long week of work, the ignorance and depravity which surrounded them, and their non-attendance at day schools.⁵ Still, the Sunday schools tried to teach reading as well as religion. Only in Scotland, where the standard of general education was much higher than in England, were children commonly

¹Second Report...Mines and Manufactories, ibid., 1843, xiii, 526.

²Ibid., pp.484, 489.

³Appendix to Second Report...Trades and Manufactories, Commons Papers, 1843, xiv, 222-3.

⁴Ibid., p.526.

⁵Ibid., p.474.

refused entry to Sabbath schools if they could not read.¹

It was this double aim which made them particularly relevant in the question of education in the Australian colonies. Because many in New South Wales knew 'not a letter in the Alphabet', the Rev. Richard Johnson had spoken of teaching on Sundays as early as 1793. In 1813 the Independent missionary, W.P. Crook, used to ride out from Sydney ten miles every Sunday morning to teach eight or ten children to write. A writer to the Sydney Gazette in 1815 urged the need for Sunday schools in the colony so that people could be taught to read and thus enabled to read the Bible, and in that year the New South Wales Sunday School Institution was established, under the direction of Wesleyans and Independents, and their Sunday schools began to spread and flourish, at first with the assistance of the Anglican clergy, but soon in rivalry with Anglican Sunday schools.² As the Sunday schools developed (in both colonies), they continued to pay some attention to teaching children to read. In 1846 a Sydney Wesleyan Sunday school reported its need of twenty-five 'first spelling books',³ and Peter Steele, a private schoolmaster in Sydney, even went so far as to say:

The method of conducting Sunday Schools in this Colony is very inefficient, the time of the masters being completely frittered away in giving elementary knowledge to the scholars in place of religious instruction; in fact, teaching them to read a spelling book in preference to communicating a saving knowledge of the Book of life. 4

Wesleyan records in Van Diemen's Land refer to instruction in 'the knowledge of letters'; they include at least one bill for 'alphabet boards'; and they report the keenness of teachers in promoting the 'literary welfare' as well as the spiritual

¹Second Report...Mines and Manufactories, ibid., 1843, xiii, 489, 496-8. For the seamier side, see ibid., pp.505, 526.

²V.W.E. Goodin, op. cit., pp.160-2.

³Minute Book of the York St Sunday School Teachers' Committee, 1846-50, Report for quarter ended 31 Dec. 1846 (ML).

⁴Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.62.

well-being of the children.¹ A fine tribute was paid the Wesleyan Sunday schools in Elliston's Almanack. In an article on 'Learning and Education', the lack of day schools was deplored, and a charge of tending 'to separate religion from intelligence generally' was levelled at 'preachers'; but the writer's remarks would have been 'culpably deficient' had he omitted to mention especially the Wesleyan Sunday schools, for the good that had been done in them was 'almost incalculable'.² The Wesleyans, in 1836, had 147 in their 'Evening School' (reported under Sunday schools) and 230 at Point Puer (the boys' prison) at Port Arthur, and their report gave an idea of where they had their chief success:

Many have been admitted who were not able to read at all and are making pleasing advancement. On the minds of some, religious impressions have been made... 3

At Port Fenton in 1845, the Independent Sunday school was the only school of any description in the district. Even in 1850 the Rev. Robert Russell, a Presbyterian, could write of the establishment of a branch Sunday school at Maryvale, near Evandale, and go on to say:

The children in such cases are too far from a township to attend week-day school, and the parents too poor to board them away from home. So that any knowledge they possess, not only with respect to religion, but even the elementary acquisition of reading and writing, will in all probability have been communicated to them at these Branch Schools, up to the time of their leaving the parental roof. 4

Most of the Sunday schools, too, had libraries from which the scholars could borrow books, and must have done much to develop

¹Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Hobart Town Wesleyan Sunday School Union..., Hobart 1834, pp.3, 15; Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting..., Hobart 1846, p.4.

²Elliston's Hobart Town Almanack... 1837, p.87.

³V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 21 Oct. 1836, Q. X and App. II.

⁴Fourth Annual Report of V.D.L. Sunday School Union, December 1845, Hobart 1846, p.7; Ninth Annual Report...January 1851, Hobart n.d., p.9.

reading skills, and powers of retention and of expression, by their insistence upon reading and memorizing hymns, scripture and catechism.¹ It was not mere theory which prompted a youthful, prize-winning essayist to mention the inability of some children to read, and to continue:

The Sabbath School Teacher is obliged to supply this want, in order that spiritual knowledge may be the more readily imparted; and thus many little ones have a taste for instruction given who would otherwise have grown up without any degree of culture. 2

Nevertheless, it was religious instruction rather than the teaching of reading or other secular knowledge, which was most prominent in colonial Sunday schools.³ In the regulations for the Sunday schools of Sydney Presbyterians (1835), Hobart Independents (1845) and Hobart Wesleyans (1839), and in the Launceston Independents' Address to Parents (1837), there was no mention of any instruction other than in religion.⁴ The real emphasis was revealed, in grandly sweeping manner, in the Methodist purpose 'gratuitously to communicate Christian instruction to children of all denominations'.⁵

It was as the means for providing the denominational teaching excluded from the day schools, that the Van Diemen's Land Government valued the Sunday schools. When Franklin gave

¹As in Tom Sawyer's Sunday school, the Hobart Wesleyans had a ticket system: one black ticket for early attendance, one red ticket for learning a hymn or six verses of scripture, etc. - Minutes of Sunday School Committee, 1830-1842, 13 Aug. 1830, (Wesley Church, Hobart).

²Mary Ann Howard, 'Sabbath Schools the Nursery of the Church', Three Prize Essays on the Advantage of Sabbath Schools, Hobart 1851, p.4.

³Cf. V.W.E. Goodin, op. cit., p.163.

⁴Presbyterian Sabbath School Society Resolutions..., Sydney 1839; General Rules and Regulations for the Sabbath Schools connected with the Independent Chapel, Brisbane Street, Hobart 1845; General Rules of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools in the Hobart Town Circuit, Hobart 1839; An Address to Parents, from the Teachers of the Independent Sunday School..., Launceston 1837.

⁵General Rules... (just cited), p.1.

notice, in May 1839, of his intention to introduce the British and Foreign system for day schools, he added that he also proposed to grant state aid to Sunday schools. No school was to receive more than £15 per annum, and the Government would only pay an amount equal to the sum privately contributed.¹ This was duly put into effect and the Sunday schools received assistance through the Board of Education, whenever it was 'shown to be absolutely necessary'. In 1841 the Board paid out £76 for this purpose, and allowed £100 for 1842.² Aid continued until Eardley-Wilmot came to think the whole school system was in doubt, and the 'Patriotic Six' were preparing to launch their attack on the entire fiscal arrangements in the colony, in 1845; it was then peremptorily stopped.³ That this aid was allowed for about five years, and that the New South Wales Government also gave some subsidies to Sunday schools,⁴ are yet another indication of the authorities' concern for religion, and of their wish to meet the Churches' demands for religious training as well as to provide for general education.

Government aid to Sunday schools did nothing to mollify the Anglican clergy. For one thing it was, in their eyes, a poor substitute for a proper denominational day school system. They therefore protested that they could not spend time at Sunday schools; they were too much occupied in taking services in churches miles apart. One of their number, more inclined to cooperate than most at that time, suggested that Saturday be set apart in every school for catechism; but this was vetoed by Archdeacon Hutchins who maintained that Saturday had been regarded as a holiday and that the children would not come.⁵ There was

¹Government Notice, Hobart Town Gazette, 10 May 1839, p.472. The Tasmanian, 13 July 1838, p.220, c.2, had spoken in favour of using Sunday schools, assisted by the Government, to make the education system work.

²Report of Board of Education, pp.3, 6, V. & P., V.D.L., 1842.

³Report of the Board..., p.4, ibid., 1845.

⁴Col. Sec. to M'Kenny, 8 June, 14 July 1837, CSOL 4/3618 (ML).

⁵Report of the Board..., pp.2, 11, ibid., 1840. The suggestion came from the Rev. R.R. Davies.

reasonableness in the claim that Sunday was not the day for the clergy to be occupied with children, and some point to the archdeacon's rejection of Saturday (although it was only a half-holiday in Hobart and Launceston). There was a more important reason why the Anglicans objected to working through Sunday schools: they had neglected this medium, and sadly lagged behind the other Protestants.

'If the clergymen complain,' remarked the True Colonist, 'they ought...to be stirred up to a greater diligence.' Deeply prejudiced though the paper confessed to be against the Methodists, it maintained that their hard working laity had done 'more good by their Sabbath schools than all the other religious denominations in the colony'.¹ There was certainly no denying the Anglican weakness in this respect. There were

comparatively few Sunday Schools in existence in connexion with their Church. In Hobart Town, where the population is in great measure of the Church of England, there is but one Church of England Sunday School, at which about 60 children attend; while of other denominations there are several Schools, with an attendance of upwards of 1000 children. In the Interior the disproportion is even greater. 2

Although the Anglicans increased their activity in this direction, Bishop Nixon could only urge his people in 1846 not to be any longer outdone by other denominations in establishing Sunday schools.³

This was just the English pattern once more reappearing in the colonies. Although the Evangelicals were vigorous developers of Sunday schools, and the Anglicans may have provided for more scholars altogether,⁴ they had not kept up with Dissenters

¹True Colonist, 29 Nov. 1839, p.5, c.1.

²Report of the Board of Education, printed in Launceston Examiner, 25 Nov. 1843, p.741. An increase in Anglican Sunday Schools was noted in Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 1845, GO 33/51, pp.595-6 (TSA).

³F.R. Nixon, A Charge delivered to the Clergy...April 23, 1846, London 1848, p.32.

⁴On one authority, there were more Anglican Sunday schools (10,581) and scholars (798,783) than Dissenting Sunday schools (6,247) and scholars (750,107) - Education Enquiry, Commons Papers, 1835, xliii, 399.

(especially Methodists) in many places in England.¹ Manchester, in 1840, had twenty-five Anglican Sunday schools compared with thirty Methodist, nine Catholic and nine Independent schools. In Leek, 1841, there was one Anglican school (422 scholars, 41 teachers) and five other schools (1,185 scholars, 127 teachers). In the Staffordshire potteries district, 4,240 children attended Anglican Sunday schools, and 13,588 went to non-Anglican - over 11,000 of the latter going to Methodist schools.²

So also in Van Diemen's Land in 1845, there were twenty-six Anglican Sunday schools (898 children) and thirty-seven non-Anglican schools (2,370 children, including Catholics).³ It was not just the parsons' Sunday and the children's Saturday which kept the Anglican clergy from co-operating with the Board of Education. As well as their stubborn refusal to surrender the day schools, there was the lack of a universally vigorous Sunday school tradition within their communion. W.E. Nairn argued that the superior activity of Dissenters in founding Sunday schools was probably more important in winning children to Dissent than the day school system. And, indeed, quite apart from that system and the Anglican clerics' boycott of it, there were 3,266 Sunday school scholars compared with 1,493 pupils at Government schools.⁴ Even with the number of children attending private schools added, there must have been at least as many enrolled at Sunday schools as at public and private day schools in Van Diemen's Land.

Anglican excuses were not convincing. The Rev. J.P. Gell argued on the Church of England's behalf that there were more attending Dissenting Sunday schools than Anglican schools in

¹J.H. Newman, in charge of an Oxford church in 1824, started a Sunday school and 'was dubbed a Methodist in consequence' - G. Faber, op. cit., p.154.

²Appendix to Second Report...Trades and Manufactures, Commons Papers, 1843, xiv, 140, 231, 221.

³Report of V.D.L. Education Commissioners, 23 May 1845, GO 33/51, pp.547-8 (TSA).

⁴Ibid., pp.993-4.

Hobart because there were nine Dissenting ministers compared with four Anglican clergy, the latter having many more parishioners and heavier parochial duties.¹ But if there were so many more parishioners there should have been many more scholars, too; for, after all, it was the laymen - not the ministers - who actually conducted the Sunday schools and kept in touch with the children.² As the Commissioners recognized, the most watchful and zealous pastors, as well as the most numerous, should have been able to collect into their Sunday schools many who were indifferent about the denomination to which they became connected.³

Over the years, the influence of the colonies' Sunday schools on the manners and outlook of young people must have been considerable. It is tempting to add the work of the Sunday schools to the list of suggested factors which produced the striking increase in sobriety and morality among the early generations of Australian-born, when compared with their parents.⁴ Visitors to Sydney on behalf of the London Missionary Society attended, in 1824, the Rev. Samuel Marsden's annual examination of the Parramatta Sunday school scholars. They were deeply impressed by the attitude and knowledge of the one hundred 'scions of wild stocks - the offspring of convicts' who were present. They reported that many of them were ashamed of their parents, and wept over their ways, and that only one young man in Parramatta was known to be a drunkard.⁵ Sixteen years later, the Parramatta Wesleyans reported that those who were on trial for membership

¹Ibid., p.1003.

²Cf. Minute Book of the York St /Sydney/ Sunday School Teachers' Committee, 1846-1850, 9 Nov. 1846: 'Unanimously agreed that each Teacher shall bring three new Scholars by next Sunday' (ML).

³GO 33/51, p.595.

⁴See K. Macnab and R. Ward, 'The Nature and Nurture of the First Generation of Native-born Australians', Historical Studies, Vol. 10, No. 39, pp.289-308.

⁵J. Montgomery (Comp.), Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, Esq.,...1821 to 1829, 2 vols. London 1831, II, p.167.

of their Church were principally young persons born in the colony, and that these bade fair to have exemplary characters.¹

However, a direct and definite connection between Church and Sunday school influence and the improved behaviour of the native-born cannot be made with any certainty. Puzzled temperance society members in Van Diemen's Land, for instance, decided that the native-born must be 'constitutionally temperate', due to 'some physical cause', for most of them had almost no religious and moral training.² Then, too, if something like thirty per cent of Van Diemen's Land children between the ages of two and thirteen were enrolled at Sunday schools in the late forties,³ as much - and more - can be claimed for the youth of England, not only at that time but also as early as 1801, when there were 156,490 enrolled at Sunday schools in London which had a population of 864,845 people.⁴ A little before 1820 there were, in England and Wales, 477,225 Sunday school scholars;⁵ by 1833 the number of scholars had about trebled, being 1,548,890,⁶ although the total population had increased by only about sixteen per cent. These figures are of doubtful reliability, but the trend is certain enough: there was a surprisingly high, and an increasing, number of children attending Sunday schools in England and Wales in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.⁷

¹N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1840, App. 1.

²First, Second and Third Reports of V.D.L. Auxiliary Temperance Society, Hobart 1837, pp.17-18.

³Estimated roughly from the 1848 Census and from the list of enrolments at Sunday schools (1845) in GO 33/51, pp.547-8 (TSA).

⁴Sunday school attendance figures from H.C. Barnard, A Short History of English Education, 1760-1944, London 1949, p.11.

⁵General Tables, Commons Papers, 1820, xii, 341ff. At the same time, there were 53,449 Sunday school scholars in Scotland.

⁶Education Enquiry, ibid., 1835, xliii, 39.

⁷From a table in Appendix to Second Report...Trades and Manufactures, ibid., xiv, 755, the following has been calculated:

Percentage of Children between 5 and 15 years of age attending Sunday Schools, 1834-8			
Bury	84	York	33
Manchester	67	Liverpool	26
Birmingham	37	Westminster	15

It may well be that a part of the explanation both of the general improvement in social and moral standards among the early native-born in Australia, and also of the increasing religious observance in Britain towards the middle of the nineteenth century, is to be found in the great extension of Sunday schools: certainly very few of the members of the First Fleet would ever have been to a Sunday school. But the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the colonial Sunday schools can only be a matter of conjecture. Perhaps there is as much evidence against claiming great success for the Sunday schools as there is on the other side. Yet it is at least worth pondering on the section of a Wesleyan Sunday school report which read:

By Sabbath School efforts many children are instructed who would be spending the Sabbath-day in idleness and mischief, in dirt and rags, [they] come clean and neat to school, and are saved from vicious companions - many, whose parents care not for their souls, are taught to regard the Lord's day - to attend the house of prayer, to respect the Word of God, and to love the people of God. Many are learning our Catechisms, and...may be able to resist the pernicious errors which are springing up around us.... 1

What is perhaps least questionable is that the Churches and churchmen who were lukewarm about Sunday schools, and hotly opposed to general system day schools, hindered rather than helped the cause of religion; their ideals did not grip the imaginations of sufficient colonists, and their positive campaigns had finally negative results.

¹Proceedings of...Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Sunday Schools, in the Hobart Town Circuit, 1851, p.5.

CHAPTER 9THE SOCIAL ISSUE:
SCHOOLS FOR THE HUMBLER CLASSES

In the matter of the schools the Churches were defeated, not merely by religious liberalism or indifference, but also by social narrowness and particularity. The colonies were not the egalitarian societies often developed in the American frontier areas, but were always communities in which the class distinctions were carefully maintained. Jack may not have tipped his hat to his master as he had in the homeland, but he certainly had a master - and everybody really knew it. Like colonial society itself, the Churches were riddled with class consciousness, and this told against them in their attempts to evangelize the masses through the schools.

Once again, the colonial problem and attempted solutions were directly related to conditions in the British Isles. The principle that the entire population should receive a basic education became accepted in Britain early in the nineteenth century, and efforts were made to this end which were not insignificant, although the ideal was only achieved many years later. It was calculated that it was necessary to provide schools for one tenth of the population if all children were to be educated, so that, with the total population of England and Wales at about eleven million just before 1820, there should have been over a million day school scholars; but, in fact, there were only about 675,000 on the rolls of all types of day schools.¹ In Scotland there were over 176,000 actual scholars compared with the 200,000 which the theorists might have laid down as the ideal² - a ratio sufficiently high to lend some seriousness to a contemporary Scot's comment that the legendary feats of the Scots Greys were due as much to writing as to fighting, since fewer of the

¹General Tables, Commons Papers, 1820, xii, 341, 353.

²Ibid., p.349.

English and Irish troops were able to describe their exploits in letters home!¹ While the Irish were described in 1812 as being so anxious for schooling that they could, in a sense, be called 'universally educated', the same observer went on to say that the quality of the teaching, the school-books and the literature read in the cottages was shockingly poor.² In England, too, enrolment at school did not mean regular or long attendance, or effective teaching. Henry Tinker, a fourteen year old working in a dye-house, said to an investigator, 'I have been to a day-school: 5 times 6 is 28'.³ Many English children could not have said even that they had attended school: in the Manchester of 1835 some 16,000 children (about one third of the total number between the ages of 5 and 15) received no schooling of any kind;⁴ and, in the 1850s, there were thousands of children in the 'low neighbourhoods' of London who had never been to day school, ragged school or Sunday school.⁵

Yet much of this information comes from the huge volumes of parliamentary papers which were devoted to this subject as commission after commission investigated the condition of the working classes. The upper classes were alive to the need for better provision; they tried to do something about it; and improvements were slowly made. In Ireland the Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor was founded in 1812,⁶ and in 1831 the famous Irish system was introduced. In England, voluntary efforts to bring education to the poor were being made by the other societies whose systems attracted attention in the colonies - the Lancastrian (British and Foreign) Society, founded 1808, and the

¹A. Somerville, The Autobiography of a Working Man, London 1854, p.141.

²E. Wakefield, An Account of Ireland..., 2 vols. London 1812, II, p.397ff.

³Appendix to Second Report...Trades and Manufactures, Commons Papers, 1843, xiv, 525. Cf. the Report itself, ibid., 1843, xiii, 525ff.

⁴Select Committee on Education, ibid., 1835, vii, 868.

⁵H. Mayhew, op. cit., IV, p.273.

⁶E. Wakefield, op. cit., II, pp.452-3.

National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (the Bell system), founded 1811. By 1833, the numbers enrolled at day schools in England and Wales had increased to nearly 1,277,000¹ - much closer to a tenth of the population, which was about 1,400,000 - and in the same year £20,000 was voted by the Government in aid of the two big voluntary societies. There were attempts by Brougham (1820), Russell (1839) and others in the forties to get a national system of education established. Unfortunately, by alternately offending Dissenters and Anglicans, and by consistently alarming all denominations by their potentially secular character, all these schemes came to little or nothing.² Yet the concept of popular education was nevertheless winning increasingly wide support.

Some of the House of Commons commissioners reported one motive: educated workmen were often considered to be the best employees.³ For such as Roebuck, the Benthamite Radical, education had to be given to the people if they were to make enlightened use of the coming democracy.⁴ Nor were the Churches opposed to the ideal of education for all (in spite of their defeat of particular Government proposals). They had an obvious interest in making the population literate because the Bible remained a closed book for those who could not read, and their missionaries found that their work was hindered by the great ignorance of the masses.⁵ In 1837 the British Wesleyan Conference explicitly approved the principle of 'general' (or universal) education,⁶ and the Anglicans and Dissenters provided a significant proportion of the

¹Education Enquiry, Commons Papers, 1835, xliii, 398.

²See, e.g., R.G. Cowherd, op. cit., pp.33-4, 117-29; O.J. Brose, op. cit., p.182.

³Second Report...Mines and Manufactures, Commons Papers, 1843, xiii, 527.

⁴R.G. Cowherd, op. cit., p.117.

⁵Ibid., p.119.

⁶B. Gregory, op. cit., p.259.

week-day schooling given to the working classes.¹ Indeed, no other than John Richard Green declared that popular education had its beginnings in the Churches' Sunday schools.²

In the Australian colonies, no less than in England, the need for the education of the poorer classes was generally recognized and approved. 'Let it not be supposed that I would withhold instruction in sound, secular knowledge, where I had not the power of accompanying it with religious instruction,' said Archdeacon Hutchins; his point was that he considered his Church to have that power and that the state should preserve it.³ It was not even necessary to discuss the matter of secular instruction - there was no difficulty about that, reported the New South Wales Select Committee on Education.⁴ With a precious piety, the Courier dismissed the argument that education merely excited discontent in the minds of the masses, and explained that a scriptural education

inculcates patient endurance, and in the occupation of the more humble walks of life, affords such food for the mind as will beguile the tedious hours, and teach us [sic!] to seek refuge in higher contemplation, smiling at the vanities and empty glories of this world, as transitory, and not in any way connected with intrinsic happiness. ⁵

Sir William Denison supported one of his proposals for education with the argument that persons in the upper classes of colonial society would benefit by having better educated servants;⁶ his Colonial Secretary spoke of the exploded fallacy that education for all was dangerous to the state; and his Attorney-General said

¹By 1820 there were 145,000 scholars in their schools, compared with 500,000 in other schools - General Table, Commons Papers, 1820, xii, 341.

²J.R. Green, A Short History of the English People, London n.d., p.721.

³W. Hutchins, A Letter on the School Question..., p.8.

⁴Lowe Committee, p.3.

⁵Courier, 6 Apr. 1838, p.2.

⁶Minute on Education, 9 Mar., V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

brusquely that the children must be educated.¹ Every child had a right to knowledge, said a writer to a Sydney newspaper,² and this seems to have been the universal opinion. Though voices were heard knocking down the argument that the education of the masses was dangerous, no voices were heard setting the argument up. The only protest came from the churchmen who warned that purely secular education, without adequate religious instruction, would lead to wickedness and anarchy; and this was no rejection of popular education as such.

If a literate people was desired, there was much to be done in the colonies. In 1837 the Wesleyan minister at Port Arthur lodged the revealing complaint that the increasing number of boys (from Point Puer) coming to his evening classes was seriously inconveniencing the instruction of the adults in reading.³ In 1844 none of three persons employed at St Philip's Church, Sydney - the sexton, the pew-opener and the bell-ringer - could sign his name.⁴ Petitions sent in by Anglicans and Catholics to influence decisions on the system of education in New South Wales were criticized because they included so many 'marksmen' - persons who could only make their marks instead of giving their signatures.⁵ Even the so-called literate were often barely so, a fact illustrated by the indignities perpetrated on the English language - in a very dignified way - by a certain Patrick Roach, one of the scholars of his locality.

Lyndherst Vale
19 March

Sir my wife Informed me that you called at my house a few days ago for establishing a school and you requested me to go and see how many children there was fitt for schooling withing three miles of

¹Courier, 22 Mar. 1848, p.2.

²Herald, 16 June 1836, p.2.

³V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 10 Nov. 1837, Appendix II.

⁴Abstract and Acquittances of the Salaries and Allowances of St. Philip's Church, Sydney...February 1844 (ML A2627).

⁵Colonial Observer, 19 Sept. 1844, p.1.

Brookfield and i write to tell you no there is fifty
 children fitt for schooling now and there Parents is
 willing to come forward at any time when you think
 propper to come up and settle about the school House
 So no moore

at Present

from Patrick Roach.¹

If the homeland poured its illiterates into Australia, the colonies themselves had enormous difficulties in educating their own children. In 1844 the New South Wales Select Committee on Education estimated that there were 25,676 children in the colony, and that about 13,000 of them were receiving no instruction.² Van Diemen's Land, in 1848, had perhaps 5,400 scholars enrolled at public and private schools;³ but there were in the colony 6,135 children between the ages of seven and fourteen, and another 6,832 between the ages of two and seven,⁴ so that probably one third, or more, of the children received little or no education. The continuing illiteracy throughout and after this period is revealed by the 1856 census in New South Wales, from which the following table has been calculated.

N.S.W., 1856: Percentage of Male Population,
 7 Years and Over, Unable to Read

Sydney and Suburbs..	8.3
Country Towns and Villages	13.7
Rural and Pastoral Parts.. . . .	23.5

N.S.W., 1856: Percentage of Male Population,
 7 Years and Over, Unable to Write.

Sydney and Suburbs..	16.1
Country Towns and Villages	23.8
Rural and Pastoral Parts.. . . .	37.6.

Naturally the lowest classes constituted almost the entire number of illiterates. It was, consequently, for the children of the lowest classes that the Governments provided schools. 'It is

¹Roach to Rusden, 19 Mar. 1850, quoted in A.G. Austin, op. cit., pp.52-3.

²Lowe Committee, p.1.

³Board of Education Report, pp.13, 15, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

⁴1848 Census, ibid.

to be remembered,' said Sir Richard Bourke, 'that the National Schools are intended for the great mass of the people requiring gratuitous instruction.'¹ Although writing tendentiously, a Committee on Convict Expenditure in Van Diemen's Land truly drew attention to the prime purpose of the Government schools:

The Estimate for Primary Instruction shows a total of £5,047: this item has its origin principally in Convict necessity. The chief object...is to provide instruction for the destitute children of Convicts, or the offspring of those who have been Convicts. The children of the free participate, but only to a limited extent. The depauperated condition of the emigrant labourer, occasioned by Convict competition, has caused an increase of expenditure under this head. 2

'Government schools', of course, included the denominational schools fully supported, or partly subsidized, by the Governments, as well as the state schools proper. In 1841, the New South Wales Government issued regulations for church schools in which it was laid down that the 'first duty' of inspectors was to find out which pupils did not need Government assistance (which was given at a rate of about one penny per day).³ The new regulations were issued precisely because the Government thought of the schools as being provided for the lower classes and disapproved of them being used by people who could afford to educate their children elsewhere or without calling upon a subsidy towards the tuition fees.⁴ The point needs emphasis, for it can easily be overlooked: the fight over the schools was fundamentally a fight for the working classes.

It is not to be thought that the Churches, in fighting for schools in which an ideal religious education was given, were also fighting for schools in which an ideal social unity was intended. On the whole, the children of the clergy and of the more respectable citizens simply did not attend the schools

¹Minute on Estimates, V. & P., N.S.W., 1836.

²V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

³Enclosure, Gipps to Stanley, 17 Dec. 1842, H.R.A., xxii, 428.

⁴Gipps to Stanley, 8 May 1845, Enclosure No. 2, ibid., xxiv, 337-8.

about which the clergy had so much to say, or of which they had control. The boys at the two Hobart schools under Anglican oversight in 1835, for instance, were the sons 'principally of petty Shopkeepers, Mechanics, Laborers [sic] and Publicans - and some...Convicts holding Tickets of Leave'. Of the teachers at one of the schools - Mr Jones and his son - the investigators reported that, while the Government was fortunate in having men of their ability, the marked character of their provincial dialect would render them ineligible for the tuition of boys belonging to a higher sphere.¹ When Government schools were attended by children of the higher classes, the tendency of the poor not to attend school was strongly reinforced. In Van Diemen's Land, at Richmond, Clarence Plains and Greenponds, the masters were accused of wanting their schools 'respectable' and the middle classes of preventing lower class children from mixing with their own, so that the Government schools were turned into 'classical academies' and even received boarders.² One way or another, the children of disparate social classes did not go to the same school - and usually, it was achieved by leaving the church and state elementary schools to the poor.

The way the young colonial gentlemen were educated (unless, or until, they were sent home to England) may be illustrated by the schooling of James Hassall in the thirties. A grandson of both Samuel Marsden and Rowland Hassall, young James went to the King's School, Parramatta, with boys bearing such proud colonial names as Blaxland, Nicholson, Oxley, Antill, Suttor and Macarthur. After several years there, he was taught at home by a governess and a tutor. Later still, he went as a boarder to a school opened at Mulgoa by the Rev. Thomas Makinson. Once more the scholars consisted chiefly of such boys as the sons of the land-owning Cox family and the grandsons of the former Governor King. After a time, another change was made, Hassall going as a resident pupil, together with two Nortons, two Oxleys and G.F. Macarthur,

¹Report of Board of Inquiry...1835, CSO 1/843/17847 (TA).

²Courier, 5 Sept. 1849, p.3, c.1.

to the home of the Rev. Robert Forrest, newly appointed incumbent of Campbelltown and Narellan. Each pupil was charged £100 a year by Forrest, who managed by this means to feed himself, and them, as they might have been fed 'at any gentleman's table', being always provided with 'wine and other luxuries'.¹

By the late forties, the colonial upper classes were fairly well served. No longer was it necessary for prosperous settlers living away from Hobart - the Brodribbs, Thrupps and Buxtons - to use the Government orphanages as substitute boarding schools for their children!² There were the Hutchins' School in Hobart and the Launceston Church Grammar School (and, as finishing schools, the Hobart High School and Christ's College).³ In New South Wales there were the Sydney College and the Australian College besides the King's School, the first - considered the best of the three - teaching two hundred and six students in 1845.⁴ The class distinctions were well observed in them. The sons of the Attorney-General, the Senior Colonial Surgeon and other surgeons, army officers and landowners, were predominant among those enrolled on the opening day of the Hutchins' School.⁵ The King's School, Parramatta, was not ultra-exclusive (and the cost was only £28 per annum), so that James Macarthur could describe it as a place where 'the children of the middling classes as well as those of the most respectable families' received an education - and in 'middling' he included 'tradespeople'. But there was still the distinction, the lower limit, which was made specially clear in Macarthur's further remark that respectable colonists did not like sending their children to school in Sydney

¹J.S. Hassall, op. cit., pp.13-4, 25-6, 41.

²Statements of Sums due for the maintenance and education of Boys and Girls not on the Foundation at the Orphan Establishments, 31 Dec. 1830, CSO 1/122/3073 (TA).

³For details, see Tasmanian Royal Kalendar, Colonial Register and Almanack, 1849, pp.107-9.

⁴Enclosure No. 2, Gipps to Stanley, 8 May 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 338.

⁵The Hutchins' School Register of Admissions, Aug. 1846 - Apr. 1892 (TA).

because it was 'a sea-port town' and the inhabitants were 'to a great extent emancipated convicts of low character'.¹ The same class distinction is also revealed in the comment of Port Phillip Anglicans that

with the exception of the Grammar School adjoining St. Peter's Church, which was erected with money from England, and is intended for boys of a different class, there is as yet in all Melbourne only two school buildings belonging to the Church of England. 2

Children who did not attend the most superior schools could be taught at such schools as Cape's in Sydney, Woolls' in Parramatta, the school for young ladies run by the Misses Deane in Sydney - or one of the many other private schools which sprang up in both colonies. The importance of these schools for the education of the children of the middle classes is shown by the numbers who attended them. There were perhaps just under 5,000 pupils in private schools in New South Wales, compared with considerably less than 8,000 in Government-assisted schools, in 1844.³ In Van Diemen's Land, in 1848, there were well over 2,000 pupils in the hundred or more private schools, and only about 3,000 scholars in the sixty-five Government and Church schools.⁴ By no means all these private schools were very respectable. They contributed their share to the 'Fagan system' schools, from which a child might return home saying, 'We have got a holiday. My mistress is drunk, and my master is gone to the treadmill'.⁵ Many of these schools were short-lived, and unsatisfactory in many ways; but there was considerable opportunity for middle class children to gain a commercial education (and, in some, for upper-middle class children to receive a classical education) in such non-Government schools, while leaving the denominational and state elementary schools to the poor.

¹Select Committee on Transportation, Commons Papers, 1837, xix, 181.

²First Report of Melbourne Diocesan Society, 1849, p.15.

³Lowe Committee, p.1.

⁴Report of Board of Education, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

⁵Courier, 5 Sept. 1849, p.2, c.4; 8 Sept. 1849, p.3, c.1.

It is odd that the clergy had so much to say about the teaching of religion in the Government schools, yet had nothing to say about religious instruction in the private schools. It was arguable that middle class children were more likely to be taught the faith by parents and ministers than were the youngsters from the poorer homes; it is much less reasonable to argue that religious instruction was at all prominent in the typical private school. The College High School in Elizabeth Street, Sydney, offered young ladies 'a sound English Education, as well as the higher, fashionable, and finishing accomplishments', and promised boys an education 'without flogging or beating'; but its advertisement spoke not a word about religious training.¹ J.F. Castle's school accounts, relating to Calder House in Sydney in 1838-9, include such items as 'Seat Church 2/6', 'Bible 6/6' and 'Prayer Book 2/9', so spiritual things were not entirely neglected - especially for the boarders - but there was little indication that they were stressed. When Castle, after an interval of farming, opened a new school, Austenham House, in 1846, his prospectus offered both elementary and higher instruction in mathematics and languages, flaunted a Mons. H. Perrier as French and Italian master, held out hopes of fitting boys to enter the professions or a university, and promised to make the boys acquainted also with 'those studies which more immediately belong to the business of every-day life': but no mention was made of religious instruction, though Castle was an evangelical Anglican.²

Yet it was not in their silence about the private schools, and not only in their condemnation of state schools on a general system, that the clergy - and, in particular, the Anglican clergy - made their serious mistake. Of all the things which militated against their views being accepted by the people generally, one of the gravest was simply that they took the class distinctions for granted, and too closely identified themselves with the upper classes.

¹Herald, 3 Jan. 1843, p.1, c.4.

²J.F. Castle's School Ledger (A.N.U. Archives 7/17/1) and prospectus, Austenham House School, Sydney n.d., contained therein.

It was not that they neglected the poor people; Captain Michael Fenton once paid the clergy a pretty compliment in the Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council, when he argued that ministers of religion should be able to exercise real control of the schools, since they alone had a real concern for the poor.¹ If the Anglican clergy appear as the villains of the piece in Van Diemen's Land during the years in which they refused to enter the Government schools, they must at the same time be credited with the development of thirty-three schools of their own by 1848; in addition, their counterparts in New South Wales had sixty-six day schools for the poorer classes.² The long years of Wesleyan hard work - including educational work - at Port Arthur and Point Puer alone are sufficient to refute any charge of indifference to the lower classes, and they had sixteen day schools in New South Wales by 1848.³ New South Wales Presbyterians had forty-six day schools at that time,⁴ and - with the Independents and Baptists - had been stalwart, if not entirely satisfied, supporters of the Government general systems in both colonies. The Catholics, even had they desired it otherwise, were given no real choice; their work had to lie largely among the poor, and they had several schools in Van Diemen's Land, and thirty-seven in New South Wales, by 1848.⁵

Ministers of religion were also prominent in one other avenue of working class education - the Mechanics' Institutes, which aimed at giving instruction to working men by lectures, library facilities and classes for reading, writing and arithmetic.⁶ Perhaps the Rev. Henry Carmichael, foremost in the establishment of the Sydney Mechanics' Institute in 1833, can

¹Courier, 5 Sept. 1849, p.3, c.1.

²N.S.W. Almanack and Remembrancer for 1848, pp. 49-51; Board of Education Report, p.8, V. & P., V.D.L., 1848.

³N.S.W. Almanack...1848, p.52.

⁴Ibid., pp.51-2.

⁵Ibid., pp.52-3.

⁶See, e.g., Rules and Regulations of the V.D.L. Mechanics' School of Arts, Hobart 1850.

scarcely be included in this connection, for he had 'all but renounced religion'.¹ But in the southern colony another Presbyterian minister, Dr John Lillie, was the backbone of the Hobart equivalent, and other Nonconformist ministers were closely associated with it.² The Rev. John West, an Independent, founded the Launceston Mechanics' Institute in 1842, and his brother minister, Charles Price, gave the first lecture.³ It was to this body that Price spoke to the working men on education, in words which might be expected to live in their memories. He praised the new schools of England, calling them 'refreshing fountains' of learning, and contrasting them with 'the mud holes...opened in this colony for the bespattering of the working classes'.

If the working classes here felt their true position, they would not for a moment subject their children to the baneful influence of so degrading a system.

There was no 'aristocracy of mind', but the greatest ideas could be grasped by 'the sturdy mind of the operative'.⁴ The part of Price's address which dealt with religion must have been delivered to an audience all the more ready to listen because of his outspokenness on their behalf in the earlier part of the speech.

Such wholehearted champions of the poorer classes did not speak up from the ranks of the Anglican clergy. In Hobart in 1845, and again in 1846, an attempt was made to get a newspaper established which had the professed aim of encouraging the working classes to associate themselves with the Church of England; but this was an individual layman's effort, which failed anyway, for after a few issues the paper ceased publication in 1845, and

¹G. Nadel, Australia's Colonial Culture, Melbourne 1957, p.113. (This book may be consulted for an account of the Mechanics' Institutes).

²Report of V.D.L. Mechanics' Institution, 1849, Hobart 1850, p.4, where Dr Lillie, the Revs. C. Simpson and W.R. Wade are listed as having given four of the eight lectures. Lillie was President, and had been for years.

³L.S. Bethell, op. cit., p.32.

⁴C. Price, The Intellectual Improvement of the Working Classes: a Lecture delivered at the Launceston Mechanics' Institute...1850, Launceston 1850, pp.5-6. Price was largely self-taught.

only limped along after it was recommenced the next year under the total abstinence banner.¹ The ministers of the Church of England, while they did pay attention to the lower classes, had too much patronage in their concern and too little ability to see through labouring class eyes. The grandly self-righteous manner in which they tried to force upon the colonies their ideal in schools did little to help them retain the people for the Church of England. Rather, one of the established newspapers was ready to snarl that colonists wanted a higher degree of education than that which England, 'under prelatric rule', deemed sufficient to dole out to her working classes.²

How completely most of the clergy accepted the prevailing class distinctions is shown in the way they educated their own children (when they had any³). J.S. Hassall, whose school career has been given as an illustration of the young colonial gentlemen's education, was the son of the Rev. Thomas Hassall and became an Anglican clergyman himself (as did G.F. Macarthur, whose schooling was almost identical with Hassall's). The Rev. William Cowper educated his children at home (and one of his sons was ordained, after graduating from Oxford).⁴ The Rev. W.B. Clarke's wife took their children to Ireland for schooling - where they, and she, remained for fifteen years!⁵ The sons of the Rev. W. Garrard and of the Rev. P. Palmer attended the Hutchins' School in Hobart.⁶ Bishop Nixon's children were taught at home.⁷

¹Hobart Town Herald, 18 July 1845, 19 Dec. 1846.

²True Colonist, 4 Oct. 1839, p.4.

³Quite a number of the clergy had no children of school age, or no children at all, or were not even married. Sometimes even non-Catholics were obliged to remain celibate - witness V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 1 Nov. 1838, Q.iv, where the Rev. W. Butters gave notice of intention to return to England since he had almost completed the six years he had engaged to remain abroad as an unmarried missionary.

⁴W.M. Cowper, op. cit., pp.17-8.

⁵Information supplied by Ann Mozley.

⁶Hutchins' School Register of Admissions (TA).

⁷Mrs Nixon to Echo, 2 Jan. 1844, in N. Nixon, op. cit., pp.16-7.

Even the chairman of the Van Diemen's Land Wesleyan District (The Rev. Nathaniel Turner) was spending £48 per annum, exclusive of clothes, on the schooling of his twelve years old son in 1844¹ - a fact which clearly indicates a private school.²

Not all Wesleyan ministers were involved in such expense, for they reported to their controlling body in England, which had just reduced their allowances, that as soon as a boy was capable of being taught to read he had either to be instructed at home or sent to a school at the cost of at least £8.8.0. a year, while a girl at a 'first school' cost £12 a year.³ There were always the poorer clergy who could not afford much for education. The Rev. J. Jennings Smith, Anglican parson at Paterson, New South Wales, had eleven children and, being one of the clergy appointed under the Church Act, did not have such generous allowances as many of those appointed earlier; hence, although he and his wife very much wanted at least one of their sons to be educated for the ministry, they were unable to afford it, and placed their boys in 'Mercantile situations'.⁴ But, generally speaking, the clergy did not send their own children to the schools they fought so hard to control and to save from the secular hands of the state, and the common people could not feel that the ministers of religion were identifying themselves with them, or that the struggle over the schools was one in which they need identify themselves with the clergy.

A further illustration of this is that schools conducted personally by ministers of religion were usually rather exclusive schools, for the boys had to be of a class which would keep the parsons' tutoring respectable and help them financially. Makinson's and Forrest's schools, attended by James Hassall, are typical examples. Another is the school opened by the Rev. W.

¹V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 4 Oct. 1844, Q. xix.

²E.g., Castle's private school at Sydney charged £50 per annum - J.F. Castle, Private Journal, 15 July 1846 (ANU Archives 7/13).

³V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., loc. cit.

⁴Smith to Broughton, 29 Jan. 1846, BP.

Sowerby when he went to Goulburn in 1838 - for it was attended by 'about sixteen of the sons of highly respectable families, resident in or connected with that vicinity'.¹ Although tangled with another type of exclusiveness - an insistence that boys attending his school should not go to the Presbyterian minister for religious instruction - the numbers at Sowerby's school underline the fact that he did not set out to provide a school for all the children in the neighbourhood. After the Presbyterians had, in retort, hired a master for a daily school, they applied either for Government assistance or the establishment of a general system school, and claimed that, of the forty-five children at Goulburn between the ages of five and twelve, only fourteen went to Sowerby's school, while twenty-seven went to theirs.² Similarly, a school run by an Anglican deacon (Raven) at Hamilton, in Van Diemen's Land, was closed in 1845 due to the small attendance, but a ticket-of-leave man opened a school, a little later, which was 'generally attended by the children of the lower orders'.³ Nor was this exclusive tendency confined to the Anglican clergymen. In Van Diemen's Land, for instance, the Presbyterian minister, J. Mackersey, had a boarding school at Campbell Town and numbered among his pupils the future Sir Richard Dry,⁴ while even the Rev. Charles Price's school was attended mostly by boys who were to become 'ministers of religion, barristers, conductors of the press, merchants, officers in the army and in the civil service'.⁵ Men could certainly prosper and climb the social ladder in the colonies, but the suggestion here is that clergymen's schools were attended almost exclusively by the sons of respectable people.

Hence the clergy piled up mistake upon mistake, blindness

¹S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.31.

²Petitions from Goulburn Kirk Session, and from Parents and Guardians, V. & P., N.S.W., 1839.

³Report of Education Commissioners, 1845, GO 33/51, pp.720, 723 (TA).

⁴L.S. Bethell, op. cit., p.77.

⁵James Fenton, Life and Work of the Rev. Charles Price of Launceston, Melbourne 1886, pp.76, 83.

upon blindness. They could not see how damaging their class allegiances were to their cause. They would not see that what was expedient might also be right in the colonial situation. When the Catholics became quite insistent on having Catholic schools, they could be confident that they would be able to secure the obedience of their people. The Anglican clergy tried to insist upon having Anglican schools, but were unable to gain or retain the people's support. It was generally recognized that the poorer classes sent their children to school 'almost entirely for the sake of the secular instruction', and with 'too often little regard to the religious instruction'.¹ Yet the Anglican clergy kept their heads in the trailing clouds of glory, and kept repeating that the bulk of the population was Anglican (though this was true only in theory) and that their Church was the Church of England. Ultimately their attempts to obstruct the development of state schools, and to develop an adequate system of their own, were in vain; and they were never able to deter parents, whose Anglicanism was probably nominal anyway, from sending their children to general system schools (or to other non-Anglican schools).² To be able to explain 'to some degree' the low attendance at Church of England Sunday schools in Van Diemen's Land in 1845 by pointing to the opening of sixteen new Anglican day schools, where five hundred and eight children were taught in a way they preferred,³ was both a plausible argument and an impressive achievement; but it was hardly a well conceived policy. People who sent their children to school for 'learning' and not for religion, were not going to be impressed by the Anglican clergymen's stand. If it was argued that the ignorance and indifference of the parents meant that a great deal of religious instruction had to be given in the schools - more than mere scripture reading lessons - the Anglican clergymen lost a great

¹Report of Education Commissioners, 1845, GO 33/51, pp.594-5. Even the Anglican, the Rev. J.P. Gell, admitted this under examination - ibid., p.1003.

²Ibid., p.992.

³Ibid., p.597.

deal of ground in refusing to go into the schools to give it.

Anglican power, wealth and numbers cause them thus to be singled out. Other Churches held similar views on the educational ideal, but Catholic power over their people was strong while their influence on affairs was comparatively weak, and the Wesleyans and other minor Protestant Churches were unable to compete in political influence, or were more ready to compromise. In a sense, the Anglican idealism was admirable; but in so far as it came to grief by being simply a lack of realism about the colonial situation, it was unpardonable. The people were not prepared to bear the expense of a multiplicity of schools; many believed in literacy far more than in the Thirty Nine Articles; and the Dissenting minority were very sensitive to Anglican privilege. The Anglican clergy played for the highest stakes - a predominantly Anglican religious education in the public schools. They lost; and it is likely that they lost also a great deal of the potential sympathy of the ordinary people.

Nor was it only with the working classes that they overreached themselves: they did the same with the governing classes. They said too much, and their arguments became self-defeating. Bishop Broughton and his men claimed that it was morally wrong for the State to support truth and falsehood, and that it should support truth only - and Anglicanism particularly. This was too much for a liberal state and liberal churchmen, and could only have the long-term effect of convincing men that the state should not support any religious denomination. When this extreme position was met with the extreme voluntarism of a churchman like the Rev. Dr J.D. Lang, Government support of religion was all the more likely to be given up.¹ When non-Christians, like the Jews of New South Wales in 1845-6, attempted to get Government aid,²

¹These two forces have been well linked by J.S. Gregory, op. cit., p.22ff.

²Gipps to Stanley, 13 Nov. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 612; Fitz Roy to Gladstone, 1 Oct. 1846; Grey to Fitz Roy, 13 Apr. 1847, ibid., xxv, 202, 484-6.

state policy was thrown even further into flux, and the most extreme demands on the state were sure to be the first rejected. The humbler classes got their schools, but, precisely because of the Churches' uncompromising attitudes, religion was not very prominent in the curricula.

PART III

RELIGIOUS OPINION AND PRACTICE IN EASTERN
AUSTRALIA, 1835-50

CHAPTER 10

THE DOCTRINES AND PREACHING OF THE CLERGY: (1) SOME STUMBLING BLOCKS

The times of the tracts

Peace between Protestantism and Catholicism has always been uneasy, and the old shadow of bitter repudiation fell darkly over the religious scene in eastern Australia. Accustomed to the breach, pessimistic about any change for the better, and despising each other, the clergy of the Churches of Rome and of the Reformation mostly went their own ways. The liveliest cut and thrust came, not from these parties, but from the two sides of another, recent, religious division which was connected with the fundamental Protestant-Catholic schism, but was contained within Protestantism itself, and essentially within the Church of England. It was the cause of much turmoil within the Anglican communion and of much suspicion of Anglicanism by Nonconformists; but it was sufficiently fluid and moderate to stop short of yet another schism.

The conflict was between the old Evangelical party, which had emerged with (and partly through) the Wesleyan revival of the eighteenth century, and the new group attracted by the emphasis of the Oxford men, Newman, Keble and Pusey. This 'Oxford Movement' became prominent after Keble preached the superiority of the Church over the state (in protest against the 'national apostasy' revealed in Government interference with the Anglican Church in Ireland¹), and its High Church views were spread through the Tracts for the Times. Though the Evangelicals had continued within the Church of England - one of the main differences between them and the Wesleyans - their stress was on individual conversion and faith, and they were prone to minimize sacramental grace, the priestly office and the corporate nature of the Church. What they put into the background, the Tractarians brought to the fore,

¹John Keble, 'National Apostasy', Sermons Academical and Occasional, Oxford 1847, p.129ff.

substituting a near-Catholic meaning in place of the rigidly Protestant interpretation of ambivalent wording in the Book of Common Prayer.¹ A famous illustration is the phrase in the baptismal rite 'this child is regenerate'. The Tractarians gave regeneration its literal meaning of re-birth and insisted that it was in baptism ex opere operato that a child lost the stain of original sin and underwent a change of nature. The Evangelicals, pointing to conversion as the life-changing event, interpreted baptismal regeneration to mean only a change of state - the child simply being brought by baptism to a point at which the possibility of redeemed life was promised and increased, but not immediately effected.²

The debate was carried to the colonies and continued there. Bishop Nixon of Van Diemen's Land followed the Tractarian lead, and he would have had men 'mark well the wide distinction between regeneration and conversion', but regeneration had to be expressed in terms of 'new birth', and be associated uniquely with baptism, to satisfy him, while conversion was mentioned only to be relegated to a foot-note in the printed version of his sermon.³ In a New South Wales reprint of an Evangelical pamphlet, however, colonists were instructed that to use regenerate in the sense of 'the work of the Spirit upon the soul' was not according to the biblical meaning (the word only occurring twice in the Bible, anyway), and that a change in state, or circumstance, or relation -

¹J.H. Newman's Tract XC, on Certain Passages in the XXXIX Articles, published 1841 (Oxford edn. of 1866 seen), was so extreme in parts that the Tracts (but not the Tractarians) were suppressed. Useful books for an understanding of the Oxford Movement are J.H. Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua [1864], London 1959; S.L. Ollard, A Short History of the Oxford Movement, London 1915; and G. Faber, Oxford Apostles, London 1956. For the Evangelical Movement, two useful books are G.R. Balleine, A History of the Evangelical Movement, London 1951; and L.E. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals, London 1953.

²Cf. H. Davies, Worship and Theology in England, 1690-1850, Princeton 1961, p.270.

³F.R. Nixon, On the Duties of the Members of the Church of England to Adhere to her Doctrine and Discipline, London 1840, pp.16, 33-4. Cf. F.R. Nixon, Lectures...on the Catechism of the Church of England, 6th edn. London 1860, p.610.

such as occurred in baptism - should not be confused with an antecedent or subsequent change of heart (or new birth).¹ The interpretation of this word regenerate was to lead, in England, to the courts of law in the crucial Gorham case (1847-50)² and, in Australia, to dissent by the Evangelical Bishop Perry from the statement of his High Church fellow bishops at their meeting in 1850,³ as well as to battles between Broughton and some of his clergy and between, especially, Nixon and some of his.⁴

The Evangelical school had been strongly represented in eastern Australia among the early Anglican clergymen. There were exceptions such as the first chaplain of Van Diemen's Land, Robert Knopwood, and the first archdeacon in New South Wales, T.H. Scott, who could more aptly be described as 'high and dry';⁵ but most of the others were of the Evangelical party. This was what Major Francis Grose meant when he disparaged the Rev. Richard Johnson as 'one of the people called Methodists'.⁶ The Rev. Samuel Marsden

¹'Clericus', A Defense of the Baptismal Service of the Church of England..., Sydney 1840, pp.5, 6.

²On 8 Mar. 1850, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council found that the Evangelical interpretation of the Rev. G.C. Gorham was one which an Anglican clergyman was as much at liberty to hold as the Tractarian interpretation of Bishop Phillpotts, who had refused to institute him into a benefice. See J.C.S. Nias, Gorham and the Bishop of Exeter, London 1951.

³Minutes of Proceedings at a Meeting of the Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Australia...Sydney...1850, Sydney n.d., pp.17-21.

⁴See, e.g., A. Stackhouse, The Gorham 'Heresy'.... A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Tasmania..., Launceston 1851.

⁵'High' may be used to describe those clergy who formed the thin red line connecting the 17th century Laudian and Non-Juring parties with the 19th century Tractarians; all these had a high estimate of Church, ministry and sacraments. 'High and Dry' describes those who simply elevated the Establishment, objecting to Dissenters and believing in 'the union of Church and State, and little else' - S.C. Carpenter, Church and People, 1789-1889, 3 vols. London 1959, I, p.68.

⁶Grose to Dundas, 4 Sept. 1793, H.R.N.S.W., II, 64. William Wilberforce complained in 1808 that any man who said his prayers was called a Methodist or Calvinist - the old Duke of Bridgewater being so absurd as to refer to Bishop Porteus, with whom he had a difference of interest over canals, as 'that confounded Presbyterian' - G.W.E. Russell, A Short History of the Evangelical Movement, London 1915, p.10. Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, op. cit., pp.130-4.

was an Evangelical whose parents had really been Wesleyans.¹ The Rev. William Cowper, who arrived in the colony in 1809, was an aged but active Evangelical opponent of 'Puseyism' in the thirties and forties. Bishop Broughton believed that much of Cowper's ultra-low churchmanship had 'worn off' by 1842, but had to admit ruefully in 1846 that this worthy cleric had chosen to come out in denunciation of Tractarianism just at a time when he was trying to keep the peace and get united support for the establishment of a training college.² One of the old Van Diemen's Land clergy, Philip Palmer, was equally a thorn in the flesh of his bishop. Nixon condemned him as being useless in every way and 'active only in scattering the tracts of the Religious Tract Society' - a body founded in 1799 by English Evangelicals and Nonconformists. 'Of his churchmanship,' the bishop said, 'you may form a tolerably good estimate when I tell you that he has been in the habit of presiding at the meetings of the Bible Society held in his own church, in which he has suffered dissenting teachers of all kinds and grades to speak all manner of abuse against the Church for her lukewarmness and indifference'.³

Although Anglican prerogatives had been jealously guarded in the early days of the colonies, the Evangelicals had been very ready, nevertheless, to work with non-Anglicans in such matters as the distribution of Bibles and evangelical pamphlets. Their theology of salvation gave scant attention to an apostolic ministry, and was even tinged with Calvinism. Palmer and Cowper continued to co-operate in these activities, but the increasing number of High Church clergy, with Broughton and Nixon at their head, would enter no such alliances. As the Sydney layman, J.F. Castle wrote, after expressing pleasure in seeing Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists working together at a

¹J.S. Hassall, op. cit., p.136.

²Broughton to Coleridge, 14 Feb. 1842 and 14 Jan. 1846, BP.

³Nixon to Woodcock, 24 Feb. 1844, in N. Nixon, op. cit., p.22.

Tract Society's meeting, 'Our Bishop and Mr Woodd [the Rev. G.N.] not there - too high Church!'¹ There was some degree of truth, therefore, in a lament uttered by a Van Diemen's Land newspaper:

A generation has passed since this colony was formed; forty years long were we without a bishop; then all classes assisted each other, and every good man approved without suspicion the labours of his neighbours.... Now we see attempts to drive every good feeling into denominational channels, and to struggle for ascendancy.... 2

If the Anglican Church could not retain exclusive state support, there were enough clergymen within her fold who insisted upon her ecclesiastical exclusiveness to maintain a solid barrier between the Church of England and other Protestant Churches. The sacerdotal innovations (or restorations) of these men did not allow the breach to be narrowed or closed. If one unfortunate effect of the Reformation, in their view, was that it destroyed the authority of the Church and the clergy,³ they were not inclined to look with favour upon Dissenting ministers. They disdained them, in fact; Nixon's slighting reference to Nonconformist ministers as 'dissenting teachers' (just quoted) was typical, and echoed Archdeacon Hutchins' sneer at 'Ministers of Religion (so-called)'.⁴ The incumbent of Windsor launched a bitter attack on the Wesleyans as being in no true Church, and was given his bishop's support.⁵ (Even the Evangelical Bishop Perry regarded the Wesleyans dubiously, and admitted that he tried to get into new areas before them.⁶) The Tractarians condemned the Protestantism of Dissenters and of Evangelicals as the 'spurious' product of the eighteenth century, in which the 'rational

¹J.F. Castle, Private Journal, 25 Sept. 1838 (ANU Archives 7/13).

²Examiner, 8 Nov. 1843, p.697.

³F.R. Nixon, On the Duty of the Members of the Church of England..., p.11.

⁴Petition, V. & P., V.D.L., 1840.

⁵H.T. Stiles, A Sermon Preached...Previously to the Opening of a New Wesleyan Chapel..., Sydney 1840; Broughton to Stiles, 13 Dec. 1839, Stiles Papers (MSS ML A1323).

⁶The Church in the Colonies, No. XXIV..., London 1850, pp.126-7.

eneration for the Teaching and Witness of Antiquity' - respected by the original reformers - had been ignored.¹

Evangelicals and Nonconformists, in turn, branded the Tractarians and High Churchmen as traitors to Protestantism and as incipient Romanists. The Rev. H.P. Fry was described by Nixon as 'a man of purity, piety and untiring zeal' who had unfortunately come to be accused of unorthodoxy:

...some, indeed, hold him as a Papist in disguise; but then I must say they consider me as a Jesuit, so we share the honours in that way between us! 2

The Evangelical minister, William Woolls, went into print to argue that the Tractarian party, by its substitution of the Sacraments as 'a kind of charm ex opere operato' in place of faith, hope and charity, was leading the Church of England 'back into the errors of the dark ages'.³ Two New South Wales deacons who had fallen foul of Broughton, the Revs. P.T. Beamish and F.T.C. Russell, protested publicly in the Herald against the 'Romanism' being injected into the Church by the 'unprincipled party' of Tractarians,⁴ and they won considerable support from the laity - William Dumaesq and about eighty others expressing deep regret that Russell had been suspended.⁵

Nonconformists bitterly resented the uncertainty about 'the precise line of demarcation' between Anglicans and 'a more

¹Parramatta S.P.G. Report, 1840, pp.12, 14.

²Nixon to Woodcock, 24 Feb. 1844, loc. cit. Fry later went to the other extreme and signed the Solemn Declaration of 1851.

³W. Woolls, Postscript to the Tract for the Times, addressed to the Laity of New South Wales, Parramatta n.d. [1849], p.14. This was a sequel to an earlier pamphlet of his own.

⁴Herald, 5 June 1849, p.1. The letters appeared as advertisements after Broughton had refused to ordain the two men as priests because Russell was alleged to have described the bishop as 'Popish', and Beamish had accused Broughton of denying him an appointment because of his Evangelical views. As a result of the letters, Broughton revoked their licences - Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, 28 June 1849, II, p.57.

⁵Statement by the Rev. F.T.C. Russell..., Sydney 1849, pp.1-2.

ancient communion'.¹ Wesleyans in Australia were doubtless aware that one of their leading men in the English Conference had received loud cheers during a speech in which he said:

Unless the Church of England will protest against Puseyism in some intelligible form, it will be the duty of the Methodists to protest against the Church of England. 2

But they had little need for such a lead, for they had their own experience to guide them, having suffered themselves from 'the vaunting apostolic successionists...setting up their church privileges', and were glad when their converts ('the seal of our apostleship in the Lord') stood firm against Anglican clerical claimants.³ Independents also spoke out against the trend in Anglicanism by declaring what their own ministers were not.

[They] do not pretend to be lineal successors of the apostles, but they desire to imitate the piety and preach the doctrines taught by the apostles; - they do not pretend to bestow, in the water of baptism, an unction which changes the heart, but they labour and pray that Christ may be formed in the hearts of their hearers... 4

Declarations of this kind only sharpened the differences and reinforced the barriers between Protestants.

It was the extreme form of much of the Tractarian doctrine which repelled Nonconformists. Anglican ceremony could impress non-Anglicans so long as moderation was the key note. In one of Broughton's addresses at the laying of a foundation stone for a church, he spoke of the necessity for institutional religion and ceremonies; but he added that he wished 'to be distinctly understood as affirming that neither prayers, nor preaching, nor

¹Examiner, 14 Oct. 1843, p.641.

²B. Gregory, op. cit., p.317. The speaker was the Rev. Jabez Bunting at the Conference of 1841.

³N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1849, Appendix I (Hunter River Circuit). The converts were claimed to have belonged to no Church. At the same time, no Wesleyan minister would submit to absolute control by a layman over times and modes of worship - thus V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 5 Oct. 1843.

⁴Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, 1843, Hobart 1844, p.7. Cf. J.D. Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account..., 1852, edn., II, p.591.

the sacraments, nor any outward act expressive of devotion, is worthy the name of a religious exercise, if it be resorted to in a spirit of formalism'. Nor, he added, was the erection of a church any proof of piety unless it was undertaken in faith. The address was printed at the request of a Presbyterian, who was very much impressed by the whole ceremony, which he had 'always associated with Popery'.¹ It might be expected that many Presbyterians could have little against Keble's Assize Sermon when four hundred and fifty ministers, and nearly one third of the members, left the Church of Scotland in 1843 in protest against state interference with the Church.² A Wesleyan view of this event was expressed in the English Conference by the Rev. Dr Joseph Beaumont in the words, 'They are now what we are - Nonconformists who do not quarrel with the Establishment principle, unless it comes in the way of the Church's work.'³ Any extension of this to Puseyism was made impossible by that movement's exclusiveness. As a New South Wales Wesleyan minister put it, during one of the education battles:

We should have but little difficulty in adopting the Tractarian doctrine that 'the Church is the supreme instructress of the people', if we had the liberty of interpreting the term Church as meaning not the Church of England, of Rome, or any other Church exclusively, but the universal body of Christ's people, by whatever name they are called. 4

But this, of course, was precisely what the Tractarians denied.

The Wesleyans had been closer to the Church of England in 1835 than their separate existence and special emphases might suggest. They welcomed Bishop Broughton in 1836 with a promise of their prayers for his work, since they had been taught by

¹W.G. Broughton, Address, delivered on the Occasion of Laying the Foundation Stone of a Church, Sydney 1845.

²The dispute centred on whether or not the State had the final right to decide upon the appointment of ministers to their charges. See, e.g., H. Watt, Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption, Edinburgh 1943.

³B. Gregory, op. cit., p.349.

⁴The Rev. Jonathan Innes, Herald, 11 Sept. 1844, p.2.

their founder, by 'the oft-repeated declaration' of their Annual Conference, and by their own experience, that the Church of England had preserved 'to the British realm the blessings of Protestant Christianity'.¹ The Rev. James Hassall remembered many persons at Parramatta who regularly attended the Anglican church in the morning and went to the Wesleyan service in the evening.² The scripture lessons for each Sunday, as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer, were printed on some of the Methodist preaching plans.³ Services from that prayer book, slightly abridged and amended, were used in the Wesleyan Church in combination with free forms of worship. 'At an early Prayer Meeting we had a most gracious Season - My own heart was melted before the Lord', wrote the Rev. Nathaniel Turner, before describing the service which followed: 'Read the Liturgy, the Litany especially with great pleasure and Profit....'⁴ The Rev. Joseph Orton said that most Methodists had a decided attachment to the Church of England, used her liturgy and would stand by her in any hour of peril.⁵ It was sometimes still argued that Methodism was only an extension of Anglicanism, not a substitute for it.⁶ It was even possible for a New South Wales layman to say without qualification early in the thirties that the Methodist ministers 'preach[ed] the doctrines of the Church of England',⁷ and for one speaker in the British Methodist Conference, as late as 1844, to say that 'he believed in baptismal regeneration, and that Mr. Wesley did too'.⁸

¹Ibid., 23 June 1836, p.2.

²J.S. Hassall, op. cit., p.11.

³E.g., Hobart Town Circuit, Wesleyan Methodist Preachers' Plan, April-July 1839 and Feb.-April 1841.

⁴N. Turner, Journal 1836-46, 2 Feb. 1840 (MSS ML A1837).

⁵Courier, 5 Jan. 1838, p.4, c.4.

⁶'A Friend to Truth and Peace', A Letter to the Rev. Henry Tarlton Stiles, Sydney 1840, pp.16-8.

⁷G. Allen to Col. Sec., 5 Aug. 1831, quoted in D. Allen, Early Georgian, Sydney 1958, p.119.

⁸B. Gregory, op. cit., p.358. For a brief discussion of Wesley's changing views, see J. Bishop, Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship, London 1950, esp. p.114.

These latent possibilities were not exploited, not least because the Wesleyans had embraced a tradition which was the reverse of the Tractarians'. Methodists everywhere shared the Evangelicals' love of preaching for conversion, but they lacked the Evangelicals' determination to continue to be bound by the prayer book and Anglican ordinances. When the Tractarians laid even greater emphasis upon forms and ceremonies, and denied Wesleyan ministers the status of ordained men, the breach could not be closed. In addition, colonial Wesleyans must have been influenced by some egalitarian and anti-ceremonial attitudes similar to those of the American Frontier, where the prayer book and ministerial vestments were soon laid aside.¹ Launceston Wesleyans objected strenuously when a minister proposed to introduce the Order for Morning Prayer; despite a firm reply from the District Meeting that this usage had the weight of law, they resisted with equal firmness, and, more than twelve months after the matter had been raised, the liturgy was still not used.² If the Evangelicals had won the day in the Church of England, Methodism everywhere might have been kept close to that Church - and the Conference speaker who had declared his belief in baptismal regeneration might not have been put to rights so promptly. But Tractarianism was in the ascendant, and the Wesleyans - honouring the Church of England as the preserver of Protestantism - drew even further away, and closer to the old Dissent (which was no more attracted than was Methodism to the Oxford Movement).³

Yet Tractarianism did not win the day, either. Anglican accommodation and comprehension won, the Church of England learning from the Oxford Movement without letting itself be completely converted. Therefore, while this was the issue which dominated

¹H.R. Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, New York 1959, p.172.

²V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 5 June 1837; ibid., 1 Nov. 1838. See also, J. Orton, Letter Book 1836-41, pp.41, 50ff (MSS ML A1718/2), and Journal 1832-9, pp.125-6 (MSS ML).

³Cf. L.E. Elliott-Binns, Religion in the Victorian Era, London 1953, pp.110-12.

the period, its effects are not to be writ too large, and compromise must receive the laurel.

W.G. Broughton was a High Churchman of the old school rather than a Tractarian.¹ He expressed an early preference for ministers from J.H. Newman's party, but he was soon saying that he was troubled not only by clergy whose doctrine laid 'a foundation for dissent' but also by 'vain and unlearned young men' who could only 'babble about "Church Principles"'. The bishop's guarded attitude was revealed in the course of commenting very favourably upon the Rev. Robert Allwood, whom he had been persuading that ordinances administered by unqualified persons were not altogether invalid; Broughton described him as 'a pretty staunch Tractarian, but sound and cautious',² From the beginning Broughton said that he was aware of dangers in the Oxford Movement as well as probable good, and his fears increased as he watched the defections to Rome which culminated in Newman joining the Catholic Church in 1845.³

It was not the emphasis placed by the Tractarians upon the Church as divinely appointed to be supreme upon earth, upon the apostolic succession of the ministry, upon the essentiality of sacramental grace, or anything of this sort, which offended Broughton. It was the fact that the Tractarian arguments were always based upon fundamentally Roman Catholic premisses, and that they apparently set out to show how closely Anglicanism could be steered 'to the shoals of Romanism, without...actual shipwreck'.⁴ Broughton hated Rome, and all her works; and he

¹Cf. Marsden's early summing up of Broughton, quoted in F.T. Whittington, William Grant Broughton... Sydney 1936, pp.50-1: 'Our Archdeacon is a very high churchman, but not inimical to the Gospel. He will not countenance the smallest deviation from the rules of the Established Church'.

²Broughton to Coleridge, 19 Oct. 1837 and 14 Feb. 1842, BP.

³Broughton to Coleridge, 14 Oct. 1839; 20 Sept. 1843; and 10 July 1844. The Rev. Edward Coleridge, incidentally, was more of a Tractarian than was Broughton.

⁴W.G. Broughton, A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Australia, Sydney 1844, pp.39-40. Cf. A Charge delivered to the Clergy..., Sydney 1841, pp.32-4 and Postscript.

felt that High Church principles could be defended on the Church of England's own ground.

How restricted Broughton's High Church view was, and how fanatically he rejected Roman Catholicism, are revealed in these words:

Any object which has this tendency - as a stone altar favouring the supposition that we do not object to the tenet of an actual sacrifice, or the exhibition of a crucifix, which may put into the thoughts of the simple folk that we do not discourage the veneration of images - would be quite at variance with the character of our Church; is injudicious; is inadmissible. ¹

That Broughton took the via media in matters of doctrine and practice undoubtedly limited, and more quickly overcame, divisions over the Tractarian issue in his diocese. In preaching on the Holy Communion, Broughton condemned the idea that religion was 'summed up in inward conviction' and that 'outward and symbolic acts of worship...were not needed'. Nor was this sacrament mere symbolism; it conveyed the benefits of Christ's passion and enabled the partaker truly to 'dwell in him'. Thus far the Tractarian was gratified. Left at that point, the Evangelical would not have been pleased. But Broughton did not stop there: he went on to describe the 'mere naked ordinance' as nothing in itself, and to say that without penitence, charity and thankful remembrance, 'the inward part or the thing signified will not be granted'.² In such a sermon both Tractarian and Evangelical could find congenial truth, and if each might have been inclined to stress one aspect

¹ Ibid. (1844), p.51. Hence Broughton had ordered the removal of a stone altar from H.D.D. Sparling's church at Appin - Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, 28 April 1843, I, p.248; and he 'put his foot through the painted glass' (presumably, not literally) when W.H. Walsh wanted to put a window with a crucifixion scene and a Madonna in it into Christ Church, St Lawrence - Atlas, 26 Feb. 1848, p.98. Vestments and furnishings were not prominent in the early years of the Oxford Movement; E.B. Pusey is said to have had to ask someone what a cope was.

² W.G. Broughton, The Nature and Intent of the Holy Communion Explained, for the Use of Those Recently Confirmed..., Sydney 1841, pp.8-9.

more than another, neither would have denied the other truth. Under Broughton, Anglican comprehension was not too severely strained: the emphases of the Tractarians were both encouraged and judiciously pruned, and the average parson could follow his bishop along what was, more or less, the middle road.

The traditional Evangelical loyalty to the Church, and the Low Church parsons' loyalty to Broughton, continued without serious check until an exceptional instance of High Church rebellion occurred. In 1848 two clergymen, the Rev. R.K. Sconce and the Rev. T.C. Makinson, renounced Anglicanism and joined the Catholic Church.¹ Twenty Anglican clergymen, including the Evangelicals William Cowper, W.B. Clarke, P.T. Beamish and F.T.C. Russell, signed an address to Broughton in which they expressed sympathy for the bishop's embarrassment and re-affirmed their own loyalty; and this was followed by a similar address from the Church of England Lay Association.² But some of the Evangelical clergy - country incumbents like James Walker, James Hassall and G.E. Turner (supported by many of the colonial landed gentry) - felt that the defection was the last straw, and that Tractarianism was not getting the outright condemnation it should from Broughton; there was considerable unrest in the Church, and there would have been more if the bishop had not astutely steered the controversy into such safe channels as Papal supremacy and textual criticism.³ The controversy continued in various forms,⁴ and, just over a year later, the simmering cauldron boiled over again when Beamish and Russell publicly criticized the 'popish' invasion of the Church of England, and much other correspondence (actually involving less than a

¹For Broughton's private comments, see Broughton to Coleridge, 4 July 1848, BP.

²Herald, 24 Feb. 1848, p.2, c.3; 4 Mar. 1848, p.2, c.7. The Herald itself white-washed the bishop and the Anglican Church - ibid., 29 Feb. The Atlas, and some of its readers, denounced 'Puseyism Finally Developed into Popery' (26 Feb. 1848, et. seq.).

³K. Cable, 'Religious Controversies...', I', op. cit., pp.64-5.

⁴Note, e.g., the lay opposition to H.H. Bobart's abolition of the clerk's duties at Parramatta, which finally made Bobart capitulate, Herald, 3, 24 May, 5 Aug. 1848.

dozen people) was published either on behalf of the indiscreet and insubordinate deacons or in support of Broughton.¹ The discontent never really disappeared, but it was kept in check and, by 1852, Broughton could report that there was 'a quietness and good sense' among his clergy (and laity) quite unlike the turmoil in Van Diemen's Land.²

In that island diocese, under a bishop at once a more dedicated Tractarian and a less commanding person,³ the Evangelicals' resentment was to explode (in the fifties) into almost open defiance of Nixon, and to be met with high-handed episcopal retaliation, which did small good to either party. Twenty Van Diemen's Land clergymen published a statement in which they condemned the 'Romanizing' content of three books in common use, and defended the right of private interpretation. Nixon's retort was to refuse preferment to, or accept Letters Testimonial from, any of the clergy who signed the protest.⁴ But this occurred at a later date; in the forties the controversy was more limited and, both in Van Diemen's Land and on the mainland, Broughton's strength and ruthlessness discouraged clergymen from rash ventures.

When a minister offended, Broughton was quick and severe in rebuke; when a rebel remained defiant, Broughton was quite without mercy; and it did not matter to which party the guilty one belonged. H.T. Stiles was a clergyman after Broughton's own heart, but he was very severely reprimanded when the bishop considered that he had abused his pulpit by making pointed allusions to one member of the congregation (G.M.C. Bowen).⁵ When the Tractarians, Sconce

¹See Herald for the whole month of June 1849. The paper itself studiously avoided comment, and all the letters were published as advertisements.

²Broughton to Coleridge, 19 Mar. 1852, BP.

³Broughton, regretting that Nixon was 'getting into much hot water with several of his clergy', thought he should be warned against rashness and impetuosity - Broughton to Coleridge, 9 Apr. 1845, BP.

⁴Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen's Land..., Hobart 1851; and F.R. Nixon, Substance of a Reply to a Deputation appointed at a Public Meeting of Members of the Church of England...April 22, 1852, 2nd edn. London 1853.

⁵Broughton to Stiles, 22 July, 3 Aug. 1837, Stiles Papers (ML A1323).

and Makinson, defected to Rome, not only was the sentence of deprivation and deposition passed on them, but the two converts were cut by the clergy after Broughton warned them against continuing any intimacy.¹ Again, the revocation of the licences of the Low Church deacons, Russell and Beamish, was followed by Russell being told to 'never address His Lordship again upon any subject whatever, unless to express repentance and contrition for his past conduct', and by Broughton's long and vindictive obstruction of their wish to minister in Bishop Perry's Diocese of Melbourne.² Broughton's balanced theology, severe discipline and skilful handling of controversies contributed much towards the Church of England's riding out of the storm. The other great safeguard was the sheer capacity of the Anglican Church to comprehend differing views.

Anglican preaching as a mirror

Anglican preaching naturally reflected the doctrinal divergence. The Rev. J.D. Mereweather spoke of a child, born a child of wrath, being born anew in baptism and saved from the wrath of God;³ but that ancient battler, Archdeacon Cowper, spoke very differently in a lugubrious sermon from the text 'Our bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth':

Not all the...unscriptural doctrines, or devices of Popery or Puseyism,...not any supposed sacramental efficacy, not any mere Baptismal regeneration...could afford peace to the conscience...; but the good old way - an humble, affectionate, self-denying, and faithful reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, as my own and only Saviour.... Here is felicity in the hour of death. 4

Men in the pews did not miss the different emphases of the preachers,

¹Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop..., II, p.13; Broughton to Stiles, 15 Apr. 1848, and following letters, Stiles Papers (ML A269).

²Perry to Broughton, 16 Nov. 1849 - 7 June 1850, BP (Reel I); Acts and Proceedings..., II, pp.57, 63-5, 71-96.

³J.D. Mereweather, The Type and the Antitype, or Circumcision and Baptism, Melbourne 1850, p.6.

⁴W. Cowper, A Sermon Preached in St Philip's Church, Sydney, 14 October 1849, Sydney n.d., pp.3-4.

or the way in which the preachers' styles revealed their parties. The Evangelical layman, Frederick Castle, once commented favourably on a sermon preached by the Rev. G.N. Woodd, a High Churchman, but he added a general impression of Woodd's preaching which was far from favourable:

I think he seems too doctrinal & not sufficiently perceptive or didactic, one would almost suppose he was more anxious that people should think right, than act right, should know light rather than love it... 1

The difference may be well brought out by comparing Cowper's sermon with one by Broughton on faith. Cowper preached after his recovery from a dangerous illness, and despite the monotonous, ghoulisn repetition that death comes to all (and 'have we fled to Jesus, as our only refuge?'), there was a vitality in his sermon. While near death, he truly had found consolation in faith alone, and he emotionally rejoiced in Christ, its object. In contrast, Broughton was intellectually convinced that only by grace, through faith, could a man be saved, and his exposition remained academic, lacking all warmth and enthusiasm - this was not a doctrine which excited High Churchmen, though they completely accepted it.

Wherefore it pleased God to accept the sufferings of the Lord his Christ, our glorious Redeemer, in expiation or substitution for the offence of all who place an unfeigned trust in the efficacy of that sacrifice. This is the 'free gift' manifested for the justification of many offenders. 2

This was dull text-book stuff from the bishop, conducive to sleep. It is doubtful if anyone slept when Cowper emerged from the grave's mouth to ask, 'Have we fled to Jesus?'. Broughton, it is to be admitted, was a man who usually adopted a cool and distant manner in public,³ but when he was preaching on such a congenial subject

¹J.F. Castle, op. cit., 12 May 1839.

²W.G. Broughton, The Righteousness of Faith..., Sydney 1836, p.11.

³Cf. F.T. Whittington, op. cit., p.68ff. Broughton was not, however, an unfeeling man. His passionate and permanent love for his wife was very notable. 'Indeed, my dearest Sally,' he wrote, eleven years after his marriage, 'the pain I feel at being separated from you is so great that I cannot endure it any longer.... I know myself to be as ardent a lover as ever I was in my life. And that, you know, is saying a great deal.' (Broughton to his wife, 5 Mar.

as the sacraments he could be forthright enough. Excuses for non-communication he gave short shrift to.

The evil-doer who presumes to take that holy Sacrament, kindles God's wrath against him, it is true, But do you imagine that the evil-doer who does not communicate shall on that account escape the wrath of God? Believe it not.

And he went on to ask if families who divided at the Lord's table - some communicating, others not - wished to be separated for ever in heaven.¹ It could not have been so easy to sleep during this sermon.

If the sermons revealed the clergy's respective enthusiasms, they revealed at the same time the wide extent of common ground and, frequently, the degree of sweet reasonableness which kept Anglicans together. A sermon of the Rev. George Turner, minister of Hunter's Hill, may be taken as a good example of Evangelical preaching. He pleaded the need for the simple and scriptural preaching of Jesus Christ. He placed an even greater emphasis on

fervent, faithful and intelligent prayer: without which, the Holy Sacraments would convey no grace whatever to the soul of man: without which, the most eloquent preaching of his ministers would be 'but as sounding brass or a tinkling symbol'.

But he also said that baptism could not be received, and the vows of parents and sponsors fulfilled, without the baptized 'being influenced by the Spirit of God'; and that communicants could not approach the Lord's Table in humble dependence upon Christ 'without partaking of that spiritual food, which will strengthen and refresh our souls'.² Vague, perhaps, and not all that the 'semi-Popish' Tractarians (as Turner called them) might have desired; but at least the sacraments were firmly included as effectual means of grace.

3 (continued)

1829, in E.C. Rowland, *op. cit.*, p.68). Once he described himself as 'grieved' by his wife's sickness, adding 'and yet that is but a poor cold word to express what I feel when anything threatens her'. (Broughton to Coleridge, 22 Dec. 1843, BP).

¹W.G., Broughton, Nature...of the Holy Communion, pp.12, 15.

²G.E. Turner, A Sermon Preached on Whitsunday, 27 May 1849, Sydney n.d., pp.7-9.

For the other side, a sermon by the Rev. Frederick Cox, of St John Baptist's, Hobart, may be mentioned. He spoke defensively, but moderately, on behalf of High Churchmen - and, in particular, of his own ministry. He had always taught his people - who had the Bible in their hands - the true gospel; and he had taught nothing of any religious life apart from Christ, and no righteousness but by faith in Christ.

This is the meaning of prayer. This is the meaning of Church services. This is the meaning of frequent Communion at the Holy Table. They are steps by which you may approach Christ, the invisible yet ever-present Saviour. This is the meaning of all ordinances, from Baptism to the last parting benediction: they are places of refreshment on the desert track of this world, 'pools filled with water', the gift of Him with whom is the well of life. 1

An Evangelical may have been impatient with the frame of ordinances within which Christ was set, but he could not deny that Christ was at the centre.

Defence of the liturgical practices of the Church of England was a marked feature of the preaching; the preachers felt obliged to re-assert their Anglican principles. This was to be expected in the Tractarians or High Churchmen, who saw their role to be that of recalling their people to the true faith and practice. Thus F.R. Nixon admitted that anyone going from parish to parish (in England) would find it hard to determine 'the fixed principles of the Church of England'. The Athanasian Creed² was disused, prayers were added or omitted, unsanctioned hymns were sung, baptism was performed 'almost without witness' (instead of being a congregational act), the apostolic succession was scarcely regarded by some clergy, and many 'devout' persons neglected the sacraments. Deploring the liberties taken with the services, and the people's preference for 'their own rash opinions', he appealed for 'union

¹F.H. Cox, Perseverance and Endurance, the Duties of this Time, Hobart 1851, p.12.

²Or the Quicumque Vult, which should replace the Apostle's Creed on thirteen holy days.

among churchmen'.¹ W.G. Broughton, from nearer the centre, and especially conscious of the regrowth of Roman Catholicism in England, also pleaded for 'union among ourselves' that no inward weakness or disorder might paralyze the Church.² Both these appeals happened to be made when Broughton and Nixon were bishops-elect, preaching in England, but High Church ministers preaching in the colonies frequently spoke in this vein. Robert Allwood, for instance, felt it incumbent on him to claim that the liturgical prayers of the prayerbook best secured proper order, soundness of petition and understanding by the people;³ and Frederick Cox decided that there was a need for him to argue for the observance of the Christian year, supporting it because it ensured that the whole gospel was presented to the people.⁴

Yet the tendency was not confined to the High Churchmen. Evangelicals, and Anglican parsons generally, also rallied to the defence of their Church's practice. Both Stackhouse and Turner preached on the advantage of having a liturgy, and in praise of the prayer book.⁵ The re-introduction of the offertory was defended by the Rev. William Dry (arguing both for the Church's rules and for the duty of the poor to share in the support of their religion) and by the Rev. R.R. Davies (who denied his congregation's accusation that it was just one more alarming Tractarian innovation).⁶ Opinion about what the Church of England should do, and should not do, was in a state of flux; and the clergy of all parties were set to defend the tradition - or their interpretations of it.

¹F.R. Nixon, On the Duty of the Members of the Church of England..., pp.13, 16, 21-3, 25.

²W.G. Broughton, The Present Position and Duties of the Church of England...1835, Canterbury n.d., pp.15, 30.

³R. Allwood, op. cit., p.18.

⁴F.H. Cox, op. cit., pp.12-13.

⁵A. Stackhouse, The Christian's Encouragement in Well Doing..., Launceston 1845, p.5; G.E. Turner, op. cit., p.3.

⁶W. Dry, Sermons, Launceston 1850, No. XX; R.R. Davies, 'The Offertory' Not an Innovation..., Launceston 1845 - see especially the appendices. For an example of an Anglican clergyman resisting the introduction, see William Woolls, op. cit.

The opposite extremity of Protestantism put forward sufficient of its variant doctrines to add to the uncertainty in men's minds, and to rally the Anglican clergymen. There were the Baptists who condemned infant baptism and insisted on believer's baptism and total immersion.¹ There was the strange interpretation of the Lord's Supper given by the Presbyterian, the Rev. Barzillai Quaife, in which the rite was valued principally as a proof of Christ's death and resurrection since its celebration could be traced back through generations of men to the Last Supper. (It was a kind of apostolic succession argument, though this was emphatically rejected by Quaife where it is usually applied - to the ministry and the validity of orders).²

Yet it was probably not so much these extreme beliefs, or the strength of non-Anglicanism generally, which called forth the Anglican clergy's defences. The reasons were less far to seek. There was, for one thing, a great deal of ignorance and carelessness in the Anglican ranks; the people had to be taught. There was also some feeling that the normal church service was wearisome and should be shortened and made interesting, so that the Rev. Robert Allwood in New South Wales asserted that the Church of England did not attempt to allure men by 'novelty or excitement',³ and Bishop Nixon must have found no less reason in Van Diemen's Land than in England to insist that the main object of the service was to pray, not to preach, and to complain

...we are too often looked upon as men of sermons, than as men of prayer; our congregations the while becoming critics, where they should be disciples... 4

The critics were multiplied by the Tractarian-Evangelical crisis, but in prayer, the prayer book and its liturgy, the Anglican clergy found much common ground - as Frederick Denison Maurice was at

¹See, e.g., E. Mote, A Dialogue on Baptism, Hobart n.d. (c.1835).

²B. Quaife, A Condensed View of the Proper Design and Uses of the Lord's Supper, Parramatta 1845, pp.5-10.

³R. Allwood, op. cit., p.23.

⁴F.R. Nixon, op. cit., p.18.

that time suggesting they might.¹ With this starting point and example, their theological differences could more easily become blurred and subordinate.

The Bible

The Tractarian attitude to the Bible was important both in Anglican opposition to general systems of education and also in driving the wedge more firmly between Anglicans and Nonconformists. In re-emphasizing the authority of the Church and the clergy, the Tractarians strictly qualified the Protestant tenet that the final authority for the Christian was his own conviction as he read 'God's Word' for himself. When a matter appeared to be simply the defence of Protestantism against Catholicism, as in the 1836 battle over the Irish school system in New South Wales, a solid front could be maintained among Protestants. Bishop Broughton simply appealed to the Protestant dogma that 'Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation' and left it at that.² A Low Church Anglican, like the Rev. W.B. Clarke, could more easily continue to demand for schools 'the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible'.³ But the High Churchmen could not be content with this once the threat from Rome had passed. The Bible as interpreted in the creeds and articles of the Church of England was what they insisted upon, with a conviction far exceeding that of the Evangelicals. The ground on which Broughton could stand to reject the Irish school system was not the ground on which he could erect another comprehensive system; he went on to demand the creeds and articles. Another High Churchman, Allwood, preached that the Reformers 'did not imagine so vain a device as that every man might go to the Bible, and that a translated one, and search out a religion for himself'.⁴

¹F.D. Maurice, The Kingdom of Christ... [1842], 2 vols. London 1958, II, p.293ff.

²W.G. Broughton, A Speech...at the General Committee..., pp.5-6.

³S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.14.

⁴Parramatta S.P.G. Report, 1840, p.15.

In taking this line, the Tractarians drew near to the Catholic teaching. It was the private interpretation of the Bible which had caused all the principal heresies in the past, in the conventional Catholic view of Fr. M'Encroe.¹ W.B. Ullathorne, defending the Catholic insistence that the Bible had to be authoritatively interpreted for the people, explained that while the Bible was 'the law' and the individual 'the judge' for Protestants, the Bible was only part of the law, and the judge was the Church, for Catholics.² He claimed that the Protestant point of view, if carried to its logical conclusion, was that none could be saved unless he could read, and indeed read the Bible in the original tongues (all translators being interpreters).³ Whereupon he was answered with an equally extreme form of argument: 'The Bible is a collection of God's letters or epistles to the human race, not to the Roman Catholic clergy exclusively'.⁴

One Protestant argued by analogy that a father (God) might send a letter to his wife (Church) and family (people), and the letter could be given to the children to read for themselves, bringing to their mother for explanation any difficulties they had with it.⁵ A Catholic could have retorted that the 'children' might misunderstand without realizing it; and, in fact, most Protestants were ready to admit limits to the plain man's understanding of the Bible when he read it alone and uninstructed. Yet they clung to the principle of informed private judgment. As a layman, wrote one Protestant, he would not have

...the presumption when writing to a clergyman, to speak dogmatically respecting the sense of any particular passage of Holy Scripture; but by the aid of Bickersteth and such

¹Note the title of M'Encroe's book - *The Wanderings of the Human Mind in 'Searching the Scriptures': Being a Concise History of... the Principal Heresies that have Arisen...from the Private Interpretation of the Holy Bible*, Sydney 1841,

²W.B. Ullathorne, *Observations on the Use and Abuse of the Sacred Scriptures...*, Sydney 1834, pp.6-7.

³Ibid., p.37.

⁴Colonist, 19 Mar. 1848, p.94.

⁵Ibid., 12 Mar. 1848, p.81.

like men, a person of plain and common understanding, may venture to express a doubt... 1

Finally, the Protestant had to be guided by his own conscience and decision. However much, in actual fact, the Dissenters stressed the preaching (which is the interpretation) of the Word, or the Shorter Catechism, or Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, or obedience to their rules and conventions, their theory was always expressed in such words as, 'The Bible alone is the religion of Presbyterians',² or that a Wesleyan 'was a man of one book'.³

Naturally the most Protestant of Anglicans - the Evangelicals - clashed with their Tractarian fellows at this point. It was this article of faith which was given expression in 1851 in the Van Diemen's Land Evangelical clergy's Solemn Declaration, where it was maintained that the Church had a right to teach, but not the right to override private judgment in matters of religion; and it was because of Nixon's Tractarianism that he consequently pronounced these clergymen 'unsound in their religious opinions, and therefore incapable of testifying to the soundness of the opinions of another'.⁴ But, once more, this was a divergence which should not be exaggerated, and which seldom reached such extreme proportions. More typically, a High Churchman was content to urge the view of Bishop Jebb, who had maintained that the Church of England steered a middle course between Catholics, who sent their people to an infallible living expositor, and the Protestant sects, who relied alone on the Bible.⁵ On the other hand, Evangelicals had held out strongly against the 'cruelty' of teaching children Bible passages without proper interpretation.⁶ No Anglican forgot the creeds and the prayer book.

¹'A Friend to Truth and Peace', op. cit., pp.4-5. Edward Bickersteth was a contemporary Evangelical divine and author.

²James Fullerton, Herald, 19 July 1839, p.3, c.2.

³Ralph Mansfield, ibid., 11 Sept. 1844, p.2, c.6.

⁴F.R. Nixon, Substance of a Reply..., pp.4-5.

⁵Jebb's Appendix to Sermons, 1815, quoted by Allwood, Parramatta S.P.G. Report, 1840, p.17.

⁶W. Dry, op. cit., p.82.

Catholics had to deny the perennial accusation that their Church kept the Bible from the people, and they vigorously rebutted this distorted charge. Dr Polding wished to God that he 'could deposit a copy in the cottage of everyone disposed to read it with the proper dispositions!', and maintained that the Church had only warned Catholics against the 'poisoned fountains' produced by the Reformers. He said:

Keep this book with reverence; let its laws be thy guide,
its counsels thy support and consolation. When thou
hearest its words or redest it, remember God speaks unto
thee... 1

W.B. Ullathorne argued similarly,² and might very well have asked his readers to note carefully the Catholic preaching, which was very heavily weighted with scriptural references. Ullathorne's own printed sermon on drunkenness was headed with four texts from the Old and New Testaments, and reached a denouement in the words of St Paul.³ Dr Polding's lenten address for 1837 was based on a text from Joel and went on to refer to Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter.⁴ As far as the use of the Bible went, the Catholic preaching was not usually distinguishable from Protestant sermons - although the honours could possibly go to the Anglican, Clarke, who had fifty-six verses or passages from the Bible given in foot-notes to one printed sermon.⁵

Both Protestant and Catholic used the Old and New Testaments with equal readiness; there was no suggestion in their preaching that the New Testament had greater authority than the Old. Nor was there any suggestion that the Bible was anything but the

¹Polding was speaking at the blessing of the foundation stone of St Joseph's Church, on the McDonald River, 22 Dec. 1839. He is quoted in John Kenny, op. cit., p.185.

²W.B. Ullathorne, op. cit., p.6.

³W.B. Ullathorne, Substance of a Sermon against Drunkenness..., Sydney n.d. (c.1834). The climax (p.11) was in the words of 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10.

⁴J.B. Polding, The Pastoral Instruction for Lent, 1837..., Sydney 1837, pp.5, 6-7.

⁵S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.3ff.

homogeneous word of God, to be taken literally. In Germany, under such men as J.G. Eichhorn, critical and analytical study of the Bible had been going on for years, but the English theologians had isolated themselves from such studies. There were only two men at Oxford who knew German when E.B. Pusey went from that university to Germany in 1825, to be shocked (perhaps with good reason) by the teaching of such professors as Eichhorn and Pott. He saw at once that biblical criticism would eventually reach Britain, and was alarmed at 'how utterly unprepared for it' they all were. Even the study of Hebrew was largely neglected by the English theologians; Pusey went to Germany a second time to turn himself into a semitic scholar and - as further illustrations of the neglect - both J.H. Newman and W.G. Broughton taught themselves Hebrew.¹ English thinkers like Samuel Taylor Coleridge could be found arguing, against 'Bibliolatory', that there was all the difference in the world between saying 'The Bible contains the religion revealed by God' and 'Whatever is contained in the Bible is religion, and was revealed by God'.² But the Australian clergy tended to accept the former statement. 'Higher Criticism'³ had not troubled their exegesis, and the Bible was still one book.⁴ With the less iconoclastic 'Lower Criticism', the establishment of the proper text and translation from the old manuscripts, the Australian clergy were familiar enough. The possibility that Jesus spent a night 'in a house of prayer' and

¹G. Faber, op. cit., pp.137-40, 168-9; Broughton to Edward Coleridge, c.1, Feb. 1851, BP.

²S.T. Coleridge, 'Letters on the Inspiration of the Scriptures', in Complete Works (7 Vols. ed. W.G.T. Shedd, New York 1884) V, p.597. There is much more in the same strain both in these letters and in his Table Talk (VI) which were first published between 1835 and 1840.

³Although the term was coined much later (1881), this was what Eichhorn and his peers were doing in their questioning of date and authorship of various parts of the Bible, comparing biblical writings with other semitic writing, suggesting mythical strands, and so on.

⁴It was not until 1850 that the Bishop of London, C.J. Blomfield, told his clergy that there was more to fear from the theology of Germany than from that of Rome.

not simply 'in prayer' (Luke 6:12), and the rendering of Psalm 104:4 as the Lord 'maketh his angels winds' instead of the Authorized Version's 'maketh his angels spirits', are random and typical examples taken from colonial publications.¹

It was indeed in the matter of translation - and from which manuscripts - that the greatest divergence occurred between Protestant and Catholic, the Catholics condemning the Authorized Version and the Protestants criticizing the Douay Version. Yet, serious as this was, it was still a comparatively minor disagreement. There was a greater truth, once expressed in this way:

...the Bible is a blessing to mankind at large. Its influence in this world is most salutary and important; while the bearing of its truths on the happiness of the immortal spirit, invest it with claims which it must be unspeakably perilous to disregard. 2

With that, Protestant and Catholic, Evangelical and Tractarian, conservative and critical scholar, could all agree.

¹The first example is from Scripture Lessons for the Use of Schools. New Testament, No. 1, Sydney 1849, p.26. (This was one of the Irish system books). The second is from W. Hutchins, A Sermon on behalf of the V.D.L. .../S.P.C.K. and S.P.G./, Hobart 1839, p.6.

²21st Report of the V.D.L. Auxiliary Bible Society, 1841, Hobart n.d., p.9.

CHAPTER 11

THE DOCTRINES AND PREACHING OF THE CLERGY;
(2) SERMON SKILLS, AND SOME COMMON THEMES

Sermon skills

To preach ex tempore is always a risky venture, and most colonial clergymen rarely or never attempted it. The Rev. William McIntyre was the 'only good extemporaneous preacher' heard by a fellow Presbyterian minister, who added that the few who resorted to the practice usually failed.¹ John M'Garvie occasionally preached ex tempore, but always revealed his nervousness by proudly recording the fact in his diary.² Though a section of his Independent congregation considered extemporaneous preaching to be the necessary mark of a truly spiritual preacher, the Rev. William Jarrett persisted in reading his sermons;³ and so did most of the colonial preachers. The practice of writing sermons facilitated the printing of them, and many were published. Examination of these prepared sermons reveals that, if the extemporaneous gift was usually lacking, other homiletic skills were not. David Mackenzie was probably right when, after having heard all Presbyterian and many Anglican ministers in New South Wales, he wrote:

I have no hesitation in asserting, that at least a majority of our colonial clergy might, in any way, stand a competition against an equal number taken indiscriminately from the clergy at home... 4

To take one example, Archdeacon Hutchins could hardly have failed to catch his hearers' attention when he opened a sermon with the caustic remark that within the last hour thousands of

¹D. Mackenzie, op. cit., p.53.

²J. M'Garvie, Diary 1843-7, pp.3, 29, 37, 176 (ML).

³M. Roe, op. cit., pp.403-9.

⁴D. Mackenzie, op. cit., p.51.

people had made, upon their knees, a mockery of prayer.¹ Again, A.M. Ramsay knew how to make high dramatic reference to a youth recently drowned:

In less than an hour my young friend anticipated a pleasant interview with his affectionate and generous relative, but ah, it was to be another interview. He was to see his Maker face to face, in that world where all is fixed and unchangeable. 2

But perhaps it is easiest to recapture the effectiveness of a sermon by that brilliant preacher, W.B. Ullathorne, the Catholic Vicar-General.

He preaches this day against drunkenness. The beginning is quiet, but has a directness which awakens immediate interest. What is a drunkard? Ullathorne adopts a puzzled tone: a Christian follows Christ; an angel is a pure creature contemplating God; a man thinks and reasons; a brute beast follows its appetites, but not to excess. What then is a drunkard? There is nothing in all creation, apparently, like a drunkard; he is nothing but - a drunkard. The preacher pauses. The hearers smirk and nudge each other, or grin in embarrassment. They are recalled by a single crisp remark: the truth about drunkenness must not be softened into falsehood. In another silence the congregation sits without movement, eyes fastened on the preacher, who waits until uneasiness mounts among the people. Suddenly the sermon is continued, loudly, fiercely, the sentences of denunciation rolling and raging one after the other without pause or mercy. The drunkard is a self-made wretch who has gratified the depraved cravings of the throat of his body, until he has sunk his soul so far that it is lost in his flesh. He has sunk his flesh lower than that of the animals which serve him. He differs only from the madman in that the mad are innocent. Where, O God, is thy image in this man? What did St Paul say? 'Do not err, nor fornicators, nor idolators...NOR DRUNKARDS...shall possess the Kingdom of God'.

¹W. Hutchins, A Sermon..., p.9.

²A.M. Ramsay, The Voice of the Storm...preached in the Protestant Hall, Stephen Street, Melbourne, Melbourne 1850, pp.8-9.

On and on the preacher thunders. Then his tone changes again, and the question is asked, how can the habit be broken? Quietly and firmly, he concludes with practical advice (strangely omitting any offer of grace). The preacher has been in turn arresting, amusing, commanding, alarming, shaming and down to earth. It has been skilled pulpit oratory.¹

The preachers were not fond of the 'illustrative story' so beloved of moderns, but J.D. Lang could shrewdly refer to the daily round to help get his message across. Visiting Yass, he gathered a congregation which consisted largely of shepherds, working for wages in rough country where snakes were a hazard. Deliberately, therefore, he began with the text, 'For all we like sheep have gone astray', followed it with 'the wages of sin is death', and concluded with the miraculous healing of the Israelites by Moses' brazen serpent. Nor was Lang afraid of luridness:

Figure to yourselves...an Israelite bitten by one of these venomous reptiles in the outskirts of the camp.... The poison has already reached his vitals; his blood stagnates in his veins, and his pulse beats slowly as if it would beat its last; a deathly lethargy steals over his frame; his pallid countenance exhibits the ghastliness of approaching dissolution, and his eye is fixed in the very glare [sic, but 'glaze'?] of death.

If his hearers were not too bemused by 'his pallid countenance exhibits the ghastliness of approaching dissolution', they must have been quite spell-bound.²

The sermons were characteristically long--usually running to fifteen, twenty or even thirty printed pages. This may or may not have been a defect; but one common fault was that the wording was hardly simple enough for the worst educated or illiterate. The Rev. William McIntyre may have been a good extemporaneous preacher, but it must have been hard to endure the forty minutes (twenty-four printed pages) in which he spoke in this vein:

¹W.B. Ullathorne, Against Drunkenness...

²J.D. Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account..., 1852 edn., II, pp.587-91.

These remarks may suffice to shew, and this is the point we sought to illustrate, that in the fact, that the Sabbath is a positive institution, a principal cause of its desecration is to be found, or, in other words, that it is desecrated to a far greater extent than it would be, other things remaining the same, if the law which requires its observance were one of the laws which lie within the field of natural revelation. 1

The Rev. John Lillie was, in some ways, even worse:

Or, again, when we explain to the shipwright the hydrostatic principles, by the application of which he gives buoyancy to the gigantic fabric he constructs and enables it to bear its ponderous burden in safety and triumph through the billowy and perilous deep, uniting by the felicitous bond of intercommunication the remotest regions and nations of our terraqueous world... 2

Both McIntyre and Lillie were ministers of the Church of Scotland, but Presbyterians, of course, did not go unchallenged in this regard; other preachers could rival them. Even the able Broughton was guilty of using these words in trying to warn women convicts at Parramatta against being persuaded to join the Catholic Church:

...there are those who would covertly lead them captive, taking advantage of their restraint and seclusion from all proper means of information, to spread amongst them persuasions foreign to God's word.

If the bishop spoke like this, the wonder is that the Catholics needed to complain that 'the more refined language of His Lordship conveyed ideas to his audience which, in the language of the Factory, were expressed by stating that...the Archbishop and his priests were liars and hypocrites, and whoever listened to them would go to hell with them'.³ But some understood, apparently, and interpreted to the many who had a difficult time with this sort of preaching.

¹Ministers of the Presbyterian Church, Lectures on the Sabbath..., Sydney 1841, Lecture III, pp.7-8. To all intents and purposes, these were sermons.

²This was typical of his style, though this extract is not from a sermon, but from his Opening Lecture...upon the Subserviency of the Works of Nature to Religion..., Hobart 1841, pp.6-7.

³The portion of the sermon and the complaint (H.G. Gregory to Col. Sec., 17 June 1844) are quoted in P.F. Moran, op. cit., p.441.

In the light of such an example of preaching to ignorant and degraded female prisoners it is unsurprising to learn of an incident (possibly apocryphal, but not unbelievable) at a similar institution in the southern colony. The Rev. William Bedford, in the company of Sir John Franklin, his wife and attendants, began to preach to the women, who wore only loose dresses. Contemptuous of his 'long stupid sermons', they tried to cough him down; when ordered by the warders to be quiet 'they all with one impulse turned round, raised their clothes and smacked their posteriors with a loud report'.¹

Other chaplains were more careful to match their words to their audience. 'Many men are sadly ignorant of their religious duties,' wrote an Anglican chaplain on Norfolk Island, 'and need instruction in the most plain and simple language';² while the Rev. Joseph Orton was quick to criticize a fellow Wesleyan's sermon in the words, 'It would have been more likely to be a useful sermon to a more matured congregation than to the simple persons to whom it was addressed'.³ Indeed, while the preachers seldom resorted to words of one syllable, their preaching was most often fairly plain. It was not difficult to follow the minister who said:

Let this time of Lent, - a season, not for strife and agitation, but for humiliation, silence, withdrawal from the world, - call you to learn more perfectly the lesson of the Cross. You would do well to set apart some time in every day for a brief study, in the very words of Scripture, of the manner of life of those first disciples, who had Apostles for their spiritual fathers. Read, pray, and imitate. 4

Fleeing the wrath to come

When men believed in hell and possession by Satan, and had never heard of psychoneurosis and release by Dr Freud, it was easy

¹Robert Crooke, 'The Convict, a Tale Founded on Fact', quoted in Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, pp.80-1. For a contemptuous comment on the Rev. William Garrard's somniferous sermons, see Colonial Times, 8 Aug. 1843, p.2.

²T. Sharpe, *Journal Kept at Norfolk Island 1839-40*, p.47 (ML).

³J. Orton, *Journal 1832-9*, p.180 (ML).

⁴F. Cox, *op. cit.*, p.15.

for preachers to play upon men's fears. Warnings of God's judgment were seldom absent from the colonies' sermons, and were sometimes very strong. Broughton and Quaife, preaching diverse doctrines of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, came together at the end. Broughton's cautioning against rejection of the ordinance may be compared with Quaife's question, 'Say, Christian...will you neglect it or abuse it? What will you say when he meets you in judgment?'.¹ Drunkards were regularly invited to imagine their future prospect, and to repent in time. Ullathorne was not unique in taking St Paul very literally on the final condemnation of these addicts; it was a common belief. Drunkenness could be called 'this sin of sins' by a Wesleyan, the Rev. Benjamin Carvosso (who had known a woman die in a New South Wales public house at midnight, 'suffocated by the fumes of alcohol').² One group of abstainers accepted as a commonplace that the drunkard had 'a doom appointed for all eternity',³ while the Catholic bishop asked 'Who shall recount the victims this monster daily sacrifices to hell?'.⁴

There were no party divisions on this matter. Hell was a very real part of the beliefs of all preachers. In a High Church parson's journal kept on a voyage to Australia, there appears this entry:

Baptized the baby which was born some time ago. The mother has been putting off its Baptism from day to day. Now it is ill; still she hesitated, until I told her that if it died I would not read the Burial Service over it. 5

An Evangelical declaimed, 'I fear the greater part of you are sowing...to the flesh...shall there be a reaping of life everlasting, when there has been only sowing unto the flesh? Impossible....

¹B. Quaife, op. cit., p.36. Broughton's warning has already been quoted. Cf. an Evangelical, W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon IV.

²B. Carvosso, Drunkenness, the Enemy of Britain..., Hobart n.d., pp.11-12.

³Annual Report of V.D.L. Total Abstinence Society, 1850 (no imprint), p.2.

⁴J.B. Polding, op. cit., p.4.

⁵J.D. Mereweather, Life..., p.64.

Repent! There is no repentance in the grave.'¹ A hint of what Wesleyans might expect to hear on occasion is given in a pro-Wesleyan pamphlet which spoke of their efforts 'to pluck these immortal men [sic]...from endless burnings, and quench them in the Saviour's blood'.² A Presbyterian was prepared to speak of 'the death of the soul...implying not the extinction of man's sentient being, but the utter extinction of his happiness; misery inconceivable and eternal'; and to warn his hearers that if, having heard the gospel, they rejected it, it would be remembered against them at the judgment day.³

Yet the remarkable thing about the preaching in the second quarter of the nineteenth century is not how much, but how little there was of this fire and brimstone in the typical sermon. Judgment and damnation were accepted unquestioningly, but were usually referred to with brevity and restraint. Parenthood meant responsibility, and the day was not far distant when parents would be called to render an account, said one tract - but there was no enlargement of the theme.⁴ 'Do not fancy you are too young to die...', was one clergyman's last word; but it came after thirteen pages of a different kind, and was not elaborated.⁵ Men were not allowed to forget the judgment, but they were not commonly dangled over the bottomless pit. As likely as not the congregation would simply be reminded that they were sinners in such words as these:

Spend your Christmas with a true Christian joy, but remember that there is no true Christian joy apart from repentance. 6

The compassion of the preachers for their hearers, and appeals to their better nature, were perhaps even more prominent than

¹A. Stackhouse, The Christian's Encouragement..., pp.16, 22, 23. Cf. W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon IX.

²'A Friend to Truth and Peace', op. cit., p.22.

³J.D. Lang, op. cit., loc. cit.

⁴An Address to Parents...from the Independent Sunday School..., (op. cit.).

⁵William Yate, To the Parishioners of St. James' Church..., Sydney 1836.

⁶W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon II.

threats. 'But are you not weary of this evil doing?', asked Alfred Stackhouse.¹ 'You have a great trust,' William Yate told parents and masters; his only threat was that children, born in sin, would grow up confirmed in sin unless their elders corrected them, and his words to young people were sympathetic and encouraging, not filled with grim foreboding.² The Rev. G.E. Turner, after an illness, returned to his flock to tell them that what had given him most anguish of mind was the thought of those among them who were Christians in name only; clearly he feared for their souls, but he yearned over them, and hoped for their salvation.³ Bishop Polding's 'bitter grief' over his people's neglect of their religion, and the 'affectionate' nature of his exhortation, did not remain mere words for the reader - they breathed in the document.⁴ Mereweather's warning that he would refuse burial to an unbaptized baby was followed by the entry in his diary, 'How sad it is to be obliged to use such a threat'.⁵ The clergy did not shrink from the hard doctrines, but they were not usually harsh men.

More surprisingly, the doctrine of the predestination of all but the elect to damnation does not seem to have been a strong element in even Presbyterian preaching. Lang declared that

...eternal life is wholly and solely the gift of God: and the manner in which alone we are made partakers of this unspeakable gift is declared by the Divine Redeemer himself in this language of encouragement to all, Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. 6

The Rev. John M'Garvie, though a Presbyterian whom Lang accused of being 'a Minister of the gospel which he never preached',⁷ in truth

¹A. Stackhouse, op. cit., p.23.

²W. Yate, op. cit., pp.4-11.

³G.E. Turner, A Few Words from a Minister to his Flock..., Sydney 1844, pp.5-6.

⁴J.B. Polding, op. cit., pp.4, 8.

⁵J.D. Mereweather, op. cit., p.64.

⁶J.D. Lang, op. cit., loc. cit. The italics are in the original.

⁷Quoted in A. Dougan, 'The Kirk and Social Problems of the Eighteen Thirties in New South Wales', J.R.A.H.S., Vol. 48, Pt.6, p.475.

spoke no differently. He believed, indeed, that not all men would be saved, but in preaching on John 3:16 he pronounced that
 ...the term world...denotes the human family, all of whom are loved by the gift of Christ,

and he offered salvation to any who were willing to accept 'the easy terms on which it is bestowed - faith in the only begotten Son of God'.¹ M'Garvie was even prepared to say:

Whether faith is first, and grace succeeds, or whether grace prepares the heart for the reception of faith, the same consequence follows. 2

This was an impossible statement for a rigid Calvinist who accepted the Westminster Confession's dogma that the natural spirit must be passive and incapable of moral response until grace was bestowed upon it; but it was in line with those Calvinists who rejected the notion of deterministic predestination and, following the idea of the covenant between God and man, allowed that man could make some spontaneous response and prepare himself for the reception of grace - with the implication that any man who did this would almost certainly be granted it.³ Such modification of the harsher aspect of Calvinism seems to have been common in the colonies.⁴ Evangelical Anglicans differed from the Arminian Wesleyans in being inclined to accept Calvin's predestination doctrine; yet one of them at least, the Rev. W.B. Clarke, was frankly Arminian in his declaration:

It has been the purpose of Almighty God, from the very moment of Adam's transgression, to save his descendants from the consequences of his guilt... 5

God's purpose was not here confined to an elect, but to every man - the descendants of Adam. Many Presbyterians and most Evangelicals,

¹J. M'Garvie, Sermons..., Sydney 1842, pp.268, 258-9, 270.

²Ibid., p.271.

³See Perry Miller, 'Preparation for Salvation in Seventeenth Century New England', Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp.253-86.

⁴Cf. A. Dougan, op. cit., p.474; M. Roe, op. cit., pp.439-40.

⁵S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.3.

were 'Moderate Calvinists' and, far from holding a staunch belief in the predestination of numerous men to hell, they simply 'looked at life from the point of view...of the hymn:

Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold of Thee,
In this alone rejoice with awe,
Thy mighty grasp of me.' 1

All men were sinners, but salvation was possible for them. No man need concern himself about the number who would ultimately be saved; all any man needed to do was to seek grace and strength from God.² That, rather than hell and predestination to hell, was the burden of the preaching.³

Prayer and divine intervention

A vital means for securing grace and strength, urged the preachers, was prayer. The clergyman's warfare against the forces of evil had to be fought, said Bishop Nixon, 'on his knees, his weapons God's sufficiency'.⁴ Bishop Broughton appealed to isolated settlers who could not get to church 'to pay attention at least to the observance of family devotions'.⁵ The Rev. Alfred Stackhouse published a book of prayers to assist this practice, thus recognizing that heads of families often found it difficult to perform.⁶ In another book circulating in the colonies, the reader was cautioned against making prayers either too brief or too long -

¹G.R. Balleine, op. cit., p.107. Cf. Mark Rutherford, The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, London n.d., p.13.

²W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon I.

³It is doubtful whether Catholics admitted much chance of salvation outside their own Church. M. Roe, op. cit., p.336ff, has collected some evidence of liberal tendencies among Catholics; C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia, Melbourne 1962, p.106, insists that the Irish clergy taught the doctrine of no salvation outside the Catholic Church.

⁴F.R. Nixon, On the Duty..., pp.26-7.

⁵Broughton to [a private friend], 17 Feb. 1846, H.R.A., xxiv, 783.

⁶A. Stackhouse, Family Prayers..., Launceston 1845.

the one leading to perfunctory formality and the other to weariness.¹ But, whatever the difficulties, the people were urged to pray. Indeed, God had not left men any real choice; because they were 'lamentably insensible' of the fact that it was 'an inestimable privilege' to pray, God had made it a duty.²

On the whole, prayer was regarded as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. It was recommended nearly always on the grounds that evils had to be removed or prevented, and that the necessary divine aid was granted through prayer; it was not as pure meditation and communion - with no other motive - that prayer was gloried in. Nixon's ideal clergyman had a war to fight on his knees. It was because 'the unaided exertions of man must prove utterly unavailing' against human depravity and spiritual powers of wickedness that a Sunday School meeting stressed 'the importance of united and special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit'.³ It was because of the ill-health of some of the ministers, and the difficulties of their work, that the Van Diemen's Land Wesleyans 'resolved in the fear of God to appropriate a season every day for specially invoking the Divine blessing upon each bro~~ther~~ in his sphere of labour. And...particularly to plead for the perfect restoration to health of those who ~~were~~ the subjects of bodily indisposition...'.⁴ These were men of faith and prayer; but they were activists, not contemplatives.

In spite of the Rev. Nathaniel Turner's unhappy choice of words in reporting, 'Prayer was made for my recovery, and means were used to effect it',⁵ the men who believed in prayer believed that God answered it; thus the recovery of Captain Samuel Horton, of Ross, from a dangerous illness which had 'baffled all medical skill',

¹Henry Cooke (Ed.), Family Prayers for Every Day in the Week..., Sydney 1841, p.7. This was originally the production of ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

²Ibid., p.3.

³21st Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools in the Hobart Town Circuit, Hobart 1843, p.3.

⁴V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 6 Oct. 1842, Q. xxiii.

⁵N. Turner, Letter Book 1836-49, 14 July 1836 (ML).

was attributed by the Wesleyans to God's responding to their intercessions.¹ And, of course, He who ruled over the sick-bed, ruled also over the whole world, and overruled the sinful actions of men. As Nixon said, after admitting that the English Reformation had some bad (as well as good) motives behind it, 'God be praised, that He can make even the bad passions of men redound to his glory, and his creatures' spiritual comfort'.²

Bringing the Reformation to full flowering could be a slow process, but the God who reigned over it was also the God who did not do all things slowly, or leave all his judgments to the after-life; often He intervened suddenly and directly in men's affairs in this world. The Rev. Frederick Cox considered that the Church of England was at that very time under a divine penalty for its internal dissension; it was a suffering Church, and that was 'a sign of God's righteous displeasure'.³ Sometimes what might be considered parodies of religion came to life in all piety in this connection. The Rev. Christopher Eipper (a continental reformed pastor) spoke of the prevalence of venereal disease among aboriginal women near the Moreton Bay convict establishment. They were suffering from many things, he said,

...especially that shocking malady which Divine Providence has wisely ordained as the due reward of profligacy. 4

Where illnesses could not appropriately be described as judgments, they were seen as times of testing decreed by God - like the afflictions of Job. George Turner felt he should say, 'It has been the righteous will of God...to afflict me with a dangerous and

¹N. Turner, *Personal Narrative*, I, pp.279-80 (ML).

²F.R. Nixon, *op. cit.*, p.10.

³F.H. Cox, *op. cit.*, p.19.

⁴C. Eipper, Statement of the Origins, Condition, and Prospects of the German Mission to the Aborigines...under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church in N.S.W., Sydney 1841, p.10. (Cf. Peter de Vries, The Mackerel Plaza, London 1958, p.28, where the hero prays in time of flood, 'Let us hope that a kind Providence will put a speedy end to the acts of God under which we have been labouring').

protracted illness...'.¹ When Archdeacon Cowper went almost blind, suffering from a cataract, this also was described as 'a visitation from divine providence'.² All kinds of tragedy were interpreted as warnings or judgments from God. When a gunner was washed overboard, and lost, on Samuel Leigh's voyage to Australia, the passengers said that he was a good man, so he must have been punished for the sins of his father. Leigh - the first Wesleyan minister to come to Australia - demurred: he told them that, in his opinion, 'the Lord had been pleased to take the Gunner away to teach us that we know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will Come'.³ These men were at all times in the hand of God, and at his disposal.

So also were the seasons, and other natural phenomena. The Wesleyan, Daniel Draper, had a stormy voyage from Hobart to Sydney, one night expecting to be blown ashore. Later he wrote:

Nothing I think but the gracious interposition of that God who heareth prayer could have preserved us, but at the time of our extremity the wind changed and we were enabled to clear the land. 4

By Governor's proclamation, one Friday in October 1838 was declared a day of fasting in New South Wales, and the clergy were invited to hold services to pray for the ending of a severe drought.⁵ This was taken up very seriously by the Churches, and a week of heavy rain which began nine days later was followed by services of thanksgiving.⁶ The Rev. John M'Garvie, in his sermon on the day of fasting, explained that God, while not infringing upon his own laws

¹G.E. Turner, A Few Words..., p.3.

²24th Report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of N.S.W., Sydney 1841, p.13.

³S. Leigh's Journal from England to New South Wales, 1815, B.T. Miss. Box 50, 188-9 (ML).

⁴D.J. Draper to J. Barrett, Apr. 1836 (Wesley Church, Hobart). Thirty years later, Draper was drowned in the Bay of Biscay. Survivors reported that he was last seen praying with passengers who remained on board, committing their souls to their Maker.

⁵N.S.W. Government Gazette, 24 Oct. 1838, p.879.

⁶J.F. Castle, op. cit., 2 Nov. 1838, and following entries.

for slight causes, did use physical evils as chastisement for moral guilt, and had to use this means for the punishment of guilty nations, since nations did not have immortal souls to be punished in the world to come.¹ A storm's devastation could also be seen as the activity of God as judge - and executioner. After three successive days of storm, causing floods and loss of life and property, one minister argued:

...those who admit that there is a God that reigneth in the earth, must also admit that in sending such a visitation, he must have had a controversy with the inhabitants of the place.

Here was the God, whose 'judicial procedure' went on 'even in the present life', stepping forth, as he did at intervals, to reveal his sovereignty and awaken the people to their 'practical atheism'.²

Samuel Leigh's interpretation of the gunner's drowning suggests that right through the period there were preachers who refused to interpret tragedy as direct judgment on the afflicted. In 1841, the English clergyman, R.C. Trench, later to become Archbishop of Dublin, published Notes on the Parables of our Lord; it was this book which was acknowledged by an Australian preacher (actually beyond the period of this study) when he claimed:

Christ does not deny the connexion between sin and suffering, but he does deny man's power to trace the connexion, and man's right to interpret any one's character by the nature and severity of his affliction.

Calamities, the preacher went on, were at least as much for the warning of the living as for the chastisement of the dead.³ The Rev. John M'Garvie had a ready explanation for the epidemic which followed the breaking of the New South Wales drought in 1838 - the seriousness of which can be gathered from an entry jotted in the

¹J. M'Garvie, op. cit., p.84ff.

²A.M. Ramsay, The Voice of the Storm..., p.11ff. Cf. the Bible Society Report just quoted, pp.8-9.

³T. McK. Fraser, Calamities Not Judgements.... With Special Reference to the Loss of the 'London', Geelong 1866, pp.3-4. (The 'London' was the ship Daniel Draper went down with). See also the Irish System schoolbook, Scripture Lessons for the Use of Schools. New Testament, No. I, Sydney 1849, p.62.

diary of Frederick Castle, the schoolmaster:

Heard that 10,000 in Sydney are ill of this Influenza or Catarrh & 2,000 in bed - not a family exempt - had scarcely any pupils last week - one Day pupil dead... 1

M'Garvie taught that this was not a judgment, but was simply proof that man's mind could not fathom the inscrutable wisdom of Providence.² As for rewards, the Rev. Alfred Stackhouse reminded his people that they came 'in due season'; often they came in this life, but possibly after years of apparent failure, and not necessarily in this life at all.³ Not always were God's ways with men reduced to the simplest interpretation.

The advancement of race and nation, or a people's decline, was very often thought to depend upon obedience to God, or, perhaps to be determined by God's choice of one people and rejection of another - for here, rather than in the salvation of individual persons, was the doctrine of predestination most apparent. Moderate and immoderate views again jostled each other. The Rev. L.E. Threlkeld thought that 'cruelties' could not sufficiently explain the declining numbers of the aborigines. Their mortality rate - and that also of the South Sea Islanders - was due to 'the wrath of God...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men'.⁴ The Rev. C.P.N. Wilton even supplied the prophecy of this - 'God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem'.⁵ The Rev. James Allan saw the aborigines as wild men by nature - like Ishmael⁶ - whom it was impossible to civilize and raise to

¹J.F. Castle, op. cit., 20 Nov. 1838.

²J. M'Garvie, op. cit., p.77.

³A. Stackhouse, op. cit., pp.18-21. Cf. Courier, 6 April 1838, p.2, c.4, on the fruits of scriptural education.

⁴L.E. Threlkeld, The Final Report of the Mission to the Aborigines, Lake Macquarie, N.S.W., 1841, (no imprint), p.1. The reader may be excused if he regards wryly Threlkeld's later mention of the loss of his wife and first-born child.

⁵Genesis 9:27. This was the same type of exegesis as that of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa today - Shem being accepted as the progenitor of the coloured peoples.

⁶Genesis 16:11-12.

the level of white men.

The race are [sic] evidently destined to become extinct, and nothing that man can do can possibly prevent it.

The Aborigines Protection Society (an English body) reported these two opinions as 'so curious that we repeat them verbatim', and itself preferred to speak of the 'fatal influence of profligate whites'.¹ Independents recorded their belief that the advancement of the British people was 'not a subject of mere conjecture', but was 'clearly revealed on the page of inspired prophecy'; therefore the ultimate advancement of their 'adopted country' was 'a matter of high probability'.² This view of the Britons as a favoured people was also common; but it was always made dependent upon keeping the faith. In the course of the education debate, Nixon declared his belief that the prosperity of a country 'must depend upon whether that country [had] God's blessing', and the blessing depended, as much as for an individual, upon whether the country fulfilled its moral duties.³ Broughton also, taxed with the immense difficulties caused by denominational schools, was driven to remark bitterly, 'I can only say that I think division in religion is so serious an evil, that I think the State must suffer from it, let it do what it will'.⁴

Moderately or immoderately, these men believed that nations qua nations had a duty to God and that any dereliction of duty or any religious weakness must call down God's judgment. Here, once more, Low Church could agree with High Church, for W.B. Clarke asked warningly:

And shall the nation to which we belong...this highly favoured nation escape; if, contented with the blessings

¹10th Annual Report of the Aborigines Protection Society, London 1847, pp.23-24. Samuel Marsden thought little could be done for the aborigines, but supposed they could hope the day would come when the gospel would be received by them - Marsden to Coates, 23 Feb. 1836, B.T. Miss. Box 54 (ML).

²Eighth Annual Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, Hobart 1844, p.4.

³Courier, 3 Nov. 1843, p.2, c.4.

⁴Lowe Committee, Evidence, p.86.

she enjoys, she shuts up her sympathies in shameless selfishness, forgetful of the office to which she has been called...as the defender of the Faith, as the guardian of the ark of liberty 'wherewith Christ hath made us free'?¹

The workaday world

One part of the obedience to God which determined a people's greatness was the proper observance of Sunday.

In proportion as nations, churches, or individuals have risen in the scale of religion and morality, they have improved this holy day, commemorative of the world's redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, and prefiguring that 'rest which remains for the people of God'.

Sabbath observance was a protection for religion, a bulwark against ungodliness and also a test of men's 'loyalty or their rooted enmity to Jehovah their Sovereign Lord'.² Therefore the clergy were staunchly Sabbatarian. The Sabbath, said John Dunmore Lang, was the one institution to survive the Fall; it was embodied in the moral law and confirmed by Christ (whose resurrection caused the first, not the last, day of the week to be observed), and it was to be entirely set apart for worship and rest.³

A day's rest did not mean a day's play. The Presbyterian ministers' Lectures on the Sabbath were prompted by the introduction into the Legislative Council of a bill to prevent shooting on Sunday. Bishop Broughton, having at that time a seat on the Council, moved that a committee be appointed to consider also the prohibition of boxing, horse and boat racing, fishing, cricket and cock-fighting, as well as the opening of shops (except butchers' shops, to 8 a.m.) and the loading and packing of goods for markets within forty miles distance. The Committee was duly appointed, and recommended an enlargement of the bill to include gambling and market-days. Although the bill was not extended, the recommendations illustrate the importance attached by the clergy, in this case

¹ S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.6.

² 21st Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools in the Hobart Town Circuit, Hobart 1843, p.5.

³ Ministers of the Presbyterian Church, op. cit., Lecture I.

typified by Broughton, to Sabbath observance; for the sake of both their religion and their nation they were prepared to legislate men into keeping Sunday holy.¹

The Committee on the Shooting on Sunday Prevention Bill was reasonable enough to recommend that if weather conditions made it necessary (in the opinion of a magistrate) to mow or make hay on Sunday, it should be allowed: the preachers were not unrealistic about this world's goods. But they were very conscious of the snares of riches. It may be true that the spirit of Protestantism, and not only the discovery of the New World and other big economic changes, pushed forward the growth of capitalism into an economic system (as distinct from the presence of capitalists within systems of other kinds); but it is no less true that the amassing of wealth, and an individualism which snapped social bonds, were largely unintended accompaniments of Protestantism. If the Reformers emphasized deliberately the workaday world and the due reward of labour, rather than the monastic world and the mendicant order, it was because they appreciated the moral values of industry, frugality and sobriety; it was not the riches which often resulted from these qualities which attracted them.² This was very evident in the preaching of colonial Protestants.

The Christian mission to New Zealand was once justified on the grounds that it was not only a religious and moral good, but also resulted in 'a considerable commercial gain'.³ But this was not a

¹Proceedings of 22 June, 8 Sept. 1841, and Report from the Committee on the Shooting on Sunday Prevention Bill, 27 July 1841, V. & P., N.S.W., 1841; and, An Act to Prohibit Shooting for Sport, Pleasure, or Profit, on Sunday, 5 Vict. VI, The Acts and Ordinances of New South Wales, 1841, pp.10-11.

²Nothing in this paragraph is absent from the inceptive work of Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Eng. trans. by T. Parsons, London 1930), for all that his heavy emphasis on the role of Protestantism caused misunderstanding (e.g., by H.M. Robertson, Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism, Cambridge 1933), and made necessary some qualification (e.g. by R.H. Tawney, both in the foreword to the English translation of Weber, and in the note on Ch. IV and the 1937 preface to his own Religion and the Rise of Capitalism).

³First Report of the Australian Auxiliary Church Missionary Society, Sydney 1835, p.10. It may be significant that the Rev. Samuel Marsden, who had a reputation for too great a concern for his flocks and commercial interests, was president of this society.

typical comment. More often money was mentioned only in the context of appeals for its use for the extension of religious provision or of warning against letting it absorb one's attention. The Rev. William Dry told his wealthier members to beware 'presumption, an independent spirit, luxury, covetousness', to be self-denying and to use their riches to the glory of God. He reminded them that they must pray, no less than others, for their daily bread since it was only by God's grace that they were granted their wealth, and that the petition 'give us this day our daily bread' implied that they had a responsibility to supply the needs of the poor.¹ His impoverished parishioners were told that even if they could only contribute a mite, it was still their duty to give what they could in the offertory.² Both riches and poverty, indeed, were crosses laid on men's shoulders; it was hard to have wealth and to use it as God's stewards, it was hard to be poor and not to rail against God.³ The Rev. T.H. Braim revealed the razor's edge when he claimed that the making of money could be 'justifiable - nay laudable' when checked by Christian principles, but deplored the way in which so many colonists idolized money-making, putting it at the centre of their lives.⁴ W.G. Broughton spoke out in a sermon in which he made the point that the Church was stationed by God in the world to win it over and subdue it to the dominion of holiness.

...if our intercourse and connection with temporal interests have tended in any degree to obscure this image in our minds, and to substitute for it one of a more complex nature, it is time that we should be brought back to juster views. 5

Once he asked his hearers if they preferred to neglect the Church's need for money, so that they could enjoy 'this world's gratifications'; or if they would not sacrifice 'temporal advantages' in trust that God himself would give abundant recompense.⁶ Presbyterians were encouraged to pray:

¹W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon XVIII. ²Ibid., Sermon XX.

³Ibid., Sermon V.

⁴T.H. Braim, A History of New South Wales..., 2 vols. London 1846, II, p.168.

⁵W.G. Broughton, The Present Position..., pp.3-4.

⁶W.G. Broughton, Address...on...Laying the Foundation Stone..., pp.12-3.

And now that we are about to enter again upon the ordinary business of life, Lord! go with us, and let thy Spirit guide us. Permit not the cares of the world to spring up in our hearts, to choke the seed of thy blessed word.... Prosper, good Lord! the purposes of our hearts, and the works of our hands. Whilst we labour for time keep us mindful of eternity.¹

Christians were neither to withdraw from the world, nor to be overcome by it.

Quite often the clergy backed precept by example of heart-searching and self-denial. The Rev. W.B. Clarke had some serious misgivings when he took two years leave of absence to conduct a geological survey of gold fields, in the service of the Government. He secured from Broughton a licence to minister within the whole diocese, and, after preaching to one group of settlers, wrote to a friend:

It is to be hoped that I may never be reproached with forsaking my calling to seek the gold that perisheth, for the judgements of the Lord, which I proclaimed amidst the mountains are more to be desired than gold, yea than fine gold! 2

The Rev. J. Jennings Smith, too poor to educate any of his sons for the ministry, found by some means or another £600 of his own money towards the erection and furnishing of his church at Paterson.³ Bishop Broughton voluntarily surrendered a large part of his own salary to enable the establishment of other bishoprics,⁴ and W.B. Ullathorne did the same to make Polding's advent possible.⁵ Wesleyan ministers, in an Irish lament, complained that reduced allowances would force them 'to resign all the comforts and many of the necessaries of life'.⁶ With a quiet pride, missionaries to the aborigines said of themselves:

Were they seeking their own, there would be ample opportunity for their individual aggrandisement in this Colony; but they

¹H. Cooke, op. cit., p.16.

²W.B. Clarke, op. cit., loc. cit.

³Smith to Broughton, 29 Jan. 1846; Broughton to Coleridge, 3 Oct. 1846, BP.

⁴See above, Chapter 3.

⁵J. Kenny, op. cit., p.89.

⁶V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 4 Oct. 1844, Q. xix.

choose rather to continue poor, in imitation of him who became poor for our sakes, that through his poverty we might be rich. 1

Unfortunately, there was also another side to many clergymen's style of living - especially among the Anglicans - which was keenly noted. As one critic wrote:

The clergymen, in addition to their government pay, receive handsome subscriptions from their congregations, and their outward appearance certainly does not proclaim them as belonging to Pharaoh's lean kine. They are, perhaps more frequently than any other class of persons in the colony, to be seen either in their carriages, or mounted on handsome and well groomed horses. 2

Exaggerated and unjust to many ministers though this comment may have been, it does serve as a reminder that the clergymen, as a class, lived as much like gentlemen as they could, and often lived very much like gentlemen indeed.

This class alignment was a big part of the reason why the clergy were usually disinclined to support any radical reform of political or social structures. Catholic clergymen could welcome an extension of the franchise as a blow in their people's favour against Protestant wealth,³ and they were characteristically radical in their politics.⁴ But from the powerful Protestant side there came very little radical support. The Rev. Charles Price, the Independent, spoke fiercely to Launceston workmen about sweeping out the rotten system of education for the poor,⁵ and the Rev. Dr J.D. Lang was a radically inclined Presbyterian, but the social conservatism of the clergy generally was trenchantly attacked by Lang. After claiming that the Bible denounced injustice and oppression of every kind as no other book did, he gave vent to his rage:

¹C. Eipper, op. cit., p.16.

²J.O. Balfour, op. cit., p.114.

³See above, Chapter 4.

⁴See M. Roe, op. cit., p.304ff. Note the Catholic Chronicle's condemnation of laissez-faire both as English-maintained and also as 'fell and satanic' (19 Oct. 1844, quoted ibid., p.320).

⁵J.D. Lang, Freedom and Independence for the Golden Lands of Australia..., Sydney 1857, pp.365-6.

And yet - so it is! - the clergy of all communions, especially if supported by the State, are almost uniformly on the side of wealth, and rank, and power, and real, although perhaps disguised injustice and oppression.... And, oh, how they hate universal suffrage, and vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, popular election and the rights of men! 1

This was true: the ministers of religion did look more to charity than to social reform, and believed in benevolent paternalism rather than in democracy.

Broughton was avowedly conservative, condemning current trends as utterly evil - 'a pernicious syncretism in religion and a levelling spirit in politics'.² William Dry found in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus not only the need for the rich to give to the poor, but also a demonstration that the Lord fixed men's stations; charity to beggars, not social reform, was all that occurred to him.³ H.T. Stiles, preaching at a service from which the offering was to go to a benevolent society, concluded with the exhortation that his hearers go out to perform acts of mercy, as God had been merciful to them; again there was no hint that the need for the benevolent society may have been reduced by social changes.⁴ The sentiments in one of the books for family prayers, while admirable in themselves, were all too often seen as saying the last word on social justice and responsibility:

If prosperity visit us, give us grace thankfully and humbly to enjoy it. If adversity smite, let us neither despise thy chastening, nor faint when we are rebuked of thee. 5

The social organization was attributed to God, and, on the whole, men had simply to be content with it. Government likewise was established by God to 'have a parental regard to the welfare and interest of its subjects', and the subjects were to be obedient

¹Broughton to Coleridge, 14 Jan. 1843, BP.

²W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon IX.

³W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon IX.

⁴H.T. Stiles, A Sermon Preached at St. Matthew's Church, Windsor... 18 June 1845, before the...United Loyal Hawkesbury Lodge..., Sydney 1845, pp.13-5.

⁵H. Cooke, op. cit., p.21.

children. Church leaders offered much criticism of Government policy - on education, state aid, the raising of revenue by duties on liquor, and many other issues;¹ but the fundamental structure of state and society they did not wish to alter.

Science and the Creator

The possible effects of radical political ideas upon the established order were far more alarming to the conservative majority among the clergy, than were the new discoveries trickling out from scientific experimenters, though these discoveries were many and, ultimately, were to have serious bearing upon religion. Young's resuscitation and verification of the wave-theory of light, Dalton's atomic theory and Faraday's experiments in electro-chemistry, which were the basis for modern atomic science, belong to the first half of the nineteenth century, as also do Joule's experimental proof of the principle of the conservation of energy, Liebig's major development of analytical methods in organic chemistry, Hurrell's and Wohler's laboratory manufacture of substances previously found only in living matter, and many more achievements which, together, were to thrust science into a dominant position, change men's ways of thinking and topple many old philosophies and cherished theories.² Yet such discoveries, if noticed at all by men at large, were at first merely interesting; it was not immediately obvious where they, and the scientific method itself, might lead as far as Christian doctrine was concerned. In the discoveries of the scientists (a new word in 1840, coined by the Rev. William Whewell) the clergy saw little cause for alarm.

There was one significant, but not complete, exception. The developing and immensely popular science of geology was then in its 'heroic age', enjoying a prestige similar to that held by nuclear physics today and, indeed, offering the far greater attraction of permitting the amateur, and even the lady, to actively participate

¹Cf. M. Roe, op. cit., p.27ff.

²See W.C. Dampier, A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion, 4th edn. Cambridge 1948, p.200ff.

in its researches.¹ All the more serious it was for religion, therefore, that some geological theories seemed quite iconoclastic. There was, for instance, the 'Vulcanist' school which argued (against the 'Neptunists') that not the flood, but heat, had been crucial in the formation of the earth's crust. There was the geologist, James Hutton, who declared that he could find in the earth no mark of a beginning or prospect of an end. There was Sir Charles Lyell, who insisted upon an unbroken operation of uniform law from remotest antiquity, and denied any catastrophic divine intervention in the creation of man. To cap it all, in anticipation of Darwin, Robert Chambers argued in his intuitive Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844) for the slow development of species.² Since Chambers' book was widely read and discussed, and theories of this kind threw grave doubts upon the Mosaic chronology, God's role in creation and conventional proofs of God's existence, the new geology plunged ecclesiastical circles into considerable uneasiness.

The situation was saved - or, rather, the final reckoning was delayed until after 1850 - by two facts. First, the geologists themselves were usually divided about each new claim and, anyway, did not see the full implications of the steps they were taking; and, secondly, most of them did not wish to overthrow the book of Genesis or break away absolutely from the old Paleyist teleology which, in fact, was pervasive right up to the middle of the century. Very many of the early geologists, including some of the most famous, were clergymen (Buckland, Sedgwick, Whewell, Playfair, Townsend, Conybeare and Fleming may be instanced), and most lay geologists were also prepared to argue that their theories - even the new ones - did no harm to the Christian evidences. In Britain by about 1825 the 'Vulcanist' theory had won general support, but the Rev. John Playfair was arguing that the contemplation of natural order led to greater reverence for the Designer than did the idea of sudden convulsions.³ The Rev. Professor William Buckland like-

¹C.C. Gillispie, Genesis and Geology..., New York 1959 (1st edn. 1951), pp.41, 187ff.

²Ibid., pp.43ff, 121ff, 149ff.

³Ibid., p.76.

wise declared that geology tended 'to confirm the evidences of natural religion' and that its discoveries were consistent with the Mosaic account of creation.¹ Despite some early flutterings, by 1830 the descriptive sciences - zoology and paleontology, as well as geology - simply seemed to offer 'new and specific evidence for the recent creation of mankind and for the historical reality of the flood', which were the 'essential points, both in Genesis and geology', and, as late as 1850, few scientists of any repute in Britain gave any support to Chambers' idea of the gradual development of species.² On the whole, therefore, the new science did not seem about to storm the ramparts of the old religious proofs. Rather, the deposits of iron, coal and limestone in England could be seen as expressing 'the most clear design of Providence to make the inhabitants of the British Isles, by means of this gift, the most powerful and the richest nation on the earth'.³ Or, to move to another scientific discipline, J.P. Joule, after proving the conservation of energy, saw it to be not just the first law of thermodynamics, but also a truth to be stated in the words, 'the grand agents of nature are by the Creator's fiat indestructible'.⁴

With scientists generally speaking in this way, the clergy, both in the British Isles and in Australia, could afford to watch or share the new interest with equanimity. If the English leisured classes collected fossils, if crowds were regularly drawn to Sir Humphry Davy's brilliant lectures in London, and other crowds heard lectures from Buckland in caves, and from other scientists in the Mechanics' Institutes, they were only learning that the psalmist's 'how beautiful is thy dwelling place' could be as happily rendered 'how useful is thy dwelling place' - and, hence, the Bishop of Bath and Wells urged the universities to take up the teaching of science for the masses.⁵ If a colonial newspaper

¹Ibid., p.103.

²Ibid., pp.120, 162.

³Ibid., p.201, 104.

⁴Quoted in E.L. Woodward, The Age of Reform, 1850-1870, London 1959, p.550.

⁵C.C. Gillispie, op. cit., p.184ff.

was prepared to denote an editorial to 'Fossil Bones', it made very light-hearted reference to some contending that Australia came into existence 'late on the first Saturday evening' while others were claiming that it appeared 'early on the first Monday morning'.¹ If Australia was 'no longer a sheepwalk' by 1848, this was because it was a thriving centre of manufactures;² its interest in science was practical, being more concerned with mechanics and anaesthetics than with materialistic theories of the universe.

There were the rare individuals in the colonies who recognized the potential conflict between religion and science, or who anticipated victory for the latter. G.M.C. Bowen, a settler in New South Wales, claimed many years later that his locally published Language of Theology Interpreted (1836) was an attempt 'to reconcile the legitimate claims of the theologians and men of science' by protesting against the literalism of the clergy and the materialism of the scientists;³ but Bowen must have been reading back into the book ideas which had become clearer in after years, for there was little conflict in 1836. In the forties, Henry Melville, sometime editor of the Colonial Times, professed to having had his eyes opened by 'the geologist' (this was post-Lyell and in the year of Chambers' publication of the Vestiges), and produced a privately-circulated rejection of Christianity.⁴ But this curious hotchpotch rather revealed Melville as a quibbling crank than showed any widespread, rational belief that in science there was good reason for finding a non-religious explanation of the universe; and the author's inscription on the Mitchell Library copy, presenting the book to Mr H.S. Thomson with the request that he not allow it out of his possession, confirms the view. So, too, does the conviction of one of the colony's true scientists, the

¹Herald, 19 Oct. 1842, p.2.

²Ibid., 1 Mar. 1848, p.2.

³'Aposynagogos' (G.M.C. Bowen), Modern Parables, or the Voice of Revelation and Nature Interpreted and Harmonized, Sydney n.d. [1876]. Bowen's earlier book is discussed below, in Chapter 13.

⁴H. Melville, Exposition of Various Admitted Modern Theories, both Philosophical and Mythological, Proving the Superior Knowledge of Man Far Anterior to the Dark Ages, Van Diemen's Land n.d. [1844].

eldest son of Alexander Macleay (himself an entomologist and Fellow of the Royal Society, and not merely the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales): W.S. Macleay saw nothing in his zoology to shake his religious faith, finding only greater wonder at 'the work of an all-wise, all-powerful Deity'.¹

The colonial clergy were, of course, severe in their criticism of anything which seemed to have irreligious tendencies; after reading Chambers on the history of the Bible, the Rev. J.D. Mereweather described the Scottish publisher and author as 'an unphilosophical unbeliever', and - to the envy of at least one modern clergyman - Mereweather felt competent to pronounce Chambers shallow on all subjects 'whether Botany, Chemistry, Medicine, or even Equitation...'.² Scientific knowledge was fairly common among the colonial clergy, who numbered among their ranks some of the best scientists in the colonies. The Rev. W.B. Clarke was the first university-trained geologist to come to Australia (he had studied at Cambridge under Sedgwick), and was extremely able and active in this field, serving as scientific adviser to the Government and laying foundations for the accurate correlation of the Australian rock series with those of Europe. The Rev. William Woolls was well known as a botanist and was assisted by the Rev. James Walker. Another minister, the Rev. R.L. King, was an entomologist and two more New South Wales clergymen - the Rev. T.B. Naylor and the Rev. C.P.N. Wilton - were corresponding members of the Tasmanian Natural History Society. This society, founded in 1838 with the active encouragement of Sir John Franklin,³ included among its members the Tasmanian clergymen, the Rev. R.R. Davies, the Rev. T. Dove, the Rev. T.J. Ewing and the Rev. Dr John Lillie⁴ - the last of whom was especially ready to lecture to

¹Quoted in J.J. Fletcher, 'The Society's Heritage from the Macleays', Proceedings of the Linnean Society, N.S.W., Vol. XLV (1920), p.567ff. (See especially pp.593-4).

²J.D. Mereweather, Life..., p.46.

³See Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Sir John Franklin..., p.194ff.

⁴The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science..., Vol. I (1842), p.424.

colonists upon scientific subjects. All of these men saw in the new knowledge support for the teleological proof of the existence of God, not denial of it.

The Rev. John Lillie pleaded for the Tasmanian Natural History Society to devote its energies to 'a simple exposition of facts' and to avoid 'discussions upon dubious and undetermined questions of theory'.¹ Almost certainly this wish was prompted by fear of ill-feeling in the group rather than fear that sound theories could be developed to overthrow his own cherished religious beliefs. He was satisfied that the plain facts of nature supported only one fundamental truth, that 'intelligence and design' were everywhere evident in the universe. 'Chance', he told workmen, 'has been demonstrated to have no place and no office in the unlimited range of universal nature.'² The only conclusion which Dr Lillie could draw from this consoling belief was that 'The Laws which sway and regulate them [the objects of Natural Science], reflect the image of the Divine mind which devised and ordained them'.³ Archdeacon Paley had been dead for over thirty years when these sentiments were expressed, but in them - and in most theological discussions of the new science - his arguments were being repeated with scarcely any modification.

The Rev. J.D. Lang, although realizing that his biblical exegesis had to be subtle in the light of the new science, showed that he could easily reconcile the geology of the Port Phillip District with the chronology of Genesis. Remarking on the signs of volcanic activity which pointed to an extremely remote origin, he explained that the biblical sentence, 'And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters', was 'a general description of the long series of changes that subsequently passed upon the face of our planet in the course, it may be, of millions of years'.⁴

¹Ibid., p.5.

²J. Lillie, The Subserviency of the Works of Nature..., pp.4, 27.

³J. Lillie, Lecture upon the Advantages of Science..., Hobart 1839, p.37.

⁴Written in 1847 and quoted in A.C. Gilchrist, op. cit., II, p.393.

Neither the insights of geology nor of Genesis were lost upon Lang. W.B. Clarke, similarly, had no doubts about religion and science complementing each other, though he saw - to some extent - that men might have to revise a few bad theories. 'But', he wrote,

this much do speculation and theorizing avail for good, that no man, with a simple-minded aim, can explore any of the beautiful fields of science which are spread out so magnificently above him, and not find himself a better man, even if he have to acknowledge himself a worse philosopher than he imagined. ¹

Clarke did not mean to suggest that the study of science might turn a man from the philosophy of Paley to that of Paine, or anything of that sort; rather, fallible man, by the study of science, would have his unbelief rebuked or his reverence deepened. Thus far, science was religion's obedient handmaid; if she had stamped her foot now and then, she had not yet dismayed the household of faith by brazenly walking out of morning prayers.

If the argument from design gave solid support to the clergymen's creeds, it was not, of course, the main reason for their belief. Some clergymen disregarded science, some minimized its importance in the matter of religion, and all stressed the point that divine revelation determined men's knowledge of God. Scientific theories of creation were completely ignored by the Wesleyan, W.B. Boyce, in his school book on ancient history published in 1850; although saying that learned men differed on the exact date of the creation of the world, the only difference to which Boyce pointed was that between Ussher (who calculated the date as 4,004 B.C. from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament) and Hale (who based his date of 5,441 B.C. on the Septuagint).² The Rev. John West discounted philosophical and scientific proofs of Christian truth:

¹Magazine of Natural History, Vol. VII (1834), p.615. (Quotation supplied by Ann Mozley).

²W.B. Boyce, op. cit., p.iv, n. (1) and (2).

The external evidences of Christianity were rarely dwelt upon by the Apostle Paul. It was from the substance and effects of the gospel, that he usually argued its truth.

So, West maintained, should we all.¹ Archdeacon Hutchins, although a former Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and a mathematician, was unlikely to give much support to any changing ideas about religion, for he believed that there was 'no room for discovery' in Christianity, the principles of which were 'not discovered by the wit of man, but given by the inspiration of God' and were laid down in the Bible.² In a typical sermon, the Rev. William Dry argued that, as well as the 'monitor' in the heart of every man (reminding him that he was 'a dependent creature'), the works of nature taught that there was a God; but it was the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures which was final and full proof.³ Bishop Broughton also insisted that men should not be encouraged to think that it was possible to dispense with revelation; while science should be studied, its role should not be exaggerated.

Broughton went on to point to two dangers which the more alert clergy could see in the scientific vogue - the glorification of man's intellect, and an obsession with material things and demonstrable proofs. The real danger, in the applied sciences as much as in pure science, was that men might adopt a 'refined scepticism' which held 'all opinions equally doubtful' because they came to 'expect the evidence of the senses for every conclusion'. Men's confidence in their own powers had, in fact, waxed, and men's faith in God had waned, because of the 'incessant aim at mechanical perfection, and almost successful attainment of it'. The remedy, said Broughton, was not in hostility to science or in 'casting anchor amidst the shoals of ignorance', but in following the example of Robert Boyle and showing that science was 'not deteriorated by an union with devotion', while stressing that all things were not to be 'brought down to the level of the senses'.⁴

¹J. West, The Hope of Life Eternal..., Launceston 1850, p.6.

²W. Hutchins, A Sermon..., pp.24-5.

³W. Dry, op. cit., Sermon VIII.

⁴W.G. Broughton, The Present Position..., pp.11-13.

The fear was not that science would disprove religion, but that science would disincline men to give time and attention to the things of the spirit. When a tablet was erected in St James' Church, Sydney, to the memory of John Gilbert, an ornithologist speared in 1845 during Leichhardt's first overland expedition to Port Essington, it could bear words in which there was no irony:

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO SCIENTIA MORI.

To die for knowledge was to die, not least, for the Christian teleology; and this was smugly reflected in the colonial preachers' occasional references to the wonders of the world as revealed by science. Believing this to be obvious, they were content to remind their hearers of the even greater witness to God - the direct revelation in the Bible - and to warn them against infatuation with the new knowledge. The clergy's largest fear was that absorption in scientific pursuits was yet one more materialistic preoccupation to add to the flocks, herds and commerce which already obsessed the colonists. But there was one consolation for the clergy at this point: the universe at large was marked by law and order, even if the squatting districts were not.

CHAPTER 12THE OUTREACH OF THE CHURCHESExtensions to the parochial ministry

On the whole, the colonial clergymen's sermons did them credit. Granted their premisses, they were logical; within the framework of an uncritical social philosophy, they were bold; shadowed by a stern eschatology, they were nonetheless compassionate; and the appeal and force of their sermons can still be felt in those which are preserved in printed form. If the clergy accepted unquestioningly some ideas which were not to survive the questions of the next generation, they were only doing what all men do. If they sometimes spoke over the heads of the ignorant and obtuse, they were labouring under a difficulty common to educated, thoughtful men. As preachers and teachers they did not need to be ashamed.

As pastors, however, they had reason to be worried. For all their preaching and church-building, many colonists neither came nor heard. For all their political agitation and school-building, many children were given little religious teaching. Their flocks were often scattered and lost, and well the clergy knew it. One Anglican body, acknowledging that mission was an essential purpose of the Church, declared that white Australia was 'itself a Missionary field of the most interesting character'.¹ In angrier tones, a group of Independents poured scorn on the sentimentality which promoted missions to 'the perishing heathen' while overlooking the fact that their own kindred and countrymen were more exposed to the wrath of God than were those who sinned in ignorance of Christ.² In their attempts to gather the wanderers into their folds, the colonial pastors always had the support of zealous laymen and had much backing from the authorities. Officialdom decreed, for instance, not only that the convict chaplain should perform his duties satisfactorily, but also that, in the absence of a chaplain, a

¹Hobart S.P.G. Report, 1844-5, p.7.

²Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary...Society, 1843, pp.5-7.

catechist should be employed among convicts and that the surgeon superintendent should regularly read divine service on migrant ships.¹ If such regulations tended to defeat their purpose, and encourage resistance to religion rather than response to it, the authorities should at least be credited with trying to disseminate religious truth among the imprisoned and the poor, and the Churches at least had an opening provided for them.

Churchmen themselves tried to help the migrants, by seeking improvements in conditions aboard the ships, as well as by purely spiritual ministrations.² One shining example of the good work sometimes done by chaplains is that of the Rev. J.D. Mereweather. As well as conducting regular services on the ship, he started a school for the children, so that all learned to read before the voyage ended. He kept a watchful eye on the passengers - visiting the sick and dying, encouraging a young girl against the infidel arguments of a group of young men, talking and lending a book to a Calvinistic Methodist troubled by the same group, and allowing two Wesleyans and a Presbyterian to receive Holy Communion at his Anglican hands, because they were thereby placed in his power 'to correct and rebuke' if necessary. To cap Mereweather's practical Christianity, he published his diary in the hope of getting more efficient moral and religious supervision on the ships, announcing that the profits from the book's sale were to go towards a fund to secure the services of ships' matrons.³ Nor were the voyagers necessarily neglected by the Churches upon arrival in the colonies. Bishop Polding took special pains to give Catholic convicts a few days' instruction when they landed.⁴ After despairing of his

¹See, e.g., Instructions for the Surgeon Superintendents on board Emigrant Ships, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838, and Standing instructions for the Discipline and Control of Convicts Employed in the Road Department in V.D.L., n.d., Minutes of Evidence, Immigration Committee, etc. (NL).

²See, e.g., T.C. Childs, Extracts from Correspondence on Emigration, no imprint, n.d. [1850], and Emigrant's School Fund Committee, Emigrants' Letters, London 1850, pp.1-14.

³J.D. Mereweather, Diary..., passim.

⁴H.N. Birt, op. cit., I, p.279.

mission to the aborigines, the Rev. L.E. Threlkeld ran an Independent mission to seamen in his Mariner's Church at Sydney.¹ The Anglicans appointed a full-time chaplain in 1849 to take care of migrants upon their arrival in Sydney.² One way or another, the Churches in the colonies tried to fulfil their pastoral responsibilities to those who, willingly or perforce, landed on these shores.

The societies which laboured to improve the colonials included benevolent, religious tract and Bible societies, and a new phenomena - the temperance and total abstinence societies. The benevolent societies were neither denominational nor necessarily religious groups, but religion normally loomed large in them (to the extent, in one case, of including among the aims that of giving to the needy 'religious instruction and consolation in their distress')³ and clergymen were very active supporters of these bodies.⁴ If these societies were content with dispensing charity instead of pressing for social justice, they nevertheless had points in their favour: they set out to improve upon mere private charity by channelling voluntary donations into a regularized system of aid,⁵ and, unlike the English workhouses, they did not break up families, but allowed them to live together in the benevolent asylum or to receive assistance while living outside.⁶ Their work was to some extent spoiled by an all too common attitude springing from the belief that poverty was part of the divine dispensation, being sometimes a penalty for sin and always a means of testing the worthiness of those who were well-to-do.⁷

¹N.S.W. Blue Book, 1851, p.587.

²Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, I, pp.58-61.

³Report of the Benevolent Society of N.S.W., 1836, p.6.

⁴Ibid., 1836, pp.4-5; 1843, p.3.

⁵Appeal on behalf of the Benevolent Asylum..., Sydney 1843, pp.7-8. Support was not entirely voluntary; in 1836, £291 came from subscriptions, £146 from church collections, £100 from a bequest and £362 from police fines - Report..., 1836, pp.10-11.

⁶Ibid., pp.13, 17.

⁷Ibid., 1836, p.9; 1847, p.19; H.T. Stiles, A Sermon, Preached... before the...Hawkesbury Lodge..., pp.5-6.

There was a good deal of patronage, and rather less of brotherliness, in these societies' efforts, and the poor could hardly fail to notice it or to question the God who made their children hungry just to enable a wealthy man to save his soul: certainly there was some tendency among those who had been admitted to the asylum to abscond.¹ Yet at least some attempt was being made to give practical assistance to the poor.

Concern for the poor was not, of course, monopolized by the benevolent societies. The Churches themselves, and the clergymen in their parochial work, did much in this regard. The Wesleyans maintained 'poor funds' from which they assisted the needy among them.² A visiting Wesleyan minister argued for complete teetotalism instead of merely condemning spirits drinking, on the grounds that it was unjust to leave the rich man his wines while denying the poor man his grog.³ The Rev. Frederick Cox introduced an evening service 'chiefly for the sake of the poor' because they had 'a special title to the gospel' yet were ashamed to show their shabby best clothes in the daylight.⁴ It is even possible to produce the Rev. Samuel Marsden as a witness for clerical kindness to the distressed. Marsden's reputation for harshness as an early clerical magistrate is almost a byword among Australian history writers, and this is not without justification.⁵ All the more significant, therefore, is one of Marsden's surviving letters in which he reports on twenty years old Jane Smith, who was put into the

¹Report..., 1836, p.12: left with permission, 189; left without permission, 64; died, 86.

²See, e.g., Hobart Wesleyan Leaders' Meeting Minute Books, 1830-52, 30 Nov. 1836, 4 Jan. 1837, etc. (Wesley Church, Hobart).

³The Australian Temperance Magazine, 1 Mar. 1838, p.142.

⁴F.H. Cox, Public Worship..., pp. 11-12.

⁵Macquarie accused Marsden of greater severity than other magistrates (Macquarie to Bathurst, 4 Dec. 1817, H.R.A., ix, 509), but it is significant that J.D. Lang, after accusing the clerical magistrates of too great severity, went on to say that they were, however, rather less severe than other magistrates (Historical and Statistical Account..., 1834 edn., II, p.248). For a probably genuine defence of Marsden, see H.T. Stiles, A Sermon, preached...May 20th, 1838, on the Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, Sydney, n.d., pp.8, 10.

Windsor lock-up fourteen days after giving birth to a child. There she could not sleep, for fear that the rats which overran the place would eat the baby. After a week of this, she was marched (as the custom was) from Windsor to Parramatta, and there she died. A cow and some clothes belonging to the dead girl were still at Windsor, and Marsden wrote to the chaplain there, asking him to claim the property so that the baby, who survived, might benefit from it. Marsden described this as a most distressing case, and ended simply, 'I felt much for her'.¹ If Marsden could feel and act like this, the gentler clergy must have felt and done much more in this regard.

Once people were dispersed in the interior, or huddled into the poor quarters of the town, it was often difficult for the representatives of the Churches to make close personal contact with them. One thing which could be done, however, was to distribute cheap Christian literature in the hope that this would pass from hand to hand. Foremost among these pamphlets were the Religious Tracts produced in England by Nonconformists and Evangelicals. Through the efforts of the Australian Religious Tract Society, thousands of these pamphlets were handed out each year until, in 1850, no less than twelve and a half thousand were issued free, as well as those which were sold (for a total of £120).² One city missionary used to leave a tract at houses to which he could not gain admission; after repeating this procedure a number of times, he often found that he was invited in, and was sometimes successful in persuading parents to go to church or to send their children to school.³ The tracts which were sent out to prisoners, labourers and stockmen in the interior were not always wasted, either. A correspondent from Port Stephens once said of the tracts:

¹ Marsden to Stiles, 9 Dec. 1834, Stiles Papers (A269 ML).

² See Report of the Australian Religious Tract Society, published annually, 1835-50.

³ Ibid., 1850, p.11. (For city missionaries, see Min. of Wes. Leaders' Meeting, Sydney, 1848-67, 3 Apr. 1850, ML).

They frequently supply some of the overseers with means of pleasing and instructing their men after the toils of the day, and likewise an inducement to assemble as many as they can on the Sabbath to read them. We cannot tell what may result from these little beginnings, for they break the monotony of the bush, and in solitude induce many to think of eternal things. Some of the men have said to me, 'They put some strange thoughts into our heads at times, Sir', meaning thoughts of spiritual things...¹

The tracts were particularly popular when the writers were artful enough to ignore the common evangelical disapproval of the novel, and to put their message in story form. Hence, in Redfern in 1850, Legh Richmond's The Dairyman's Daughter was popular, and C.B. Taylor's The Bar of Iron was in great demand, though it could not be read 'without tears'.²

In addition, the Bible Societies in both colonies steadily put copies of the scriptures into circulation. Some they sold; many more they issued free. A typical report was of 168 Bibles and 175 Testaments sold in New South Wales, compared with 233 Bibles and 322 Testaments given away.³ In 1848, the Van Diemen's Land Society issued 2,882 Bibles and Testaments, and 2,632 copies of the scriptures passed through the sister society's hands in New South Wales in 1849.⁴ This was not, perhaps, a large number when the colonies' population numbered about 75,000 and 220,000 respectively; but, taken over the years, and with such other sources of supply as the issues made by surgeon superintendents on migrant ships, Bibles must have been fairly readily available

¹ Ibid., 1835, pp.6-7.

² Ibid., 1850, pp.12-3. Cf. M. Maison, Search Your Soul, Eustace: A Survey of the Religious Novel in the Victorian Age, London 1961, pp.72, 89-95.

³ Report of the Auxiliary Bible Society of New South Wales, Sydney 1836, p.9.

⁴ V.D.L. Bible Society Report, 1848, p.7; N.S.W. Bible Society Report, 1849, pp.8-9.

throughout the colonies. In 1837, one clergyman was not only reporting that the district of New Norfolk in the southern colony was well supplied, but was expressing his anxious desire to have something done for the neighbouring district of Hamilton, which was short of Bibles.¹ This was precisely the kind of call which the Bible societies answered: free copies had been distributed, according to one typical report, among the poor in Sydney, poor children at a Windsor school, stockmen in the Wellington Valley, convicts at Norfolk Island and poor settlers at Cook's River.² One other practice adopted by the societies was to send Bibles home with patients returning to the interior after having been in hospital.³ Local agencies were also established in outlying towns,⁴ and there was even an attempt made to employ hawkers to sell Bibles (though this venture was unsuccessful).⁵

These valiant attempts to let the written word reach persons who might seldom hear the spoken word were largely made by Dissenters and Evangelicals.⁶ The High Churchmen, and the bodies they controlled (S.P.G., S.P.C.K. and some Diocesan Societies), gave religious literature a lower priority, for they were sceptical of religious notions acquired without clerical safeguards, distrustful of private interpretation and - as Broughton had said - firm believers in the necessity of the 'proper means', by which they meant the pastor, the sacraments, the church and the church-school. Hence they gave most attention to supplying settlers with religious buildings and religious men; the provision of religious books was a secondary matter.

¹ Ibid., V.D.L., 1837, pp.14-5.

² Ibid., N.S.W., 1835, pp.6-8.

³ Ibid., 1836, p.9.

⁴ Ibid., 1848, p.9. Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Bathurst and Maitland were listed.

⁵ Ibid., V.D.L., 1850, p.6.

⁶ Hence thousands of tracts were distributed through Anglican schools in the Deanery of Longford (V.D.L.) - W. Jones, The Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society..., London 1850, p.539.

Anglican High Churchmen also kept aloof from what was perhaps the most striking - certainly the newest - organized effort at moral reform, the temperance movement. Beginning in the thirties in the United States of America and the British Isles, this movement was quickly introduced into Australia,¹ where it found enough support, and had sufficient religious associations, to allow it to be hyperbolically described by one historian as 'a sizeable religious sect'.² The High Churchmen - and some other Christians as well - rejected the total abstinence, and even the temperance, societies through a combination of moderate views about alcohol, jealous regard for their own Church's reforming power and a dislike of groups which could be suspected of relying on man's effort rather more than on divine grace, or which seemed to be frankly substituting the gospel of teetotalism for that of Christ.³ But the Catholic priests were often fervent supporters of the cause,⁴ and so were ministers from every Church in the colonies.⁵

Very often, in fact, the members of these societies saw their task of calling the drink-sodden colonies to sobriety or teetotalism as a holy task, since drunkenness was not only a social problem but was also a positive sin against God.⁶ Reliance

¹ See The Australian Temperance Magazine, 1 July 1837, p.3.

² M. Roe, op.cit., p.585. Roe discusses this movement in detail on pp.508ff, 562ff, 583ff.

³ See, e.g., Colonial Observer, 8 Oct. 1842, pp.521-2; Annual Report of V.D.L. Total Abstinence Society ... 1847, p.8. Cf. M. Roe, op.cit., p.562ff.

⁴ Hobart Town Herald and Total Abstinence Advocate, 19 Dec.1846, p.3; 13 Jan. 1847, p.2; E.M. O'Brien, Life and Letters of Arch-priest John Joseph Therry ..., Sydney 1922, p.255; H.N. Birt, op.cit., II, p.6n.

⁵ Report of the Provisional Committee of the Temperance Society of N.S.W., 1834, p.3; First Annual Report ..., 1835, pp.5, 12; First, Second and Third Reports of the V.D.L. Auxiliary Temperance Society, 1837, pp.3-4.

⁶ N.S.W. Report, 1835, pp.5-6, 16.

on God's grace was sometimes written into the constitution of these groups,¹ which bitterly repudiated the charges that they were offering a substitute religion, and pointed to men who were reclaimed and worshipping in the churches through their work.² These societies were very realistic and imaginative in their methods. Halls, libraries, brass bands, tea-meetings, picnics and children's 'Cold Water Armies' all came within their scope, and one illustration of the success they sometimes enjoyed is that, in one month, forty stockowners in a southern New South Wales district pledged themselves to ban spirits from their stations.³ They had succumbed to the societies' logic that to give men water-proof pants before the sheep-washing was more effective than giving them spirits after it, and to the correctness of the societies' claims that many sheep-washings were done without spirits, either because the bullockies had tapped the kegs on the road, or because the men were too impatient to wait, and drained the kegs as soon as they arrived.⁴ Yet the work of the temperance and total abstinence societies, though a valuable adjunct to the Churches' efforts to reform colonial life, was not successful enough - as the societies were the first to admit. Too many colonials continued to prefer drunkenness and their own society.

This conclusion is much like the final result of every other effort made by Churches and moral reformers.⁶ There was success, but not overwhelming success; the lost who were sought were by no

¹ Report of Provisional Committee ..., p.3.

² Report of V.D.L. Total Abstinence Society, 1845, pp.9, 14-17; ibid., p.4. Cf. J. Norminton-Rawling, op.cit., p.96; J.P. Townsend, op.cit., p.163.

³ The Australian Temperance Magazine, 1 May 1838, pp.173-4; 1 June 1838, p.190.

⁴ Ibid., 1 Sept. 1837, p.36; 1 Nov. 1837, pp.69, 79; First, Second, Third Reports of V.D.L. Auxiliary ..., 1837, p.25.

⁵ Report of V.D.L. Total Abstinence Society ... 1847, p.8.

⁶ Cf. N.S.W. Bible Soc. Report, 1835, p.5; 1836, p.6; 1840, p.7; V.D.L. Bible Soc. Report, 1841, pp.10-11; C. Kemp, op.cit., 5 Aug. 1847, and J. Fowles, Sydney in 1848, Facsimile edn. Sydney 1962, pp.23-4, (on Church of England Lay Association).

means anxious to be found, and the Churches improved society without radically changing it. But it is equally true that those who remained outside the Churches, and untouched by efforts to reform them, did so in spite of the fact that they were very earnestly wooed. As has been suggested already, when discussing the provision of churches and clergymen, most Australians who paid no heed to religion, and very little heed to social morality, went their own way despite the fact that they were surrounded by influences which might have led them another way. Australians have always been subjected to fairly strong and persistent religious and moral pressures, even where they have resisted them.

The bush pastors

The outback areas and the clergymen who toured them deserve attention in some detail, both because of the epic quality of many of these pastoral tours, and also because there is a false rumour to be denied. It was, and is, sometimes claimed that the Catholic priests went about the sheep and cattle stations more often than any other ministers of religion. John Fidler, a Wesleyan local preacher, came out to Australia because he read of a convict who had seen no clergyman but a Catholic.¹ A bushman wrote in 1847, 'At present, except a stray Catholic priest, no preacher or teacher ever penetrates the far interior'.² W.C. Wentworth claimed that he had never heard of a clergyman visiting the squatting districts 'except perhaps a stray itinerant Catholic'.³ Another squatter mentioned only a Catholic priest and a Presbyterian minister as occasional visitors to his runs.⁴ Catholics themselves encouraged this claim that they were the real bush

¹ J. Fidler, op.cit., loc.cit.,

² 'A Bushman' (John Sidney), A Voice from the Far Interior of Australia, London 1847, p.23.

³ Herald, 6 June 1848, p.3 c. 2.

⁴ 'Spectator', ibid., 23 May 1848, p.2 c.4.

pastors, and denigrated the Protestants' efforts. 'There is nothing that so strikes the Protestant population as the great distance the Catholics come to assist at Mass, whilst they themselves reckon four or five miles too far to travel that they may listen to the minister,' wrote J.B. Polding, adding 'who, on his part, considers it a great hardship to have to leave his house in order to read the service.'¹ There can be no quarrel with Polding's claim that Catholics went a long way to Mass,² but it can be denied that Protestant ministers were house-bound. An historian has recently repeated the claim that 'itinerant Catholic priests were seen in the bush more often than were those of any other denomination';³ but the references he cites do not prove his point (to say the least),⁴ and there is much evidence to the contrary.

Since Polding contributed to the idea, a comparison of tours by the bishops is appropriate. Polding's own travelling energies were great. In 1838 he reported being called to Wollongong from

¹ Quoted in P.F. Moran, op.cit., p.230.

² Cf. the Rev. E.G. Pryce, in The Church in Australia, Part II: Two Journals of Missionary Tours in the Districts of Maneroo and Moreton Bay, New South Wales, in 1843, London 1845, p.8.

³ R. Ward, op.cit., p.88.

⁴ Ward's first reference is to A Voice from the Far Interior (just cited above), and does support his claim. The second is to J.P. Townsend, Rambles and Observations in New South Wales ..., London 1849, p.140. This simply reports that in four years the township of Uldalla was visited once by a Catholic priest, once by an Anglican clergyman and once by a Presbyterian minister. On pp. 162-3 (not referred to by Ward), Townsend describes Murrurundi as 'a fair specimen of an inland town', and reports a monthly visit by an Anglican and a quarterly visit by a Catholic. The third reference is to E.W. Lander, The Bushman ..., London 1847, pp. 113-4. This refers to Western Australia, and claims that there were twelve Catholic and only six Anglican priests in the colony; in fact, the seven Catholic priests were chiefly Italian and French missionaries to the aborigines; only one could speak English, and they did not remain long (see P.F. Moran, op.cit., p.558ff.). Ward's last reference is to G. Mackaness (ed.), The Correspondence of John Cotton, 3 parts Sydney 1953, Pt.III, p.44. Here (actually p.45) Cotton deplors the fact that Anglican ministers were 'not so much amongst the lower class of people as those of other sects' and that 'the Roman Catholics and dissenters' (my italics) were sending men throughout the country.

Sydney ('just 85 miles from Sydney - a comfortable ride for one day and a half') to attend a dying man. The man did not die, and Polding said he would have to return to the district in a few weeks to keep the man on those right paths to which the accident had directed him.¹ A little later in the year, Polding made his 'first pastoral tour of extent', being away from Sydney four Sundays and going to Goulburn, Yass and on beyond the boundaries.² In the middle of 1843, Polding wrote a letter from Moreton Bay, from which he intended commencing a visitation tour of nearly five hundred miles back to Sydney. 'We must pack up and off,' he concluded, 'We carry a blanket each for the bush, a pair of pistols for show, Altar things, etc. etc.'³ Ten years later, he and Dr Gregory travelled more than eleven hundred miles by buggy in the southern districts of the diocese.⁴ All this, and more, besides trips to Van Diemen's Land and even Western Australia, were undertaken by the head of the Catholic Church. But Bishop Broughton made voyages to these colonies, too, and he was no less active in touring the bush. Almost the first thing he did upon his return to Sydney in 1836 was to visit Bathurst.⁵ In 1840 he was out beyond the boundaries in the Tumut area, meandering back to Sydney via Yass, Limestone Plains, Braidwood, and so on.⁶ In 1845, between June and August, he was away visiting Newcastle, Maitland, Paterson, the River Allyn, Singleton, Muswell Brook, Scone, Mudgee, Bathurst, and other towns and stations along the way. Towards the end of that year, he went to Geelong, Melbourne and Launceston.⁷

¹ H.N. Birt, op.cit., I, p.317.

² Ibid., I, p.321.

³ Ibid., II, pp.61-2.

⁴ P.F. Moran, op.cit., pp.446-7.

⁵ S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1837, p.40.

⁶ Ibid., 1840, p.32ff.

⁷ The Church in Australia: Two Journals of Visitation to the Northern and Southern Portions of his Diocese, by the Lord Bishop of Australia, 1843, London 1845, passim.

Dr Polding therefore did not have any edge over his rival - especially if it is noted that Broughton was sixty years old in 1848, compared with Polding's fifty-four years. Nor did the Catholic Bishop of Melbourne put to shame the Anglican Bishop of Melbourne. Dean Coffey gave as his excuse for entering a public controversy that the head of his Church, Bishop Goold, had 'gone to search out the poor man in the Bush'.¹ But Bishop Perry, the Anglican, was no less a travelling man, but was 'distinguished as a working minister' who went into the interior.²

The persistent, arduous labour of ordinary Catholic priests is not to be denied. Priests were stationed in pairs, when possible, partly to enable one to itinerate while the other stayed at the main centre.³ The two priests at Bathurst were reported to have twenty-six stations to visit once a quarter, the closest being twenty miles from Bathurst, and the farthest (Dubbo) being one hundred and thirty miles away.⁴ To these may be added the further example of the Rev. Charles Lovat in the Yass-Goulburn area. A typical extract from his report on his work in 1839 reads:

2nd December, Gundaroo, 27 miles from Yass; 3rd, Goulburn, 45 miles from Gundaroo; 6th, Bungadore, 40 miles from Goulburn; 8th, Molonglo, 14 miles from Bungadore; 9th, Queanbeyan, 12 miles, at least; 11th, Goulburn, 40 miles (about); 12th, Gunning, 30 miles from Goulburn; 13th, Yass, 30 miles from Gunning ...⁵

There was much in the same strain. In that year, also, the priest at Penrith travelled 4,500 miles, the man at Windsor covered

¹ 'N.J.C.', Catholics, not Idolators, Nor under a Satanic Delusion ..., Melbourne 1850, p.5.

² J.B. Clutterbuck, Port Phillip in 1849, London 1850, pp.67-8. Cf. G. Goodman, The Church in Victoria during the Episcopate of the Right Reverend Charles Perry ..., London 1892, pp.70-89.

³ P.F. Moran, op.cit., p.238. This practice, by no means universal, while enabling more consistent itineration, also reduced the area in which a priest could be seen; two stationed 100 miles apart could have travelled into more country.

⁴ J. Kenny, op.cit., p.197.

⁵ Quoted in H.N. Birt, op.cit., I, p.447.

between 8,000 and 9,000 miles, and the priests at East and West Maitland each travelled more than 3,000 miles.¹ Within and without the boundaries, the Catholic clergy toured as assiduously as any; but this did not mean that they were seen more often than other clergy.

If the Catholic priests at Maitland each travelled about three thousand miles a year, an Anglican clergyman (G.K. Rusden, who was neither young nor a bushman) had done the same in that district five years earlier, and had soon been joined by another parson, who took charge of a district one hundred miles in length.² In 1840 it was reported also of the Rev. Robert Cartwright, who had been in the colony since 1810, that he

had just returned from a distant excursion to the river Lachlan, whither he had gone at the express desire of Whitton, lately executed at Goulburn for bush-ranging and murder, in order to warn some of his associates against the danger of following his evil course.

Cartwright's home base was then at Burrowa, several miles north-west of Yass and close to the boundaries of location, and he was recognized to be a travelling parson, having once been 'minister of the district of Yass, the entire County of Murray, and the Western Division of the County of King'.³ One of the ministers who helped to reduce Cartwright's parish was the Rev. Edward Smith; appointed to Queanbeyan in 1838, he was under instructions from his bishop 'to visit at regular periods some stations 75-80 miles off'.⁴ Since the work of priests at Bathurst has been mentioned, it should also be noted that Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan ministers were all stationed there before them.⁵

¹ Ibid., pp.444-5.

² W.W. Burton, op.cit., pp.206-8.

³ S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.33; Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, I, p.58.

⁴ Report of Committee on Immigration, p.839, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

⁵ Tegg's Almanac, 1837, pp.117-8 (the first year in which all three were listed).

Nor is it at all surprising to find that at least Anglican ministers were frequently in a district before Catholic priests. In New South Wales as a whole there were seventeen Anglican clergy and only seven Catholic priests in 1836; by 1844 the respective numbers were about sixty and thirty; and in 1850 there were approximately seventy-two to twenty-nine.¹ This meant that, despite the Rev. T.H. Braim's claim that Anglican ministers had many more people for each of them to care for,² they had no more, or even considerably less, than the Catholic priests had. In the early forties they had much the same number of 'parishioners', and by the end of the forties the Anglicans had to minister to a rough average of one thousand persons compared with the Catholics' two thousand.³ When these figures are considered, the claim that the Catholic priests gave better attention to their scattered flocks becomes at once improbable.

In 1836 the Wesleyan minister at Bathurst was regularly riding twenty-six miles between services on one Sunday, and forty miles to three appointments on the next, and by 1839 the Bathurst Wesleyan circuit was one hundred miles in length.⁴ In 1842 it was reported also that Wesleyan ministers were regularly riding once a quarter the seventy miles between Sydney and Wollongong, and during the forties the Wesleyans were stationing men at Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Scone and a few other places then a good way out.⁵ But they were not great bush tourists - they had enough work to do in the more heavily populated areas, and had far too few ministers,⁶ to allow a great deal to be done in the interior. The Rev. Charles Price, the Independent, was at Port

¹ See Appendix A; Tegg's Almanac, 1844, pp.102-3, 105-6; and Chapter 5 above.

² T.H. Braim, op.cit., II, p.172.

³ The number of clergymen has simply been divided into the number of adherents, as revealed in the censuses of 1841 and 1851.

⁴ J. Colwell, op.cit., p.246; N.S.W. Wes. Meth. Min., 1839, Q.28.

⁵ See ibid., throughout the period.

⁶ See, e.g., ibid., 1845, Q.27.

Stephens for some years in the thirties, but he was an exception to the general rule that Independents and Baptists did very little bush work in New South Wales.¹ On the mainland these were not the men who challenged the Catholics as bush pastors.

In Van Diemen's Land, however, the Independents did an important work in pioneering the bush areas. At the end of 1836 the Rev. Joseph Beazley arrived in the colony specifically for work in the interior, a task he faithfully carried out and in which he was joined, a few years later, by the Rev. John West, Alexander Morrison, William Waterfield and one or two others - all of whom spent at least some time in the bush.² Here, too, the Wesleyans, while regretting their inability to go from farm to farm, or to make more than occasional visits to many places,³ itinerated widely through the island.⁴ As for the Anglicans, by 1850 they had fifty clergymen (including six 'Missionary Chaplains' as well as ten 'Convict Chaplains') compared with a dozen Catholic priests. If the Catholics had been four times more active in their journeyings than the Church of England ministers, they would still have been no more in evidence. But, in fact the Anglicans were so much in evidence that the Rev. John Mereweather, arriving in 1850, soon transferred to New South Wales to get a neglected area to work in.⁵

Mereweather's wish was fulfilled in the Riverina. He was energetically riding about that large district while the nearest Catholic priest was a hundred miles away, in the Irish settlement at Kilmore, forty miles from Melbourne.⁶ In a nearby area, entered by crossing the boundary of the County of Murray at Michelego, and continuing beyond the Snowy River ('a deep and

¹ Cf. M. Kiddle, *op.cit.*, p.447, on the Port Phillip District.

² Report of V.D.L. Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1843; Colonial Times, 28 May 1844, p.3 c.3.

³ V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 1 Nov. 1838, Q. xxviii, xxxii.

⁴ Ibid., 11 Feb. 1836. Cf. J. Orton, *Journal 1832-9*, pp.180-5(ML).

⁵ J.D. Mereweather, Life ..., pp.75-6.

⁶ J.D. Mereweather, Diary ..., p.115.

rapid stream, very difficult to cross'), sterling work was done for years by another Anglican, the Rev. E.G. Pryce. For four years Pryce had no home but the squatters' huts; and, for the first six months at least, he never stayed in one place for more than three days, except for one week when he had a bad cold. Between 1843 and 1848, as well as itinerating in his own enormous district, he twice went to Gippsland and Twofold Bay - a round trip of eight hundred miles.¹ In the mid-forties, Pryce was only one of five Church of England chaplains (supported mainly by the S.P.G.) appointed for duties beyond the boundaries.² The Rev. James S. Hassall, whose father, the Rev. Thomas Hassall, 'used to be called "the galloping parson", because he rode so much', began his own ministry at Bungonia in 1849 and, in his first year, rode nearly six thousand miles.³ His clerical friend, G.E. Gregory, stationed at Canberra, was drowned while crossing the Molonglo in 1850; he was one of five Anglican clergymen drowned within a few years - poor support for Polding's malicious remark that they did not much like stirring from their houses.⁴

At the end of the forties Melbourne Anglicans were keeping a clergyman itinerating around the stations on the Campaspe, Loddon and Murray Rivers, on the 'Adelaide Boundary line near Portland and Mount Gambier', down the Wimmera, and on the Goulburn, Ovens and Broken Rivers.⁵ In 1849, Broughton's bete noire, the Rev. F.T.C. Russell, took up duty at Coleraine and itinerated between Casterton and Hamilton, down to Heywood and across to the South Australian border, an area of some two thousand square miles.⁶ Lest too much be said on the Anglicans' behalf, and too

¹ The Church in Australia, Part II ..., passim. 'A Maneroo Squatter', Herald, 1 July 1848, p.3, c.1. Cf. M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.110.

² Broughton to S.P.G., 3 Apr. 1845, H.R.A., xxiv, 494.

³ J.S. Hassall, op.cit., p.73.

⁴ Ibid., p.81; L.F. Fitzhardinge, St. John's Church and Canberra, Canberra 1959, pp.82-3.

⁵ Report of Melbourne Diocesan Society, 1849, pp.13-4; 1851, p.9.

⁶ M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.445.

little on the Catholics', it should be mentioned that Catholic priests - Geoghegan, and Walsh, and Slattery - also had a good reputation as itinerants in these areas at different times.¹ But there were also the Wesleyans - the first to hold service in Melbourne, the first to be established at Geelong, the only ones to establish a mission to the aborigines, and whose ministers were to be 'characteristic figures on the gold fields'.² Bishop Perry acknowledged that in many places the Anglicans had been preceded by Dissenters in his diocese. The Anglican Church, he said, was

continually anticipated and shut out, through her own sloth and lukewarmness, from places which she has been invited and even entreated to occupy, but has refused to do so until it was too late.³

This is not support for the claim of Catholic pre-eminence. Perry's lament was not over Catholic activity; it was that Wesleyans and Presbyterians were more often seen in the bush than Anglicans.

Presbyterian clergymen were well regarded as travellers in the interior, though they may have been handicapped by their schisms, which sometimes meant two men being stationed where one could have done the work. They were mentioned on several occasions, along with Catholics, as the only ones who had visited various areas.⁵ A Presbyterian, the Rev. James Forbes, was the first minister of religion to settle in Port Phillip (where the first service had been conducted by a Wesleyan, and where an Independent and an Anglican minister had also settled before the first Catholic priest arrived).⁶ The experiences of some of the early Presbyterian ministers - as well as the patently foolish

¹ Ibid., pp.111, 446.

² Ibid., pp.196-7.

³ G. Goodman, op.cit., pp.64-5. Cf. Broughton to Coleridge, 20 Sept. 1843, BP.

⁴ See A. Dougan, op.cit., p.465.

⁵ Herald, 23 May 1848, p.2 c.4; Broughton to S.P.G., 3 April 1845, loc.cit., Cf. M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.301.

⁶ R.D. Boys, op.cit., pp.59, 71, 81, 94.

statement by Wentworth in the New South Wales Legislative Council - give warning that squatters' accusations of clerical neglect are to be treated cautiously. Certainly there were too few clergymen, and their visits were too occasional and haphazard to be of the highest value; but they did more than the squatter was always ready to admit. The Rev. Andrew Love - an early Port Phillip Presbyterian - met a settler in Geelong and asked if he would contribute to the church building fund. The man refused, saying, 'You and Mr Forbes are two very indolent men. He stops in Melbourne, and you in Geelong, and never come out to us country people at all'. Not long before, Love had ridden ninety miles to baptize this settler's children. Forbes also was 'a real riding parson'; and another, the Rev. Peter Gunn, was 'probably the most indefatigable of them all'. Yet Gunn also suffered the same accusation of not visiting the outlying settlers.¹

Squatters, therefore, were not always easy to please. It was less than just to complain of ministerial neglect when they refused to call a minister, believing they could not provide for him,² and, once they had one in their midst, they could be hard taskmasters. John Mereweather found that the clergyman in the bush

must not expect a very high appreciation of the sacrifices he makes in coming into such a country. Many of the squatters are not gentlemen, but rather people who will broadly hint that, having paid a certain sum towards a clergyman's support, they expect to get something for their money in the shape of so many visits a year, be the weather what it might.³

Perhaps the squatters were sometimes unreasonable in what they asked of a minister; perhaps they just liked to take him down a little. Certainly the squatters' word should not be accepted without question. In particular, when they said that only

¹ Aeneas MacDonald, One Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Victoria, Melbourne 1937, p.21.

² M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.172.

³ J.D. Mereweather, Diary ..., pp.210-11.

Catholics went to the bush, or that Catholics went most often, they were talking nonsense - or were trying to get something, as Wentworth was trying to get a general system of education in opposition to Bishop Broughton, its most dangerous enemy.

Rather than saying that the Catholic religion was relatively respected by the sceptical bushmen because priests were most often seen,¹ it would be less misleading (though not altogether true) to say that priests were more consistently around the men's huts both because Catholicism usually retained a stronger hold on its adherents than other creeds, and also because Catholics were more often to be found in the huts than in the homesteads.² There was often a greater barrier between the station-hand and the status-conscious Anglican parson than between the hand and some other clergymen. Mereweather's complaint that many of the squatters themselves were 'not gentlemen' is vastly suggestive. John Cotton's dissatisfaction with the situation as he saw it - that the 'clergy of the Church of England [did] not go so much amongst the lower class of people as those of other sects' - was quite explicit. His further question, 'Is this from their having generally received a better education?',³ was in line with a Governor's opinion that the 'liberal University education' of the typical Anglican minister was a hindrance rather than a help in dealing with the Australian population.⁴ Too much weight should not be put on the 'University education' mentioned by Arthur, for many of the colonial Anglican clergymen were not, at any rate, the finished products of universities. Archdeacon William Cowper had an honorary doctorate, no other degree and very little learning,⁵ and a good number of the clergymen's degrees were

¹ This is the full claim of R. Ward, op.cit., pp.87-8.

² Cf. M. Kiddle, op.cit., pp.111, 301; The Church in Australia, Part II ..., pp.25-6, 28, etc.

³ G. Mackaness, op.cit., p.45.

⁴ Arthur to Bathurst, 21 Apr. 1826, H.R.A. III, v, 151.

⁵ Broughton to Coleridge, 14 Feb. 1842, BP; W.M. Cowper, op.cit., p.8.

honours conferred by the Archbishop of Canterbury: T. Hassall, R. Forrest, H.T. Stiles and W.H. Walsh, for instance, received the Master of Arts degree in this way on 24 August 1843, none of them previously having a degree of any kind.¹ But the accent could certainly be placed on the 'liberal' training and 'liberal' ideas of the clergy, in Arthur's sense of 'gentlemanly'; they knew where they belonged or intended to belong. The people sometimes complained of Anglican parsonic airs. 'I fear that the humbler classes of the people are accustomed to look towards the clergy as a kind of high Brahminical caste, rather than as their pastors and spiritual advisers,' wrote a newspaper correspondent, 'And this may chiefly arise from the fact, that the clergy have not mingled more with their people ...'² Another accused an Anglican clergyman of accepting ferrymen's coats as a cushion without thanks, and without speaking to his parishioners - boatmen and passengers - while the ferry was pulled across.³

Yet this tendency can also be grossly exaggerated, and is not to be substituted for the myth already exposed. The Rev. J. Gregor, in the Moreton Bay district, and the Rev. J.H. Gregory, in the Western Districts, are examples of Anglican ministers who were in the huts both constantly and courteously.⁴ F.T.C. Russell's name 'became a legend for humanity and kindness far beyond the confines of his own large district, and amongst many not of the Anglican persuasion'.⁵ James Hassall reminisced in this vein:

I never hurried away from the stations, often stayed a day or two to visit the shepherds and other station people, and when I called would have a pot of tea and some beef and damper and, I hope, a profitable chat with the lonely shepherd or hutkeeper. Often I would sleep at a shepherd's hut and the man would divide his blankets with me and give me his own bed if I had been willing to take it.⁶

¹ Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, I, p.259. One certificate survives in Stiles Papers, p.53 (A269 ML).

² 'Vindex', Courier, 24 Feb. 1837, p.3 c.1.

³ True Colonist, 4 Oct. 1839, p.7 c.2.

⁴ The Church in Australia, Part II ..., passim; G. Goodman, op.cit., pp.132-3.

⁵ M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.301, Cf. p.445.

⁶ J.S. Hassall, op.cit., p.73.

Shepherds' huts were notoriously dirty (in contrast to stockmen's), and Hassall's claim should be assessed with that in mind. When James Hassall's clergyman father was buried, a man was seen standing quietly in his best clothes twenty miles from the place of burial; he explained that, while he could not go to the funeral, he was keeping the day all the same.¹ Such things are to go on record, as well as complaints against the Anglicans. While they may often have been rather more self-conscious than some other clergy when roughing it in the bush, some of them - like James Hassall - were virtually bush-bred themselves, and many of them did bush work faithfully and effectively.

The barrier, when there was one between the itinerating cleric and the isolated bushman, was not necessarily from the clergyman's side at all. As the Presbyterian, the Rev. James Forbes, wrote to one young squatter:

Private Christians can do a great deal for the Lord's cause, perhaps in some respects they can do more than ministers. The ungodly and profane regard religion as 'the parson's trade', and treat his admonitions as very much in the way of business.²

If the bushman wanted it, the clergyman was usually willing to do what he could to help. If the bushman was suspicious of all parsons as such, the presence of a minister caused almost as great a difficulty as his absence.

¹ Ibid., p.197.

² C.S. Ross, op.cit., p.78.

CHAPTER 13THE PEOPLE'S BELIEF AND UNBELIEF

Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, the pious seventeenth century navigator, had hoped that, somewhere in the great south sea, there was a land to be dedicated to the Holy Spirit. Australian clergymen of the mid-nineteenth century knew this hope to be false, or one not to be fulfilled in their time. Yet all comfort was not denied them, for there were the faithful in the land and, up to this point, the civil authorities had not finally renounced their responsibility to defend the faith. It was a vague faith, or all Christian faiths, which the Government acknowledged and supported, and this could be seen as loss and weakness; but it could also be seen as gain or, at least, as one bastion still standing, still strongly defended. Australia was not the land of the Holy Spirit, but it boasted many well-attended churches and many religious people. It is as true to say that Christianity was strongly represented in the colonies as it is to say that Christianity was widely neglected in them. The difficulty, increased by the fact that one man's Christ is often the next man's antichrist, is to weigh accurately the religion against the irreligion. Perhaps a majority of the colonial people towards the middle of the nineteenth century cared little for religion, and even less for narrowly credal Christianity; but the minority who thought otherwise was not an insignificant group, either in numbers or in influence. If it is extraordinarily hard to place colonial life in true perspective, that life is utterly distorted unless both aspects - religious observance as well as religious indifference - are at least seen.

Religious observance

The debates on the school systems have shown how prominent religious issues could be in the colonies, but the school campaigns were due more to the ideals and the vigour of the clergymen than to the zeal of the laity. Pointing more clearly to religious feelings

among the people themselves are the welcome given to the Church Acts and the ready growth of the Churches through the thirties and forties - phenomena which often gave the Church leaders new heart as they looked about them. The immediate response among Anglicans to the Van Diemen's Land Church Act was proof to their archdeacon that the people had a great desire for religious instruction.¹ Bishop Broughton was surprised and pleased to find that in the Tumut River district, 'far beyond the limits of location', there were more than three hundred adults willing to subscribe the sum of £300 towards the erection of a church, and whatever he had to say on occasion about the unwillingness of squatters to build churches, he had to say on other occasions that there seemed to be an eagerness to have churches built, to subscribe towards them and to fill them when they were finished. He thought, at the beginning of the forties, that there was an increasing respect being paid to Christian teaching, that more people were serious and prayerful, and that this was having such practical effects as increasing the number of marriages and decreasing merely de facto alliances.² About this time, one of the leading Wesleyan ministers was also glad to report an evident change for the better in the class of migrant and in religious observance in the colonies.³ A little later, a Presbyterian observer, with a wide range of acquaintance with churches and congregations in the colonies, expressed the opinion that colonial church-goers gave very marked attention to the service, being far less given to yawning, sleeping and general listlessness than Scottish congregations were.⁴ The colonies were not all stony ground where the seed of the Word could not grow to the harvest.

The statistics of church attendance in eastern Australia at the end of the forties are ambiguous, so no exact knowledge can be

¹ W, Hutchins, op.cit., p.3.

² S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, pp.22-3, 28, 32.

³ John M'Kenny, Wesleyan Missionary Report, 1840, pp.28-9.

⁴ D. Mackenzie, op.cit., p.54.

gained from them, but what they strongly indicate is that colonial attendance was much the same as Australian church-going today. Compared with twenty-five per cent, or a little more, of the modern Australian population which goes to church each Sunday,¹ rather more than twenty per cent of the total population in New South Wales attended worship on an average Sunday in 1850.² If approximate and rounded figures, based on approximate and incomplete figures from that time, may be described as 'detailed', the position in greater detail was as follows.

NEW SOUTH WALES, 1850

Denomination	Average Number at Worship Each Sunday	Percentage of Adherents Attending
Anglican	15,500	16
Catholic	12,500	22
Wesleyan	6,500	65
Presbyterian	2,500	}----- 25
Free Presbyterian	2,100	
Independent	1,400	}----- 33
Baptist	500	

About four-fifths of the total Wesleyan accommodation was taken up regularly; the churches of the Anglicans, Catholics and Independents were, on a colonial average, three-quarters filled; the Baptist accommodation was half used; and the Presbyterian churches, reflecting the schisms which plagued this denomination at the time, were less than half filled.

In Melbourne, on a Sunday, the churches of all denominations were reported to be 'well attended, the people dressed in their best attire, the shops shut, the streets ... quiet'.³ There are statistics available on church attendance in the Port Phillip District.⁴

¹ The Australian Gallup Polls found that, in 1947, 35% had attended a service in the two Sundays prior to the poll, and that 27% and 30% went to church each week in 1961 and 1962 respectively.

² Calculated, without claiming any high degree of accuracy, from the detailed lists in N.S.W. Blue Book, 1850, p.611ff.

³ D. MacKenzie, *op.cit.*, p.30.

⁴ Statistics of the Port Phillip District ... 1850, Melbourne 1852, p.6.

PORT PHILLIP DISTRICT, 1850

Denomination	Number of Churches	Total Sittings	Average Attendance
Anglican	7	2,460	2,550
Wesleyan	5	2,700	2,700
Catholic	5	1,720	1,670
Presbyterian	5	1,376	900
Free Presbyterian	3	920	680
Independent	2	1,000	900
TOTALS	27	10,176	9,400

However, while the churches were well attended, the total accommodation in them provided for only thirteen per cent of the total population, so church attendance in this region left much to be desired. Van Diemen's Land, as is only to be expected, came out better in this regard.¹

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, 1849

Denomination	Members and Adherents	Total Sittings	Average Attendance
Anglican	45,000	16,300	7,000
Catholic	11,000	700	1,600
Presbyterian	4,500	3,100	3,000
Wesleyan	3,100	3,800	3,400
Other Protestant	2,300	3,340	Independ. 1,500(?)
		450	Baptist 200
		?	Quaker 75
TOTALS	65,900	27,690	16,775

Although the Anglican churches (taken together) were not half-filled (the Anglican figures underlining the extent to which Anglicanism was purely nominal), and although the Catholic attendance was unusually small (as was Catholic accommodation), the overall attendance still amounted to nearly a quarter of the population - about the same proportion as in New South Wales in 1850, and much the same as that in Australia today.

¹ Statistics of V.D.L. for 1849, Hobart 1850, Tables 44-50, in conjunction with the censuses of 1848 and 1851. Certain soldiers and convicts were excluded, though they must have been mustered for service fairly regularly.

Modern Australian churchmen recognise that they are faced with a problem of poor church attendance, for they do not consider it enough that a quarter or a third of the population attend worship regularly. Furthermore, in the England and Wales of the mid-nineteenth century (according to the religious census of 1851), about forty per cent of the people attended church on a Sunday.¹ Or, to take another standard, some forty-seven per cent of adult Americans attend church every week in our own times.² By comparison, therefore, the fact that about a quarter of the Australian colonists went to church regularly in the middle of the last century does not mark them as a church-going people. Yet, on the other hand, they were much more often at church than the average Englishman of today, for only twenty-eight per cent of the English now go to church once a month or more often³ - so that probably not more than about ten per cent attend weekly. Taking this as a standard, and taking into account all the colonial difficulties, the colonists do not emerge so badly as church-goers. Certainly enough of them went to church sufficiently often to give the clergy some encouragement, and to make religious observance a noticeable - if not the dominant - feature of the colonial Sunday.

Further evidence of religious observance emerges from the records of confirmations and baptisms. The Anglicans had many candidates for confirmation. In 1839, for instance, Archdeacon Hutchins reported that five hundred young people had been presented for confirmation in a few months.⁴ Bishop Broughton confirmed perhaps six hundred persons in 1836; in 1843 he confirmed eighty-seven at Melbourne; over two hundred were confirmed in towns around Sydney in January 1844; early in 1845 the bishop was

¹ See K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, Vol.XI, No.1, pp.74-86, for a discussion of this census which is printed in Commons Papers, 1852-3, LXXXIX, 1.

² According to the American Institute of Public Opinion Surveys, 1957-61.

³ According to a survey in 1957 by the Gallup Poll, London.

⁴ W. Hutchins, op.cit., pp.3-4.

administering the rite at such places as Cobbity (fifty-five candidates), Yass (eleven), Goulburn (thirty-one) and Queanbeyan (twenty); and from August to November 1848, he had thirty-one candidates at Marsfield, three hundred and eightyfour in Sydney, and two hundred and fifty-eight in surrounding towns - all of which are only selections from the record, not a complete account.¹ The sacrament of Baptism was also widely administered. In 1849 the Van Diemen's Land Churches between them baptized at least two thousand persons.² Most of those involved would have been children (no baptisms were reported from the adult-immersing Baptists), and - as a guide to the significance of the figure - there were 3,578 children under two years of age, according to the 1848 census, and only about 4,000 in 1851.³ If baptisms continued at the rate of two thousand each year, the Churches must soon have made up lost ground. In 1851, in fact, when the Rev. J.D. Mereweather visited the extremity of the White Hills district - 'quite in the bush' - he found 'a great many children, dirty, untidy, ignorant and healthy. They had all been baptized'.⁴ From the Australian bush there have emerged famous stories of visiting clergymen being told that they could christen the settlers' offspring if they could catch them, and the fact that rites have been administered does not necessarily mean that they have been sought by people who have a proper appreciation of their significance; yet it would be unreasonable simply to dismiss these external evidences of religion in the colonies, for where the rite is, there the spirit often is, also.

Yet where the spirit of religion is, the practice of religion may be restricted at some points, and may be marked by strong prejudices against certain aspects of religious observance. There were some very obvious examples of this among the colonial Christians. One Protestant rite which suffered neglect was the sacrament of

¹ Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, passim.

² Statistics of V.D.L. for 1849, Hobart 1850.

³ Soldiers' children were excluded.

⁴ J.D. Mereweather, Diary ..., p.78.

Holy Communion. Colonists who were of 'the same religion as the Queen' often followed her example in communicating only twice a year,¹ for this was a common Anglican practice at the time (and an obvious example of the practices against which the Tractarians rose up in wrath). Other Anglicans did not communicate at all and, indeed, although the Anglican clergy (especially the High Churchmen) repeatedly appealed for frequent communion,² the sacrament was infrequently offered in many places. Both these facts may be illustrated by this random selection from figures for Anglican churches in Van Diemen's Land for 1849.³

Place	Average Attendance at Worship	Number of Communion Services Each Year	Average Attendance at Sacrament
Green Ponds	60	4	12
Trinity, Hobart	300	12	45
Horton-Circular Head	70	8	24
Macquarie Plains	150	12	25
Westbury	115	12	9

The figures were given with a warning that they did not represent the total communicants in the year - 'some partaking of it but once, others twice or more; but this merely underlined the degree to which this sacrament was neglected.

The same was true of other denominations. Wesleyans had protested (obviously being far too scrupulous) that the phrase 'in communion' suggested for the Van Diemen's Land Church Act would exclude them from aid because comparatively few of their hearers attended the sacrament.⁴ They usually offered the sacrament only at their principal chapels, and then no more than

¹ R.C.K. Ensor, op.cit., p.139.

² See, e.g., W.G. Broughton, The Nature ..., pp.4, 10f; F.R. Nixon, On the Duty ..., p.16; W. Dry, op.cit., Sermons XXI, II, XIII, XIV; F.H. Cox, Public Worship..., Hobart 1850, introduction and p.14.

³ Statistics of V.D.L. for 1849, Table 44.

⁴ Min. of Exec. Coun., V.D.L., 20 Nov. 1837, EC 2/4, p.561 (TA).

two or three times a quarter, while many people attended little Wesleyan preaching places where they could not have communicated if they had wanted to.¹ The Van Diemen's Land figures would suggest that an average of only 636 attended the Wesleyan Communion services, compared with over 3,300 in attendance on their preaching services. A similarly low proportion of communicants to worshippers was shown for Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist congregations. Catholics made their communion more often, an interesting comparison being possible between the weekly average of one hundred assisting at the Holy Eucharist in St. Joseph's, Hobart, and the average of sixty-five at Holy Communion in the Anglican St. David's - both claiming an attendance of eight hundred at non-sacramental services.² Nevertheless, many Catholics apparently ignored this sacrament too, for only 80,000 communions were made annually in the Catholic churches of New South Wales by about 1850, when the Catholic population was well over 50,000.³

It was not necessarily contempt for the rite which lay behind this. Often the inhibitive force was a fear of taking the sacrament unworthily, a dread which was as real for a respectable Evangelical schoolmaster, in one of his spiritually depressed states, as it was for the more ignorant soldiers and convicts to whom the Rev. Thomas Sharpe ministered on Norfolk Island.⁴ But another possible reason

¹ Hobart Town Circuit Wesleyan Methodist Preachers' Plan, April-July 1839 (Sacrament monthly at one chapel, every second month at another, and not at all at eight other places); A Plan for the Wesleyan Methodist Preachers of the Melbourne Circuit, Nov. 1840-Jan. 1841 (Sacrament twice at main chapel, not at all at six other places); Wesleyan Preachers' Plan, Parramatta, Sept.-Dec. 1845 (Sacrament three times at main chapel, not at all at six other places); The Wesleyan Preachers' Plan for the Hunter River Circuit, Feb.-May 1847 (Sacrament monthly at West Maitland, every four months at ten other places - often on a weekday, and understandably so, since there were nineteen preaching places in the charge of one minister!).

² Statistics for V.D.L., 1849.

³ H.N. Birt, op.cit., II, p.177.

⁴ J.F. Castle, op.cit., 2 Dec. 1838; T Sharpe, op.cit., p.37.

for ignoring this sacrament was sheer reaction to its ritualistic nature, for forms and formality found many critics in the colonies. Convict resentment unquestionably contributed to this feeling. One convict, although a very different man from most of his fellows, has left a vivid account of his own reaction to the gaol services which, mutatis mutandis, illustrates how many convicts felt.

... we were mustered out, formed into double rank, and marched with the most soldier-like precision to the convict's [sic] church at Hobart town, to hear the detested ritual of the Church of England. ... Our American blood boiled in our veins ...

But there we were, helpless, and forced to submit to it all, and compelled to endure the purgatory of two and three long doleful hours - rising, kneeling, and sitting, according to the most precise formula, all the while holding our faces as grave as an owl, and for all the world looking, perhaps, about as wise.

After scathing criticism of the chaplain, the convict went on:

It may well be imagined that his teachings, which were but the repetition of a stereotyped service, that in itself was as heartless and devoid of devotion as the soul of its ministrator, parson Bedford, made no other impression on our minds than those of hatred and disgust.¹

This writer was an American, captured while assisting Canadian rebels, and he had patriotic as well as, apparently, religious objections to the Anglican ritual. The more typical convict, however, was no more likely to love the liturgy when he got his liberty, and, if he were to be won to Christianity at all, a form of worship which was warmer and homelier, or which had much more drama (of one kind or another) in it, was required.

This need was not lost upon all who were responsible for the conduct of services, and the distaste for ritual services was not confined to those who were simply antagonistic to religion in any form. After hearing Morning Prayer read in a small settlement, the Quaker, James Backhouse, remarked that 'this sort of mechanical religious service does not seem to be very attractive to the people,

¹ W. Gates, Recollections of Life in Van Dieman's [sic] Land, Lockport 1850, pp.93-4.

either here or in other places'.¹ The Anglican clergymen themselves revealed their awareness of the problem, even among the devout members of the Church of England, by the frequent defences of Anglican practice which have already been discussed.² The Launceston Wesleyans' stalwart opposition to the introduction of the Order for Morning Prayer was another aspect of the same point of view;³ and an incident in the ministry of the Rev. J.C. Symons, first Wesleyan minister in Gippsland, also reveals the common dislike of religious ceremony. Symons allowed himself to be persuaded 'to don a pair of moles' so that he would not appal his bush congregation 'by the terrors of a black suit', and one of his hearers was most enthusiastic about this 'right good fellow in fustian, instead of a mere formal parson'.⁴ Bishop Polding said, 'To suppose that the cold forms of Protestantism can ever have effect on our abandoned population is absurd. Zeal amounting to enthusiasm is required. So long as Methodism does not come in, we have no rival to fear ...'.⁵ Polding apparently thought that the visual drama of the Catholic services (as well as the pastoral zeal of the priests) was great enough to compensate for their ritual form; but it is extremely doubtful whether the Catholic ceremonies had much converting effect, and W.B. Ullathorne's thorough defence and explanation of the long order for blessing and laying a foundation stone⁶ rather confirms the idea suggested by the Anglican defences of their practice: anti-ceremonial attitudes were common and were often to be distinguished from anti-religious sentiments. The old Methodist woman on J.D. Mereweather's ship, who complained that there were no prayer meetings on board

¹ J. Backhouse, op.cit., p.189.

² See above, in Chapter 10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ W.L. Blamires and J.B. Smith, op.cit., p.251.

⁵ Polding and Brown, 14 June 1837, quoted in H.N. Birt, op.cit., I, p.306.

⁶ W.B. Ullathorne, The Ceremony of Blessing and Laying the Foundation Stone of a New Church: Translated from the Pontifical with a Preliminary Instruction, Sydney [1836].

and that the chaplain's prayers were 'only parson's prayers', was giving vent to feelings which were neither irreligious nor likely to be lost in the colonies.¹ It was not simply debating tactics, and not irreligion proper, which had led a Van Diemen's Land newspaper to protest against the appointment of a bishop and to argue for humble, itinerant preachers as the preferable alternative;² it was an expression of an opinion upon which the editor expected to get sympathetic support from many readers. Again, while some Anglicans were ready to accuse Robert Lowe of being a traitor to the Church and a worldly man, Lowe was sufficiently wordly-wise to know how the ground lay when he attacked the development of the 'solemn pomp of Cathedral worship' while the outback remained in religious neglect;³ he knew that a good many practising Anglicans, sharing his dislike of Tractarianism and all that it stood for, would agree with him.

Lowe, furthermore, was probably quite sincere when he argued that it was the duty of laymen to see 'that men were not brought up to dwell on ... differences in the forms and modes of worship ... till in the heat of controversy and bigotry, they forgot that they were Christians'.⁴ Here, too, he would have carried many colonists with him, for indifference or antagonism to form went along with a considerable indifference to denomination - except for the rigid distinction between Catholics and Protestants, which was nearly always maintained.⁵ Criticism of the 'bona fide members' clause in the Church Act of Van Diemen's Land, and defence of state schools and Nonconformist Sunday schools against Anglican charges of proselytism, were made in terms of the great numbers of people who were quite indifferent about which denomination came among them or taught their children,⁶ and this

¹ J.D. Mereweather, Life ..., p.18.

² Colonial Times, 5 July 1836, p.221.

³ Atlas, 10 May 1845, p.277.

⁴ Herald, 10 Oct. 1846, p.2 c.6.

⁵ J.D. Mereweather, op.cit., p.115: 'Find many Romanist families about, but they will in no wise avail themselves of my ministry'.

⁶ See above, in Chapters 4 and 8.

indifference was not necessarily (though it was often) an indifference to religion as such: it could be due simply to people being not at all particular about denominational differences and loyalties. In rural Van Diemen's Land, wrote one of the ministers who had worked there, religion was never openly questioned in the settlers' houses, all ministers were welcomed and 'controversial divinity was excluded by common consent'.¹ In line with this was a newspaper's comment that it did not matter to the public which sect gave religious instruction to the convicts.² Anglicans sometimes complained of the extent to which their people went to other churches because there was insufficient accommodation in Anglican churches,³ but this, while it worried the zealots, often gave no concern to those who did this. It was quite common, indeed, for Anglicans to deliberately attend a non-Anglican service on those days when the (objectionable) Athanasian Creed was to be said in the Church of England.⁴ Evangelical Anglicans like the Macarthurs were very ready to lay the foundation stone of a Wesleyan chapel and to grant land for the erection of another,⁵ while one prominent Sydney Methodist could not recollect what had led him to join the Wesleyans some sixteen years earlier.⁶ One squatting family, the Learmonth, secured for their district the services of a minister of the Free Presbyterian Church, mainly because he was most readily available, and they later contributed towards the support of an Anglican clergyman as well.⁷

¹ J. West, op.cit., I, pp.85-6, 196.

² Examiner, 9 Sept. 1843, p.561.

³ 'Philanthropos', Herald, 15 Apr. 1839, p.2 c.5; Report of Church of England Lay Association, N.S.W., 1844-5, p.38.

⁴ Tasmanian, 8 Apr. 1836, p.119. The creed was objected to since it was often taken to mean that all would be damned who did not accept this specific statement of the faith. Cf. F.R. Nixon, On the Duty ..., p.18, and F.R. Nixon, A Charge ... 1846, p.22.

⁵ N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1839, Q.9; ibid., 1842, Q.32.

⁶ D. Allen, op.cit., p.59.

⁷ The Church in the Colonies, No.XIV..., pp.37-8; A.G. Austin, op.cit., p.61.

There was so much scepticism of the more exclusive claims of Christian denominations that Church leaders were worried into calling it irreligion. Yet many of the most extreme 'nonformists' were not truly agnostics or atheists. The Australian poet, Charles Harpur, hated and feared the domination of any Church over education, politics or social life, and was very much a religious radical; yet he was still a theist.¹ The Anglican settler, G.M.C. Bowen, moved far away from religious orthodoxy (arguing such things as that the Universe was God, that the Christ of the Lord's Supper was not an 'individual' but a disposition of mind and that, therefore, there need be no quarrel with Catholic transubstantiation or Lutheran consubstantiation); but he, too, remained genuinely and deeply religious in his own way.² What is more, such religious extremists usually expected small support for their views in the colonies. Bowen anticipated not only 'expressions of surprise' from his friends, but also their 'strong disapproval'.³ Marsden lamented Bowen's book, but found comfort in his belief that it was 'so clearly opposed to the Holy Scriptures, that very few ... [would] be inclined to read it';⁴ and in this he was supported by the newspapers' tendency to dismiss Bowen's book as one which neither was worth reading nor had been much read.⁵

Church leaders over-stated the case against the tolerant and the partially committed, both in England and in Australia. In the mother country in 1835, W.G. Broughton condemned a tendency towards that

modification of infidelity, which may be called negative, as it proposes no actual objections, but manifests itself rather by

¹ J. Normington-Rawling, *op.cit.*, p.152.

² G.M.C. Bowen, The Language of Theology Interpreted, in a Series of Short and Easy Lectures, Sydney 1836, pp.311-2. See also his later work, Modern Parables ..., cited above in Chapter 11.

³ Bowen to Broughton, 24 Nov. 1836, Stiles Papers (A1323 ML).

⁴ Marsden to Stiles, 9 Jan. 1837, *ibid.* (A963 ML).

⁵ See e.g., Sydney Times, 27 May 1837, p.2; Colonist, 8 Dec. 1836, p.396; 25 May 1837, pp.167-8.

an affected liberality towards all religions and all creeds, while it finds none among¹ them worthy of its own enlightened preference.

The future Bishop Nixon, preaching in England in 1840, said, 'These are the days of liberalism and doubting, rather than of meek submission to the once-regarded teaching of the Church'.²

In the colonies, liberalism was no less in evidence. Broughton was alarmed at 'a spirit of self-will' amounting 'practically to atheism' among the leading men.³ Nixon remarked bitterly to the Van Diemen's Land Legislative Council that he was 'old-fashioned enough' to believe that a country needed God's blessing.⁴

Archdeacon Hutchins decried the readiness of apparently Christian legislators to grant state aid to 'truth and error, acknowledged error'.⁵ The Catholic Bishop Davis complained that the New South Wales Legislative Council was 'chiefly composed of a fearful set of infidels'.⁶

This liberalism certainly meant that the Churches' claims and demands did not go unchallenged. It was also of the same kind of opinion which, in some men, led to rejection of religion. But the Council debates and decision rebut the idea that the councillors, and their social peers, were atheists or agnostics. Some probably believed very little, but none came out publicly to say that religion was an out-moded superstition. On the contrary, they all affirmed their belief in the necessity for religion, and backed it by large grants of money to the Churches and by trying hard and long to find an acceptable method of religious instruction in state schools. No doubt the religion of many councillors and leading men sat comparatively lightly on their shoulders; but the

¹ W.G. Broughton, The Present Position ..., p.11.

² F.R. Nixon, On the Duty ..., p.9.

³ Broughton to Coleridge, 6 Mar. 1847, BP.

⁴ Courier, 3 Nov. 1843, p.2, c.4.

⁵ W. Hutchins, A Sermon ..., p.26.

⁶ Davis to Heptonstall, 22 Aug. 1850, quoted in H.N. Birt, op.cit., II, p.166.

real cause of the frustrated annoyance among the Church leaders was not that the colonies' prominent citizens were 'infidels', it was simply that they - like many of the colonial church-goers - lacked denominational exclusiveness and doctrinal rigidity.

Even so, there is a large qualification to be made to this common tolerance and frequent dislike of religious ritual. Catholics remained Catholics, and Anglicans - while possibly resisting the High Church emphasis - remained Anglicans. They did not turn in large numbers to new sects, or swing in any significant fashion away from the most 'ecclesiastical' Churches. No large numbers flocked to, say, the Independents or Quakers; and almost no frontier sects developed.¹ W.G. Broughton was not indulging in mere wishful thinking when he wrote of Geelong:

There has never been a clergyman here before; and yet they have a presbyterian minister, a wesleyan preacher, and a Romish priest; and yet more remarkable, the Church of England feeling still pervades the greater number, and the most intelligent ...²

Church loyalties, or, at any rate, loyalty to the orthodox Churches, did remain firm in Australia. Prophets who had privately seen visions were not warmly welcomed. When, for instance, a religious fanatic named Westwood toured the Western District of the Port Phillip District, some of the squatters gave him a hearing, and some refused even to do that, but none embraced his creed.³ In the late forties, there was talk in Sydney and Melbourne of founding a 'free' Church of England, but nothing emerged of any significance.⁴ If one mark of the Australian colonist was his feeling that denominations did not matter very much, an equally important mark was that, in his easy, tolerant way, he usually maintained his traditional allegiance and accepted his denomination's traditional services.

¹ The esoteric Wroeties, who had several chapels (and these in the larger centres of population) and perhaps one thousand members by the end of the forties, were a minor exception. See M. Roe, op.cit., pp.389-91.

² Broughton to Coleridge, 20 Sept. 1843 (continued 29 Sept.), BP.

³ M. Kiddle, op.cit., p.301.

⁴ M. Roe, op.cit., p.412.

This fact is in striking contrast to what happened on the American frontier. There the Methodists and Baptists, in their most homely guise, swept the field among Protestants - except for the indigenous Disciples of Christ, who arose to express the common faith of the frontier and to resist the entry of rival denominations, and who flourished.¹ Differences between the American and Australian 'frontiers' are usually explained by contrasting the nature and extent of the frontiers, and by showing the far greater dependence of Australian settlers on government.² Almost certainly this also applies in the religious sphere. There was no state aid to religion in America after the earliest settled colonies were left behind, but in Australia the Church Acts were in operation. These Acts did not encourage local sects, but supported the orthodox Churches named in their regulations, for state aid was only granted where the required numbers of persons declared their adherence to one of these Churches. When their Legislative Councils would help them secure the denominations they were used to, the Australian settlers were unlikely to hive off on their own. In any proper investigation into the reasons why the Churches of the British Isles remained unrivalled as the Churches of Australia, and why the proportion of colonists belonging to each of them remained about the same throughout these years, the Church Acts should be given a significant place.

Yet the determinants of the nature and structure of Australian religion must be dependent upon much more than the Church Acts and their effects. It may be at least suggested here that intending interpreters will have to deal with an apparent resistance of Australians to fervently revivalistic religion and their phlegmatic moderation in spiritual things. Fifty years after settlement began at Port Phillip, two Wesleyan ministers collaborated in a history of their denomination in Victoria, and generalized about the colonists by saying that 'religion, if it assumed not the stern type of the Puritan in New England, had yet a home and welcome

¹ See H.R. Niebuhr, op.cit., p.136ff.

² Cf. H.C. Allen, Bush and Backwoods, Michigan 1959, esp. pp.82-109.

amongst them, and toned down the rough asperities, and developed the better elements, of colonial life'.¹ Just as truly, they could have said that Australian religion did not assume the revivalist form so common in later American history. Wesleyans occasionally reported small, local revivals, but nothing more important than thirty persons being won at Dapto, New South Wales, and a few persons being gathered in from the world at Back River, Van Diemen's Land, to encourage the local Methodists; but even incidents like these were reported only now and then.² The Rev. Nathaniel Turner gave the usual situation in these words:

We have at times appeared just on the eve of revival amongst the people, and then something has transpired that has appeared to put an extinguisher upon the gracious flame.³

The devout Mrs Sarah Hopkins, of Hobart, recorded in her diary the prayerful hope of a revival among Independents (and those they could reach), but this did not come, either.⁴ Even the noteworthy revival which swept through the United States of America in 1858, and crossed the Atlantic into the British Isles in 1859,⁵ did not much influence Australians. In 1860 it was supposed to have 'visited also these shores', but it 'came in lessened energy'.⁶ The Australian colonists seem to have been well proofed against revivals, a fact which, intrinsically, is significant for the sociologist of religion and which, historically, has meant that few of the colonials who were outside the Churches were persuaded to come into them.

Practical Atheism

On board an emigrant ship bound for Australia in 1850, a 'crowd of vicious young men' sometimes read Tom Paine aloud and

¹ W.L. Blamires and J.B. Smith, op.cit., p.11.

² J. Fidler, op.cit.; V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 1843, Appendix.

³ N. Turner, Journal, 14 Aug. 1840 (ML).

⁴ J. West, The Hope of Life Eternal ..., pp.92-4.

⁵ See J.E. Orr, The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain, London 1949.

⁶ W.L. Blamires and J.B. Smith, op.cit., p.89. Cf. J.C. Robinson, The Free Presbyterian Church of Australia, Melbourne 1947, pp.85-8.

assailed the Bible with what believers described as 'clumsy jests'. But there was no clumsiness in their argument, 'Don't quote your Bible to prove your Bible; we must have other arguments'; they had learnt to attack Christianity on intellectually acute grounds.¹ The people who came to the colonies were not all immune to the movements in thought associated with D.F. Strauss's Leben Jesu (1835-6, translated into English in 1846), with H.F. Milman's History of the Jews (1829), with the Rev. R.D. Hampden's liberal views expressed in his 1832 Bampton Lectures, and his subsequent persecution,² and with the rejection of Christianity by such persons as George Eliot, F.H. Newman and J.A. Froude in the thirties and forties.³ The colonies had their own G.M.C. Bowen, their Charles Harpur, their Henry Melville and their E.S. Hall,⁴ all of whom argued either for unorthodox religion or for no religion at all; and an Australian Anglican journal declared that men no longer believed a religious doctrine just because they had been taught it, but investigated its truth for themselves.⁵

The real problem for the churchmen, however, did not lie in rational repudiation of religion; as the Rev. William Dry asserted, there were few colonials who would have denied that there was a God.⁶ The greatest worry to Church-leaders was simply 'practical atheism', a condition which had many causes and assumed various forms. Some of it came from the old country, from such places as parts of Birmingham where many had 'always been quite heathen',⁷ from neglected parts of rural England⁸ and from the poor in

¹ J.D. Mereweather, op.cit., pp.4, 34-5, 61-2.

² The Hampden Case was reported in Herald, 22 Aug. 1836.

³ See H.R. Murphy, 'The Ethical Revolt Against Christian Orthodoxy in Early Victorian England', American Historical Review, Vol.LX, No.4 (1955), pp.800-17; B. Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies, London 1949, and More Nineteenth Century Studies, London 1956.

⁴ For Hall, see his Credulity of Deism, 1855-6 (MSS 3221 ML). Cf. J.F. Castle, op.cit., 6 June 1841.

⁵ Melbourne Church of England Messenger, June 1852, pp.161-2.

⁶ W. Dry, op.cit., Sermon VIII.

⁷ Midland Mining Commission ..., Commons Papers, 1843, xiii, 160, 163.

⁸ Women and Children in Agriculture ..., ibid., 1843, xii, 169.

Scottish cities, of whom it was said, 'they cannot tell how they live, nor what they do, so that to ask if they went to Church would be a piece of supererogation'.¹ Some of the practical atheism developed from isolation and constant labour in the Australian bush, so that Churches feared for their members when they moved to outlying areas where the clergy could not easily follow.² Thousands were known to be living without any religious observance in the bush,³ where even the devout could find that their 'general way of spending Sabbath morn^g. - alas!' was in riding fifteen miles to attend to cattle, not to attend service.⁴ There was sheer human cussedness, too, in the religious neglect: as James Backhouse was told by Robert King, a convict with respectable parents, he had become an 'infidel' not because he 'had carefully examined the subject and found any reasonable objection to the truths of Holy Scripture', but because he 'wished to be an infidel, and hoped there was no future state' for he would fare badly there if there was.⁵ Whatever the cause or excuse, the indifference to religion in practice was widespread.

Alongside the statistical revelation that three-quarters of the population were absent from regular worship, there may be placed a number of contemporary comments, all of which could be multiplied many times over. A Hobart clergyman, while believing that there was little 'professed unbelief' in his working class parish, said that there was much 'practical unbelief' - a great deal of lying about on Sundays and little church attendance; and J.D. Lang said much the same of some of the Sydney working class

¹ Religious Instruction, Scotland ..., ibid., 1837, xxi, 55.

² See V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., Oct. 1845, Appendix.

³ See e.g., Report of Church of England Lay Association, N.S.W., 1844-5, pp.62-4; J.D. Mereweather, Life ..., pp. 76-7; 'An Emigrant Mechanic' (A. Harris), Settlers and Convicts ..., [1847], Melbourne 1954, p.230; Colonist, 25 Aug. 1836, p.265.

⁴ J.F. Castle, op.cit., 16 Feb. 1840, 7 and 14 Mar. 1841, etc. Cf. J. West, op.cit., I, p.85; G.F. James, op.cit., pp.108-9; 'An Emigrant Mechanic', op.cit., p.128; M. Kiddle, op.cit., pp.112-3.

⁵ J. Backhouse, op.cit., p.161.

areas.¹ In the Castle Hill and Dural area, the greater number of people were described as having 'a contempt for religion, or, at the very best, a faint and imperfect sense of its value or importance', and similar comments were passed, at various times, on Richmond, Goulburn, Yass and many another area.² The evidence of Sabbath breaking in the cities is overwhelming. In 1836 a Sydney clergyman said,

The prancing of horses and the rolling of chariots and the splashing of boat oars, and the revelry of parties, and the disgusting ribaldry and profaneness of drunkenness would drown in their united din the songs of holy praise and joy ... that are heard within the walls of the Sanctuary. Brethren, these things are, but they ought not to be.³

The Superintendent of Police in Sydney admitted in 1841 that so many people went outside the city to amuse themselves on Sundays that it was impossible to enforce the law, and the Sydney Sunday was a great day for feasting and tripping throughout the forties.⁴ Sydney was sometimes considered the worst of the cities in this respect,⁵ but, in tune with the voice of the Rev. Frederick Cox, the Hobart Wesleyans might be heard speaking of the house of God being 'forsaken by many' while 'practical infidelity, like a flood' spread over the land.⁶

As for the bushworkers, how completely estranged they were from church services was not always realised even by the itinerant chaplains themselves. The Rev. J.D. Mereweather, after moving from Van Diemen's Land to the Riverina, described how he went to a wool-shed to see the sheep-shearing and held a service there on

¹ F.H. Cox, Public Worship ..., pp.7-8; J.D. Lang, Address ..., pp.2-3.

² S.P.G. Report, N.S.W., 1840, p.37; W.M. Cowper, op.cit., p.84; N.S.W. Wes. Dist. Min., 1839, Q.28 and App.1; Committee on Immigration, Minutes of Evidence, p.858, V.& P., N.S.W., 1838; D. Mackenzie, op.cit., p.47ff.

³ W. Yates, To the Parishioners ..., pp.12-3. Cf. D. Allen, op.cit., p.36.

⁴ Report from Committee on the Shooting on Sunday Prevention Bill, V. & P., N.S.W., 1841; A. Marjoribanks, Travels in New South Wales, London 1847.

⁵ D. Mackenzie, op.cit., pp.30, 51.

⁶ Report of Wesleyan Methodist Sunday Schools..., Hobart 1843, p.5.

the Sunday. 'The shearers,' he wrote, 'were very attentive'.¹ But a station-owner in this district also wrote a book in which he may have recalled the same service. He told, anyway, of a Mr M----r riding in one day, and turning out to be an ordained man, recently arrived from Tasmania. It was shearing time, and when the Rev. Mr M----r asked if he could hold a service for the thirty-odd men, the owner tried to arrange it. All the men had an excuse for not attending, until the owner promised a glass of rum to every man who went to the service and behaved during it. They all came, and were reasonably impressed by the parson, but were much more impressed by the rum, for 'wiping their mouths on their sleeves, they said they would not mind having a parson and Church service every day in the week, on the same terms'. Mr. M----r was completely ignorant of the reason for the men's orderly attendance, and - the squatter believed - later described the incident in rosy colours in his own book.²

Catholics, who might ride long distances to receive the sacraments when a priest was in their area,³ did something to reduce this spread of irreligion. Although it was often thought that their religion was a formal matter and a national habit which did not interfere overmuch with their manner of living,⁴ the Irish Catholics had an enormous reputation for faithfulness to their religion wherever they went.⁵ Yet all was not well even here. Bishop Polding, in his pastoral address of 1837, spoke to his people in this way:

The world and its business usurp that place in our hearts which God alone should occupy; hence indifference to prayer, hence neglect of attendance at Mass, hence

¹ J.D. Mereweather, Diary ..., p.139.

² 'A Pioneer' (John Phillips), Reminiscences of Australian Early Life, London 1893, pp.79-83.

³ J. Kenny, op.cit., p.197.

⁴ J. Backhouse, op.cit., pp.420-1; T. Sharpe, op.cit., p.44; R. Ward, p.87 (quoting A. Harris). Cf. J.F. Hogan's panegyric, The Irish in Australia, Melbourne 1888, pp.28, 36, 142ff.

⁵ See, e.g., J. M'Garvie, Diary, 22 Jan. 1843 (ML). Cf. H. Mayhew, op.cit., I, pp.108f, 514f.

years follow each other in rapid succession, and the Sacraments are not received. ... the sacred name of God is blasphemed worse than among the Gentiles; the holiness of an oath is trampled under foot; the Sunday is no longer deemed a day consecrated to the Lord; children grow up in the habits of sin unchecked and unheeded ...¹

Apparently it was not the Protestants only who did not bother much about their religion.

One other convention which, when observed, did a little to bring spiritual truths before the dispersed colonists' notice, was the reading of prayers to families and hands. This was by no means unknown, or even uncommon.² Nevertheless, it was not the general practice - and, in fact, the servants were not always willing to come.³ J.F. Castle was one who read prayers to his men, but for the first twenty months he was with them on his land he had not done so. The Presbyterian squatters in the Western District often had good intentions in this regard, but here - as in most other places - it was the coming of the station women and children, in the later forties, which caused it to be widely practised.⁴ Settlers were more often criticised for not seeing that services were read to their employees - or even to themselves - and it was sheer 'practical indifference'.⁵

Leaving the British Isles, often for ever,⁶ to venture over wide oceans in tiny ships,⁷ and to be landed on harshly alien

¹ J.B. Polding, The Pastoral Address for Lent 1837...., Sydney 1837, p.4.

² J.F. Castle, op.cit., 22 Aug., 19 Sept. 1841, 30 Aug. 1842; J. Backhouse, op.cit., pp.187, 333, 446-7; Report of Australian Religious Tract Society, 1835, pp.6-7.

³ J. Backhouse, op.cit., pp.293-4, 403, 500.

⁴ M. Kiddle, op.cit., pp.112-3, 299; J.D. Mereweather, Life ..., p.77; J.O. Balfour, op.cit., pp.77-8.

⁵ W. Hutchins, op.cit., p.4; A. Stackhouse, Family Prayers ..., introd. T. Sharpe, op.cit., pp.63-5; Broughton to a Friend, 17 Feb. 1846, H.R.A., xxiv, 783; Report of Melbourne Diocesan Society, 1851, p.9.

⁶ The poignancy of this is well captured in G.F. James, op.cit., pp.24, 29, Cf. J.F. Castle, op.cit., 1 Feb. 1839.

⁷ The usual displacement was between 300 and 900 tons - and often towards the lower end of the scale. See C. Bateson, op.cit., p. 288ff; C.S. Immigration Lists (ML).

shores, might have been an experience which left migrants ever more ready to acknowledge dependence upon God. Yet this does not seem to have often happened. A few were converted on board ship,¹ but the long, idle months, spent amid the boredom and temptations of the voyage, left many migrants changed for the worse rather than for the better. J.D. Lang therefore denied, with strong emotion, the ancient maxim, 'Non mutant animos qui trans mare currunt'.² J.D. Mereweather spoke, out of the same bitter experience, to the same effect. A Wesleyan spokesman for some of the passengers had accepted Mereweather's offer to lead daily prayers, saying that while their creeds differed, their danger was common; but, four months later in such a gale that the 'sea rushed by, a mass of wild foam, as if it were too hurried to form into billows', the prevailing mood on board was very different.

The people below did not seem frightened, or penetrated with a feeling that God was exerting, or allowing the Evil Spirit to exert, the power of his might. They were neither praying to their Saviour, or [sic] the Blessed Virgin, or the Holy Saints; but they were grumbling sadly that their dinners were not nicely cooked.³

There seems to be no evidence that the voyages to Australia did much to lead men to God. On the contrary, the common report of religious men was that there was little spirituality and much vice on the ships,⁴ and, all too often, when the migrants reached the land they were to live in, they adopted the place names of the homeland but forgot the faith of their fathers - if, indeed, their fathers had had a faith to be forgotten.

A vague answer to a leading question

'Is there much vital religion in the Church in Australia?' asked the Rev. Thomas Braim, a contemporary observer and historian.

¹ See, e.g., J. Backhouse, op.cit., pp.246, 452-3.

² J.D. Lang, Historical and Statistical ..., 1834 edn., II, pp.241-2.

³ J.D. Mereweather, Life ..., pp.5, 67. Cf. pp.44-5, 50, 63, 70.

⁴ See also J. Fidler, op.cit., loc.cit.; J.F. Castle, op.cit., 12 Apr. 1838.

Though he raised the point boldly, he had to deal with it awkwardly, for he confessed that 'in proportion to the importance of this question is the difficulty of coming to a satisfactory conclusion respecting it', and had to conclude on a note of agnosticism:

The public feeling is all on the side of the form of religion, how much of the power exists among us, the searcher of hearts alone can tell.¹

The passing of another hundred years of history hardly makes the question any easier to answer. It is not hard to amass contemporary evidence of 'little practical Christianity',² of 'fearfully low' moral standards and 'intense selfishness' in the colonial community,³ and of a people who 'for the most part quitted their native country principally intent on the acquisition of wealth, and with little thought ... of those durable riches, and of that better country'.⁴ Nor must the mass of evidence be ignored: almost certainly the religious carelessness was greater than the religious zeal in the colonies. Yet the zeal was also there, and was to be seen and felt as a very real force. New South Wales legislators were not just indulging in wishful thinking when they asserted that many colonists regarded 'the advancement of Virtue and Religion ... with becoming solicitude',⁵ for the history of the Church Acts and of the Churches' growth gave substance to the claim. The 'solicitude' rightly suggests that religion could easily have fallen into neglect in the colonies, and the coupling of 'Religion' with 'Virtue' suggests that religion might have been regarded by the governing and respectable classes merely as a means towards social order and decency. Nevertheless, the diaries of many of these people repeatedly reveal genuine spiritual wrestlings and ecstasies.

¹ T.H. Braim, op.cit., II, pp.168-9.

² J. Backhouse, op.cit., p.cxii.

³ Denison to Grey, 25 Apr. 1848, GO 33/63 (TA).

⁴ Report of V.D.L. Colonial Missionary ... Society, 1843, p.4.

⁵ See proceedings, 10 July, V. & P., N.S.W., 1838.

One contemporary observer, therefore, dismissed the religion of the colonists too peremptorily when he said:

... appearances are all in favour of religion in the Colony, it would be well if there were the reality.[†]

The view of the Rev. Thomas Braim is to be preferred; for, too acute and too cautious to claim overmuch, he still allowed the possibility of real religion being present to a significant degree among the colonists. The most, and the least, that can be said is that many ignored religion, many supported it for conventional or utilitarian reasons, and not a few were deeply religious people. More than this the historian can hardly say.

[†] J.C. Byrne, Emigrant's Guide to New South Wales...., London 1848, p.48.

REVIEW

The Churches' story in Australia is more consistent than it is simple. In the years between 1835 and 1850, events occurred in eastern Australia which had not happened there before, which have not happened since, and which helped determine the future of the Churches in Australia. Yet the most striking element in the history of those years is not their difference from other periods, but their basic similarity to all other eras in Australian Church history. The 1835-50 era saw the Churches neither fully consolidating their victories, nor completely succumbing in their defeats, and this seems to be characteristic of Church life in Australia. In winning, the Churches often lose; in losing, they still hold much ground. Most Australians attach a denominational label to themselves, but most Australians seldom go to church. The Churches are always on the decline, but never fade away. Revival is often round the corner, but has never turned it yet.

The great success of the years 1835-50 was in institutional development; the securing of proper ecclesiastical organization, and the vast increase in the numbers of church buildings and men to minister in them, were tremendous achievements. Yet the seeds of failure were already evident in this success, for Government aid was granted only at the expense of the Church of England, and the aid was given with increasing reluctance. The Churches' opposition to all but church schools was an even more obvious example of ill-starred success; time after time they dammed back the waters of the general systems but, instead of securing their own schools permanently, they were actually helping to bring on the flood which eventually swept nearly all of them away. The Churches knew that a sea of religious indifference surrounded the places of worship they were erecting so quickly, yet they underestimated it. Just as the Rev. John Mereweather misjudged the situation at his service in the shearing shed, so the Churches as a whole miscalculated the support they could command in the colonies.

Yet the Churches were not wrong in thinking that they commanded respect. Public support was less than the Church leaders often hoped for, but it was by no means insignificant, and it has endured.

The Church which hoped to be established was emphatically denied that position, yet it is still among the strongest of Churches. The state aid which was so important in Church extension was ultimately stopped, but the Churches still spread and build their sanctuaries. Secular systems of state education came in to dominate the schools, yet the matter is still not settled, though a hundred years have passed. Australians still prefer the sun and the beach to the interior of a church, yet as high a proportion of them attend worship now, as in colonial days. Even the class alignments on religion and denomination have changed very little since the 1830s. The connection between the Churches and the Australian people is, and has been, complex; but it seems to have amounted to much the same thing throughout Australia's history.

It is only too easy to exaggerate the role of religion, or to minimize the role of religion, in Australian history. The passing of the Church Acts in 1836-7 was a political event which could have no real counterpart today. This, and the discussions of religion's role in education which occurred in the colonial Legislative Councils, show that colonial government was carried on in a comparatively religious context. This needs to be stressed. If it be argued that there was, in the colonies of the 1835-50 era, an 'essential, if not fully acknowledged, antipathy between moral liberalism and traditional Christianity',¹ great weight should be placed on the qualification that the antipathy was not always seen clearly; and it might be added that it was often not seen at all, and that the essential nature of the contradiction could be challenged. It is possible to be deeply impressed by the place religion occupied in the thinking and legislating of the colonists.

At the same time, the extent of irreligion in the colonies must not be lost to sight. Pious colonials hacked away at the rock of moral coarseness and religious ignorance upon which the colonies were being built, and cut into it and smoothed it, but found it as hard as it was large. Men and women in their thousands

¹ M. Roe, op.cit., p.vi.

lived for land and sheep and pleasure, for money and lust and rum, for their children and their new country; whether God existed, or did not exist, seldom troubled them, for they existed and their own existence absorbed them. In addition to this practical atheism, there was the liberal theory; and this did cause a reduction of the power of the Churches (not only the Church of England) in society. Churches (and not only one) must lose some authority in times when Establishment is being attacked and ancient Church prerogatives are being taken over by a state which sees its role to be defence of liberty of conscience rather than defence of the faith; and the grudgingly continued state aid, and the determination to introduce state education, revealed this process at work in eastern Australia between 1835 and 1850.

When full weight is given to the role of religion in the colonies, and the force of liberalism is also clearly recognised, the later history of Australia may be described in terms of steady religious decline - so that the 'wealth of love which used to be lavished on Him is turned upon the whole of nature'.¹ It is reasonable to argue in this way; but it may not be right. The 1830s followed a period of considerable religious neglect in the colonies, and introduced an era of attention to religious needs, yet right through the thirties and forties the Church leaders were bemoaning the evidence of unbelief and scepticism they saw above and below them. The sixties and seventies saw the state withdraw from the support of religion, yet the secularization of this period can be over-coloured. The 'free, secular and compulsory' education Acts did not quite remove religion from public schools, and were not intended to denigrate religion in private life.² They were in that old colonial tradition which did not acknowledge the antipathy between moral liberalism and traditional Christianity, and their effects upon society were similarly moderated.

¹ C.M.H. Clark, A History of Australia, Vol.I, Melbourne 1962, p.380.

² Cf. A.G. Austin, op.cit., pp.107-9, 166-70, 196-7.

The interpreter of Australian religious history must balance two facts. One is that at no time has the striving for a liberal Utopia, or any other humanistic ideal, replaced the striving for the Kingdom of Heaven among a substantial minority of the people. The other is that the Australian Churches have never been able to claim the active allegiance of more than a minority of the people. Perhaps the Churches would have done better if they had been more liberal towards the middle of the nineteenth century. At any rate, they have not done better and they do not seem to have done worse. The position of the Churches in the Australian community has been constantly changing and yet ever the same.

APPENDIX AIntroductory Comment:

To get an accurate figure for the number of clergy in the colony in 1836 it is necessary to get down to actual names if errors, hidden in a mere statement of 'the number' of clergymen, are to be avoided.

It is also necessary, since the total number was small and the mobility of the clergy considerable, to choose some particular period within the year at which to make the survey. In this case, the census month of September has been selected.

This has meant the exclusion of such clergymen as:

R. Hill	C. of E.	Died, 30 May, 1836
T. Sharpe	C. of E.	Ordained, December 1836
J. Orton	Wesleyan	Left Colony, January 1836
W. Simpson	Wesleyan	Left Colony, January 1836
C. Price	Independ.	Left Colony, March 1836

The Very Rev. W.B. Ullathorne and the Rev. J.D. Lang have been included for they were stationed in the colony, although absent on leave.

Deacons, catechists and lay preachers have been excluded, though two Wesleyan probationers have been included - to have done otherwise would have been misleading. Ordained men with special-ist duties rather than parochial appointments, such as the Rev. L.E. Threlkeld (missionary to aborigines) and the Rev. Robert Forrest (headmaster of King's School), have also been excluded, and so has the controversial W.P. Crook.

Appendix A (cont'd)NEW SOUTH WALES CLERGYMEN, SEPTEMBER 1836

Church of England:¹ The Rt. Rev. W.G. Broughton; the Revs. S. Marsden, W. Cowper, W.M. Cowper, R. Cartwright, H. Fulton, J. Cross, T. Reddall, F. Wilkinson, M.D. Meares, T. Hassall, J.E. Keane, C.P.N. Wilton, J. Vincent, C. Dickenson, H.T. Stiles, G.K. Rusden.

Total: 17

Catholic Church:² The Rt. Rev. J.B. Polding; the Very Rev. W.B. Ullathorne; the Revs. J.J. Therry, C.V. Dowling, J.C. Sumner, J. M'Encroe, J.V. Corcoran.

Total: 7

Presbyterian Church:³ The Revs. J.D. Lang, J. M'Garvie, J. Cleland, K.D. Smythe, J. Garven.

Total: 5

Wesleyan Methodist:⁴ The Revs. J. M'Kenny, J.D. Draper, W. Schofield, F. Lewis.

Total: 4

Independent:⁵ The Rev. W. Jarrett. Total: 1

Baptist:⁶ The Rev. J. Saunders Total: 1

GRAND TOTAL: 35

¹ Tegg's Almanac, 1836, p.52; ibid., 1837, p.118; Acts and Proceedings of the Bishop of Australia, I. p.30; Minutes of Meeting of Protestants, 24 June 1836, H.R.A. xviii, 472-4.

² Tegg's Almanac, 1836, p.51; ibid., 1837, p.118; H.N. Birt, op.cit., I. p.291.

³ Proceedings of the Presbytery of N.S.W., 28 Oct. 1835, p.5 (ML); Tegg's Almanac, 1836, p.52; ibid., 1837, pp.117-8.

⁴ There is confusion in the records over a fifth name. F.R. Swynny 'The Circuit Index', p.218 (Aust. Meth. Hist. Soc. Journal, Vol.IV, Pt.2, No.12), the Report of Wesleyan Missionary Committee, 1836, p.16, and Tegg's Almanac, 1837, p.118, each list five names but the fifth is different in each case. V.D.L. District Minutes, 1836-37, make it clear that the fifth man was a young candidate for the ministry called Crookes - the name given in Tegg's and also H.R.A., xviii, 472. He has been excluded, since he proved unsatisfactory.

⁵ Tegg's Almanac, 1837, p.119.

⁶ Ibid., 1837, p.118.

APPENDIX BVAN DIEMEN'S LAND CLERGYMEN, MID-1836

Church of England:¹ The Revs. P. Palmer, W. Bedford, W. Garrard, J. Norman, R. Knopwood, W.H. Browne, R.R. Davies, R.C. Drought, W. Bedford Jr., T.B. Naylor.

Total: 10

Presbyterian Church:² The Revs. J. Mackersey, J. Garrett, J. Anderson.

Total: 3

Wesleyan Methodist Church:³ The Revs. J. Orton, W. Simpson, J.A. Manton, W. Butters.⁴

Total: 4

Catholic Church:⁵ The Revs. P. Conolly, J.A. Cotham.

Total: 2

Independent Church:⁶ The Revs. F. Miller, C. Price, J. Nesbit.

Total: 3

Baptist Church:⁷ The Rev. H. Dowling. Total: 1

GRAND TOTAL: 23

¹ Ross's Hobart Town Almanac, 1836, pp.18-19, Melville's Van Diemen's Land Annual, 1836, pp. xxi-xxii.

² Ross, op.cit., 1836, pp.19-20, Melville, op.cit., 1836, p.xxii.

³ V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 11 Feb. 1836; Courier, 15 July 1836, p.2 c.3.

⁴ Butters was 'on trial', and recommended for reception into 'full connexion' only later in the year - V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 21 Oct. 1836, Q. VI. As a probationer, however, he was not subject to the same limitations as an Anglican in deacon's orders would have been.

⁵ Ross, op.cit., 1836, p.20.

⁶ Ibid., 1836, p.20, for Miller. For Price and Nesbit, see The Australian Encyclopaedia, Vol.2, p.496.

⁷ Ibid., Vol.I, p.424. Dowling was at Launceston; there was no Baptist minister at Hobart until after the forties.

APPENDIX CVAN DIEMEN'S LAND CLERGYMEN, MID-1837

Church of England:¹ Archdeacon W. Hutchins; the Revs. P. Palmer, W. Bedford, W.H. Browne, T.B. Naylor, W. Bedford Jr., J. Norman, W. Garrard, R.R. Davies, E. Knopwood, W.J. Aislabie, M.J. Mayers, W. Morris², E. Freeman.³

Total: 14

Presbyterian Church:⁴ The Revs. J. Lillie, T. Dove, J. Anderson, J. Mackersley, J. Garrett, R. Russell.⁵

Total: 6

Wesleyan Methodist Church:⁶ The Revs. J. Orton, W. Butters, J. Manton, W. Simpson, J. Weatherstone.

Total: 5

Catholic Church: The Revs. J.A. Cotham,⁷ J. Watkins.⁸

Total: 2

Independent Church:⁹ The Revs. F. Miller, C. Price, J. Nesbit.

Total: 3

Baptist Church:¹⁰ The Rev. H. Dowling. Total: 1

GRAND TOTAL: 31

¹ Melville, op.cit., 1837, pp.25-6.

² Mayers and Morris were added in Elliston, op.cit., 1837 (published in April), p.19.

³ Freeman was a signatory of the petition against the Church Act - Courier, 24 November 1837, p.2 c.4. (Strictly, he may be out of place in this list).

⁴ Melville, op.cit., 1837, p.27.

⁵ Russell, apparently a recent arrival, noticed in Courier, 17 May 1837, p.2 c.6.

⁶ V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 10 Nov. 1837; Elliston, op.cit., 1837, p.20. John Weatherstone arrived at Hobart (for Port Arthur) 5 Feb. 1837 (CSO 67.1/2/14); he was recommended for reception into full connexion in March (V.D.L. Wes. Dist. Min., 1 Mar. 1837).

⁷ Melville, op.cit., 1837, p.26.

⁸ Elliston, op.cit., 1837, p.21.

⁹ Melville, op.cit., 1837, p.27.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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ERRATA

p.417, for McDowell read McDowell, R.B.

p.418, for Bethell read Bethell, L.S.

might have been called forth in reaction to these attacks, they were certainly unlikely to result in Catholics and Presbyterians being kept off the Government's ecclesiastical list. The Governor and Legislative Council had no need to fear that the basic principles of the Church Act would be widely opposed, even though the Anglican clergy were against them.

Questions of detail, not of principle, were the main subjects of debate, and the cause of delay, in the Council. On 24 July the main aim of objectors was to get a better deal for the rural areas. Let two or more sects combine in the erection of a place of worship, said Mr M'Lachlan. Reduce the minimum sum to be raised voluntarily to £150, urged Mr Kerr. They were countered by a mixture of practical and idealistic views. A congregationally divided group could give too little security; it was not intended to cover the country with 'twopence half-penny chapels'; the measure should not encourage carelessness about denominational loyalty (that would be indifference, not liberality); and there would be quarrels - the Quakers not liking to be kept waiting in the rain because the Presbyterians had preached too long.¹

This was typical of the debates. On principles nearly all the councillors were agreed: they wanted the greatest religious benefit of the community, by the equalization of the status of the different Churches and by a happy compromise between Government aid and congregational support. The Courier, in pointing this out, also claimed to have 'canvassed the sentiments of all classes' and to have found that the principles were 'heartily concurred in'.² With the Anglican clergy glaringly excepted, the newspaper was certainly right. And, at long last,

7 (continued)

their judgements from original information. In this colony the majority of the population, members of the Church of England, are almost wholly subject to periodical teaching adverse to her principles.

¹Courier, 28 July 1837, p.4.

²Ibid., 5 Sept. 1837, p.2, c.1.