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CHRISTIANITY AND ITS DEFENCE IN NEW SOUTH WALES
CIRCA 1880 TO 1890

by

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This thesis was submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
The Australian National University

March 1969



This thesis is my own work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W.W. Phillips', written in a cursive style.

W.W. Phillips

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Precis

Christianity in New South Wales in the 1880s was supported by a minority of the population. Widespread religious indifference, militant secularism and scepticism and the secularisation of public life confronted churchmen during this decade. They attempted vigorously to overcome religious indifference, to defend the relevance and reasonableness of Christianity and to assert its authority in political life. But their efforts made little impact on religious indifference. Their response to the challenges of contemporary thought had but slight effect on scepticism, although it enabled Christians to adjust their faith to the climate of the age. But churchmen largely failed to identify Christianity with the struggle of the working classes. They were unable to maintain the authority of Christianity in the political sphere and unsuccessful in their attempts to gain increased recognition for Christianity in national life. Yet the colony remained nominally Christian, and the state still afforded some protection to Christianity.

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Introduction

New South Wales in the nineteenth century was, as it is today, nominally a Christian society. By 1880, however, the majority of the people tacitly accepted the separation of church and state. Yet this did not necessarily imply a divorce between religion and society. Christian laymen, not secularists, had decreed an end to all forms of direct state aid to religion. Those who would have completely separated religion from public life were a small and despised minority in the 1880s. Nevertheless, the status of Christianity in colonial society was quite ambiguous.

Churchmen maintained emphatically that the colony was Christian, and that its laws ought to uphold Christianity. But the churches enjoyed only limited support, and the influence of Christianity in colonial society appeared to be waning. During the 1880s, more than in any other decade during the nineteenth century, Christianity was challenged on several fronts. There was widespread indifference to religion, particularly among the urban working classes. Freethought flourished in New South Wales in the 1880s and alarmed churchmen with its public attacks on Christianity. At the same time some working men questioned the relevance of Christianity to their struggle for social justice. Sunday observance became freer in the 1880s, and during the decade reformers campaigned for more liberal divorce laws. In face of these currents churchmen

feared for the future of Christianity; they stirred themselves to strengthen its hold on the population and to defend its status and authority in colonial society.

The city was the focus of the encounter between Christianity and society in the 1880s. The great mass of the religiously indifferent lived in the metropolis; there freethought lecturers attracted large audiences, and Sunday was liberalised largely to meet the demands of the urban population. It appeared that the authority of Christianity was set aside most conspicuously in the city. This does not mean that there were no serious problems for Christianity in the country or that the needs of the country were overlooked. But the city contained the front line of the defence of Christianity.

This defence brought Protestants into closer unity. They sometimes sought the cooperation of Catholics, but Catholics and Protestants were divided on questions of state aid, religion and education, and ecclesiastical authority. The Catholic hierarchy declined to support the movements Protestants initiated, although in a few instances some Catholic laymen joined Protestants in the defence of Christian institutions. The division between Catholic and Protestant weakened the Christian cause, but at the same time it was a safeguard to liberty.

The three parts of this thesis attempt to show how churchmen responded to the challenges to Christianity in the 1880s. The first part describes the churches' efforts to increase their support among the population. The second part deals with the churchmen's defence of

the reasonableness of Christianity and its relevance to the problems of industrial society. The relationship between Christianity and the state is discussed in the last part. The state afforded some protection to Christianity, but churchmen demanded more than the state was willing, or perhaps able, to concede. It was an uneasy alliance which identified Christianity with the established order but deprived it of much of its authority.

Abbreviations

<u>A.C.W.</u>	<u>Australian Christian World, Sydney</u>
<u>D.T.</u>	<u>Daily Telegraph, Sydney</u>
<u>F.J.</u>	<u>Freeman's Journal, Sydney</u>
<u>M.P.G.A.</u>	<u>Minutes of Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales</u>
<u>M.S.D.B.</u>	<u>Minutes of the Synod of the Diocese of Bathurst</u>
<u>M.W.C.</u>	<u>Minutes of the New South Wales and Queensland Annual Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church</u>
<u>N.S.W.P.D.</u>	<u>New South Wales Parliamentary Debates</u>
<u>P.S.D.G.</u>	<u>Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Goulburn</u>
<u>P.S.D.G. & A.</u>	<u>Report of Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Grafton and Armidale</u>
<u>P.S.D.N.</u>	<u>Report of Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Newcastle</u>
<u>P.S.D.S.</u>	<u>Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney</u>
<u>S.M.H.</u>	<u>Sydney Morning Herald</u>
<u>V. & P.L.A.N.S.W.</u>	<u>New South Wales. Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly.</u>

PART ONE

THE CHURCHES AND THE PEOPLE

Chapter 1

Denominational Affiliation and Religious Practice in New South Wales

There exists a wealth of statistics on religion in New South Wales from which we can learn something about the denominations which represented Christianity in the colony, their nominal strength, their regional distribution and social composition. From them we can also gain some idea of the actual support the churches received. The figures cannot give us simple or confident answers, but they can help shape questions and provide a control on generalizations we make from the literary evidence.

The decennial censuses in the Australian colonies always included a question on religious affiliation. Nonconformist opinion in Britain led the government there to discontinue the religious question, but there was only mild opposition to it in the colonies. In June 1880 the New South Wales Independent protested that it was inconsistent with the separation of church and state to inquire about the religious affiliation of the people; it asserted that many Congregationalists and 'other staunch friends of religious liberty' would leave the column blank, and it complained that this would represent their denominational totals unfairly.¹ And Baptists, one of the smallest denominations, objected to the collection of

1

New South Wales Independent (hereafter Independent), 15 June 1880.

religious statistics; the Banner of Truth pointed out that numbers alone were useless for spiritual purposes.¹ Wesleyan Methodists, however, were so anxious that the question should be answered properly that before the census in 1881 an instruction was read from Wesleyan pulpits stating that Wesleyans attending the ministry of other denominations, who did not desire to be otherwise described, should be returned as Wesleyans as well as those within the reach of their ministry.² This instruction could hardly have affected those other Wesleyans if they were not in the churches to hear it read, but the Independent objected to it.³ However, T.A. Coghlan, the Government Statistician, observed shrewdly in 1891 that there was not the same opposition to the religious question in Australia as 'all the denominations would appear to be anxious to gauge their numerical strength from census to census'.⁴ But this does not explain the consistently high proportion of people who, over 50 years, answered the question by claiming allegiance to some Christian denomination.

The question was optional, and although it is not clear how far people realised this, collectors were

¹ Banner of Truth, 5 May 1880.

² This instruction was drawn up by the Wesleyan Committee of Privileges: Weekly Advocate (hereafter Advocate), 26 March, 1881

³ Independent, 15 April, 1881

⁴ T.A. Coghlan, General Report on the Eleventh Census of New South Wales [1891], Sydney, 1894, (hereafter General Report, 1891), p.213.

carefully instructed not to press it.¹ If people objected to the question the form invited them to state so, and from 1891, in all the Australian colonies they were invited to indicate if they were freethinkers or professed to no denomination or religion.² Roughly one per cent objected to the question in 1891, when objectors were first classified separately. Thus the great majority dutifully answered the question, and Coghlan considered the religious returns both interesting and 'fairly accurate',³ and the historian of Christianity in New South Wales cannot afford to ignore them. They are an indication of the nominal strength of Christianity in the colony, and of the relative strength of the various religious groups. They are no guide to the effective support the Christian churches received, as this thesis will show, for they conceal a large amount of indifference to religion. But they do provide some means to measure conscious unbelief in an age when science and rationalism challenged the Christian religion.

1

Report on the Census of 1871, p.XXIV; Census of 1881, Report, pp.XIX-XX; T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.213.

2

Decided at the Census Conference at Hobart in March 1890; see Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1911, vol.I, pp.38-9: for Model Schedules see Census of 1881, Appendices, pp.LXXV-VI; H.H. Hayter, General Report on the Census of Victoria, 1891, Melbourne, 1893, pp.5-6; and Census of Western Australia, 1901, vol.I, facing pp.50-1.

3

T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.213.

In 1881 96 per cent¹ of the population claimed allegiance to Christianity.² The great majority of these Christians professed to belong to one of six Protestant churches or to the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of England was the largest denomination; 46 per cent of the population returned themselves as Anglican in 1881. The proportion of Anglicans was fairly constant from 1861 to 1901,³ although it declined slightly in the 1880s. Presbyterians were returned as ten per cent of the colony; their relative position hardly changed from 1851 to 1901. The English Nonconformists or Free Churches were a small but increasing proportion of the population.⁴ Wesleyan Methodists had increased from five per cent in 1851 to almost eight per cent in 1881. Other Methodist churches, of which Primitive Methodists were the largest, were one per cent in 1881; they doubled during the 1880s. This

1

Throughout the text I will quote percentages in rounded figures. Percentages to two decimal points are used in Appendix I in conformity with the published tables of the censuses

2

See Appendix I: Christians formed 98 per cent of the population in 1851 before the influx of Chinese to the goldfields.

3

Before 1861 'Undefined Protestants' were counted as Church of England, making Anglicans around 50 per cent of the population.

4

I will use the term Nonconformist to include the principal non-episcopal Protestants in the colony, for although some used the term 'Free Churches' it was not in general use in the 1880s. The term Dissenter had gathered derogatory overtones.

was largely due to migration from Britain and of miners from the copper fields of South Australia to the mines at Broken Hill.¹ As well as Primitive Methodists there were some of the United Methodist Free Churches and Bible Christians and a few Methodists not organised in denominations. Congregationalists had increased from one per cent in 1856² to two per cent in 1881. Baptists were one per cent in 1881. Both these latter denominations increased relatively strongly in the 1880s, but Congregationalists had reached their peak by 1891. Roman Catholics, who in 1851 formed 30 per cent of the population had declined to 28 per cent in 1881. The decrease of Irish Catholic immigrants contributed to this decline which continued through the 1880s; by 1891 Catholics were 26 per cent.³

These six Protestant denominations and the Catholics altogether comprised 94 per cent of the population. Apart from them there were some Lutherans, mostly on the South Western Slopes near Albury; they were less than one per cent of the total population. The Salvation Army, which came to the colony in the 1880s, was one per cent of the population in 1891. How many of the

1

For social composition and regional distribution of Methodists see below, pp.30-1.

2

The first time they were distinguished in the census.

3

Of the assisted immigrants, 1880-1890, 74.13 per cent were Protestants; 23.83 per cent were Catholic, mostly Irish; 2.03 per cent were 'Other Religions'. Statistical Register of New South Wales (hereafter Statistical Register, N.S.W.), 1890, p.421.

Army's adherents were immigrants rather than converts is not known. The Army might have attracted some nominal Anglicans to its ranks, and its appeal would have been strong for Methodists since it claimed to be doing the work of 'old fashioned Methodism'.¹ Among the 'Other Protestants', who formed one per cent of the colony, were the Society of Friends and the Churches of Christ, relatively strong in South Australia and Victoria, but weak in New South Wales in the nineteenth century. There were also Christian Israelites, Plymouth Brethren and a few who returned themselves as unsectarian Christians. As well as these there were a few heterodox Christian sects. Mormon missionaries from North America founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the 1850s, and their rivals established the Reorganized Church in 1874.² The Swedenborgian New Church had a congregation in Sydney as did the Christadelphians and the Catholic Apostolic Church. The Seventh Day Adventists gained followers in Sydney late in the 1880s.³ But these sects were very small; apocalyptic doctrines and religious enthusiasm had little appeal to most colonists. There were also a few followers of non-Christian religions. Jews were one half per cent of the total population, but one per cent

1

See pp.52-3, and Chapter 3.

2

Tess Van Sommers, Religions in Australia, Adelaide, 1966, pp.111-3.

3

Ibid., p.198: See also T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.215. Seventh Day Adventists were included with Baptists.

of the metropolitan population.¹ Buddhists, Confucianists and Muslims, who were almost four per cent in 1861, were slightly over one per cent in 1881, and were mostly in rural areas.²

Freethinkers and those professing no religion were not distinguished from 'Other Persuasions' before 1881.³ This category, which also included Spiritualists, Theosophists and others, had decreased in numbers in the 1870s and formed only a tiny minority in 1881.⁴ But by 1891 freethinkers, agnostics and those of no religion, who comprised the overwhelming number of those under 'Other Persuasions', were counted as a little over one per cent. Their numbers had increased more than ten fold in the 1880s.⁵ The churches saw freethought and secularism as a considerable threat, and no decade was more fruitful for Christian apologetics. Religious

1

Census of 1881, p.XLVI: There are variations in the published titles of the censuses between 1851 and 1901. E.g. Census of the Colony on New South Wales, 1851, 1856 and 1861; Census of 1871, Census of 1881; and Results of a Census of New South Wales, 1891 and 1901. For simplicity I will refer to each census thus: Census of N.S.W., 1881, etc.

2

Ibid.

3

The presence of freethinkers was recognised in 1856, but they never appeared on census tables before 1891: See Census of N.S.W., 1856, p.XXVII.

4

T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.218; and Appendix I.

5

Other Persuasions Etc; 1881, 1042: 1891, 14,978: increase 1337.81 per cent. T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.218.

rationalism also prospered in the 1880s. Unitarians, confined to the metropolis, were declining in the 1870s, but in the next decade they increased by 60 per cent.¹ Charles Strong's Australian Church was also established in Sydney by the end of the decade.² But these churches were small; Unitarianism, like freethought and agnosticism, declined absolutely in the 1890s.

Thus New South Wales, in the 1880s, contained a wide variety of religious groups, Christian and non-Christian, and a flank of rationalism, agnosticism and unbelief. But this thesis is concerned with the six Anglo-Saxon Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church, to which the majority of the population adhered. These denominations³ are the subject of the thesis, not

1 Ibid.

2 See chapter 4 for note on Charles Strong.

3 I use the term denomination here as sociologists use it to distinguish between the church, with its claims to exclusive possession of the truth and to social comprehension, and the sect, with its exclusive basis of membership and rejection of the wider society and its institutions. Unlike the church and the sect, the denomination makes no claim to possess the truth exclusively, but it shares the church's acceptance of society and responsibility within it. The contrast between church-type and sect-type is not a useful tool of interpretation in Australian church history, for, as Professor K.J. Cable has observed, the sharp distinction between the sect-type and the church-type of Protestantism had ceased to hold good in Britain by 1850, and it survived only in a limited fashion in Australia. Nonconformists and the Church of England had assumed the character of regular denominations by 1880. The Roman Catholic Church had also accepted denominational status, within certain limits: it was willing to share the
(footnote continued on p.9)

only because of their total size, but because their leaders all asserted, in varying degrees, an interrelationship between religion and society or Christianity and the state. Moreover, interdenominational intercourse was largely confined to these Protestant denominations. They recognised each other, particularly after 1880, as representing Christianity in the colony, and on occasions they were willing to offer Catholics shelter under the umbrella of 'common Christianity'.

The Regional Distribution and Social Composition of the Denominations

The censuses of 1871 and 1891 provide tables listing the total adherents of the various denominations in urban areas, counties and pastoral districts, and although these tables were not provided in the 1881 census, it does include a summary of the urban and rural distribution of the religious groups in the colony.¹

(footnote 3 continued from p.8)
protection of the state, and its bounty (when it was given), with other churches, but it did not abandon its claim to be the sole possessor and teacher of truth, and largely maintained an exclusive attitude toward the Protestant denominations. K.J. Cable, 'Protestant Problems in New South Wales in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', Journal of Religious History, vol.3, no.2, December 1964, pp.119-36. On the use of the term denomination see D.A. Martin, 'The Denomination', British Journal of Sociology, vol.13, 1962, pp.1-14; Bryan R. Wilson, Religion in Secular Society, London, 1966, pp.199-220.

1

Census of N.S.W., 1871, Religion of the People according to Municipalities, pp.313-21; Counties and Pastoral Districts, pp.279-304; 1881, Religious Persuasions in the Urban and Rural Parts of the Colony, pp.XLV-XLVII; 1891, Municipalities, pp.369-403; Counties, pp.404-33.

The regional distribution of the denominations changed little over twenty years, but comparison of the figures in 1871 with those in 1891 will indicate where there were significant changes. There was no correlation of religion and occupation before 1901,¹ but other evidence suggests that the distribution of the denominations in the various occupations before 1901, or after for that matter, varied very little. The table of religion and occupation in 1901, however, has one serious disadvantage; it does not indicate whether those of any denomination in a particular calling were employers, self-employed or employees, although later census provide this correlation.² From these statistics, together with contemporary comment from the 1880s, there emerges a fairly adequate picture of the regional distribution and social composition of the denominations.

1

Census of N.S.W., 1901, Occupations according to religion, pp.786-801.

2

In 1921 Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian males who were employers were above the average percentage of males in that category. Methodists and Presbyterians were also above the average among the self-employed and below among wage-earners. Baptists were about the average among wage-earners but Congregationalists were more than average. Anglicans were slightly below the average among employers and the self-employed, and a little above average among wage-earners. Catholics and the Salvation Army were below the average among employers, and while Catholics in 1921 were about average among wage-earners they were above the average among the unemployed. See Appendix IIIB, and Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, vol.1, p.395; 1947, Statistician's Report, p.174; 1954, vol.VIII, Statistician's Report, p.191.

The Church of England in 1871 was most strongly represented in County Cumberland, in the pastoral districts East of Darling and on the Central and North Western Slopes. Anglicans were around their average of 45 per cent of the population in the counties of the Lower Hunter, Camden County, and on the Northern and Central Tablelands, although they were below average in the counties of Bathurst and Georgiana of which they formed 40 and 39 per cent respectively; but some of the wealthiest pastoralists in these regions of lower representation were Anglicans.¹ In the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Pastoral Districts, which embraced the South Western Slopes and the Riverina, Anglicans were about average. They were below average in the Albert Pastoral District, which comprised most of the division West of Darling and in the pastoral districts on the North Coast. They were weakest on the South Coast, excluding County Camden,² and on the Southern Tableland.

1

See Ruth Teale, 'A Brave New World in the Australian Bush: 'The Anglican Diocese of Bathurst and its First Bishop, Samuel Marsden', Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, vol.53, part 2, June 1967, p.142. In her M.A. thesis Miss Teale provides tables showing the distribution of the denominations within the district of the diocese of Bathurst. She states that Anglican strength was largely in the pastoral districts and small towns rather than the larger towns of Orange and Bathurst. Ruth Teale, 'By Hook and By Crook: The Anglican Diocese of Bathurst, 1870-1911', M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1967, vol.I, p.383; vol.II, Appendix B, pp.152-216.

2

I have distinguished County Camden, as one of the older and more closely populated areas, from the remainder of the South Coast Division. Throughout the text South Coast refers to the area below Camden: viz., Counties St Vincent, Dampier and Auckland.

By 1891 they had declined a little in the Lower Hunter, the Central Western Slopes and the plains East of Darling, although they were still relatively well represented in these regions. They were below average on the South Western Slopes, but their proportion on the South Coast and West of Darling had increased; however, in County Yancowinna, in which Broken Hill was situated, Anglicans were only 28 per cent of the population.¹

The Church of England was one denomination among several in the colony, but its connexion with the established Church of England gave it a dignity and prestige above other churches. And Anglicans boasted, or sometimes complained, that theirs was the church of the wealthy and the influential. W.M. Cowper,² the

1

See Appendix II, and Map and Diagram of the Regional Distribution of the Denominations, inside back cover. For the purposes of describing and comparing the regional distribution of the denominations in 1871 and 1891 I have followed the divisions of New South Wales used in the census of 1901, grouping the counties in 1891 in their respective divisions. The census of 1871 provided tables for the counties only in the older and more closely settled regions and for pastoral districts in the interior. The boundaries of the pastoral districts do not coincide exactly with the divisions used later, but they are close enough for the purpose of comparison.

2

William Macquarie Cowper (1810-1902), son of William Cowper, who came to the colony as assistant chaplain to Samuel Marsden in 1809, was the first native-born clergyman in the colony, although he completed his education at Oxford. He began his ministry as chaplain on the estate of the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens in 1836. In 1856 he became acting principal of Moore Theological College, then after a

(footnote continued on p.13)

Evangelical Dean of Sydney, told the synod of Sydney in 1881 that Providence had given to many Anglicans 'wealth and influence and power to do good beyond others' of their brethren and neighbours.¹ An 'Old Churchman', however, lamented in 1888 that Anglican churches were 'filled with the wealthiest classes'.² It was the church of the governors and the majority of the bench were among its active laymen.³ In 1888 all six of the general staff of the military forces were Anglican as were an overwhelming number of the men in the ranks.⁴

(footnote 2 continued from p.12)

short period of mission work in the Glebe he succeeded his father at St Philip's Church, Sydney with the office of Dean and Archdeacon of Sydney. He remained Dean of Sydney until his death in 1902. An Evangelical all his life, Cowper was a much respected figure in Sydney in the 1880s and exercised considerable influence in the diocese and in Sydney. He administered the diocese during the interregnum between Bishop Barker and Bishop Barry and between Barry and Bishop Saumarez Smith, and during Barry's absences overseas, in all about half the decade. W.M. Cowper, Autobiography and Reminiscences, Sydney, 1902; see also Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-1891, A-C, pp.480-2.

1

Address, Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney (hereafter P.S.D.S.), 1881, p.23; see also ibid., 1889, p.23.

2

'Old Churchman', S.M.H., 2 May 1888.

3

In the 1880s Justices W.J. Foster, Sir George Long Innes, Sir William Manning, William Owen, M.H. Stephen, and District Court Judges E.B. Docker and W.H. Wilkinson were active in synods and in the Church Society. W.J. Foster was prominent in the Evangelical Church Association. Sir James Martin, Chief Justice from 1873 to 1886, was a lapsed Catholic: Sir Frederick Darley, who succeeded him, was an Anglican.

4

See report of church parade for the United Thanksgiving Service on the centenary of the colony, S.M.H., 30 January 1888.

Anglicans were around their average proportion, that is, 45 per cent of male bread winners,¹ in the professions, although they comprised 52 per cent of those in law and order and only 39 per cent of those in education. Their proportion in finance and property was 54 per cent, and, within this category, they formed 61 per cent of those in banking. Within trade, which included the various shop-keepers, merchants and their employees, they were mostly according to average. Their overall proportion in the industrial division was average; within this section, however, they were below in textile and dressmanufacturing, and in unskilled work on roads and railways, and a little above average in the building industry. In agricultural and pastoral pursuits they were according to their average, though stronger in the pastoral industry than in agriculture. In mining, however, they were below average. Anglicans were nevertheless the largest group within any occupation and were therefore well represented in every calling. Their preponderance in banking and the legal profession provides some confirmation of Cowper's claim to outstanding wealth and influence in the Anglican Church. Nonetheless this social superiority did not always show in political influence, for in 1880 Parliament passed the Public

1

See Table of Religion and Occupation, Appendix, IIIA. With a few exceptions I have confined myself to discussion of the occupations male breadwinners in the various denominations. The table mostly covers the broad occupational categories. Statements concerning the relative proportion in sub-sections such as banking, roads and railway construction, etc., are based on figures in the Census of N.S.W., 1901, Table XV, pp.786-93.

Instruction Act against the wish of the bishops, most of the clergy and some leading laymen. At the following synod in Sydney Alexander Gordon, a lawyer and Evangelical laymen, and Shepherd Smith, a banker and High Church layman complained that their denomination lacked the political influence its numbers and intelligence entitled it to, but their resolution that the laity should combine, without political involvement, to secure proper consideration 'for the interests and opinions of Churchmen' was lost, although the majority of the clergy voted for it.¹ But not all the wealthy and influential agreed with their bishop. Moreover, while many of the wise, the powerful and those of noble birth were Anglicans, a goodly number were middle class; moreover, they had the largest number of nominal adherents and so the poor were with them always.

Catholics in the colony were overwhelmingly of Irish birth or descent. Many had come as convicts before 1846,² and as immigrants particularly in the late 1840s.³ The Irish composition of the Catholic community was taken for granted but there was an analysis made in 1880 of the Catholic diocese of Goulburn, the strongest Catholic

¹ P.S.D.S. 1880, pp.39-41.

² A.G.L. Shaw, Convicts and the Colonies, London, 1966, pp.166-83.

³ I am indebted to Mr R.J. Shultz, Research Scholar in History, Australian National University, who is studying immigration in this period, for this information.

region in the colony.¹ Those of Irish birth or descent composed 91 per cent of Catholics in the diocese; four per cent were English Catholics (most of whom were converts through marriage); two per cent were Scottish Catholics and the remaining three per cent were German and other European Catholics.² There were some Highland Catholics in the Monaro, and in New England.³ A small community of Italian Catholics, survivors of the New Ireland colonizing scheme of the Marquis de Rays,⁴ settled on the Clarence and Richmond River districts

1

Mr John N. Molony states that before 1911 it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of Irish-born Catholics but considers that 70 per cent a reasonable estimate. He adds that most native Catholics were of Irish stock. The Goulburn figures confirm this. John N. Molony, 'The Roman Mould of the Australian Catholic Church', 1846-78, M.A. Thesis, Australian National University, 1967, p.75.

2

Summary Relation of Goulburn, May 1880 (M.S., St Mary's Archives).

3

The Macdonald clan met Cardinal Moran with a bagpipe procession when he visited the Cooma district in 1886. They had done the same for Archbishop Polding (P.R. Moran, 'Loose notes on visitation', 19 and 22 May 1886, in Diary, 1886). Bishop Murray referred obliquely to Bishop Torreggiani's 'Scotland Flock' in Armidale. (Bishop James Murray to Dr P.F. Moran, 27 December 1879, St Mary's Archives); Protestant Highlanders were particularly strong in this district.

4

The Marquis de Rays attempted to settle 'New France' at Sharks Bay, Western Australia in 1880 (D.T., 30 August 1880), and then attempted a settlement with Italians in the New Hebrides. The colonizing expedition left Italy for the New Hebrides in 1880; the plan was a miserable failure. Late in 1883 the Marquis was convicted of fraudulent misrepresentation. Some directors of the Glasgow Bank were also involved (D.T., 4 January 1884). The Marquis subsequently committed suicide.

in the early 1880s;¹ but Catholics of non-Irish origin made practically no impact on Australian Catholicism.

Although Catholics were ruled by English Benedictine bishops from 1834 to 1883, almost all the priests and suffragan bishops were Irish, although in 1879 Elzear Torreggiani, an Italian, became bishop of Armidale following the appointment of Bishop T. O'Mahoney as auxiliary to the Archbishop of Toronto. In 1884, Patrick Francis Moran, successor to the English Archbishop Vaughan, came from Ireland 'to labour hence forward among the sea-divided Gael'.² For the first time the Australian Catholic Church was ruled by an Irishman. The hierarchy were men trained in the Roman mould; Moran, nephew of Cardinal Cullen, had trained in the Irish College in Rome with James Murray and Matthew Quinn, suffragans of Maitland and Bathurst respectively. Australian Catholicism was as a result most ultramontane, passive and dependent,³ as Catholicism was in most Protestant countries in the nineteenth century. But the Irish character of the church is as important as its ultramontaniam; indeed the two are complementary. The Irish composition of Catholics in the colony strengthened the coherence of the church, particularly under Moran; he consolidated the Irish character of Australian

1

F.J., 4 December 1886.

2

Dr Moran in his address at Presentation in St Mary's Cathedral, 8 September 1884, Freeman's Journal, (hereafter F.J.), 13 September 1884.

3

John N. Molony, op. cit., pp.216, 317-8.

Catholicism; his appeal to 'Irishness' is apparent in many of his public addresses, in the content of the hymn-book he published and in the fuller ecclesiastical observance of St Patrick's Day.¹ Catholic bishops in Australia appropriated the image from Ireland of a pious and suffering people, though they sought to raise their flock from the status of a depressed minority.

Catholics in 1871 were strongest in the Central and Southern Tablelands, in the Lachlan Pastoral District, and on the South Coast. There was some foundation for Archbishop Polding's claim in 1871 that the Monaro was in Catholic hands.² Catholic strength in the pastoral districts on the Central Western Slopes and in the

1

In 1884 the Archbishop and Bishops of New South Wales issued The Australian Catholic Hymn Book which differed from the hymnal issued under Polding chiefly in its Irish content. The Polding hymnal contained no hymns to St Patrick, but it included an alternative version of the hymn 'Faith of our Fathers', praising the devotion of Catholic Ireland. The new hymn book contained two hymns to St Patrick. See Catholic Hymns: A Manual for the Afternoon Services, New and Improved Edition, Sydney 1874, and The Australian Catholic Hymn Book, Fifth Edition, Sydney, n.d. On St Patrick's Day 1885 High Mass was celebrated in St Mary's Cathedral for the first time. Up to that date it had been observed only in St Patrick's Church, Sydney. The Freeman's Journal declared that the festival would now 'have its full dignity and importance by being honoured every year with all the magnificence of ceremonial in the great metropolitan church'. F.J., 21 March 1885.

2

Archbishop Polding to Dr Gregory, 27 March 1868, cit. H.N. Birt, Benedictine Pioneers in Australia, London, 1911, vol.2, pp.336-7.

Murrumbidgee was about average. Catholics were slightly under-represented in the counties of Cumberland, Camden, in the Lower Hunter, on the Northern Tableland and North Western Slopes. They were below average on the North Coast, and well below average in the plains East and West of Darling. They had, however, increased in the pastoral districts by 98 per cent between 1861 and 1871,¹ and continued to grow in these regions over the next 20 years. By 1891 their strength was average on the North Coast, in the Riverina, and above average on the Slopes and plains East and West of Darling. But in the older settlements, the counties of Cumberland, Camden and the Lower Hunter they decreased significantly. While their proportions declined on the Central and Southern Tablelands they remained above average in these divisions. Like the Anglicans, they were under-represented around Broken Hill; they formed 21 per cent of County Yancowinna.²

1

Increase in Pastoral Districts, 1861 to 1871. (These figures are not available for 1881, nor are they supplied under this heading in 1891.)

	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Increase per cent</u>
Church of England	32,112	58,011	25,899	44.47
Roman Catholic	19,006	37,684	18,678	98.27
Presbyterian	7,749	15,186	7,437	95.97
Wesleyan and Other	1,570	5,682	4,112	261.91
Methodists				

Census of N.S.W., 1861, p.513; 1871, p.279.

2

See Appendix II, and Map and Diagram of the Regional Distribution of the Denominations, inside back cover.

In view of their regional distribution it is not surprising to find Catholics so well represented in agricultural and pastoral pursuits. There were some wealthy Catholic pastoralists, but they were a minority; many of the Catholics in the primary division were free selectors.¹ Unfortunately it is not possible to say how many were farm labourers, shepherds or shearers, but the proportion of Catholics in others unskilled occupations was high.

Catholics comprised 24 per cent of the male workforce; however they were significantly below their average in the professions. They formed 18 per cent of all serving in government, defence, law and protection, but were 26 per cent of those in law and order employed by the government, most of whom were policemen. The predominance of Irish Catholics in the police force was already a myth; B.R. Wise observed in 1889 that the policemen of Australian pantomime always spoke with a brogue.² But the extent of Irish Catholics in the force was exaggerated; Anglicans made up around 50 per cent of the force in 1901, and probably monopolised the higher offices.

Catholic men formed about a third of those engaged in the supply^{of} board and lodging; 79 per cent of that category were hotel keepers and their employees. 34 per cent of women in board and lodging and domestic service were Catholics also; they represented 50 per cent of

1

Polding, loc. cit.

2

B.R. Wise, 'Plain Speaking on Great Questions', Centennial Magazine, Vol.2, no.2 September 1889, p.87.

Catholic female breadwinners.¹ These figures support the popular view that many Catholics were publicans and domestic servants,² though Anglicans were above average in this area also. The low proportion of Nonconformists is as conspicuous as the high proportion of Catholics.

Catholics were considerably below their average in finance and property and under-represented in trade and mining. Their proportion of those in the industrial sector was according to their average but within this division there were notable differences. They were below average in such skilled industries as printing, mechanical engineering, coach-building and other trades described under art and mechanic productions and in the building trade. They were well above average among those working in road and railway construction, the majority of whom were navvies, labourers and platelayers. Apart from those born in New South Wales, Irish born³ formed the largest single group of road and railway construction workers. Catholics were also above average in the imperfectly defined pursuits, 80 per cent of whom were labourers. Except for their position in agriculture and primary industry, Catholics predominated in those industries in which wage-earners, chiefly labourers were

¹ Census of N.S.W., 1901, Table XVI, pp.794-801.

² See B.R. Wise, loc. cit.; and Bishop Robert Dunne below, pp.22-23.

³ 2,103 or 15 per cent, Census of N.S.W., 1901, p.776.

highest, and where the work was mostly unskilled.¹
 Dr Robert Dunne, Bishop of Brisbane, who feared that Catholics were both diminishing in numbers and declining on the social scale suggested to Cardinal Moran that this question should be on the agenda of the First Plenary Council in 1885. He observed that

Some middle class families, indeed, bring up their boys to professions, but such pushing people do not form one per cent of the Catholic mass. The farming population is probably fifty per cent, and the children of this element are fast drifting into homeless, unmarried and unsettled bushmen. Again, in the tradesmen class, the Catholics form today but a small proportion of the skilled labour (stone cutters, masons &c.) of the Colonies. The next generation will show a still smaller (comparative) proportion....Our people unhappily run into the crowds of unskilled labour, - irregular occupations; viz: publicans, policemen, cabdrivers, wharf-labourers, pick-and-shovel men. These latter employments are not so good as the former morally, socially, or physically; neither are they as fruitful of good families of creditable children.²

1

In those occupations in which Catholics were below average, e.g. Art and Mechanic productions, 81.6 per cent of those engaged were wage-earners; Houses and Building, 76.1 per cent of those engaged were wage-earners. In those occupations in which Catholics were above average, e.g. Roads, railways and earthworks, 92.1 per cent were wage-earners, and 82.9 per cent navvies, labourers and plate layers; imperfectly defined pursuits, 93.4 per cent were wage-earners, and 80.4 per cent labourers. I am indebted to Mr B.A. Mitchell, Research Scholar in History, Australian National University, for these percentages.

2

'Suggestions for Australian Synod of 1885', M.S. with letter, Bishop Robert Dunne to Archbishop Moran, 24 October 1884, Moran Papers, St Mary's Archives.

Though Dunne was unduly pessimistic, the bishops in council supported his judgment and lamented that Catholics should be so often found 'wherever the hours are long, the climate merciless, the labour unskilled, the comforts few and the remuneration small'.¹ The hierarchy instructed the faithful to bind their children as soon as they left school to some trade or profession that was healthy and in which the company was virtuous and improving. They asked their people to build houses for themselves and make provision for their old age, for they declared, 'God never meant the Irish Catholic to be the wanderer that he is over the face of the earth'. In short the bishops exhorted the faithful to practise the virtues of thrift, industry, sobriety and stability that had contributed to the prosperity of so many of their Protestant neighbours. But the treasures of the faith were to be prized above worldly wealth, and the hymnal offered comfort and strength to Catholics who might covet unduly their Protestant neighbour's prosperity:

They may boast of their wealth, they may talk
of their gold,
I'll be true to the Faith like the Martyrs of old,
"A Catholic live, and Catholic die".
Be this my life's watchword, at death my last cry.²

1

Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops in Plenary Council Assembled to the Clergy and Laity of their Charge, Sydney, 1885, (hereafter Pastoral, Plenary Council), p.18.

2

'The Holy Roman Church', Australian Catholic Hymn Book, Hymn.73.

If, however, Catholics did have more than their share of the poor, they were not without those of wealth and influence in colonial society. Some eminent politicians in the 1880s, for example, W.B. Dalley and Sir Patrick Jennings, were Catholics. Mr Justice Fawcett and Dalley also showed that Catholics could find their place in the legal profession. But the table of religion and occupation in 1901 suggests that Catholics generally remained for some time in the position their bishops lamented so much in 1885.

Catholics, like Anglicans, were conscious of their numerical strength and chagrined at their lack of political influence, particularly following the passing of the Public Instruction Bill in 1879. The hierarchy hoped that the Catholic vote in the election in November-December 1880¹ would defeat candidates who supported the Public Instruction Act, although a meeting of laymen in August 1880 decided that Catholic candidates should drop the education question for the time.² The Parkes Government returned with strength, and in July 1881 an anonymous Catholic advocated more effective use of the Catholic vote. He thought that Catholics could have prevented the return of militant Protestants at the last election; Catholic workmen in Balmain had voted for Jacob Garrard, an Orangeman, but also a champion of labour.³ The Express, a Catholic

¹ Polling was from 18 November to 2 December 1880.

² D.T., 30 August 1880.

³ B.W.H., Express, 23 July 1881.

weekly owned by Archbishop Vaughan, supported this anonymous 'lay gentleman of very high standing' and argued for clerical tutelage in politics. Vaughan wanted political combination of Catholics to restore state aid to church schools.¹ But the lay Catholic paper, the Freeman's Journal, generally opposed the political combination of Catholics, although it rejoiced in the power of the Catholic vote in East Sydney in 1880.² In 1883, following elections in which the Parkes Government was defeated, the Freeman's denied that any Catholic party existed and cried shame on any, particularly Protestants, who tried to exploit the Catholic vote.³ But Bishop Dunne believed that Catholics should be encouraged to register as electors 'to obtain and possess their legitimate influence'.⁴ But without unanimity Catholic combination was hardly possible. Later in the 1880s, when Protestants were strongly suspicious of a Catholic conspiracy, Cardinal Moran declared publicly that Catholics were free to vote as they liked and denied that the Church took any side in politics.⁵ But he warned Catholics against leaving civil and political life to others and urged them to exercise their political

¹ Express, 17 September 1881.

² F.J., 20 November 1880.

³ F.J., 13 January 1883; see also Express, 20 May 1882.

⁴ Suggestions for Australian Synod of 1885, loc. cit.

⁵ F.J., 24 August 1889; S.M.H., 29 January 1890.

rights.¹ This was consistent with the hierarchy's desire for a better place for Catholics in colonial society.

Presbyterians were as Scottish as Catholics were Irish. They claimed proudly that they represented 'the National Reformed Church of Scotland' and deeply resented the term Dissenters applied to them by Anglicans.² Nevertheless, Free Churchmen and United Presbyterians dominated their ministry by 1880, and they were closest to the English Nonconformists in their evangelical theology and spirit. For this reason I shall include them among Nonconformists in the colony.

The Presbyterians were exceptionally strong in New England and on the North Coast, particularly in Macquarie County where in 1871 they formed 23 per cent of the population and in the Clarence River Pastoral District of which they were 20 per cent. During the famine in the Highlands and Scottish Isles from 1837 to 1839 a number of Highlanders were brought to the colony to settle on the Clarence River. Many tenants of the Australian Agricultural Company in Gloucester County were Scots and Ulsterman; Highlanders among them later moved to the Clarence and Richmond Rivers.³ These Highlanders were

¹ F.J., 23 August 1890.

² Dr Robert Steel, 'We Are Not Dissenters', Presbyterian, 21 November 1885; see also Presbyterian, 15 May 1880.

³ J.D. Lang, An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, London, 1875, vol.2, pp.314, also 254, 259.

Free Presbyterians who refused to enter the union of Presbyterians in New South Wales in 1865.¹ In 1882 George Grimm who toured the northern districts reported on the strength of Presbyterianism, particularly Highlanders,² and the same year Dr W. Moore White, an Ulsterman, returned from New England gratified 'to find that the Presbyterian Church occupied a position of power and influence equalled by no other throughout the district'. The wealthy Presbyterian squatters and merchants, true to a man to the church of their fathers, had he said, ranged themselves with honest pride 'under the blue banner of the covenant'.³

Presbyterians were also particularly strong in the Riverina of which they formed 17 per cent in 1891. They were generally well represented in the interior, in Lower Hunter and on the South Coast. They were a

1

In 1865 the Synod of Australia (Church of Scotland), the Synod of Eastern Australia (Free Presbyterians who seceded from the Synod of Australia in 1846 in support of those who left the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Disruption of 1843, and who united with the Synod of New South Wales, a voluntaryist communion formed by J.D. Lang in 1850), and the United Presbyterian Church formed the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales. See James Cameron, Centenary History of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales, Sydney, 1905, pp.1-85; C.A. White, The Challenge of the Years, Sydney, 1951, pp.1-23.

2

George Grimm, 'Brief Notes of a Long Tour', Presbyterian, 24 June 1882.

3

W. Moore White, 'A Visit to Armidale', Presbyterian, 20 May 1882.

little below average in County Cumberland and on the Central and Southern Tablelands, although they represented 11 per cent of the population in the Monaro Pastoral District in 1871. They formed only five per cent of the population around Broken Hill.¹

With such strength in rural areas Presbyterians were well represented in pastoral and dairying pursuits; they formed 13 per cent of that division; from the early settlement a number of Scotsmen were employed as shepherds. In agriculture they conformed to their average of ten per cent of male breadwinners. They were above average in the professions, particularly in law and order and education. They formed around 17 per cent of all engaged in education, but 18 per cent of teachers in state schools were Presbyterians. This relatively high proportion of Presbyterians and other Nonconformists in education was already evident in the 1870s.² Presbyterians formed 12 per cent of those in

1

See Appendix II, and Map and Diagram of the Regional Distribution of the Denominations, inside back cover.

2

The following table based on Mr B.A. Mitchell's sample of 238 successful pupil-teacher applicants (male and female), 1870-1875, illustrates the point.

	<u>Percentage of Total Population, 1871</u>	<u>Percentage of Successful Applicants, 1870-75</u>
Church of England	45.49	40.75
Presbyterian	9.75	16.80
Wesleyan Methodist	7.20	16.38
Congregational	1.83	6.30
Other Protestants	3.07	3.36
Roman Catholic	29.29	16.38
Others	3.37	0

(footnote continued on p.29)

property and finance and 14 per cent in banking. They made up nine per cent in wholesale and retail trade, but were 13 per cent of hardware merchants and others dealing in metals, ten per cent of dealers in art and mechanic products and of drapers and others, but only eight per cent of grocers and butchers.¹ In the industrial sector, of which they formed ten per cent, they were above average in the skilled trades, art and mechanic production and building, and below average in unskilled work. They formed seven per cent of road and railway construction workers. This denomination made up nine per cent of those in mining. Presbyterian churchmen felt no need to encourage their people to aim higher; on the contrary, the Presbyterian in 1880 warned parents not to aim too high nor to despise the lower occupations.² As with every denomination they had some adherents in lowly occupations, but how many of these were in the church of their profession is another question with which this thesis will deal later. Presbyterians, however, were concerned to hold all of Scottish nationality, but at the same time to attract others. Some regretted that people generally

(footnote 2 continued from p.28)

B.A. Mitchell, 'A History of Public School Teachers' Organisations in New South Wales, 1855 to 1945', thesis submitted for Ph.D., Australian National University, 1969, p.18. I have used percentages with two decimal points, as originally supplied by Mr. Mitchell, to conform with the figures taken from the Census of 1871.

1

In all cases these figures represent shop-keepers and their employees.

2

Presbyterian, 15 May 1880.

assumed that the Presbyterian Church was for the 'Scotch and North of Ireland People'.¹

Most Methodists in the colony were Wesleyans. They were strongest along the North and South Coasts, in Lower Hunter and Camden, and on the Central and Southern Tablelands. In 1891 they formed roughly 15 per cent of the population in County Bathurst and 14 per cent of County Westmoreland on the Central Tableland. On the Southern Tableland they represented 10 per cent in County Argyle and 12 per cent in County King. They were around their average of 7 per cent in County Cumberland, but elsewhere they were poorly represented. Though they increased in the interior between 1871 and 1891 they remained below average, except in around Broken Hill, where they were particularly strong.²

Wesleyans were strong among free selectors; they increased by 262 per cent in the pastoral districts in the 1860s. Though nine per cent of male breadwinners in 1901, they formed ten per cent of farmers, but only seven per cent in pastoral and dairying pursuits. They were below average in most of the professions, but they formed 13 per cent of those engaged in education and 16 per cent of teachers in state schools. They were also below average in property and finance, but in other areas of commerce they were better represented among drapers, grocers, butchers, and dealers in metals and in art and mechanic productions. In the industrial

1

'Progress', Presbyterian, 2 September 1883; 'Common Sense' *ibid.*, 9 September 1882.

2

See below, and also Appendix II, and Map and Diagram of the Regional Distribution of the Denominations, inside back cover.

sector their strength lay in the skilled trades, but they formed only five per cent of road and railway construction workers.

Methodists formed 17 per cent of those in mining. The Census of 1901 did not distinguish between Methodists in the table of religion and occupation, but it is safe to assume that many of the Methodist miners were Primitive Methodists, United Methodist Free Church and Bible Christians. Primitive Methodists were relatively strong in the rural areas where the Wesleyans had their strength also. But in the Hunter Valley 'Other Methodists' in 1891 formed ten per cent of the population, and Primitive Methodists alone formed eight per cent;¹ Wesleyans made up nine per cent of the population there. In Broken Hill in 1891 the proportion of Methodists was remarkably high. Wesleyans were 17 per cent, Primitive Methodists ten per cent, and Bible Christians and United Methodist Free Church four and a half per cent.² A good number of Methodists in Broken Hill had come from the copper mines of South Australia. This accounts for the appearance of Bible Christians in the 1880s. The Salvation Army which came to the colony in 1883 also had a relatively high proportion of its adherents in mining.

1

County of Northumberland, Census of N.S.W., 1891, p.424. In this county 'Other Methodists' increased from 3.09 per cent in 1871 to 10.22 per cent in 1891.

2

Municipality of Broken Hill, Census of N.S.W., 1891, p.381.

Wesleyan strength rested in the lower middle classes particularly among farmers, shopkeepers and skilled tradesmen. Renate Howe found in Victoria that the majority of Wesleyans were small business owners or skilled workmen.¹ 'Other Methodists', their lesser brethren, were predominantly in mining and to a lesser extent in farming. Methodists in education came mostly from the Wesleyans.² In 1900 the various branches of Methodism in Australia united, but in the 1880s they were quite distinct denominations. Social differences distinguished them as well as matters of polity and practice. Wesleyans had the most social and political influence of Methodists in the colony. They increased and expanded more than any other denomination and were socially and politically ambitious. Before the general election in November 1880 the Advocate stated that Methodism had many men eligible for parliament; Methodism was a qualification above their other virtues. It claimed that if Methodists would stick together 'more than one Methodist candidate [would] be at the top of the poll'.³ But Protestant ascendancy was more important than Methodist pre-eminence, and the Advocate's hope was but a dream. Nevertheless, Wesleyans believed that

1

Renate Howe, 'The Wesleyan Church in Victoria, 1855-1901: Its Ministry and Membership', M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1965, pp.21-23.

2

Mr B.A. Mitchell's samples of successful pupil-teacher applicants, 1870-75 confirm this.

3

Advocate, 13 November 1880.

the Methodist vote would purge politics by supporting the godly and excluding the unrighteous. For this reason the denomination regretted that the itinerant system should so often deprive moving ministers of their vote.¹ Primitive Methodists were neither as successful nor ambitious, but as the second largest Methodist Church in the colony they were included in the Protestant sextet.

Congregationalists, who constituted two per cent of the whole population in the 1880s, were mostly confined to the metropolitan area and a few larger towns; in 1881 they formed four per cent of the population in Sydney and suburbs, one per cent of towns and villages, and one per cent of the rural population.² They comprised five per cent of the municipality of Newcastle in 1871 and three per cent in 1891;³ in West Maitland they were three per cent,⁴ and in Wollongong eleven per cent in 1871 and eight per cent in 1891.⁵ They formed two per cent of the population in the Broken Hill district.⁶ Their strength in rural areas was in the counties on the coast between

¹ Ibid., 9 January 1886.

² Census of N.S.W., 1881, p.XLVI.

³ 1871, 4.82 per cent; 1891, 2.99 per cent.

⁴ 1871, 2.56 per cent; 1891, 3.10 per cent.

⁵ 1871, 10.87 per cent; 1891, 8.25 per cent.

⁶ 1891, 2.06 per cent of the Municipality of Broken Hill.

Newcastle and Wollongong. Within Sydney they were strongest in the wealthier suburbs: though their percentage decreased as some suburbs increased in population and declined in social status, it was high in newer and more fashionable suburbs.¹ Congregational leaders were anxious about their urban concentration, though some thought they should leave the country to other Nonconformists.²

Congregationalists formed less than two per cent of the male workforce in 1901.³ Highly urbanised, they were poorly represented in agriculture and pastoral pursuits, and in mining, although there was a Welsh Independent Church at Stockton and most of its male adherents were presumably miners. Congregationalists were well represented in industry, but like other

1

	<u>1871</u>			<u>1891</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Congrega-</u> <u>tionalists</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Congrega-</u> <u>tionalists</u>	<u>%</u>
Manly	-	-	-	3,236	232	7.16
Marrickville	1,464	268	18.00	13,507	1,323	9.79
Newtown	4,328	324	7.25	17,870	891	2.44
Redfern	6,616	445	7.00	21,322	787	3.69
Strathfield	-	-	-	1,820	241	13.24
Willoughby	553	39	7.05	3,411	244	7.15
Woollahra	4,061	501	12.50	10,023	600	5.98

Census of N.S.W., 1871, pp.313-21; 1891, pp.370-77.

2

Independent, 15 February 1882, 15 March 1882; Report of the Intercolonial Conference held in Pitt Street Church, Sydney, May 15th to May 23rd 1883...to celebrate the Jubilee of the Introduction of Congregationalism to Australia (hereafter Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, 1883), Sydney, 1883, pp.230-1.

3

1.67 per cent.

Nonconformists their proportion was higher in skilled trades than among unskilled labourers. They were above average in other occupations. Their great strength, however, lay in commerce. In finance and property they were four per cent. In trade, where they formed three per cent, they were five per cent of dealers in art and mechanic productions, of drapers and others,¹ and six per cent of hardware merchants and other dealers in metals. Twenty eight per cent of Congregational male breadwinners were engaged in property, finance and trade, a proportion exceeded only by the Jews of whom 55 per cent were in commerce. Congregationalists then were the most bourgeois of the Christian denominations. They were an influential minority more committed to political liberalism and free trade than other Nonconformists. John Fairfax and family, proprietors of the Sydney Morning Herald were staunch Congregationalists as were the first two official editors, the Rev. John West, editor from 1854 to 1873, and Andrew Garran, from 1873 to 1885. Alexander Stuart, a prominent Anglican layman, later Premier and then Agent-General, resented the aggressiveness of Congregationalists and declared in 1879 that he was determined not to allow them to assume a leading position in New South Wales, as he believed they intended, and as was the case in South Australia. But when Stuart's words were read to the Congregationalists at their annual meeting that year they affirmed their intention to win for their denomination 'a leading position among the organized principles of Christian life in New South

1

David Jones was a deacon of Pitt Street Congregational Church.

Wales'.¹ With boundless faith in voluntaryism they believed that once they had severed all formal connexion between church and state their principles would win in 'a fair and open field'.² These expectations, however, were not to be fulfilled.

Baptists in New South Wales formed one per cent of the population in the 1880s. They were almost all Particular or Calvinist Baptists. General Baptists, Arminian in theology, were found only in other colonies, though it was commonly assumed that the churches of the Baptist Union were General Baptists.³ Three liberal churches which practiced open membership and Castlereagh Street Strict and Particular Baptist Church refused to join the Baptist Union of New South Wales at its foundation in 1868. The liberal churches joined the Union in 1870, but Castlereagh Street remained outside. In 1871 Daniel Allen, a rabid Orangeman, became its pastor and in 1873 Allen persuaded a few churches to form the particular Baptist Association of New South Wales.⁴ The Strict and Particular Baptists were hyper-Calvinists, and regarded those in the Baptist Union as General Baptists.

1 New South Wales Congregational Year Book, 1880, p.21. Stuart's statement is quoted here.

2 W.S. Fielden to W.J. Green, 16 December 1881. In correspondence of the Church Extension Society, Congregational Union Papers, Mitchell Library, uncatalogued.

3 See T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.215.

4 Alan C. Prior, Some Fell on Good Ground, Sydney, 1966, pp.93-8, 109-11.

Baptists were well represented in the metropolitan area but they did not have the same urban preponderance as Congregationalists. In 1881 40 per cent of all Baptists were in Sydney, 24 per cent in other towns and 36 per cent in rural areas.¹ In Sydney they were strongest in the most populous places, particularly Newtown, Paddington, Redfern and in Marrickville and Woollahra as these suburbs grew, but, unlike Congregationalists, they were not well represented in wealthier suburbs.² The denomination's leaders, however, were concerned about the weakness of the Baptist cause outside the city; in 1887 the Baptist considered the cause in the county as lost and suggested a union of Baptists and Congregationalists to represent the Congregational order in the interior of the colony,³ but this never eventuated in New South Wales; it had been tried with little success in South Australia.⁴ But

¹ Census of N.S.W., 1881, p.XLV.

²

	<u>1871</u>			<u>1891</u>		
	<u>Pop.</u>	<u>Baptists</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Pop.</u>	<u>Baptists</u>	<u>%</u>
Camperdown	1,950	45	2.30	6,658	72	1.08
Marrickville	-	-	-	13,507	344	2.54
Newtown	4,328	190	4.39	17,870	437	2.44
Paddington	4,250	52	1.22	18,392	292	1.58
Redfern	6,616	96	1.45	21,322	213	0.94
Woollahra	4,061	22	0.54	10,023	105	1.04

Census of N.S.W. 1871, pp.313-21; 1891, pp.370-77.

³ New South Wales Baptist (hereafter Baptist), 4 March 1887.

⁴ H.E. Hughes, Our First Hundred Years: The Baptist Church of South Australia, Adelaide, 1937, pp.38-9, 63.

Baptists were not as weak in country areas as Congregationalists. They were relatively well represented in the Hunter Valley and north of Newcastle. From 1873 to 1876 the Clarence River district attracted a number of Baptists from the Hunter. They constituted a church at Grafton in 1876.¹ Thomas Llewellyn, of the Baptist Evangelist Society, travelled through the north and New England in the early 1880s, reviving old causes at Newcastle and Wallsend, baptising in rivers and establishing new causes in New England.² Their proportion in the South Coast, however, declined between 1871 and 1891.³ In Newcastle Baptists formed two per cent of the population in 1871 and rose to nearly three per cent by 1891.⁴ At Broken Hill they were almost three and a half per cent of the municipality in 1891.⁵ They were, as their strength at Broken Hill and Newcastle suggests, well represented among miners. Migration from South Australia to Broken Hill was a large factor in their increase in the 1880s as it was with the smaller Methodist denominations. But Baptists were below average in agricultural and pastoral pursuits.

¹ Banner of Truth, 5 November 1884.

² Ibid., 3 March 1880; 8 September 1880; 14 September 1880.

³ Particularly in St Vincent County. In 1871 Baptists were 1.34 per cent; in 1891 they were 0.41 per cent. The total population of this county fell from 15,606 to 13,701 over this period.

⁴ 1871, 1.95 per cent; 1891, 2.89 per cent.

⁵ 3.44 per cent at Broken Hill, 1891.

Baptists formed one per cent of the total male workforce. Their proportion in the profession and in commerce differed slightly from other Nonconformists. They were below average in government service and barely average in education. Though average in property and finance they were below in banking. In trade, they formed two per cent of dealers in art and mechanic productions, of drapers and those dealing in metals. In skilled industries, particularly in building they made up one and a half per cent but among roads and railways workers they were only one half per cent and little more among other labourers. Owen Chadwick writes of Baptists in Britain that they 'bore to Congregationalists somewhat as Primitives bore to Wesleyans'.¹ Their regional and occupational distribution in the colony suggests that this was true in Australia also. Their influence in colonial society was less than the Congregationalists, not only because they were numerically less. They were staunch voluntaryists and were more suspicious than the other denominations of political activity. S.D. Clark found in Canada that 'even the most worldly-minded of English Baptists retained strong attachments to the long sectarian tradition' in Christianity.² This seemed to be so in New South Wales also, though it might not have been the case in other colonies. Nevertheless, the other Protestant denominations

1

Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, Part I, London, 1966, p.412.

2

S.D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, Toronto, 1948, p.272.

counted the Baptists worthy partners in common causes, though, as in the matter of religious instruction in public schools, they sometimes declined to join the Protestant pressure group.

Among other Protestants were Lutherans, mostly farmers who had come from South Australia to farm in the Albury district.¹ The Salvation Army, who had a relatively high proportion in mining, was above average in skilled trades, but also in unskilled labour. Salvationists were hardly found in the professions, except in religion, or in finance and property. Of the few in trade most were in the sale of food. 'Other Christians', among whom were Quakers, the churches of Christ and Plymouth Brethren, were found mostly in education, finance and property, among shopkeepers and their assistants and in the skilled trades. They were below average in unskilled labour; predominantly urban, they were also poorly represented in primary industries. Though they were closest to Congregationalists in regional concentration and occupational distribution, these small companies of Christians were separatist and other-worldly in outlook. The Quakers were perhaps an exception, for in the 1880s they attempted to influence society in their concern for peace, and some of their members were active in philanthropic societies and movements for social reform, particularly in temperance.

1

In the Riverina, Counties Goulburn, Hume, Mitchell (South Western Slopes Division) and Urana (Riverina Division) the average proportion of Lutherans in 1891 was 8.47 per cent; see also G.L. Buxton, The Riverina, 1861-1891, Melbourne, 1967, pp.197ff.

Religious Practice in New South Wales.

The professed allegiance of the vast majority of the population to one of the six Protestant denominations or to the Roman Catholic Church is an inadequate guide to the religious feeling or practice of the people, although it is at least significant that such a large proportion should continue to indicate a religious preference over several generations. Returns of church attendances from 1850 to 1900,¹ however, are a better indication of the effective support the denominations received.

The average attendance at Sunday church services was a minority of the whole population. The proportion rose from 22 per cent in 1850 to 35 per cent in 1870, but fell off after 1871. Total attendances were 30 per cent of the population in 1880; within a year they declined to 27 per cent, and though there were fluctuations throughout the 1880s, they were the same at the end of the decade.² But from 1884 attendances at Salvation Army meetings formed an increasing proportion of total church attendances in the colony.

But how much value can be attached to these figures? As with the census of religious affiliation, both denominational authorities and the Government Statistician took these statistics seriously, though they complained

¹

See Appendix IVA. From 1850 to 1894 there were annual returns of church attendances; thereafter returns were irregular; viz. 1897, 1900, 1904.

²

See, Appendix IVB.

of the difficulty in obtaining returns and of the imperfection of those received.¹ The returns were not always complete, and the statistician sometimes supplied figures on the basis of previous returns. But the omissions were not so serious. Most churches of the principal denominations returned figures on church attendances regularly. Whether they guessed, overestimated or underestimated their average congregations is another question. At the Wesleyan Conference in 1883 a layman accused ministers of carelessness in filling in these returns; some, he asserted, simply put down the number of sittings,² but the attendances were usually less than accommodation. Some ministers, on the other hand, complained that the figures underestimated the number of churchgoers in the colony. In 1856 Joseph Beazley, minister of Redfern Congregational Church remarked on the return form that it was not easy to estimate the number 'generally attending'. If it referred to one Sunday he said that he would return 400 to 500 but if it were over three months it would be twice the number. The statistician decided on 450 for Redfern.³ Clergy in the diocese of Sydney were asked to add to the morning

1

Report of the Statistical Committee, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales (hereafter M.P.G.A.), 1881, p.86; T.A. Coghlan, The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1886-7, Sydney, 1887, p.467.

2

S.M.H., 2 February 1883.

3

Returns of Churches and Chapels, 1855-56, Colonial Secretary's Office, Special Bundle 4/716.6, Archives Office of New South Wales.

congregation the number of persons attending other services but not present in the morning; they were not to count children.¹ In 1892, however, 'An Anglican Minister' alleged that the returns of church attendances were untrustworthy; a few clergy failed to submit returns and while some might overestimate their congregations, he maintained that a return of the average congregation underestimated the number of churchgoers. Since not all were regular, he claimed that Anglican attendance figures would rise by 150,000 if distinct persons were counted.² We have no means of testing this estimate; but Wesleyans, whose published attendances in 1880 were 9667 below the number of 'Attendants of Adherents' in their conference returns,³ determined in 1890 to represent 'a fair return' of their adherents; the conference resolved that ministers should add one-third to the largest congregation, whether morning, afternoon or evening, to represent absentees, and also to add the number of children enrolled in the Sunday School.⁴

1

Directions on form, 'Church of England, Return of Churches, Sunday Schools &c., 1892, Circular of the Diocese of Sydney, 1842 to 1895, no.308, Archives of the Diocese of Sydney.

2

'An Anglican Minister', S.M.H. 25 April 1892.

3

Attendances in Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1880, p.16, 35, 357; Attendants or Adherents, 1880, 45, 024 (excluding Queensland), M.W.C., 1881, Appendix, C.1.

4

M.W.C., 1890, p.116. This resolution was reaffirmed annually until 1895.

Superintendents of circuits were to complete the forms in pencil and send them to a committee which would harmonise the government and conference returns. In 1891, however, the committee reduced the published figures of the past ten years largely by discounting children under 14 years.¹ Up to 1892 the Presbyterian Church included only those 16 years and over.² Apart from Wesleyans, it seems that children were not counted in the 1880s. T.A. Coghlan assumed this in 1886 when, excluding the Salvation Army's reported attendances, he calculated that church attendances in the colony were 34 per cent of the estimated adult population; he considered this 'a very high ratio indeed.'³ If attendances were of adults only they would have been 49 per cent of the adult population at the census in 1881,⁴

1

See Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1891, p.438n. I have used the revised figures in tables and calculations.

2

Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1892, p.586n; 1893, p.656n.

3

T.A. Coghlan, Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1886-7, p.468. In 1886 figures for all denominations except Wesleyans were for the principal service of the day only, and represented 24 per cent of the whole population. Re. Wesleyan attendances in 1886 see Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1887, p.287n.

4

I have taken the number from 15 upwards, viz 452, 848 (inclusive of aborigines) as the adult population. The records of the 1881 census are too scanty to allow a calculation from 14 upwards. Moreover, the Statistician counted those below 15 as children. As attendances were returned on 31 December 1880, I consider it better to compare the attendances in 1880 rather than those of 1881 for comparison with the adult population at the census in April 1881, although in 1881 attendances for 1881 were lower than in 1880. Census of N.S.W., 1881, Report, pp.XXIV, XXVI-XXX; Summary Tables, p.XXVI.

as against 30 per cent of the estimated total population on 31 December 1880, and attendances in 1890 were 43 per cent of the adult population in April 1891¹ compared with 27 per cent of the total population in December 1890. But when Coghlan calculated the proportion of the adult population in 1886 he was unaware of the inclusion of some children. Because of the uncertainty of the inclusion of children in figures, and more particularly for comparison with Britain and other colonies, it seems better to measure attendances against the whole population rather than adults only, even though this may underestimate the proportion of churchgoers; the alternative might overestimate. In either case the figures are a rough, rather than precise, estimate of average church attendances.

Comparison with other colonies, however, is not easy. Victoria published attendances at the principal service only until 1889 when distinct persons attending the Sunday services were counted. New South Wales published average total Sunday attendances, except in 1886, when attendances, except in Wesleyan churches, were for the principal service only.² Coghlan estimated

1

Adult population from 15 up wards, viz. 692,765 (exclusive of aborigines). Census of N.S.W., 1891, p.6.

2

Wesleyans returned total attendances in 1886. See Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1887, p.287n: In 1872-74 New South Wales published both total attendances which were around 33 per cent and attendances at the principal service, 21 per cent, lower in fact than 1886, (24 per cent of the total population), although average total attendances were declining from 1870-1886.

the attendances in 1886 as 34 per cent of the adult population,¹ and claimed that church attendance in New South Wales was higher than in Britain, though he quoted no figures for comparison.² The only official census of church attendance in Britain was taken in 1851 when attendances at all services were about 47 per cent of the adult population or 35 per cent of the total population.³ There were unofficial surveys of church attendances in larger cities, particularly Liverpool and Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1881 which reported a decline in church attendances since 1851.⁴ But Coghlan admitted that church attendances in New South Wales were lower

1

This was 24 per cent of the total population.

2

T.A. Coghlan, Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1886-7, p.468.

3

W.F.S. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census-a useless experiment?', British Journal of Sociology, vol.18, 1967, pp.393-4. Pickering adds that the 6.4 millions who attended church on the census Sunday in March 1851 represented about 51 per cent of Horace Mann's calculated 'eligible population'. See also K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol.XI, no.1, April 1960, pp.74-86.

4

The Liverpool Daily Post conducted a survey of church attendances in Liverpool in 1881. Dr. R.B. Walker's work on this census reveals that church attendances were 32.2 per cent of the population compared with 45.2 per cent in 1851. A census taken in 1902 showed much the same proportion of churchgoers as in 1881. There were similar surveys taken by provincial newspapers in other cities, but little work has been done on these. R.B. Walker, 'Religious Changes in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century'. Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol.XIX, no.2, October 1968, pp.210-11.

than in Victoria where, in 1880, attendances at the principal service of the day formed 34 per cent of total population; they were 33 per cent in 1885 and in 1890 distinct persons attending church services were 43 per cent of the population.¹ South Australia did not publish church attendances in its Statistical Register, but it listed the number of sittings in churches; there was accommodation for 60 per cent of the population of South Australia in the 1880s.² Victorian churches provided for 49 per cent of the population in 1880 and 54 per cent in 1890.³ In New South Wales there was room for 29 per cent of the population in 1880 and 40 per cent in 1890.⁴ If accommodation and church attendance habits of Nonconformists are any guide we should expect attendances in South Australia, 'the Paradise of Dissent', to have been higher than Victoria and New South Wales. But on Sunday 19 August 1888 the Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal conducted a census of attendances at evening services within a radius of three miles from the Adelaide General Post Office. It estimated that the average attendance was 28 per cent of the population in the area.⁵

1

Statistical Register of the Colony of Victoria, 1880, p.301; 1885, p.427; 1890, p.675.

2

Statistical Register of the Province of South Australia, 1880, part VII, p.5; 1890, part VII, p.5.

3

Statistical Register, Victoria, 1880, p.301; 1890, p.675.

4

See Chapter 2 for comment on accommodation in churches in New South Wales.

5

Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal, 24 August 1888.

Evening services, however, were generally poorly attended in the 1880s,¹ and are therefore an inadequate guide to average church attendance in South Australia.

Although the overwhelming number of churchgoers belonged to the principal denominations, their distribution was different from the proportions of the denominations in the religious census. Anglican attendances were considerably below the percentage of Anglicans in the total population; they accounted for 33 per cent of total attendances in 1880 and 27 per cent in 1890. And their church attendances represented 22 per cent of their total adherents in 1880 and 16 per cent in 1890.² Presbyterian attendances formed around ten per cent of total attendances, the same as their average in the

1

Jubilee of Congregationalism in South Australia: Report of the Intercolonial Conference held in Adelaide, September 1887. (hereafter Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Adelaide, 1887) Adelaide, 1887, p.49; Advocate, 8 September 1888: this issue discusses the survey of attendances in Adelaide.

2

T.A. Coghlan provided comparisons of attendances with nominal adherents in 1892, 1894 and 1901. His figures give a similar picture except in 1900, when he lists Anglican churchgoers as 22.9 per cent of adherents compared with my calculation of 17 per cent, and Methodists as 93.9 per cent as against my figure of 62 per cent. I have used the revised attendance figures for 1900, which were higher than those used by Coghlan (for revised figures see Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1904, p.729), and have taken figures of nominal adherents from the Census of N.S.W., 1901. Coghlan possibly did not have the census returns when he calculated these percentages and estimated the number of adherents as he had done in 1892 and 1894; his estimates must have been below those of the census. T.A. Coghlan, Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1892, p.545; 1894, p.855; 1900-01, p.200.

population; 30 per cent of their adherents were worshippers in the 1880s. The Methodist churches, Baptists, Congregationalists and Catholics all commanded higher proportions of the total attendance than their respective percentages of the population. Wesleyan attendances were 16 per cent of the total in 1880 and 15 per cent in 1890. Other Methodists were five per cent in 1880 and four in 1890. But the percentage of Methodists adherents attending Methodist services dropped from 71 per cent in 1880 to 49 per cent in 1890.¹ Attendances at Congregational churches in the 1880s were four per cent of the total, twice their average percentage of the total population, and Baptists were a little above average. Congregationalists had just over half their adherents in the pews in the 1880s, and Baptist worshippers increased from 29 per cent of their total adherents in 1880 to 35 per cent in 1890. Catholics, whose relative strength declined from 28 to 26 per cent of the population in the 1880, accounted for 31 per cent of total attendances in 1880 and 32 in 1890. Their attendances represented around a third of the nominal Catholic population.

1

I have taken all Methodists together since the number of 'Other Methodists' who might have returned themselves simply as 'Methodist' in the earlier census were presumably included with Wesleyan Methodists. Attendances at 'Other Methodist' churches in 1870 and 1880 were 121 per cent and 144 per cent of adherents respectively; taken together the percentage of all Methodists who were churchgoers seems more plausible. It seems a more satisfactory explanation than the possibility that the 'Other Methodists' attracted a large number from other denominations.

The decline in church attendances from 30 per cent of the total population in 1880 to 27 per cent in 1890 was caused largely by the low increase in attendances at Anglican and Methodist churches compared with the other denominations, whose attendances in the 1880s advanced approximately in proportion to the growth of their numbers in the population, and in the case of the Baptists exceeded it, as the following table shows.¹ The slow

1

The percentage increase of church attendance in each denomination compared with percentage increase of the denomination, 1880-90.

	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Wesleyan
Percentage increase in church attendance, 1880-90	9.6	38.4	51.3	24.2
Percentage increase of denomination, 1881-91	46.9	38.2	50.8	53.4
	Other Methodist	Congregational	Baptist	
Percentage increase in church attendance	7.9	62.3	118.8	
Percentage increase in denomination	241.4	68.3	79.4	

For percentage increase of the denominations, 1881-91 see Census of N.S.W., 1891, p.361. I have recalculated 'Other Methodists' to include Bible Christians. In 1892 the Herald featured a special article on church attendance in New South Wales from 1881 to 1890, and provided figures for the percentage increase in church attendances as follows: Church of England, 12 per cent; Roman Catholic, 30 per cent; Presbyterian, 45 per cent; Wesleyan, 85 per cent; Other Methodists two per cent; Congregational, 62 per cent; (footnote continued on p.51)

growth of Anglican and Methodist attendances may have been due partly to the religious habits of the immigrants who came to the colonies in the 1880s. This decade was the period of the greatest net increase of the population through immigration. According to Professor F.K. Crowley, the great majority of British immigrants were drawn from the working classes,¹ and few of these classes were churchgoers in Britain.² Thus there was probably a large degree of religious indifference among Protestant immigrants, the majority of whom were Anglican. Moreover, the marked decline in attendances was among the urban population where the largest number of the working classes was to be found, and where, presumably, most immigrants settled.³ In 1880 church attendances in the metropolitan

(footnote 1 continued from p.50)

cent; Baptist, 85 per cent. The difference between these figures and those quoted above is explained firstly in the years selected for comparison: attendances were mostly lower in 1881 than in 1880. Secondly, I have used revised figures for Catholics which are higher than those quoted by the Herald and revised figures for Wesleyans which were considerably lower than the figures the Herald used for its calculations. S.M.H., 4 January 1892; for table of revised figures see Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1891, p.438.

1

F.K. Crowley, 'The British Contribution to the Australian Population', University Studies in History and Economics, vol.II, no.2, July 1954, p.76.

2

K.S. Inglis, Churches and Working Classes in Victorian England, London, 1963; Horace Mann, who conducted the census of public worship in Britain in 1851, came to this conclusion. Ibid., p.20.

3

A study of the social and religious background of immigrants to New South Wales in the 1880s is much needed.

area were 31 per cent of the respective population and attendances in the country were 29 per cent of the rural population. By 1890 the situation was reversed: 28 per cent of the country population attended church regularly but only 25 per cent in Sydney and suburbs.¹ The smaller denominations, though mostly urban, were not affected so much as they had less of the working classes among their nominal adherents. But nor were Methodists as likely as Anglicans to be affected by the religious indifference of the working classes. Love of chapel was characteristic of the miners who helped to swell the numbers of Methodism in the 1880s.² But the Salvation Army was more likely to affect Methodist attendances. In 1887 the President of the Wesleyan Conference complained about people forsaking Methodist services for Salvation Army meetings.³ There is not much other evidence, except that visitors to Salvation Army meetings noticed a predominance of 'church people' in the congregation.⁴ Attendances at Salvation Army services exceeded the number of their adherents by 50 per cent. Apart from Salvationists who migrated from Britain, it seems that the Army's following included some from other denominations,

1

These percentages are of city and country church attendances in 1880 and 1890 respectively over the metropolitan and rural populations according to the censuses of 1881 and 1891.

2

Geoffrey Blainey, The Rush That Never Ended, Melbourne, 1963, pp.120-1.

3

See Chapter 3.

4

Ibid.

particularly Methodists. Although it may have attracted some of the poor of the city, the Salvation Army's efforts did not have much effect on the widespread religious indifference of the colony.¹

The church attendance returns indicate the large gap between religious affiliation and practice, but statistics of communicants or church members are a better guide to religious commitment or devotion. This information, however, is not uniformly available in the 1880s, and the meaning of membership varies considerably from denomination to denomination. Catholics included children from seven or eight among communicants while Anglican communicants embraced adolescents upwards. In Presbyterianism adherents may hold office on the board of management and vote at congregational meetings; communicant membership traditionally is for the ripe in faith. But in Congregational and Baptist churches only members may vote or hold office. Despite the differences, however, communion was an obligation of membership in most denominations. It is worth asking then how many churchgoers were members or communicants.

Communicants formed only a minority of those who attended churches services regularly. The Easter returns for the Anglican diocese of Sydney in 1880 showed that 6,802 or 21 per cent of the 32,382 churchgoers were communicants; the proportion rose to 27 per cent of

1

Many of the Salvation Army's followers in England seem to have come from other denominations, particularly Methodists. See K.S. Inglis, *op. cit.*, p.212-3.

attendances in 1890.¹ Presbyterian church members formed 25 per cent of the denomination's churchgoers in 1880 and 29 per cent in 1890.² Membership in Wesleyan Churches constituted 16 per cent in the 1880s;

1

Ecclesiastical Returns, Easter 1880, Easter 1890, P.S.D.S., 1880 and 1890. Attendances for 1890 are taken from the Statistical Register, 1890, p.383. This information is not uniformly available in published form for the rural dioceses in the 1880s, but the following figures from the Special Returns in the Statistical Register for 1893 show the proportion of churchgoers who were communicants in the various dioceses.

	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Sydney</u>	<u>Bathurst</u>	<u>Goulburn</u>
(a)	Communicants	12,598	2,387	3,026
(b)	Habitual Attendants	38,974	14,736	9,705
(c)	Percentage of habitual attendants who were communicants	32.3	16.2	31.2

	<u>Grafton and Armidale</u>	<u>Newcastle</u>	<u>Riverina</u>	<u>Total Province</u>
(a)	1,858	3,945	1,290	25,104
(b)	9,015	12,374	4,677	89,501
(c)	20.6	31.8	27.6	28.0

Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1893, p.641. Attendances are for Sunday services and weekday services where Sunday services were not available. There were similar returns in 1892, but I have used 1893, when all denominations returned this information.

2

In 1887 the Statistical Committee of the Presbyterian Church provided a table showing the proportion of membership in relation to adherents in relation to total adherents between 1881 and 1886. They averaged 24 per cent. The committee assumed that adherents comprised all ages but the number is approximately the same as the published church attendances, and seems to be of adult adherents only; the figure would be much higher if the Sunday School enrolments were added. Report of the Committee on Statistics, 1886, M.P.G.A., 1887, p.95.

communicants, listed separately, were one per cent in 1880 and two and a half per cent in 1890. These were mostly members of other denominations who communicated in Wesleyan Churches but would not accept the discipline of the class meeting.¹ Thus in 1890 members and communicants together formed a little under 20 per cent of attendants. Congregationalists and Baptists did not publish regular returns of members in the 1880s but in 1879 communicants averaged 187 out of a membership of 428 in Pitt Street Congregational Church. Low attendances at evening communions reduced the average and the church decided to discontinue the ordinance in the evening.² In 1893,

1

M.W.C. 1878, pp.57-8: Wesleyans in the 1880s were divided as to whether or not the class meeting - a fellowship for the converted to assist them on the progress to 'entire sanctification' - should remain the chief requirement of church membership. Attendants from other traditions would not join it, and few Wesleyan youth were willing to submit to its spiritual discipline and exposure. Ministers also found it necessary to appoint as officers members whose attendance at the class meeting had lapsed. Some feared that Methodism would lose 'sanctified intelligence' because of its membership test. In 1878 the General Conference reaffirmed the class meeting requirement, but the question remained unsettled, and after much debate the General Conference of 1890 revised the standard of membership; it recognised a monthly fellowship meeting in lieu of the weekly class meeting; it was only a matter of time before the class meeting died out completely. Minutes of the General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, (hereafter, Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference) 1878, pp.57-8; 1890, pp.39-41; for debate on the question see S.M.H., 6 February 1888; 1 February 1890; see also Renate Howe op.cit., pp.44-9.

2

Year Book of the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney, 1879-80, p.3.

when all denominations provided figures for members or communicants, around 33 per cent of Congregational and Baptists churchgoers were members and 31 per cent were regular communicants. Members incapacitated through age or sickness may largely explain the difference between these two percentages. Twenty five per cent of Primitive Methodist churchgoers were members in 1893.¹ Catholic communicants were around 79 per cent of attendants at Mass, including children, in 1893.² Thus, while the church attendance returns reveal that many were out of regular contact with the churches, the returns of communicants and members show that many Protestants who were in regular contact were not under church discipline.

1

Above figures from the Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1893, pp.642-9.

2

These figures for the various dioceses were as follows:

	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Sydney</u>	<u>Armidale</u>	<u>Bathurst</u>	
(a)	Communicants	48,855	4,267	11,720	
(b)	Habitual Attendants	62,817	6,322	15,045	
(c)	Percentage of Habitual Attendants who were Communicants	77.8	67.5	77.9	
	<u>Goulburn</u>	<u>Grafton</u>	<u>Maitland</u>	<u>Wilcannia</u>	<u>Total Province</u>
(a)	14,286	4,940	12,440	3,850	100,358
(b)	18,026	6,820	13,589	5,180	127,799
(c)	79.2	72.4	91.5	74.3	78.5

Statistical Register, N.S.W. 1893, p.643. Figures for communicants and attendances include children under 14.

From the published Sunday School attendances we can measure to some extent the churches' contact with children in the community. The proportion of children between five and fifteen attending Sunday Schools increased from 27 per cent in 1860 to 39 per cent in 1880. Enrolments were also published in 1880; they included 52 per cent of eligible children, and attendances were 75 per cent of the enrolment. Total attendances at Sunday Schools increased to 46 per cent of eligible children by 1890.¹

The distribution of Sunday School scholars among the various denominations differed little from those of church attendances. Anglicans were below average. Presbyterians were roughly average and other Nonconformists above average. Catholics, however, were slightly below average in Sunday School attendances. Allowances must be made for children whose parents might have considered it their prerogative to see to the religious instruction of their children, and who took them to church but did not send them to Sunday School. These, however, would not have been many, for by 1880 most Protestants regarded Sunday Schools, begun in 1780 by Robert Raikes for poor children, as the most important instruments of religious instruction for children within each congregation. Some continued to see them as essentially for the poor

1

See Appendix V.

outside the church,¹ and zealous teachers gathered children of indifferent parents. The Public Instruction Act of 1880, in withdrawing aid to denominational schools, practically eliminated Protestant day schools and enhanced the importance of Sunday Schools and religious instruction in public schools. Catholics, however, who resolved to preserve their parish schools, primarily for religious reasons, mostly boycotted the public schools. But in some places Catholic children had to attend public schools. Where this was the case bishops encouraged Catholics to assemble their children in catechumen classes on Sundays.²

The Sunday School returns only complete the picture provided by the figure of church attendances and membership. The larger proportion of the population was out of regular touch with the churches. The gap

1

At the Intercolonial Congregational Conference in Sydney 1883, Joseph Robertson of New Zealand argued that Sunday Schools, as founded by Robert Raikes, had a missionary purpose, but Charles Manthorpe of South Australia hoped that 'the notion would be discouraged that the schools were intended for outcasts, and not for children connected with their own congregation.' Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, pp.189, 196.

2

See Bishop Lanigan (Diocese of Goulburn), Lenten Pastoral, 1882, in Express, 25 February, 1882.

between formal profession and actual practice is narrowed a little when allowance is made for the disability of the aged and sick and the very young. In some parts of the interior religious provision was still poor, though it improved considerably in the 1880s. Even so, there were always empty pews. The gap is still large when all allowances have been made, as shown by Coghlan's estimate of the proportion of the adult population in 1886 who were churchgoers. But between regular attendance and complete indifference there were varying degrees of contact through 'occasional conformity' at Christmas, Easter, and patriotic occasions. There were also the more intimate but less frequent contacts through baptism, marriages and funerals. From the little evidence available it seems that around 75 to 80 per cent of infants born each year were baptised;¹ there is

1

There are very few statistics on baptisms in the 1880s; the Anglican diocese of Sydney and the Presbyterian General Assembly published figures annually, but I have not found returns for other denominations. In 1893, however, all denominations included the number of baptisms in their returns to the Government Statistician. The total number of baptisms in denominations practising paedo-baptism amounted to 81 per cent of infants born that year. The Wesleyan Church rarely recorded these statistics and was the only denomination to omit them in 1900, but with the interpolation of the probable figure of 2,500 for Wesleyan baptisms it appears that approximately 76 per cent of infants born in 1900 were baptised. These figures exclude the returns of the Baptist Union, the Churches of Christ and other denominations which baptised only on profession of faith; they also exclude the returns of the Salvation Army under the heading of baptisms; since the Salvation Army does not observe sacraments these may have represented infant dedications. Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1893, births, p.542, Special Returns, pp.641-51; 1900, births, p.672; 1901, Special Returns for 1900, pp.868-86.

practically no information about secularist funerals, which were rare, but there are marriage returns which indicate something of the extent of 'occasional conformity'. In 1880 94 per cent of marriages in the colony were conducted by ministers of religion and 93 per cent in 1890. Only those with strong feelings would have sought a secular marriage by a registrar. Such people formed six per cent in 1880 and seven per cent in 1890.¹ Of the others the most that we can say is that they did not object to a religious ceremony, or that they thought it fitting and proper. There may have been some who believed in Christianity in their own way, but saw no relevance or attraction in organised religion. However, there is little evidence about the religious views of those outside the churches in the nineteenth century. Few outsiders were articulate about their belief or disbelief, and there were no surveys of religion among the people. We do not know how prevalent were the customs of family worship or private prayer among churchgoers let alone among non-churchgoers. But recent surveys indicate that private religion may survive the cessation of participation in public worship.²

1

Tables of marriages conducted by ministers of religion according to denomination and by registrars appear as follows. 1878-1889, Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1889, p.191; 1885-1890, Statistical Register, 1890, p.429; 1891-1900, Statistical Register, 1900, p.673.

2

In his recent survey of 'Religion in Australia' Dr J.J. Mol found that 76 per cent of the people interviewed believed in a personal God, though only two-thirds of these were free of doubt. Another 12 per cent believed vaguely in a higher power. Six per cent were agnostic
(footnote continued on p.61)

Nevertheless, the fact that most people called on the services of religion occasionally, but otherwise ignored the churches, reminded churchmen what the strength of the churches might have been if they could only obtain the regular support of these nominal Christians. They recognised that apathy rather than unbelief was their greatest enemy, and the indifference of the multitude was one of the constant preoccupations of Protestant churchmen in the 1880s.

(footnote 2 continued from p.60)

and only two per cent were emphatically atheist; two percent gave some other reply. 33 per cent (that is, of persons over 20 years of age) attended church regularly, which meant once a month or more often. 34 per cent prayed daily, but another 40 per cent prayed occasionally. He also found private believers, that is, persons who prayed daily, but did not attend church regularly. The majority of these were older women and predominantly Anglican. I am grateful to Dr Mol for allowing me to see the result of his survey 'Religion in Australia', soon to be published. The information above is from unpublished reports mimeographed at the Australian National University: 'Beliefs and Ethical Issues in Australia', pp.7, 28-9; 'Religion and Education', p.29.

Chapter 2

Extension and Evangelism

The churches in New South Wales in the 1880s devoted much of their effort and resources to church extension and evangelism, and churchmen hoped that these agencies would help to close the gap between nominal and practising belief. They could not complain justly that many were outside their aegis if some places were without church buildings and others were provided with insufficient accommodation. But other motives operated alongside the evangelical desire to save souls in stimulating the work of church extension. Churchmen believed and proclaimed religion to be the cement of a sound social order. Bishop Barry in 1885 asserted that the future of Christianity, 'especially the question whether it should be, not a rival or enemy but an ally of the civil power', depended on an energetic programme of church extension. It was a critical age, he told Anglicans, in which they were witnessing 'the conflict between the old civilisation which was impregnated with the principles of Christianity, and the new civilisations, on secularist bases which were offered in its room'.¹ Three years later Mr Justice Owen, an Anglican layman, remarked that church extension and religious instruction were of great importance in an age when 'The powers which controlled the life of communities were passing into

1

Address at Church Society Conference, 27 August 1885, S.M.H., 28 August 1885. For note on Bishop Barry see below, p.64.

the hands of the masses, and the influences which were the result were secular'. Moreover, the propaganda of socialism was also spreading over the world, and it was the duty of the church to uphold Christianity as the source of all that was high and noble in civilisation; only the churches could supply the moral and religious teaching which would make good citizens.¹ Congregationalists and Presbyterians thought it a reflection on the churches that public houses always preceded them into new suburbs. The Presbyterian warned that the whole population would suffer if a portion lapsed into heathenism. Ignorance of morality would produce anarchy and crime, and people without moral and religious nurture would make 'lopsided and dangerous citizens'.² The Wesleyan Advocate agreed that the churches had to extend and evangelise, not only for 'the salvation of the individual man', but because they had 'the unique remedial and directive energy for ... civic and municipal life'.³

Denominational rivalry provided another strong stimulus to church extension. There was no established church in New South Wales; Christianity was represented by competing denominations each determined to retain the support of its own members rather than to lose them to

1

Speech at Annual Meeting, Sydney Church Society, 9 April 1888, S.M.H., 10 April 1888.

2

Presbyterian, 18 September 1880; Congregational comment, D.T., 7 January 1880.

3

Advocate, 15 October 1881.

more enterprising rivals. In 1883, Dr J. Moorhouse, Bishop of Melbourne, warned Anglicans in New South Wales not to abandon the interior of the colony; to do so would result either in spiritual decline among the population or stigma would attach to the Church of England if she left the interior to other denominations.¹ Dr Alfred Barry,² who became Bishop of Sydney in 1884, desired no rivalry except the honourable rivalry of doing good, with other Christian bodies, and exhorted

1

Address to the Sydney Church Society, 1 March 1883, S.M.H., 3 March 1883.

2

Alfred Barry (1826-1910), was appointed to the bishopric of Sydney, to which attached the offices of Metropolitan of New South Wales and Primate of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania, in 1883; he arrived in the colony in April 1884 and was duly enthroned in the St Andrew's Cathedral. Educated at King's College, London and Trinity College Cambridge, Barry became a schoolmaster and was principal of King's College, London, at the time of his appointment to Sydney. He was a prolific author and a distinguished lecturer and Christian apologist. A Low Churchman, orthodox in doctrine and liberal in spirit, he tried unsuccessfully to moderate between the Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic parties in his diocese, but his churchmanship fitted him for ecumenical leadership, and Nonconformists willingly put him at the head of united movements for the defence of Christianity in the colony. In 1889 he resigned his bishopric, giving his wife's health as the principal reason; he returned to England where he became assistant bishop of Rochester and later Rector of St James's, Picadilly, and continued his writing and lecturing. Full biographical accounts of Barry are given in the Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement, vol.I, 1901-1911, pp.103-5; Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-90, A-C, pp.105-7.

Anglicans to lead 'in the battle against secularism, sin and unbelief'. The Church of England, he argued, was peculiarly suited to this role, as it stood between the absolutism of Rome on the one hand, and 'Congregational disintegration' on the other.¹

The Presbyterian in 1880 admitted that the denomination had some leeway to make up; with increasing immigration they had 'to lengthen [their] cords and strengthen [their] stakes',² and not allow the Wesleyans to overtake them.³ Some Presbyterians felt that the denomination was 'weak at the centre' and losing members to other denominations as a result.⁴ There was strong pressure for more church extension in Sydney but the Church Extension Fund was considered for country extension only.⁵ However, in March 1883 the assembly designated Sydney and suburbs and the Riverina as the most important areas for church extension,⁶ and the progress of Anglicans, Wesleyans and Congregationalists in the metropolitan area stimulated Presbyterian church extension in the city as well as the country, but the Presbyterian trusted that

1

Address, Church Society Conference, 27 August 1885, S.M.H., 28 August 1885.

2

Presbyterian, 13 November 1880.

3

Ibid., 11 March 1882.

4

Ibid., 20 January 1883.

5

Henry Macready, Presbyterian, 10 February 1883;

6

M.P.G.A., 1883, pp.14-15.

the higher considerations of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, even more than a desire not to be outdone by another Church, will ever be with her the grand motive power.¹

Wesleyans were also anxious to increase their strength in the growing metropolis and to keep pace with the progress of other denominations. In 1879 they formed 'The Sydney and Suburban Wesleyan Methodist Church Sites Fund' to assist church extension in the city.² Congregationalists, on the other hand, worried about church extension in the country where they were losing members to other denominations. Thomas Binney³ had warned them in 1858 against multiplying little places and little men, but Joseph Beazley persuaded the Intercolonial Congregational Conference at Adelaide in 1859 that they should be 'less controversial and more evangelical-less of a sect and more of a church....'⁴ Beazley thought that Congregationalists should emulate the Wesleyans by using a lay agency in church extension, but a permanent lay agency never emerged.

1

Presbyterian, 16 October 1886.

2

M.C.W., 1879, p.64; see also Advocate, 18 June 1881; and Report of Church Sustentation and Extension Fund, 1886, S.M.H., 28 January 1886.

3

See Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-90, A-C, pp.164-5.

4

Minutes of Proceedings at the Conference of Delegates, &c. from the Congregational Churches of Australia, held in Adelaide, South Australia, November 1859, Adelaide, 1860, p.6.

While Congregationalists achieved little in the country in the 1880s, there was some growth in the metropolitan area,¹ and W.J. Green, Secretary of the Church Extension Society, argued that Congregationalists had to accept the cost of denominational competition in the city at least. Green told those who objected to the multiplication of churches that congregations came mostly from those within a mile of a church building, and that as the climate was too hot for long walks in summer children would attend the Sunday School most conveniently close. 'If our people have not a church within this distance from their house', he said, 'they sooner or later go to a place of worship of another denomination.'² Baptist churchmen, who thought that many of their adherents were lost to other denominations, used similar arguments in support of greater efforts in church extension in the country and new suburbs.³ The Rev. F. Hibberd reminded his fellow-Baptists that those who were behind them in understanding of truth excelled them 'in their efforts to reach the ungodly, in their Church extension schemes, in their Christian liberality and in their interest in one another.'⁴ The work of

1

Annual Meeting of the Church Extension Society, Congregational Year Book, 1884, pp.35-7; 1886, pp.78-87.

2

W.J. Green, 'Congregationalism in New South Wales,' Independent, 15 August 1881.

3

W. Taylor, Chairman's Address, Banner of Truth, 5 May 1881; *ibid.*, 5 October 1882.

4

Ibid., 7 April 1880; see also Baptist, 1 November 1888.

other Protestants and even of Roman Catholics, said the Banner of Truth, 'should make us heartily ashamed of ourselves and stir us to a holy emulation'.¹ Some Baptists thought that 'open membership', that is, to admit to membership individuals not baptised on personal confession of faith, would widen support for the denomination; in 1888 it was proposed that a new church on the North Shore should be opened on these lines, but the Baptist Assembly negatived the proposal. There were, however, a few churches with 'open membership'.²

Denominational competition made church extension to some extent irrational, particularly in sparsely populated areas where one or two churches would have been sufficient. There were some 'Union Churches' in country areas shared mostly by Anglicans, 'Presbyterians and Wesleyans. Some of them prohibited collections and in others the financial response was poor, though they often had good congregations.³ The buildings were of wood and iron, dingy and depressing and stifling in summer. Anglicans found them unsuitable for the conduct of their liturgy.⁴ They promoted friction rather than

1

Banner of Truth, 3 December 1879.

2

A.C. Prior, op.cit., p.125; the churches with 'open membership' were Bathurst Street, Sydney, Bathurst and Orange. The insistence on baptism was omitted from the constitution of the Baptist Union in 1870 to accommodate these churches. Ibid., p.110.

3

J.E. Carruthers, Memories of an Australian Ministry 1868 to 1921, Sydney, 1922, pp.68, 90.

4

C.H.S., Matthews, A Parson in the Australian Bush, London, 1908, pp.27, 60.

harmony among the clergy who ministered in them. Wesleyans solved the difficulty at Bushmans (Parkes) by buying the Presbyterians out of the Union Church there.¹ And in some other places, the Wesleyan Advocate asserted, Anglicans tried to elbow other denominations out.² The Wesleyan and Anglican ministers at Bega disputed each other's rights in the Union Church at Tanja until Sunday, 19 August 1888, when the Wesleyan minister arrived to find the building burnt down.³ In 1887 the Baptist and the Independent both deplored the loss of Baptist and Congregational families to other denominations in the country. But while the Baptist advocated union churches between these two denominations, the Independent argued that the Nonconformist denominations should sink their differences and set up 'free and evangelical churches' in sparsely settled parts of the colony.⁴ Comity between the Protestant denominations was an established principle in overseas missions, but there was little support for it in the home mission in the 1880s. However, in 1891 the Wesleyan Conference passed a resolution advocating comity in church extension in the colony.⁵

¹ J.S. Austin, Missionary Enterprise and Home Mission Service, Sydney, n.d., pp.200-1.

² Advocate, 19 February 1887.

³ Presbyterian, 12 March 1887, F.J., 25 August 1888.

⁴ Baptist, 4 March 1887; H.E. Hughes, op.cit., pp.37-8, 63; Independent, 15 May 1887.

⁵ M.W.C., 1891, pp.114-15.

Union churches belonged to no denomination and members of any denomination who attended them were largely lost to their own church. There was little incentive for the denominations to sponsor them though the laity might often have preferred them. Irrational though it might sometimes have been, denominational competition did more to extend religious facilities than would have been achieved through a network of union churches. Competition brought in more money, and apart from differences in doctrine and polity, there was that denominational pride which desired to see the denominational flag flying throughout the colony. This competitive spirit contributed, as well as pastoral concern, to the establishment of new dioceses in the Anglican and Catholic Churches in the colony. Each church established dioceses in the same areas around the same time.¹

1

Dioceses of the Church of
England

1. Sydney (Australia 1836-47) formed 1836.
2. Newcastle 1847.
3. Goulburn 1863.
4. Grafton and Armidale 1867.
5. Bathurst 1869.
6. Riverina 1884.
7. Grafton 1914.

Dioceses of the Roman
Catholic Church

1. Sydney (Vicariate - Apostolic of New Holland 1834-42) formed 1834.
2. Maitland 1847 (not occupied until 1866).
3. Goulburn 1862 (occupied 1867).
4. Armidale 1862 (occupied 1871).
5. Bathurst 1865.
6. Wilcannia 1887.
7. Grafton (Lismore) 1887.

In 1862, in reference to Bishop Barker's intention to create two new dioceses, Archbishop Polding wrote to
(footnote continued on p.71)

Church extension stimulated by denominational competition demanded considerable financial support and this money had to come increasingly from voluntary contributions. Under an Act gazetted in 1863 Parliament had abolished the state aid, given to Anglicans, Catholics, Presbyterians and Wesleyans, although clergy in receipt of state subsidy continued to receive it for the duration of their ministry in the colony.¹ But state aid had carried no guarantee of adequate religious provision either in Britain or the colonies. Voluntaryist Dissenters had overtaken the established Anglicans in the provision of church buildings in the larger industrial cities in the first half of the nineteenth

(footnote 1 continued from p.70)

Bishop Goold of Melbourne that Catholics should endeavour to anticipate and gain the valuable prestige of giving 'the first and real Bishops' to the districts. (cit. P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church in Australasia, Sydney, [1895], pp.768-9).

In a letter to England in 1867 Bishop Barker also mentioned the establishment of the Catholic diocese of Bathurst in support of his argument for an Anglican see in the district. (Bishop Barker to Rev. Earnest Hawkins, 30 November 1867, cit., Ruth Teale, 'By Hook and By Crook', p.33).

Lack of finance prevented separation of the Anglican diocese of Grafton and Armidale in the late 1880s.

(Report of Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Grafton and Armidale, (hereafter P.S.D.G.&A.), 1889, p.5.

2

Grants for Public Worship Prohibition Act, 1862, 26 Vic. No.19. The bill was reserved on 12 December 1862 and assent was proclaimed on 21 July 1863.

century,¹ and in New South Wales state aid had proved inadequate long before it was abolished. Before 1862 Anglicans had begun to organise church extension on voluntary support. William Tyrrell, the first Bishop of Newcastle, established the Newcastle Church Society on 26 April 1851 to provide for missionary work within and beyond the diocese.² Frederic Barker,³ Evangelical successor to the High Churchmen, W.G. Broughton, in the see of Sydney, established a Church Society in his diocese on 5 May 1856, a year after his arrival in the colony. Barker found that state aid would not support further church extension in the colony,⁴ and moreover, he probably foresaw the writing on the wall for state aid, as voluntaryists led by the fiery John Dunmore Lang were campaigning for the abolition of state aid to religion; South Australia had set the precedent in 1851.⁵ The

1

W.F.S., Pickering, 'The 1851 Census- a Useless Experiment', loc.cit., p.389.

2

A.P. Elkin, The Diocese of Newcastle, Sydney, 1955, pp.219-27.

3

Bishop Barker's long episcopate did much to stamp an Evangelical character on the diocese of Sydney. Barker died while abroad on 6 April 1882. For a full biographical account of Frederic Barker see Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-1890, A-C, pp.90-5.

4

Archdeacon R.L. King, 'History and Principles of the Church Society', paper read at a Conference of the Church Society, Sydney, 27 August 1885, S.M.H., 28 August 1885; see also Dean W.M. Cowper, speech at the Annual Meeting of the Church Society, 9 April 1888, S.M.H., 10 April 1888. Both these churchmen were in the diocese at the Society's formation.

5

Douglas Pike, Paradise of Dissent, Second Edition, Melbourne, 1967, pp.434-7.

synod took over the functions of the Newcastle Church Society in 1867,¹ but the dioceses of Goulburn and Bathurst formed their own Church Societies as they were established. Grafton and Armidale was without any society or fund for church extension. Grants were made from diocesan funds, but the third bishop. Dr A.V. Green, recommended a Diocesan Church Extension Fund at his first synod in 1894.² The Church Societies, as well as subsidising stipends and church building distributed Bibles and religious literature and supported missions to the Aborigines.³ But each Society was dependent upon the generosity of wealthy individuals and older established parishes; lack of funds often frustrated their work.

1
A.P. Elkin, op.cit., pp.229-30.

2
Address, P.S.D.G. & A., 1894, pp.7-8.

3
There was little mission work among the aborigines in the 1880s. Daniel Matthews had established the Maloga Mission on the Murray near Moama in 1874. J.B. Gribble, a Congregational minister in charge of the Presbyterian Church at Jerilderie, moved by the plight of the aborigines, established the Warangesda Mission on the Murrumbidgee in 1879. It began as a nonsectarian mission but Gribble found interdenominational support insufficient, though the mission received a state subsidy. In 1881 he took Anglican orders and Warangesda became a mission under the Anglican diocese of Goulburn. In 1887 it transferred to the new diocese of Riverina. Independent, 15 July 1880, 14 May 1881, 15 October 1881; M.P.G.A., 1880, pp.28-9; 1881, p.37; Minutes of the Synod....of the Diocese of Goulburn (hereafter P.S.D.G., 1881, p.9; 1887, p.14. I am also indebted to Dr W.N. Gunson for some of this information.

The financial anxiety of Anglicans and Catholics in particular increased around 1880 as the last sources of state aid were about to dry up. The Public Instruction Act, 1880, decreed the end of state aid to denominational schools and the Church and Schools Lands Dedication Act, 1880,¹ diverted another small income from the four denominations to public education. Though it was small,² the Anglican and Catholic bishops opposed it strenuously. Catholics, however, had been preparing for the withdrawal of state support from their schools since 1867.³

1

44 Vic. No.19. The bill was reserved on 30 June 1880 and assent was proclaimed on 20 October 1881.

2

Income from the Church and Schools Estate				
	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Wesleyan
	£	£	£	£
1870	1,576	1,024	326	180
1880	3,283	1,822	581	320
1883 (last payment)	3,290	2,362	581	320

Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1870, p.14; 1880, p.16; 1883, p.16.

3

When the Catholic Association for the Promotion of Religion and Education in the Archdiocese of Sydney was formed, R. Fogarty, Catholic Education in Australia, Melbourne, 1959, vol.1, pp.218-9.

Direct payments to clergy were diminishing considerably as the following table shows:

Amounts paid to the Clergy of the Several Denominations since the passing of the Abolition Act. ¹				
	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Wesleyan
	£	£	£	£
1870	12,386	6,583	2,180	1,572
1880	7,739	3,893	1,702	1,716
1890	5,591	2,600	702	900

Churches were obliged to provide full voluntary support for clergy who replaced subsidised incumbents. In 1881 the diocese of Newcastle equalised the state aid through a Stipend and General Fund; this allowed a grant of £100 to all clergy rather than £200 only to those on the state list;² as a result the diocese was glad to keep clergy still in receipt of state aid.³ When Archbishop Vaughan succeeded to Archbishop Polding's throne in 1877 he did not inherit Polding's income of £800 from the state, but he did inherit the debts of the archdiocese.⁴ The state,

¹ Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1890, p.387.

² Report of the Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Newcastle (hereafter P.S.D.N.), 1881, Appendix II, pp.71-2.

³ Ibid., 1885, p.25.

⁴ A Sydney correspondent to Dr Gregory, 31 October 1874, cit. H.N. Birt, op. cit., vol.2, p.381. This correspondent refers to the debt Polding handed on to Vaughan.

however, had in 1856 guaranteed an annual income of £2,000 to the Anglican bishop of Sydney until the Bishopthorpe Estate should provide that amount.¹ In the diocese of Goulburn there was discussion of parochial endowments to take the place of state aid;² Josiah Pearson,³ the second Bishop of Newcastle suggested that some wealthy families might endow parishes for their sons, as in England, thus relieving both the financial difficulty and the problem of ministerial supply;⁴ but though endowment of parishes did not transplant too readily to the colonies there were some generous

1

Dean Cowper stated in Synod that 'In 1856 the Governor in Council acting upon a Minute made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Hon. W.E. Gladstone, entered into an arrangement by which the Bishop's Stipend of £2,000 was guaranteed from the Public Funds until the income of Bishopthorpe...should reach that amount. See P.S.D.S., 1881, p.51.

2

P.S.D.G., 1881, p.24.

3

Josiah Brown Pearson (1841-1895) became bishop of Newcastle in 1880; he was vicar of Newark before coming to Australia. A graduate of Cambridge, in 1872 he was Hulsean Lecturer and Ramsden Preacher. Pearson was a liberal theologian who sought to reconcile Christianity with modern thought. He left Newcastle in 1886 and would have become assistant bishop to Dr J. Moorhouse (formerly to Melbourne) at Manchester, but for his poor health. He did not formally resign his bishopric until 1890; he became rector of a small county parish in North Lancashire until his early death.

Philip Mennell, Dictionary of Australasian Biography, London, 1892, p.369; A.P. Elkin, *op.cit.*, pp.472-4, 509-13.

4

Address, P.S.D.N., 1886, p.24.

endowments of dioceses. John Campbell, M.L.C., of Canberra Plains, gave £10,000 in 1884 to endow the new bishopric of Riverina,¹ and Bishop Tyrrell, Pearson's Predecessor, had bequeathed a number of cattle and sheep stations worth £250,000 to the diocese of Newcastle. He expected it to provide an annual income of £25,000 but bad seasons in the 1880s seriously impaired the benefits of this large endowment; Pearson faced considerable financial difficulty which ultimately broke his health.²

There were complaints about inadequate finance and poor giving from the parishes at most synods and meetings of the Church Society. Bishop Broughton had revived the weekly offertory in the 1840s in face of opposition,³ but while the custom was widespread by 1880 it was not well supported. Cowper complained that 'perhaps about one-fourth' of Anglican congregations contributed to the offertory.⁴ The 'Church Acts' of 1836 and 1837⁵ assumed that most church income would be through pew rents, and some pew-holders considered their rent as their whole contribution to the church.⁶ The

1

Address, P.S.D.G., 1884, pp.5-6.

2

P.S.D.N., 1886, Appendix VII, pp.79-80; A.P. Elkin, op.cit., pp.395-404.

3

John Barrett, That Better Country, Melbourne, 1966, p.65.

4

Address, P.S.D.S., 1882, part II, pp.7-9.

5

'Bourkes Church Act', 7 Wm.IV, No.3; English Church Temporalities Act, 8 Wm. IV, No.5.

6

Pearson, Address, P.S.D.N., 1885, pp.22-3.

excuse that 'the Church of England people have not been educated to give' angered Bishop Barry, who exclaimed that they had not learned 'the plainest teaching' of individual Christian responsibility'.¹ But the problem was not peculiar to Anglicans. Bishop Dunne suggested that giving should be discussed at the Plenary Council in 1885. He thought that less than ten per cent of Catholics contributed to the support of public worship.² Presbyterians referred frequently to the need for more generous and systematic giving to church work.³ Wesleyans pleaded for better stewardship of wealth; during the 1880s some circuits adopted the weekly envelope system despite opposition from those who despised such worldliness in the Lord's business.⁴ Presbyterians and Wesleyan churches also received pew rents, as did some Catholic parishes. By 1880 most Congregational churches had substituted weekly freewill offering envelopes for the old pew rents, but pews were still allocated to families who took envelopes.⁵ However, the

¹ Address, P.S.D.S., 1886, p.38.

² Suggestions for the Australian Synod of 1885, loc.cit.

³ Presbyterian, 3 June 1882; 22 December 1883; 14 December 1889.

⁴ Advocate, 19 February 1887; 'Envelope', ibid, 5 March 1887; J.S. Austin, Missionary Enterprise and Home Mission Service, p.295.

⁵ See Pastoral Letter, Year book of the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney, 1879-1880, pp.5-7; also, Year Books, Woollahra Congregational Church, 1880, p.114; Burwood Congregational Church, 1880, pp.111-124; Petersham Congregational Church, 1881, pp.4-5; Redfern Congregational Church, Manual, 1885, pp.4, 17.

Independent in 1880 complained about 'systematic withholding'.¹ Primitive Methodists also found it necessary to advocate systematic giving.²

None of the denominations, however, depended solely on freewill offerings. Fund-raising was a prominent activity in all churches. Ladies undertook to collect money for special causes;³ bazaars, fetes, fancy dress balls and other entertainments supplied a good proportion of church finance. Easter 1882 witnessed a remarkable incident for fund-raising enterprise and denominational competition. Anglicans organised 'Ye Olde English Fayre' in the Garden Palace and Archbishop Vaughan reproduced 'Merry England' in the 'Fayre of Ye Olden Tyme' in the unconsecrated shell of the new St Mary's Cathedral; Vaughan's 'Fayrè' added around £6,000 to the cathedral fund.⁴ These fairs evoked considerable criticism from Protestants,⁵ but fairs continued particularly among Catholics who showed great imagination and energy in their

¹ Independent, 15 October 1880.

² Annual Meeting, Primitive Methodist Conference, 1890, D.T., 14 February, 1890.

³ See Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Goulburn, 1881, p.14; Address, P.S.D.N., 1885, p.28 and 79; Manual, Redfern Congregational Church, 1885, pp.4-5, Year Book Petersham Congregational Church, 1886, p.17.

⁴ Express, 8 April, 3 June 1882; P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, pp.672-3.

⁵ Church of England Record (hereafter Record), April 1882; Advocate, 22 April 1882; P.S.D.G.&A., 1882, p.24.

fund raising.¹ Protestant churches found it necessary to condemn raffles and art unions in church fairs,² and in 1887 Sydney H.L. Jackson, incumbent of St James' Church, Sydney, attempted unsuccessfully to have 'Bazaars, Flower Shows and Exhibitions' condemned along with gambling as 'wrong in principle' and 'unworthy of professing Christians'.³ In 1891 the Anglican Synod of Goulburn denounced as illicit means of fund-raising 'dances, fancy dress balls, concerts, theatricals, Punch and Judy shows and other like modes'.⁴ Catholics did not condemn raffles or art unions; but the first Plenary Council in 1885 decreed that dances and fancy dress balls were unbecoming and should not be held under the auspices of Catholic societies,⁵ although the Catholic St. Vincent's hospital ran a fashionable ball in 1886 to raise funds.⁶ However, the Catholic synod of Sydney in

1

For example, Irish Fancy Fairs, 1884, Shakespearian Fair, Easter 1885, Great Fench Fair, 1889; F.J., 27 December 1884, 11 April 1885; Nation, 19 December 1889.

2

P.S.D.S., 1887, p.103; P.S.D.G., 1891, p.42; M.P.G.A., 1887, pp.15, 137-7; Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference, 1878, p.38; Advocate, 6 July 1889.

3

P.S.D.S., 1887, p.103.

4

P.S.D.G., 1891, p.42.

5

Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Australasiae, Habiti apud Sydney, A.D. 1885, Sydney, 1887, (hereafter Acta et Decreta, 1885), Decree, 197. See also; 'Translation of Some Decrees of the Plenary Council, Held in Sydney in November 1885,' in Synodus Dioecesis Maitlandensis, West Maitland, 1888. (Mitchell Library).

6

F.J., 25 September 1886.

1891 instructed the clergy to discountenance balls for charitable and religious purposes.¹ While Nonconformist churches did not hold dances in the 1880s they resorted to many other expedients to raise funds.

Fund-raising to support church work absorbed as much time and energy as the cause it aimed to sustain. 'We are so much occupied with finances and the mere external scaffolding of the Church', Bishop Thomas said in 1881, 'that our minds are too much turned aside from the living spiritual power of the Gospel....'² Wesleyan Ministers were expected to organise fund-raising to clear circuit debts and J.S. Austin concluded his ministry at East Maitland in 1882 satisfied that his labour had not been in vain 'either financially or spiritually'.³ But Canon Selwyn, who was Vicar-General of the diocese of Newcastle during Pearson's long illness, found no satisfaction in fund-raising. He told the synod he wished he were forbidden to speak of money for the clergy were commonly stigmatised as 'inveterate beggars'.⁴ George Campbell declared to the Intercolonial Congregational Conference in 1883 that it was a reproach for the church to have to beg from door to door or to resort so many expedients to raise funds which Christians were 'pledged

¹ Decrees of the Diocesan Synod of Sydney, 29 July 1891, Sydney, n.d., decree LVIII.

² Address, P.S.D.G., 1881, p.5.

³ J.S. Austin, op.cit., pp.275-6, 280.

⁴ Address, P.S.D.N., 1887, p.11.

to provide'.¹ The Presbyterian asserted in 1882 that some people stayed away from the churches because they saw it as 'a mere money-gathering institution for paying ministers' salaries'.²

The clergy, however, painted a gloomier picture than was the case during the 1880s; it was easier to raise money for local objectives than for wider work and considerable sums of money were spent to enlarge or renovate old buildings,³ and to install pipe organs in several large city churches.⁴ This expenditure moved J.T. Warlow Davies, minister of Newtown Congregational Church, whose church was one of those renovated, to criticise misplaced generosity as well as miserly giving. He thought that the outlay on new buildings and aesthetic improvements diverted funds from charity and missions.⁵ Bishop Pearson, despite his pessimism about funds for wider works, advocated the subdivision of parishes confident that 'the more the workers the more liberally will each worker be supported',⁶ but Anglican clergy

¹ Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, p.118.

² Presbyterian, 3 June 1882.

³ Pitt Street, Redfern and Newtown Congregational Churches, Chalmers Presbyterian Church were some of the buildings altered and enlarged in the 1880s.

⁴ See Chapter 3.

⁵ J.T. Warlow Davies, 'Church Finance', Independent, 15 June 1881.

⁶ Address, P.S.D.N., 1886, p.15.

frequently charged the laity with parochialism, particularly in connection with finance. Canon White, preaching to the synod of Newcastle in 1886 denounced the tendency to 'Congregationalism' among older parishes which, he asserted, said to the diocese,

We have our own church buildings, our own parochial machinery to provide for, our own clergyman to support, we will do this and do it well; why should we be called upon to do more, and to provide also for the poorer parishes of the diocese? - each parish for itself.¹

Bishop Thomas complained that established parishes retained grants-in-aid toward stipends as long as possible, but when financially independent they isolated themselves withholding their support from funds to subsidise others.² The Anglican diocese of Bathurst faced the same problem of parochialism in attitudes to the Church Society. Parishes spent money on themselves while those in the interior languishes.³ Bishop Marsden observed that little of the vast wealth from stock and wool sales found way 'into the treasury of the Lord',⁴ but it was the

1

Canon White, Sermon, preached to the Synod of Newcastle, 8 June 1886, P.S.D.N., Appendix XI, 1886, p.86: The Archdiaconal Council of Grafton reported in 1886 that 'This marked spirit of Congregationalism, pure and simple, hampers every effort of the Council.' P.S.D.G. & A., 1886, p.41

2

P.S.D.G., 1881, p.13; 1884, pp.4-5.

3

Ruth Teale, 'A Brave New World in the Australian Bush', loc.cit., pp.149-50.

4

Minutes of the Synod of the Diocese of Bathurst (Hereafter M.S.D.B.) 1875, p.7.

treasury of the diocese rather than the parish which wanted for it. Bishop Barry, at his first meeting of the Sydney Church Society, stated that Anglicanism stood for united church action rather than 'Episcopal Congregationalism', and that people and parishes with much wealth had to make up for those with little in the support of church extension and evangelism.¹

Financial support for church extension, however, improved in the middle years of the decade and much of the increased support came through direct giving. Contributions to the Sydney Church Society fell in 1882, but during the first year of Bishop Barry's episcopate collections nearly doubled and remained at a high level in 1885. After 1887, however they began to decrease,² and a collection for the Society's funds was taken at the enthronement of Bishop Smith on 9 October 1890; Dean Cowper placed leaflets in the orders of service which stated that contributions had decreased by £640 from the previous year.³ In 1885, after the synod of Newcastle had heard Bishop Pearson's despairing plea for more money, it decided to establish a Diocesan Church Extension Fund; the Synod pledged itself to raise £1,000 by the

1

Annual Meeting, Church Society, 1884, S.M.H., 26 April 1884.

2

Reports of the Church Society of the Diocese of Sydney, 1880 to 1890.

3

See leaflet in Order of Service, Circulars, no.262, Archives of the Diocese of Sydney; see also Advent Season 1889: The Pressing Needs of the Church Society; *ibid.*, no.232.

end of that year, it appointed a secretary to arrange deputations to the parishes.¹ At the next synod Pearson said that liberal giving to the new fund to the extent of £1,900 had tided the diocese over the crisis; but he added his urgent plea for more self-denial and unity in the diocese.² The total income of the Goulburn Church Society from 1864 to 1905 reached its highest amount in the early 1880s when it was between £10,000 and £12,000, but it declined later in the decade, and was a little under £5,000 in 1890.³ This was due partly to the formation of the diocese of Riverina in 1884, but also to drought and depression.

Several denominations strengthened their programme of church extension through special funds in the 1880s. Catholics raised money early in the decade to have the new St Mary's Cathedral roofed and in use. Archbishop Vaughan wrote numerous personal letters to wealthy Catholics to solicit funds;⁴ liberal Protestants also gave generously to the building of St Mary's and other Catholic causes,⁵ much to the chagrin of Bishop Barker

¹ P.S.D.N., 1885, p.35.

² Address, P.S.D.N., 1886, pp.14, 18-20.

³ Ransome T. Wyatt, The History of The Diocese of Goulburn, Sydney, 1937, pp.112-3.

⁴ P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, p.671.

⁵ See Archbishop Vaughan, Express, 13 May 1882; also F.J., 9 October 1880, 22 September 1888; Express, 15 April 1882.

and other Evangelical Protestants.¹ Vaughan charged admission to the cathedral at its opening and roused the ire of some laymen.² A pew-holder also objected to admission charges to sacred concerts in the cathedral under Cardinal Moran.³ In 1883 Catholics also opened the O'Beirne Catholic Bible Hall for biblical and apologetical lectures. When Moran arrived there was a tacit agreement that he would not seek further funds for the cathedral but concentrate on finances for schools and churches.⁴ However, in 1887 Catholics agreed enthusiastically with W.B. Dalley's proposal to complete the chancel of the cathedral and portion of the central tower as a centenary memorial.⁵ The Freeman's Journal denied that funds for the cathedral would divert finance from Catholic education, and added that St Mary's was more than a place of worship; it was a symbol of Catholicism in the colony which would mark 'the contrast between the sects and the Church'.⁶ When

1

Archbishop Polding to Bishop J.A. Goold, 8 July 1865, cit. H.N. Birt, op.cit., vol.2, p.308; Bishop Barker, S.M.H., 19 November 1875; Record, October 1882; Presbyterian, 31 July 1880.

2

'A Catholic Layman', S.M.H., 25 July 1882; 'Another Catholic Layman', *ibid*, 29 July 1882.

3

'Simon Magus', S.M.H., 23 January 1890.

4

Express, 15 November 1884.

5

P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, p.701.

6

F.J., 4 June 1887.

the completed sanctuary was dedicated in 1890 it acclaimed it as a sign of 'the living force of Catholicism' in New South Wales.¹

Congregationalists in New South Wales opened a Jubilee Fund at their intercolonial conference in May 1883 which marked the jubilee of Congregationalism in the colony and in Australia.² They aimed to raise £25,000 to establish a ministers' retiring fund, to pay off church debts and to establish new causes. Before the fund was launched £13,022 had been subscribed,³ and it soon exceeded its target; by 1885 it had received £30,366 but little was subscribed beyond that.⁴ In 1886, 21 years after their reunion, Presbyterians opened a Majority Fund to assist in building churches and manses. They aimed for £50,000;⁵ at the close of the first year nearly £14,000 was promised and when the fund closed in 1892 promises were for £35,680 with £25,489 subscribed.⁶ Although the fund did not reach its goal it did assist

¹ F.J., 1 February 1890.

² The Congregational Union of England and Wales also opened a Jubilee Fund in 1883 to commemorate the jubilee of the Union.

³ Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, pp.105-28, particularly p.117.

⁴ Advocate, 28 July 1883; S.M.H., 7 August 1885; Congregational Year Book, 1886, p.51.

⁵ C.A. White, *op.cit.*, p.34.

⁶ M.P.G.A., 1887, pp.77-8; 1892, pp.91-2.

the Church Extension Fund which had a continual deficit of over £2,000.¹ To celebrate their jubilee in the colony the Baptist Churches also opened a Jubilee Home Mission Fund in 1886 with a modest target of £5,000.² There were promises of £2,205 at the jubilee meeting on 16 September 1886 but enthusiasm dwindled; many failed to fulfil their promises and in 1889 the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union decided that promises made to the Jubilee Fund were no longer binding.³

Anglicans and Wesleyans both launched special appeals at the centenary of the colony. Wesleyans hoped, through their Centennial Thanksgiving Fund to raise £50,000 for a theological institution, a site for a girls college, church extension in the country and mission work in the city, and to liquidate trust debts.⁴ £10,697 was promised at the opening of the appeal in January 1888; the fund remained open for several years but it was never fully subscribed.⁵

Anglicans established the Centennial Church Extension Fund for the Province of New South Wales with the aim

¹ C.A. White, op.cit., pp.36, 38, 41.

² Baptist, September 1886; A.C. Prior, op.cit., p.121.

³ A.C. Prior, op.cit., pp.122-3.

⁴ M.W.C., 1888, pp.80-2.

⁵ J. Colwell, Illustrated History of Methodism, Sydney, 1904, pp.454-5; J. Colwell, A Century in the Pacific, Sydney, 1914, p.260.

of raising £200,000; the fund received £4,950 in unsolicited donations almost immediately,¹ but at the synod of Sydney in 1888 Bishop Barry expressed dissatisfaction with its progress: he stated that contributions came from a few wealthy Anglicans who represented about one per cent of the denomination. A large number of small donations were yet to come and Barry appealed to Anglicans to rise above party-spirit and parochialism in support of the fund, for it was, he said, the Church's fund, not his.² Party-spirit was running high at the time; in 1887 Barry had fallen foul of many Evangelicals and some Anglo-Catholics over a new reredos in St Andrew's Cathedral.³ By February 1889 £38,515 were promised and the fund had received £15,006 within the diocese of Sydney. The other dioceses had promised £23,800; almost half this amount was promised by the diocese of Newcastle. The total promises for the Province were £62,315.⁴ But during the first year the

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Circular no.157, Archives of the Diocese of Sydney.

2

Address, P.S.D.S., 1888, pp.31-2.

3

Evangelicals objected to the centre panel depicting the Crucifixion. Barry maintained at the synod in 1887 that it was proper and legal, but agreed in deference to the strong feeling against it to substitute a panel representing the transfiguration if the cost were donated. Evangelical laymen, led by W.J. Foster promptly provided the finance, but Anglo-Catholics thought Barry should not have given in. P.S.D.S., 1887, pp.67, 77-8, 81.

4

First Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Centennial Church Extension Fund, Diocese of Sydney, 1889, P.S.D.S., 1889, Appendix XIX, pp.127-138.

only other contributions were £221 from the diocese of Newcastle and £160 from the diocese of Riverina. The Diocesan Council of Grafton and Armidale reported that contributions did come up to expectations in that diocese,¹ and Bishop Camidge, who complained of parochial niggardliness toward diocesan funds, told the synod of Bathurst in 1890 that the diocese had lost considerably by the provincial arrangement. He was sure that they would have raised more money had the Centennial Fund been made diocesan and apologised for consenting to a provincial scheme.² In 1889 the Board of the Centennial Fund decided that each diocese should administer the amounts contributed and promised within it. By 1890 the diocese of Sydney had contributed £20,614 and £41,324 had been promised.³ The fund fell considerably short of its target; subscriptions declined in the 1890s from £4,873 in 1890 to £29 in 1896. The total amount subscribed by 1897 was £29,383.⁴ The fund was invested and its income used to subsidise stipends, new church buildings and home mission work, particularly within the diocese of Sydney.

1

P.S.D.G. & A., 1889, pp.36-7.

2

Address, M.S.D.B., 1890, pp.17-8; for Camidge's comment on parochialism see Address, M.S.D.B., 1889, p.13.

3

Report, P.S.D.S., 1890, Appendix XIX, pp.110-11.

4

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure from the Inception of the Fund to June 30, 1897. The Centennial Fund Annual Report, Year Ending June 30th 1897, Sydney 1897, pp.16-7.

Though the rate of giving to denominational funds was disappointing to bishops and church leaders, and while parishes or churches spent readily on local objectives, lack of finance was not always due to meanness or parochialism, though ministers found this a ready explanation. Lack of organisation was sometimes the cause; funds increased when organising secretaries were employed and where deputations were made to parishes. Nevertheless, party-feeling, particularly among Anglicans occasionally stopped the flow of finance to diocesan funds. St Mary's, West Maitland, had some wealthy members in its parish; but it was a stronghold of Evangelicalism in the diocese of Newcastle. In 1890 it declined, for spurious reasons, to contribute to the diocesan funds and a member of the Church Defence Association circulated pamphlets calling on Anglicans to disregard the directions of the Newcastle synod.¹ Nevertheless, there was considerable generosity and goodwill to be tapped, and though the response might not always reach the appointed goals, it sometimes exceeded the target. But where there was a gap other fund-raising activities were needed. Clergy understandably objected to these activities both because they trivialised the Church and absorbed much of the time laymen and women could give to church work as well as invading the time of the clergy. They longed to see the Church supported entirely by the free and generous giving of its members, and to be able to provide religious facilities without

1

P.S.D.N., 1890, pp.17-18, Report of the Diocesan Council..., 1889-90, Appendix I, *ibid.*, p.51.

too much anxiety or effort over finance. But the churches owed more than part of their finances to these other fund-raising activities. Though they might have alienated some people, they did much to promote the social coherence of local congregations. Warlow Davies, when supporting the Congregational Jubilee Fund, found it necessary to refute the belief that 'churches would not be kept alive unless they were compelled to work to pay off debts': it would be a very sickly church which could find no work to do when free of debt.¹

Archbishop Vaughan, however, considered that the loss of state aid had resulted in 'the salvation of the Catholic religion' in the colony; he looked for added vigour to the Catholic cause through the financial sacrifice and efforts which would follow.² Future events confirmed his opinion. Warlow Davies looked for the highest quality of Christian devotion and church life, but fund-raising was a more acceptable form of work than evangelism and visitation in which the clergy wished the laity would assist. Organisers of fund-raising activities could feel that they were doing something for the Church; ministers asked continually for more money for many objects and the fund-raisers did their best to provide it.

1

Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, pp.108-9.

2

R.B. Vaughan, Occasional Addresses Delivered in New South Wales, Sydney, 1881, p.54; R.B. Vaughan to J.G. O'Connor, 21 July, 1880, Manuscripts, A030, Mitchell Library.

There was sufficient money to support vigorous programmes of church extension in most denominations. Apart from union churches, of which the number is not known, there were about 1,250 church buildings in 1880 and about 1,950 in 1890, an increase of 700 compared with 434 in the 1870s and 294 in the 1890s.¹ Services were also held in schoolhouses, private dwellings and other places. These details were not supplied in 1880; the returns in 1890 listed 651 schoolhouses and 2,374 other buildings used for worship.²

Churches in the Anglican diocese of Sydney increased from 135 in 1880 to 192 in 1890, an increase of 57, of which 39 were in the metropolitan area. There was an

1

These figures are approximate only. The Statistical Register lists 907 churches in 1870, 1,341 in 1880, 2,125 in 1890 and 2,419 in 1900. However, the figures in the Statistical Register are, in many cases inaccurate when compared with denominational sources. I have spent much time trying to calculate an accurate figure but have found it impossible to arrive at anything more than a very approximate estimate based on figures from denominational sources, from the Statistical Register where other figures are not available, and a few informed guesses. Some union churches may have been included in denominational returns, but I have found no estimate of the number of union churches in New South Wales and we have no way of telling how many churches may have included the same union church in their returns. I have set out figures from the Statistical Register, those obtained from denominational sources and other estimates in Appendix VI.

2

Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1890, pp.383-5.

increase of approximately 111 new churches in the country dioceses.¹ Church buildings in the Catholic archdiocese of Sydney increased from 117 in 1880 to 140 in 1890, and 19 of the new churches were in the metropolis. Church buildings increased by about 75 in the country dioceses.²

The Presbyterian Church expanded remarkably during the decade. In 1880 it had 70 charges including 113 churches and 328 preaching centres; in 1890 there were 141 charges with 773 preaching centres and about 250 church buildings.³ Although Presbyterians doubled the number of their causes in the city their strength remained in the country. Wesleyan Methodist churches increased from 287 in 1880 to 387 in 1890, and of the 100 additional churches 16 were in the metropolitan area. Their preaching centres, almost all in the country, rose from 374 to 433.⁴ There were 70 churches of Other Methodist denominations, principally Primitive Methodists, in 1880 and 105 in 1890. Roughly three-quarters were in the country, and Bible Christians built 11 of the new

1

See Appendix VI and notes for an explanation of these figures.

2

See Appendix VI and notes.

3

General Statistics, 1880, Part I, M.P.G.A., 1880, pp.55-61; Report of Committee on Statistics, 1880, *ibid.*, 1880, p.69; Statistical Returns, 1890, Part I, *ibid.*, 1891, pp.114-21. See also Appendix VI and notes.

4

General Returns, 1880, 1890, M.W.C., 1881, Appendix C.1; 1891, Appendix D. pp.136-41.

churches.¹ Congregationalists built 17 new churches giving them 55 in 1890, with 35 in Sydney and suburbs. In 1880 they had 31 preaching stations, but there were only 16 in 1890.² The Baptist Union increased its churches from 13 in 1880 to 33 in 1890, strengthening its position in the city as well as the country.³ Apart from the church extension of the principal denominations, the Salvation Army, which commenced its operations in December 1882, had 99 meeting places, 25 in the city and 74 in the country. The number of church buildings of other denominations and sects rose from around 32 in 1880 to 67 in 1890.⁴ As a result of all this church extension there was accommodation for about 40 per cent of the population in 1890 compared with 29 per cent in 1880. In the metropolitan area there was room for 30 per cent of the respective population in 1880, and for 37 per cent in 1890; in the country there was provision for 29 per cent in 1880 and 42 per cent in 1890.⁵ Churchmen would have liked to provide even

1 Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1880, p.16; 1890, pp.384-5.

2 Congregational Year Book, 1881, p.106; 1891, p.288.

3 See Appendix VI and notes.

4 Statistical Register, 1880, pp.16-7; 1890, pp.383-5.

5 These figures are based on the sittings listed in the Statistical Register for 1880 and 1890 measured against the metropolitan and rural populations as returned in the censuses of 1881 and 1891. The figures are approximate only and are probably inflated in much the same proportion as the number of churches. Nevertheless, they do indicate some improvement in the religious provision for the colony.

more church accommodation, but there was ample room for the churchgoing population.

Ministerial supply was also an important part of church extension; the Church Societies and other denominational sustentation and extension funds subsidised stipends in new causes and assisted in bringing ministers to the colony from Britain. Anglicans had Moore Theological College, established in 1856, and St Paul's College affiliated to the University of Sydney. Bishop Matthew Quinn founded St Charles Borromeo Seminary at Bathurst in 1881.¹ Cardinal Moran opened St Patrick's Seminary at Manly in 1888. Presbyterians had a theological faculty in St Andrew's College at the University of Sydney from 1873.² Wesleyans trained students for their ministry at Newington College, a private school of the denomination at Parramatta. In 1880 Newington moved to Stanmore and in 1887 the conference appointed its head J.H. Fletcher principal of a new theological institution attached to Newington.³ Congregationalists had established Camden College in 1864.⁴ Baptists made an unsuccessful attempt to establish

1

P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, p.386-7.

2

C.A. White, *op.cit.*, p.197.

3

M.W.C., 1887, p.56; S.M.H., 3 February 1887.

4

John Garrett and L.W. Farr, Camden College: A Centenary History, Sydney, 1964: Chapter 6, contributed by Professor K.J. Cable, contains a brief history of 'Training for the Ministry in the Mid-Nineteenth Century'.

a theological college in the 1870s, and in the 1880s arranged to have Baptist candidates trained at Camden College, but only one student entered Camden from their ranks. From 1890 until the establishment of the Baptist Theological College in 1915 their students trained in Victoria.¹ None of these institutions received enough students to meet the growing demands for ministerial leadership in the colony and every denomination was dependent on supply from Britain despite efforts to recruit more native sons for the church. Dean Cowper pleaded constantly for more recruits from colonial families and warned that England would not be an unfailing supply of clergy. He attributed the dearth of candidates to more attractive prospects in other professions and to theological unsettlement; in 1883 he told the synod of Sydney that one student was barred from training for want of finance, and pleaded for scholarships to sustain candidates.² Roughly half the clergy of the diocese of Sydney in the 1880s were trained in the colony, mostly at Moore College.³ Few of the Catholic clergy in the

1

A.C. Prior, op.cit., pp.226-32.

2

Addresses, P.S.D.S., 1881, p.23-4, 1882, pt. II, p.13; 1883, pp.21-2. Bishop Pearson's suggestion of endowments by families to encourage the sons to enter the ministry has been mentioned earlier. For other comments see Bishop Pearson, Address, P.S.D.N., 1886, pp.22-5, Bishop Barry, Address, P.S.D.S., 1885, pp.26-7; Bishop Camidge, Address, M.S.D.B., 1888, pp.12-13.

3

Based on an analysis of the list of clergy summonsed to the Synods in 1880 and 1890 and information provided in the Sydney Diocesan Directory, 1881 and 1893 (the holdings of the Directories are incomplete). Miss Ruth Teale shows that the majority of the clergy who passed through the diocese of Bathurst from 1870 to 1888 were colonial born. Ruth Teale, 'By Hook and By Crook', p.95.

colony were Australian born or other than Irish. By 1890 all Hallows Seminary, Ireland, was supplying half the clergy for Australia.¹ Bishop Torreggiani brought a few Italian Capuchins with him to the diocese of Armidale in 1879, but James Murray, Bishop of Maitland, boasted at the consecration of Dr Dunne to Brisbane that they could look to no other place but 'Catholic Ireland' for the supply of clergy.² Archbishop Moran, however, in one of his first pastorals, told of his plans for the seminary at Manly and appealed for young Australians to enter the priesthood;³ in 1885 he stated that no church was 'on a permanent footing until it enlists clergy from among the ranks of its own faithful children'.⁴ But Ireland remained the main source for clergy for some years to come.⁵

Other denominations faced the same difficulty in recruiting clergy. The Presbyterian said in 1882 that the best ministers were the 'sons of the soil',⁶ but few

1

John N. Molony, op.cit., pp.18-9.

2

Express, 1 July, 1882.

3

P.F. Moran, Pastoral Letter...to the Clergy and Faithful of the Archdiocese on the Festival of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., Sydney, [1884].

4

P.F. Moran, Pastoral Letter...to the Clergy of the Archdiocese, 1885, Sydney, [1885].

5

Dr Patrick O'Farrell states that by 1914 St Patrick's Seminary had produced 160 priests out of an Australian total of 800, the rest being nearly all Irish. Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, Sydney, 1968, p.244.

6

Presbyterian, 25 November 1882; see also J.G. Fraser, Address, Congregational Year Book, 1890, pp.69-71.

of them professed the vocation. Like the Anglicans, Nonconformists blamed materialism and worldliness, the attractiveness of other occupations, the financial insecurity of the ministry, the want of love of learning or early marriages.¹ But they found that appeals for native sons were less hopeful than appeals to the 'mother country'. In 1877 the Presbyterian Church Extension Committee prepared a careful appeal to the General Presbyterian Council in Edinburgh for more ministers.² During the 1880s a steady supply came from Britain; 75 came from Scotland and Northern Ireland, 61 from England and Wales, other places outside the colony or from other denominations and only seven were trained in the colony.³ In 1886 the Church Extension Fund was too poor to provide fares for migrating ministers, but the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church sent some ministers to the colony at their own expense.⁴ In 1890 the Church Extension Committee confessed that the 'mother

1

Presbyterian, 13 November 1880; Report, Church Extension Committee, 1883, M.P.G.A., 1884, p.40; W.J. Green, 'Our Need of Ministers', Independent, 15 January 1881; Independent, 15 September 1884; Australian Christian World (hereafter A.C.W.), 22 October 1886.

2

The Presbyterian Church of New South Wales: A Paper Prepared by the Church Extension Committee for the General Presbyterian Council to be Held in Edinburgh, July 1877, Sydney 1877.

3

From the lists in James Cameron, op.cit., pp.406-12 and C.A. White, op.cit., pp.552-92.

4

Presbyterian, 12 March 1887.

country' was still the main source of supply for ministers.¹ But during the 1890s the number of native ministers ordained doubled and the supply from Scotland and Ireland fell by half.² Wesleyans asked the British Conference to send them 12 ministers in 1882 and commissioned the Rev. F. Tait to help select suitable candidates during his visit to Britain.³ But in 1884 the British Conference refused requests from New South Wales and South Australia due to the need in England; New South Wales had asked for eight.⁴ The conference was thrown more on its own resources; the number of native-born ministers increased from slightly more than a quarter in 1880 to a third in 1890.⁵ Congregationalists suffered a dearth of candidates during the 1880s. Eight of the 47 ordained Congregational ministers in 1880 were

¹ M.P.G.A., 1890, pp.49-52.

² James Cameron, *op.cit.*, pp.402-12; C.A. White, *op.cit.*, pp.552-92; see also J.D. Bollen, 'The Protestant Churches and the Social Reform Movement in New South Wales, 1890 to 1910', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1965, p.391.

³ M.W.C., 1882, p.65-6.

⁴ M.W.C., 1884, p.61; Advocate, 4 October 1884.

⁵ 1880, 25 out of 94; 1890, 46 out of 138. Compiled from stationing lists, 1880 and 1890, excluding Queensland, and G. Kingston Daws, Methodist Ministerial Index for Australasia, Melbourne, 1962, pp.180-207. Renate Howe found that native born ministers in Victoria increased to outnumber those from Britain in the 1880s. Renate Howe, *op.cit.*, p.138.

trained at Camden College; in 1890 there were only ten among 64 ordained ministers.¹ This denomination drew heavily on Britain for ministerial supply in the 1880s. The Congregational Church Extension Society appealed to the Colonial Missionary Society² in London for four ministers in 1882. J.R. Fairfax supported the appeal on his visit to Britain in 1881 to 1882. W.S. Fielden, secretary of the Colonial Missionary Society, informed W.J. Green in Sydney that able young men were unwilling to leave England; he said there were dozens whom he could send, some of them unmarried, but neither he nor Fairfax considered them suitable. Fielden also pointed out to Green that South Australia did not ask for assistance toward passages.³ But after the Jubilee Fund was opened in 1883 New South Wales no longer needed to ask for contributions toward fares.⁴ Fielden also suggested that Camden College should train men particularly for country churches,⁵ but other denominations also found it difficult to find Australian ministers who would supply

1

Congregational Year Book, 1880, pp.88-91, 1890, pp.180-4.

2

Founded in 1836 to supply ministers to Congregational Churches in the colonies

3

W.S. Fielden to W.J. Green, 17 May 1883, 28 August, 1883, Correspondence of the Church Extension Society, Congregational Union Papers, Mitchell Library.

4

Report, Church Extension Society, 1884, Congregational Year Book, 1885, p.76.

5

W.S. Fielden to W.J. Green, 14 December 1882.

the interior. They had to rely on recruits from England, catechists or unordained home missionaries.¹ Most of the Congregational ministers who were new to the colony in the 1880s came from England and Scotland.² Baptists also were dependent upon supply from England for most of the nineteenth century.³ Despite the difficulties in obtaining ministers the ratio of clergy to the population improved slightly but not significantly in the 1880s. There were 671 clergy in the colony, or one to every 1,115 persons in 1880. But Anglicans were grossly undersupplied with one to 1,615 adherents; Catholics had one to 1,141, Presbyterians one to 788, Wesleyans one to 613 and Other Methodists one to 487; Congregationalists and Baptists were best supplied with one to 341 and 302 respectively. By 1890 there were 1,063 clergymen, or one to every 1,055 persons and around a third of these were in the metropolis. The four larger denominations all improved the ratio of clergy to adherents; in 1890 Anglicans were one to 1,552, Catholics one to 1,021 Presbyterians one to 701, and Wesleyans one to 600. But the ratio of adherents to ministers in the smaller churches increased in the 1880s, particularly among 'Other Methodists' who had one

1

J. Fraser, Articles in Presbyterian, 23 September 1882, 14 October 1882, 11 November 1882; J.S. Laing, Moderator's Address, 1884; Presbyterian, 8 March 1884; Bishop Stanton, Address, P.S.D.N., 1891, p.12.

2

The Scottish Congregational Union was losing ministers to England and the colonies in the 1880s. See Independent, 14 May 1881.

3

A.C. Prior, op.cit., p.226.

minister to 706 adherents in 1890; Congregationalists with one to 389 and Baptists with one to 397, however, were still the best supplied with ministers in 1890. The general position had improved since Church extension in the 1880s had kept ahead of the increase in the population, notwithstanding difficulties in obtaining finance and ministers. Churches could accommodate more of the population in 1890 than in 1880, and the ratio of ministers to people was slightly improved. But the churches did not rely on these means alone to increase their support. They organised evangelistic missions to convert the ungodly outside the churches and to awaken the apathetic within them.

Evangelistic Missions.

Protestant churchmen in the 1880s were rarely satisfied with the spiritual life of the churches. Attendances at weeknight prayer meetings and class meetings were poor and church discipline was weakening rather than strengthening. Churchmen almost universally believed a revival was needed to rekindle the spirit of the people, but some doubted whether a revival could be engineered by men. Warlow Davies disparaged artificial means but confessed that the churches withered 'for lack of gracious showers'. 'Man's extremity is God's opportunity', he told the Congregational Union in 1881. He looked for a commercial depression rather than an organised campaign to revive religion in the colony.¹

1

J.T. Warlow Davies, 'The State of the Colony in Regard to Religion', Congregational Year Book, 1882, p.50.

There were churchmen in other denominations who also doubted the propriety of evangelistic campaigns and who objected to sensational methods.¹ The majority, however, thought that the campaigns were desirable and necessary. Canon Soares argued for eight-day parochial missions at a clerical conference at Goulburn in 1881; had the Anglican Church done the work of the evangelist, he asserted, there would have been no Methodist Church or Salvation Army.² As with church extension denominational rivalry was a powerful motive and sufficient to convince many who might otherwise have wavered in their support of revivalism. Although some churchmen affected to despise the sensational methods of the Salvation Army, their evangelistic activity was stimulated by it.³ The three years after the Army commenced its work in 1883 witnessed the most organised evangelism by the denominations. But the churches had engaged in evangelistic activity before the Army came to the colony.

1

Presbyterian, 15, 22 May 1886; W. Newell, ibid, 5 June 1886; John Auld, 'Special Evangelistic Missions', ibid. 12, 26 June 1886. Richard Sellors at Wesleyan Conference, S.M.H., 19 January 1887. See also Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Adelaide, 1887, pp.48-9.

2

Canon [A.D.] Soares, 'Parochial Missions', Questions of the Day: A Series of Papers...read at a Clerical Conference held at Bishopsthorpe, Goulburn, N.S.W., 5, 6, and 7 October 1881, Sydney, 1882, p.55.

3

For further reference to criticism of the Salvation Army see Chapter 3.

The Anglicans conducted a series of eight-day missions in parishes in Sydney in 1880. They had held similar missions six years earlier.¹ In 1885 Bishop Barry initiated another series of eight-day missions in the diocese; city churches conducted simultaneous missions in June and suburban churches in September and later.² In July Barry told the synod that the missions had been tokens of spiritual progress.³ In 1886 Barry licensed Thomas Wales, formerly of the Evangelisation Society in England, as an evangelist in Pyrmont and Ultimo.⁴ Anglicans also conducted some open-air missions in the city, and there was an attempt to establish the Church Army in Sydney.⁵

Catholic religious orders conducted missions periodically in parishes.⁶ The hierarchy at the Plenary Council in 1885 commended these missions and visits from 'extraordinary confessors' to restore those who might have been away long from penance and communion and found it difficult to return through confession to the local

1

Record, July 1880, October, 1880.

2

Pastoral Letter on Special Missions, S.M.H., 20 April 1885; S.M.H., 15 September 1885; see also Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 13 June 1885, 14 November 1885.

3

Address, P.S.D.S., 1885, pp.19-20.

4

A.C.W., 28 May 1886.

5

See Chapter 3.

6

Carmelites, D.T., 19, 26 May 1884; Redemptorists, D.T., 5 May 1884; Vincentians, S.M.H., 21 March 1887.

priest.¹ The Catholic diocesan synod of Sydney in 1891 decreed that missions conducted by approved religious clergy should be held every alternate year in city parishes and triennially in country districts.² Catholic missions aimed more specifically to renew faith in indifferent Catholics rather than to convert non-Catholics, but the results of Protestant missions were little different in effect.

Presbyterians had conducted special missions for some years,³ but they intensified their efforts in the 1880s. At the assembly in March 1884 the Committee on Religion and Morals recommended the appointment of evangelistic deputies to conduct missions in country districts. The assembly appointed four ministers, John Walker, David Allan, T.E. Clouston and Andrew Gardiner, and arranged for missions in the presbyteries of Bathurst and Hunter.⁴ At the next assembly the deputies reported on their missions but spoke more of spiritual stimulus to the congregations they had visited rather than of new converts.⁵ They conducted informal services and used Sankey's hymns instead of the Scottish Psalter. One evangelist, David

1 Pastoral, Plenary Council, p.4.

2 Decrees of the Diocesan Synod of Sydney, 1891, Decree XXXII.

3 See M.P.G.A., 1869, p.18; 1874, p.19.

4 M.P.G.A., 1884, pp.27, 32; Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1883, *ibid.*, 1884, p.48.

5 Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1884, *ibid.*, 1885, pp.46-7.

Smith, claimed that he spoke directly to the people 'in colloquial Saxon-English' and from the floor of the church rather than the lofty pulpits which made informality too difficult.¹ In 1887, however, the Evangelistic Deputies Fund was insolvent and some of the Presbytery of Sydney had criticised the missions severely.² Nevertheless, the assembly continued to recommend that eight-day missions should be held annually,³ and some ministers acted as visiting evangelists in churches which desired missions. John McNeil,⁴ who came to Sydney from South Australia in 1885, became convenor of the Religion and Morals Committee and gave considerable time to evangelism. He took extended leave from his parish at Waverley in 1887-8 to conduct missions but left for Victoria after three years in the colony.⁵ In 1889 the committee reported that not one charge had responded to its offer to help in conducting evangelistic services, though it

1

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1885, *ibid.*, 1886, pp.49-50. Smith was a Deputy in 1885.

2

Presbyterian, 15 May 1886.

3

M.P.G.A., 1887, p.23, 1888, p.27.

4

John McNeil is not to be confused with John McNeill, 'the Scottish Spurgeon' who conducted an evangelistic campaign in Sydney in 1894; see C.A. White, *op.cit.*, p.48; there is a description of 'the Scottish Spurgeon' in Sydney in J.F. Hogan, The Sister Dominions: through Canada to Australia by the New Imperial Highway, Sydney, 1896, pp.135-6.

5

C.A. White, *op.cit.*, pp.37-8, 561.

noted that some churches had held missions.¹ Despite discouragements the assembly continued to sponsor missions and in 1893 the committee reported that 1892 was 'a year of remarkable Evangelistic activity', but the depression curtailed the use of professional evangelists.²

Wesleyan Methodists believed theirs was 'a revival church' and each year the conference appointed a week of prayer for revival and special evangelistic services.³ Considerable organisation went into some of these special missions. J.S. Austin conducted missions in every circuit in which he was stationed. At Singleton in 1884 there was a week of preparation; church-workers distributed circulars throughout the town; there were prayer meetings and Friday was a day of prayer and fasting. On the Sunday night Austin led a church procession with a band through the town and attracted some non-churchgoers, several of whom, he said, were converted. But most of the conversions he recorded were of children.⁴ Austin found it harder to organise missions at Windsor, but at Paddington in 1889 he ran another spectacular mission; he and his people paraded through the suburb at night

1

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1888, M.P.G.A., 1889, p.52.

2

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1892, M.P.G.A., 1893, pp.65-6; Report, 1893, *ibid.*, 1894, p.71.

3

M.W.C., 1880, pp.60-61; 1890, p.110.

4

J.S. Austin, *op.cit.*, pp.281-2, 289-90, 293-4.

carrying the illuminated sign, 'Paddington for Christ'.¹ Many children and a few adults were converted at this mission. Austin, however, was strongly attached to the old traditions of Methodism. Some Wesleyans deplored the methods of the Salvation Army which had influenced Austin.²

In 1880 the conference rejected a proposal that it should appoint an evangelist,³ but the demand persisted, and in 1885 the conference set aside one of its younger ministers, J.A. Bowring, as conference evangelist.⁴ For two years he conducted missions among the churches which, if they sparked off no great revival, did kindle 'a gracious awakening'. He persuaded 'encouraging numbers' to seek salvation and more to sign the pledge.⁵ But the appointment lapsed in 1887 when the conference sent Bowring to the York Street Church which, under the name of the Central Methodist Mission, had already established itself as an evangelistic centre.⁶

1

Ibid., p.309-10.

2

See remarks of Richard Sellors, R. Caldwell, retiring Presidents of Conference, 1887, 1890, S.M.H., 19 January 1887, 23 January 1890.

3

S.M.H., 2 February 1880.

4

M.W.C., 1885, pp.11, 75.

5

A.C.W., 8, 15, 22 January 1886; see also Bowring's reports to conference; S.M.H., 4 February 1886, 7 February 1887.

6

See Chapter 3.

But Methodists, who considered it their mission 'to spread Scriptural Holiness through the land',¹ also conducted special campaigns to revive religion among churchgoers and to promote their growth in holiness. Some Wesleyan ministers feared that many Methodists had not experienced the 'second blessing' through the experience of 'entire sanctification'. J.A. Nolan, President of the Conference in 1885, said that the ordinary church member had been converted once

and since then, he has always been acknowledged to be a Christian man. His moral and religious character stands unimpeached. He attends the Sunday, and, perhaps, even the week-night services, with regularity. Nor is he an idler in the Church....But when you come to the matter of his religious experience, ah! then is the rub. Being an honest Christian man, he will be himself the first to tell you that his religion does not give him much delight. The motive of his religious life is a sense of duty rather than an impulse of love.²

Three American evangelists, the Rev. J. Inskip, his wife and the Rev. W. Gardiner had conducted a holiness mission in the York Street Church in May 1881; J.S. Austin thought it was 'another Pentecost'.³ However, it was W.G. Taylor who established the holiness convention in Sydney during his first ministry at York Street.

1

M.W.C., 1880, p.60.

2

Proceedings of the United Methodist Conference for the Spread of Scriptural Holiness (hereafter, Proceedings, Methodist Holiness Convention), Sydney, 1886, p.8.

3

J.S. Austin, op.cit., p.271-2.

Influenced by the holiness conventions of Canadian Methodism and a convention at Southport, England, in June 1885, he organised a holiness convention at York Street that year.¹ He arranged a camp meeting at Lane Cove on 9 November 1885 and invited the Primitive Methodists and United Methodist Free Churches as well as Wesleyans. About 1,200 attended and from this camp meeting resulted the plans for a holiness convention from 9 to 10 December.² The convention was well attended; there were addresses and testimonies from those who had experienced entire sanctification. During the meetings some came forward to seek pardon and purity and others professed to 'rest on Christ for full salvation'.³ For many it meant the recapture of old Methodism, and strengthened the conviction of those Methodists who believed that the prosperity of the church lay, not in change and new methods, but in greater faithfulness to the old ways. M. Maddern, a Wesleyan minister prophesied afterwards that

if every church would only take for its motto in this year of our Lord, 1886, "Holiness unto the Lord", it would take an immense stride toward the millenium glory of Christ's reign in the earth.⁴

¹ Proceedings, Methodist Holiness Convention, 1885, pp.3, 75.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.38.

⁴ A.C.W., 8 January 1886.

The United Methodist Holiness Association was formed and it published Glad Tidings which Maddern edited; it had a circulation of 15,000 throughout Australia.¹ The Association continued to hold holiness conventions.²

Camp meetings, American in origin, were a popular form of revivalism among Methodists. Primitive Methodists, who had introduced them to English Methodism, held them during their annual meetings,³ and Wesleyans promoted them during the 1880s. J.E. Carruthers, a native-born minister and brother of J.H. Carruthers, Premier of New South Wales 1904-7, inaugurated a camp meeting on the St Leonard's Reserve on Good Friday 1884. He had an American lady evangelist to address the meeting.⁴ Carruthers also established an annual camp meeting on Good Friday at Uralla during his ministry at Armidale.⁵ On Anniversary Day 1885 the Wesleyan Conference organised a 'Grand Conference Camp Meeting' on the Sydney Domain. It was a picnic day for Methodist families as well as an attempt to convert sinners.⁶

¹ Advocate, 5 May 1888.

² See, Annual Meeting United Methodist Holiness Association, 1888, S.M.H., 1 May 1888; Advocate, 5 May 1888; Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 2 November 1889.

³ See D.T., 6 January 1880; *ibid.*, 17 February 1885; *ibid.*, 13 February 1889.

⁴ Advocate, 19 April 1884.

⁵ J.E. Carruthers, Memories of an Australian Ministry, p.99.

⁶ Advocate, 3 January 1885, 31 January 1885, Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 24 January 1885.

There were a few conversions claimed at most camp meetings. The Advocate in 1889 thought that Wesleyans could still make better use of the camp meeting from which Methodism in America and Britain had derived great advantage.¹ That year Methodists held a 'Field Day' on the Domain on the Prince of Wales' birthday. Two hundred marched from York Street behind the Central Methodist Mission Band to a marquee pitched near St Mary's Cathedral. They had large numbers at their public meetings and concluded with services at night at York Street.² Baptists also conducted camp meetings. On Good Friday 1889 they held a camp meeting at Plattsburg (Wallsend), 'the stronghold of Methodism', and claimed that neither Methodists nor the Salvation Army had conducted a more impressive meeting.³

But the Baptist Union did not organise evangelistic campaigns until late in the 1880s. Up to 1885 there was the Baptist Evangelist Society which employed several evangelists 'to preach the Gospel and visit the scattered Baptists throughout the colony'; in 1885 this society merged with the Home Mission Society.⁴ At their annual meeting in 1888, however, Baptists lamented that they were lagging behind other denominations in evangelistic work, and that their membership was not increasing.

¹ Advocate, 13 April 1889.

² S.M.H., 11 November 1889.

³ Baptist, 1 May 1889.

⁴ A.C. Prior, op.cit., pp.242-3.

sufficiently; they decided to raise money to engage an evangelist.¹ Donations came in slowly, and, as they could make no appointment in 1889, the Union recommended that city ministers should be released to conduct missions in country churches.² In 1890 the denomination appointed Charles Boyall its evangelist;³ in 1891 Boyall became pastor of a church and only engaged in part-time evangelistic work.⁴ But in 1889 A.J. Clark, who had come from Melbourne in 1887 to the pastoral charge of the Baptist Tabernacle, Burton Street, Woolloomooloo, established a Central Evangelistic Mission on similar lines to the Central Methodist Mission in York Street.⁵

Congregationalists did not organise evangelistic campaigns through the Union in the 1880s. Some agreed with Warlow Davies that men could not engineer a revival and others were critical of the vulgarity of some evangelism.⁶ But they were hardly more divided over the merits of missions than were Presbyterian ministers, and some Congregationalists strongly advocated evangelistic work. S. Savage, minister of Petersham Congregational

¹ Baptist, October 1888.

² Baptist, February 1889, August 1889, October 1889.

³ Ibid., July 1890, September 1890.

⁴ A.C. Prior, *op.cit.*, p.243.

⁵ See Chapter 3.

⁶ See discussion at Assembly 1882, Congregational Year Book, 1883, pp.66-7; and Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Adelaide, 1887, pp.48-9.

Church, told Congregationalists in 1880 that every church was an evangelising agency, and that Congregationalists had the same responsibility as other churches to reach the masses living in neglect of religion.¹ S. Bryant of Woollahra Congregational Church advocated more persistent evangelistic activity in 1882,² and in 1884 James Hill, minister of Bourke Street Church and newly arrived from Scotland, called for a more aggressive evangelistic policy. Though liberal in theology, Hill thought too much was made of the intellectual difficulties over faith, and while it was the churches task 'to keep alive the religious life of men', he feared that they were seeking to attract people by becoming less religious. To show the world that Christianity could be offensive as well as defensive in its warfare, he advocated open-air preaching and Sunday afternoon missions, but he did not persuade the Congregational Union to organise any evangelistic work.³ In 1889, at a discussion of the spiritual life of the churches, Dr Thomas Roseby⁴ recommended spiritual

1

Chairman's Address, 1880, Congregational Year Book, 1881, p.55.

2

S. Bryant, 'The Promotion of Spiritual Life and Activity,' Congregational Year Book, 1883, pp.87-91.

3

J. Hill, 'Evangelistic Enterprise', Congregational Year Book, 1885, pp.99-106.

4

Thomas Roseby (1844-1918), F.R.A.S., was a minister of advanced liberal views on theological and socio-economic questions as well as an amateur astronomer and botanist. Born and educated in New South Wales he ministered in New Zealand 1872-1885, and at Ballarat 1885-1888, then at Marrickville Congregational Church. See Chapters 4 and 5.

conferences associated with local evangelistic services.¹ In 1890 the Congregational Union appointed the first Sunday in March 1891 as a day of prayer 'for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit' and called for special mission services to secure 'the fuller consecration of the people of God, and the conversion of the undecided'.² But while the Union appointed no special evangelist in the 1880s Pitt Street Congregational Church supported a mission church in Sussex Street.³ Some Congregational churches held eight or ten-day missions;⁴ they also supported the interdenominational missions which were held during the decade.

Most of the local missions were conducted by particular denominations but members and ministers of other churches usually attended the services.⁵ There were also occasional interdenominational missions. J.S. Austin began such a mission during his ministry at Windsor, 1885-87, in cooperation with the Anglican and Congregational ministers; these missions continued after his removal from Windsor.⁶ Presbyterians and

¹ Independent, 15 April 1889.

² S.M.H., 29 October 1880.

³ See Chapter 3.

⁴ Independent, 15 May 1885.

⁵ See Presbyterian comments on the Inskip Holiness Mission, Presbyterian, 28 May, 1881; 'X' ibid., 11 June 1881; see also T.J. Curtis, 'Fourth Progress Report of our Evangelistic Mission', Presbyterian, 8 May 1884; H.A. Hutchinson, 'Special Services', ibid., 10 February, 1886.

⁶ J.S. Austin, *op.cit.*, pp.296-7.

Congregationalists cooperated with Wesleyans in a three week mission in North Sydney during J.E. Carruthers ministry at St Leonards. Each church had a week of special services conducted by the local ministers and some visiting missionaries. Carruthers claimed that 50 young people were 'brought in' during these 'gracious seasons'.¹ In June 1888 A.J. Clarke, J.D. Hennessy, a Congregationalist² and J.W. Holden, a Primitive Methodist, conducted an eight-day Blue Ribbon mission in Sussex Street.³ These are but few instances of widespread cooperation among Protestants, particularly Nonconformists, notwithstanding their competition with one another; it was a friendly rivalry on the whole.

The visits of professional evangelists to the colony in the 1880s brought Protestants together in large scale evangelistic campaigns. Dr Somerville, a Presbyterian, had conducted a successful mission in Sydney and other colonies in 1877.⁴ In 1882 the Rev. Joseph Cook of Boston conducted a series of meetings in Sydney but his lectures were apologetic rather than evangelistic.⁵ The next year, Mrs Margaret Hampson, a lady evangelist from

1

J.E. Carruthers, Memories of an Australian Ministry, p.95.

2

But formerly a Wesleyan minister.

3

Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 23 June 1888.

4

M. Maddern, Proceedings Methodist Holiness Convention, 1885, p.66, C.A. White, op.cit., p.29.

5

See Chapter 4.

England came to Sydney after drawing great crowds in New Zealand, Victoria and South Australia.¹ The churches combined and organised a house to house visitation in Sydney to invite people to the services.² Some were sceptical of a woman preacher but Mrs Hampson was a stout lady with a powerful voice; some 4,500 to 5,000 attended her first meeting in the Exhibition Building on Sunday, 16 September, and nearly 7,000 the following Sunday. With W.G. Taylor and John Vaughan, an Anglican, she addressed about 5,000 children in the Exhibition Building on Saturday, 22 September, 200 of whom signed cards professing to have received good at the service.³ Her eight-day mission extended to 15 October. She addressed a meeting for men only at the Y.M.C.A. Service in the Opera House on Sunday 21⁴ and a farewell service was held in Pitt Street Congregational Church the next evening. The church was crowded to overflowing and at the conclusion Mrs Hampson presented New Testaments to the new converts.⁵ Before she left Sydney she laid the foundation stone of the new Y.M.C.A. hall in Pitt Street.⁶

¹ Echo, 17 September 1883.

² See Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 1 September 1883.

³ S.M.H., 24 September 1883; Advocate, 29 September 1883.

⁴ Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 20 October 1883.

⁵ S.M.H., 23 October 1883.

⁶ S.M.H., 29 October 1883.

Other evangelists followed Mrs Hampson, including some crusaders for social purity.¹ The most outstanding of these was Henry Varley,² who came to Sydney from Melbourne in August 1889. He conducted missions in the city and in suburban churches. Crowds attended and

1

In 1885 George Williams, a Welsh evangelist and associate of Dwight L. Moody, came to the colony for health reasons; he conducted missions at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church and in some Anglican churches. The Rev. J. Mountain and his wife, British Congregationalists, conducted evangelistic meetings in Sydney and other parts of the colony in 1885 and 1886. In July 1886 the Y.M.C.A. sponsored the visit of Dr Grattan Guinness, a medical practitioner, who conducted a social purity campaign among young men. John J. Lewis came from New Zealand in 1888 to conduct a crusade against gambling, intemperance and impurity in the Wesleyan Church, William Street, Woolloomooloo, and the same year George Clarke, an exponent of 'muscular Christianity' came to Sydney. The campaigns of these evangelists were not reported extensively. George Williams, S.M.H., 7 February 1885; J. Mountain Independent, 15 April 1885; A.C.W., 19 March 1886; Grattan Guinness, A.C.W., 9 July 1886; John J. Lewis, S.M.H., 4 June 1888; George Clarke, S.M.H., 30 October 1888.

2

Henry Varley, 1835-1912, son of a Lincolnshire brewer, sought his fortune in Victoria in 1854 but returned to England in 1857. He became a butcher and part-time preacher at the Free Tabernacle, Notting Hill. In 1868 he devoted himself full-time to evangelism. He conducted missions in North America, Australia and South Africa before migrating once more to Victoria in 1888. From Melbourne he conducted evangelistic campaigns in the colonies, in India and Britain and the United States. He returned to England in 1910 and preached chiefly in the Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission Hall, Union Street, Brighton, almost until his death on 30 March 1912. Henry Varley Junior, Henry Varley's Life-Story, London, [1913].

the mission was so successful that Varley received an invitation to return.¹ After a brief respite in Melbourne in early October he came back to the colony and conducted campaigns in Newcastle, Bathurst, Parramatta and once more in Sydney and the suburbs.² Varley thundered against the iniquities of society; he attacked gambling, lectured to men and youth on the evils of sexual indulgence,³ and denounced Sydney for its sins and religious indifference.⁴ During the decade the colony also received extended visits from several temperance missionaries, who induced many to sign the pledge and don the blue ribbon.⁵ It was

¹ Echo, 24 September 1889.

² A.C.W., 3, 10, 17, 24 October, 21, 28 November, 19 December 1889; S.M.H., 12 November 1889.

³ See Henry Varley, The Impeachment of Gambling, Melbourne, 1890; Private Address to Boys and Youth, Melbourne, 1893; Lecture to Young Men on a Vitally Important Subject, Melbourne, 1894.

⁴ S.M.H., 25 September 1889; A.C.W., 3 October 1889.

⁵ In 1882 Eli Johnson spent ten weeks in New South Wales, and assisted with his wife in the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. R.T. Booth, an American temperance missionary came to the colony in 1884 at the invitation of the Y.M.C.A. Politicians and leading churchmen patronised his mission in Sydney, and he persuaded 12,798 to don the blue ribbon and 6,452 to sign the pledge in Sydney; until December 1886 he preached temperance throughout the colony. William Noble, an English Gospel Temperance missionary, came to Sydney in 1886 to preach 'true reform', and he was followed by Matthew Burnett a Yorkshireman, who had been a temperance missionary in the colonies since 1864. Burnett toured the colony for two years, and at his farewell in July 1889 he claimed that he had secured 140,000 pledges for
(footnote continued on p.121)

easier to convert Christians to teetotalism than to convert the heathen to Christianity.

The Y.M.C.A. carried on consistent evangelistic work during the 1880s apart from the denominations and cooperative efforts of the churches. In 1880 it operated at Gospel Tent in Sydney¹ and in 1882 leased the Sydney Opera House for Sunday evening services.² Young men were approached in the streets and invited to the services which were informal. Attendances averaged around 500. Speakers encouraged the young men to sign the pledge and received inquirers after the services. In 1884 there were 2,250 enquirers and 315 signed the pledge.³ During 1884 the Y.M.C.A. held similar services in the Haymarket Academy. The hire of the Opera House was increased early in 1885 from eight to ten pounds a night. The Association was able to secure the House for a limited period at the old rental, but it discontinued services in the Opera House at the end of October 1885 and commenced

(footnote 5 continued from p.120)

total abstinence in Australia, apart from those obtained from soldiers and sailors. But R. Coad, a Cornish Temperance evangelist who followed Burnett in 1890 was not as successful. Eli Johnson, S.M.H., 5 September 1882; R.T. Booth, 7, 8, 10, 13 May 1884; Annual Report, Y.M.C.A., 1885, S.M.H., 15 April 1885; S.M.H., 29 December 1886; William Noble, A.C.W., 9, 16 July 1886; Matthew Burnett, S.M.H., 16, 23 July 1889; see also Renate Howe, op.cit., p.12 for comment on Burnett in Victoria; R. Coad, D.T., 9 June 1890.

1

Annual Report of the Y.M.C.A., 1880, p.12.

2

Annual Report, 1882, S.M.H., 24 January 1883.

3

Annual Report, 1884, S.M.H., 15 April 1885.

services in the Y.M.C.A. Hall on 1 November.¹ It used a Gospel Tent again in 1889 at Balmain² and in 1890, after the Supreme Court had ruled Sunday Evening Concerts illegal,³ the Y.M.C.A. began its theatre services again.⁴

The Sydney Ladies United Evangelistic Association conducted a Cab Mission to cab, bus, and draymen and induced drunkards to sign the pledge as well as its ministrations to the poor,⁵ and there were other non-denominational agencies which conducted evangelistic campaigns in Sydney.⁶ In 1889 a group of churchmen, mainly Anglicans, began seaside services for children on the beach at Sans Souci.⁷ In addition to all these agencies the Salvation Army had been making rapid progress in the colony; its aggressive campaign brought the evangelical appeal directly to many and at the same time stimulated the churches to greater efforts in the work of evangelism.

1

Annual Report, 1884, S.M.H., 15 April 1885, Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 17, 31 October 1885.

2

Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 5 October 1889.

3

See Chapter 7.

4

A.C.W., 3 July 1890.

5

Annual Meetings, S.M.H., 16 October 1885, 15 June 1888.

6

Some were, The Evangelistic Christian Association (Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 2 March 1883); Divine Healing Association (Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 7 April 1888); and the Sydney Evangelistic Mission (Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 28 April 1888); Gospel Army Home Mission, S.M.H., 15 September 1883. I have found nothing about these groups apart from these advertisements of their meetings.

7

S.M.H., 22 January 1889; Independent, 15 April 1889.

The results of these campaigns are difficult to assess. There are no figures to show how many were converted or how many of the converts were non-churchgoers or non-Christians. There were occasional conversions of freethinkers to Christianity,¹ and J.S. Austin converted a young Jew at Parkes.² These, however, were exceptions; there were many suggestions that many of the converts were children and youth. Austin told the Wesleyan Conference in 1882 that they should look for the conversion of their older hearers as well as their youth.³ But the churches saw in their Sunday Schools 'a field white unto harvest', and it was easier to gather in than the vast uncultivated fields outside their walls. The rules of Wesleyan Sunday Schools instructed the teachers to look for the conversion of the children.⁴ In 1876 the conference had ruled that an annual sermon should be preached to the young, warning them of 'the danger and guilt of religious indecision and the duty and privilege of uniting themselves' in membership with the church.⁵ The conference reaffirmed this resolution annually and in 1881 it recommended 'Select Classes' to secure the conversion of older scholars.⁶ Young minds moulded by

1

J.S. Austin, op.cit., pp.311-12; W.G. Taylor, The Life-story of an Australian Evangelist, Sydney, 1920, pp.174-6; George Preston, Sermon, D.T., 21 April 1884.

2

J.S. Austin, op.cit., p.202.

3

S.M.H., 28 January 1882.

4

Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference, 1875, p.28.

5

M.W.C., 1876, p.26.

6

Ibid., 1881, p.52.

religious teaching were more ready to respond to the evangelical call, and all denominations saw the Sunday School as 'feeders to the churches'.¹ The Presbyterian Sabbath Schools Committee reminded the general assembly that the Catholic Church knew the importance of training the lambs of the fold, and it ill-became Protestants to neglect this field.² And in 1883 James Jefferis³ told Congregationalists at their intercolonial conference how important it was to prepare the children in Sunday School for church membership rather than to wait for adult conversions.⁴ But while an increasing proportion of children attended Sunday Schools, not all of them were

1

Presbyterian, 19 June 1880; Bishop Camidge, M.S.D.B., 1890, pp.19-20; Bishop Stanton, P.S.D.N., 1891, p.11.

2

M.P.G.A., 1880, p.36.

3

James Jefferis (1833-1917), son of a Bristol estate agent, was a graduate of New College, London, and of the London University. He migrated to South Australia in 1859 for the sake of his health, and established the North Adelaide Congregational Church. In 1877, after receiving three calls and persuasive letters from John Fairfax, Jefferis became minister of Pitt Street Congregational Church on a stipend of £1,000 per annum. He was one of the foremost Nonconformist ministers in the 1880s. A liberal thinker, his Sunday evening lectures were popular and received wide coverage in the press. He was also an ardent advocate of Australian federation. In December 1889 he left Sydney, and, after two short ministries in England, he returned to his former pastorate at North Adelaide, and remained in South Australia until his death on Christmas Day, 1917.

4

Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, p.186.

gathered into church life; those who remained in the churches probably came mostly from churchgoing families, although this is only conjecture.

But the churches saw more value in evangelistic missions than the converts who might be counted. J.S. Austin recorded that his mission at Windsor 'did more for the uplifting of the church...than double the number of conversions would have done'.¹ Alexander Osborne, one of the Presbyterian Evangelistic Deputies in 1885, thought that the missions did good to the congregations, and even if the wave of revival receded after the mission it had 'left its mark higher on the beach'.² Ministers were also glad to use visiting evangelists in the hope that they would awaken those who had grown used to the same voice.³ Most laid aside their objections to the crude theology and sensational methods of some evangelists if they thought that the visitor could get results which the regular preacher could not obtain.⁴ For this reason comparatively liberal

1 J.S. Austin, op.cit., p.294.

2 M.P.G.A., 1886, p.49.

3 Presbyterian, 19 February 1881.

4 An American Minister, the Rev. Pearse Pinch explained his support of Billy Sunday, the evangelist in these words: 'Why my dear sir, the man has trampled all over me and my theology. He has kicked my teachings up and down the platform like football. He has outraged every ideal I have had regarding my sacred profession. But what does that count against the results he has accomplished? My congregation will be increased by hundreds.' Lindsay Denison, 'The Rev. Billy Sunday and His War on the Devil',
(footnote continued on p.126)

ministers supported evangelistic campaigns,¹ and the progress of liberal theology did not diminish support for the evangelist who promised results. Early in the 1890s Australian Protestant ministers invited Dwight L. Moody, the famous American evangelist to Australia, but he could not come;² nevertheless, in the twentieth century several of Moody's successors have found the Australian churches willing to receive them.

Despite all the churches' efforts in extension and evangelism in the 1880s, the overall proportion of the population attending church regularly declined slightly during the decade. But the losses might have been greater had the churches neglected extension and evangelism. Yet even as churchmen planned and carried out this work many of them felt that changes were needed in church life and worship before some outside them would come in. To place a church in a district and to call the people to it did not seem to be sufficient; the Church, some thought, had to be made attractive and they sought to remove all that offended or repelled the outsider.

(footnote 4 continued from p.125)
American Magazine, LXIV (September 1907), pp.454-5, cit. W.G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, New York, 1959, pp.419-20. See also W.G. McLoughlin, Billy Sunday was His Real Name, Chicago, 1955, pp.196-200

1
 Miss G.A. Roseby, daughter of Dr Thomas Roseby, recalled in an interview that her father once took her to an evangelist's meeting in Sydney, but on the way home he apologised constantly for the evangelist and gave the sermon a liberal reinterpretation. Interview with Miss G.A. Roseby in November 1966.

2
 See Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1890, M.P.G.A., 1891, p.64.

Chapter 3

Worship and the Working Classes.

The apparent estrangement of the greater proportion of the population from the churches troubled Protestant churchmen considerably in the 1880s. Because the colony was professedly Christian it rarely occurred to them to ask why anyone went to church at all; they assumed that everyone who could should attend public worship regularly. Rather, they asked why people did not go to church. This was the question Warlow Davies posed from the chair of the Congregational Union in 1881. He observed that, while many churches had been built in the 1870s, there was still insufficient accommodation for the whole population; nevertheless, apart from Catholic churches, not all the available sittings were occupied each Sunday. Davies saw indifference rather than infidelity as the principal reason for the absence of so many artisans and other classes from the churches. He did not think the churches could do much to overcome this condition for it was a symptom of the prosperity of the age which only adversity in the form of a depression could cure.¹

Most churchmen would have agreed that secularism did not go far to explain the relatively low proportion of church attendance, but few were ready to admit that there was little the churches could do to overcome

1

J.T. Warlow Davies, 'The State of the Colony in Regard to Religion', loc.cit., p.50.

indifference to religion. They looked for other reasons for the absence of the majority from public worship, and for possible means to attract the indifferent. Some thought that the fault lay largely in the worship of the churches, and there was a movement in most Protestant denominations for aesthetic improvement in their services, both in form and music, and a trend toward shorter services and sermons.

Changes in Worship.

Until 1872 the morning service of the Church of England had consisted of Morning Prayer, the Litany and the Communion Service together, lasting about two and a half hours and longer when communion was administered. In 1858 Lord Ebury, an advocate of prayer book reform, read to the House of Lords a letter from a country baronet who was 'wearied to death' by services lasting from 11 a.m. to 2.20 p.m. He pointed out that in a full service with the administration of communion there were

Two creeds, two general exhortations, two general confessions, two absolutions, three final benedictions. The Sovereign is prayed for three times, the Clergy three times, the Civil Ministers twice, this House twice, the Magistracy twice, and finally, we have the Lord's Prayer six times.¹

The Anglican Church in the colonies followed the same practice. Evening Prayer was held at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and it was difficult for worshippers who remained

1

Cit. A. Elliott Peaston, The Prayer Book Revisions of the Victorian Evangelicals, Dublin, 1963, p.29.

to communion to get to the evening service. This difficulty was first relieved by moving the evening service to 7 o'clock rather than separating the services.¹ However, in 1850 the Australian bishops meeting in Sydney, agreed that they had the right to authorise clergy 'in cases of necessity' to divide the morning service provided that each service was 'read entire'. They also agreed that there could be early celebrations of Holy Communion in parishes with a large number of communicants or afternoon celebrations where necessary.² But the long three-part morning service remained the pattern in most dioceses in the colony after 1872 when the British Parliament had authorised the separation of the three services.³ In 1876 Bishop Thomas told his synod at Goulburn that the 'Shortened Services Act' permitted the separation of the services and abbreviation of morning or evening prayer on ordinary week-days;⁴ but in 1878 a layman in the diocese of Bathurst complained of the three services together with a 45 minute sermon

1

K.J. Cable, 'St James' Church, King Street, Sydney, 1819-1894', Part II, Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, vol. 50, pt.5, November 1964, p.358 n.

2

Minutes of Proceedings of a Meeting of the Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Australasia, held in Sydney, October 1 to November 1, A.D. 1850, in R.A. Giles, The Constitutional History of The Australian Church, London, 1929, Document K, p.241.

3

An Act to Amend the Act of Uniformity Act, 1872, 35& 36 Vict. c. 35.

4

Address, P.S.D.G., 1876, pp.9-10.

in a bush church when the midday temperature was above the century.¹ Some clergy, however, separated the services before Bishop Barker admitted it was legal to do so. 'An Old Churchman' questioned the right of ministers to omit the Litany when communion was administered; he thought it would show more humility to omit a hymn or the sermon. But Edward Symonds, graduate of King's College, London, and incumbent of St Leonards, replied that he recited Litany at Evening Prayer when he omitted it from Morning Prayer and quoted the 'Shortened Services Act' to justify his practice.² At the synod of Sydney in 1880 R.S. Willis, a colonial-trained parson, questioned whether the separation of the services was legal; Bishop Barker, the metropolitan, thought that it was not, but two days later he corrected himself and informed the synod that the 'Shortened Services Act' authorised the separation of the three services provided that they were all read on the same day.³ Barker seemed reluctant to to recognise these provisions and did not encourage separation of the services in his diocese.

At the synod in August 1883 Joseph Page and the Rev. Thomas Kemmis proposed unsuccessfully that the three morning offices should be separated, and that shorter brighter services should be held in the evening to

¹ Watchman (Bathurst), 1 March 1878, cit. Ruth Teale, 'A Brave New World in the Australian Bush', loc.cit., p.144.

² 'An Old Churchman', Australian Churchman, 16 October 1879; Edward Symonds, ibid., 23 October 1879.

³ P.S.D.S., 1880, pp.39, 45.

encourage better attendances.¹ The next year Page and Judge Wilkinson expressed their regret that the 'Shortened Services Act' did not apply in the diocese and asked for an ordinance to authorise the separation of the services. They argued that this would give more frequent opportunities of devotion, increase attendances and extend the influence of the Church.² The synod referred the matter to the Standing Committee which reported to the next session that there was no need for an ordinance as, in its opinion, the 'Shortened Services Act' already applied in the diocese.³

It is difficult to discover what difference this made to the length of morning services in Anglican churches, for the length depended not only on what was omitted or included, but also on the length of the sermon. These were tending to become shorter, generally around 30 minutes, but even as little as fifteen minutes 'full of carefully collected and refreshing new thoughts'.⁴ The morning service continued to include Morning Prayer, sermon and Holy Communion in most cases, although sometimes it was Matins, Litany and sermon.⁵ It must

¹ P.S.D.S., 1883, p.42.

² P.S.D.S., 1884, pp.35-6, 55-6.

³ Ibid., 1885, Appendix I, p.69.

⁴ 'Pewholder', S.M.H., 25 May 1888.

⁵ See Christ Church, St Laurence, Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 2 May 1885; St Andrew's Cathedral, ibid., 19 May 1888; St James' Kalendar and Monthly Record, February 1889.

have taken about an hour and a half and up to two hours when communion was administered. But a few churches observed early morning communion services, particularly Christ Church, St Laurence, St James Church, Sydney and St Andrew's Cathedral later in the 1880s. Earlier in the decade the cathedral had observed a monthly evening communion service, which Evangelicals preferred to early morning since it could hardly be a fasting communion, a practice Anglo-Catholics encouraged.¹ Christ Church, St Laurence and St James' also held special services for children, and St James' provided a short service with address at 4 p.m. as well as Evening Prayer and a sermon at 7 p.m. Other clergy also abbreviated the evening service.² But a study of church notices for Sydney in the 1880s shows that most Anglican churches held only two services a day, the morning service at 11 a.m. and the evening at 7 p.m.

There was also a movement toward more reverence and congregational participation in Anglican services. Shortly after his arrival in 1884 Bishop Barry asked

¹
Dean Cowper defended the practice of evening communion at the synod in 1882. P.S.D.S. 1882, Part II, pp.27-8. On Evangelicals and evening communion see Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England: From Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900, Princeton, New Jersey, 1962, p.118n.

²
There was an anonymous complaint in 1885 that some clergy were drastically shortening the evening services. This correspondent called the 'Shortened Services Act' 'a pure creature of the secular legislature'. 'Quomodo Dilexi', Australian Churchman, 17 December 1885.

Anglicans to show greater reverence by kneeling for prayer,¹ and Bishop Camidge made a similar request in Bathurst in 1888.² A High Church visitor to Sydney in 1884 criticised the unattractive quality of Anglican worship in the city and the lack of congregational participation.³ But the standard of worship improved under Barry; in part it was due to him and the pattern he set through the cathedral services;⁴ but it was also due to effects of the Oxford Movement on clergy who did not necessarily accept its theology or the ritualism of some Anglo-Catholics. Evangelicals were also affected; St Andrew's Cathedral consecrated in 1868 had a surpliced choir;⁵ the practice spread to other churches in the 1880s,⁶ and Anglican preachers slowly forsook the black gown for the surplice, once considered 'popish' outside a cathedral.⁷

1

Alfred Barry, A charge delivered at his Primary Visitation of the Diocese on July 10th 1884, Sydney, 1884, p.7.

2

Address, M.S.D.B., 1888, p.16. See also 'Correspondent', Australian Churchman, 15 January 1886.

3

'A Traveller', S.M.H., 18 September 1884; see also, Viator, D.T., 31 May 1884.

4

Barry and other bishops looked to their cathedrals to set the standard of worship for the diocese but only Sydney and Goulburn (consecrated in 1884) had adequate cathedrals in the 1880s. See Bishop Barry, P.S.D.S., 1885, p.19; Bishop Thomas, P.S.D.G., 1884, p.4; Bishop Pearson, P.S.D.N., 1884, pp.33-4; Bishop Stanton, *ibid.*, 1891, p.14: see also W.M. Cowper, Autobiography and Reminiscences, pp.196-7.

5

P.S.D.S., 1881, p.56.

6

'Correspondent', Australian Churchman, 15 January 1886.

7

See Owen Chadwick, *op.cit.*, pp.219-20.

The Tractarians taught their congregations to make the response and the revival spread among all Anglicans.¹

The revival of the usages of the Book of Common Prayer, however, led some Evangelicals to seek a revision. John Vaughan, of St Andrew's, Summer Hill adopted the practice of 'the Reformed Church of England' which a 'Protestant Churchman' explained was a species of 'Episcopal Wesleyanism' more in accord with the aspirations of most Sydney Anglicans than the 'straight laced doctrines and formularies of the Prayer-book'.² Dean Cowper, however, disapproved departure from the Prayer Book; he preferred to await the outcome of ritualistic disputes in Britain;³ liberty to vary the services might allow more ritual as well as more 'Protestant' services. But, as Anglo-Catholics claimed to do no more than follow the rubric of the Prayer Book,⁴ some Evangelicals favoured an anti-ritualist revision which might facilitate union with Nonconformists.⁵ At the General Synod in 1886 the

1 See Horton Davies, op.cit., p.209.

2 Australian Churchman, 12 June 1882.

3 Proceedings, Provincial Synod of New South Wales, (hereafter Proceedings, Provincial Synod), 1884, p.35.

4 At the General Synod of Australia in 1881 C.F. Garnsey the Anglo-Catholic incumbent of Christ Church, St. Laurence and Archdeacon Coles Child of Newcastle advocated that the services of the Book of Common Prayer should be carried out where practicable in Australia. Proceedings of the General Synod of Australia and Tasmania (hereafter Proceedings, General Synod), 1886, p.35.

5 Synod of Sydney, S.M.H., 17, 18 April 1888, Synod of Bathurst, ibid., 23 May 1888.

bishops generally favoured a change in law regarding the use of the Prayer Book to allow other forms of service and prayers, especially for missions to the heathen. The General Synod supported this opinion and agreed to refer it to the convocation of Canterbury.¹ There was little prospect of an Australian Prayer Book in the 1880s, particularly in view of the disagreement between Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics as to what changes were desirable: but by the time the English revision took shape it showed the influence of Anglo-Catholics rather than Evangelicals, and Australian Evangelicals took refuge in the version of 1662.²

By 1880 Nonconformist worship had departed considerably from the old Puritan austerity. Presbyterians had lost their objections to musical instruments in worship and their preference for metrical psalms rather than hymns, which were only human compositions, although Free Presbyterians stuck firmly to the old tradition. However, organs found their way into other Presbyterian churches. In 1867 the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales adopted Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship, compiled by the Presbyterian Church in England, and in 1884 supplanted it by the second English hymnary, Church Praise.³ But the pattern of worship

1

Proceedings, General Synod, 1886, pp.18-19, 46-7.

2

P.S.D.S., 1914, pp.65-6.

3

C.A. White, op.cit., pp.25, 33; James Cameron, op.cit., p.125; M.P.G.A., 1884, p.30.

presented a confusing variety in 1880. Some churches retained the old tradition of standing to pray and sitting to sing; others did the opposite and a few did a little of both. The Lord's Prayer, once excluded from public worship as vain repetition, was now recited in many Presbyterian and other Nonconformist churches, but in several versions; sometimes by the minister alone, or by the whole congregation, or by only a few.¹

The liturgical movement in Scotland and England influenced colonial Presbyterianism,² though there was the same resistance to a formal liturgy.³ In 1883, however, when the Intercolonial Presbyterian Conference appointed a committee to revise the Westminster Directory of Worship the Presbyterian supported the proposal. It also advocated the chanting of the prose versions of the Psalms.⁴ In 1888 the journal argued that a new Directory would end the confusion of practices

¹ 'Subscriber', Presbyterian, 30 October 1880; W.J. Green, 'On the Conduct of Divine Service', Independent, 15 October, 1880; letter, Advocate, 29 May 1880.

² The Church Service Society was formed in the Church of Scotland in 1865, the United Presbyterian Devotional Service Association in 1882 and the Public Worship Association of the Free Church in 1891. The 'Euchologion' a Book of Common Order was first published in 1867; by 1884 it had run to five editions. Horton Davies, op.cit., pp.91, 96-7.

³ See Presbyterian, 15 January, 3 December 1881.

⁴ Presbyterian, 4 August 1883.

from church to church.¹ Presbyterians were looking for guidance in conducting the various rites and offices, but in 1888 the Assembly agreed with the cautious Dr A. Gilchrist that it had no intention to countenance forms of prayer but only to provide 'specimen forms of devotion' to guide laymen in conducting services.² As revision progressed suspicion increased and the Presbyterian upheld extemporary prayer against the liturgical proposals presented at the Federal Assembly in 1890.³ The Directory, largely the work of Dr Robert Steel, was published in 1893,⁴ but it did not supplant the tradition of free prayer.

By 1880 the differences between Presbyterian services and those of the English Nonconformist tradition were minimal. They had all moved toward more ordered worship and at the same time had shortened their services. In 1880 W.J. Green, a Congregational Layman, described a 'marked alteration' in church services over 25 years. The old two hours service with its long prayers and longer sermon was gone (a Wesleyan layman even complained about 'fifteen minute sermonettes').⁵ The average service lasted about an hour and a half. The

¹ Presbyterian, 3 March 1888.

² See Overture from Presbytery of Bathurst, M.P.G.A., 1888, pp.19, 159, also p.30.

³ Presbyterian, 25 January 1890.

⁴ James Cameron, op.cit., p.188; C.A. White, op.cit., p.45.

⁵ J.B. Youdale, Advocate, 16 February 1884.

minister no longer dominated the service; there was less emphasis on the sermon and more on worship, with more participation by the congregation through hymns and response.¹ Green thought, however, that congregations should all use the Prayer Book version of the Lord's Prayer; he asked ministers to improve the standard of the public reading of Scripture and looked for aesthetic appeal as well as devotional inspiration in the musical portions of the services.

Green overestimated the extent of congregational participation among Nonconformists in 1880; vocal participation did not come easily to congregations long used to services that were a performance by the minister. J.F. Cullen, a minister, spoke on worship to the Congregational Union in October 1885; he complained that few congregations responded with 'Amen' and fewer still joined in the Lord's Prayer. He observed pertinently that a logical Congregational protest against vicarious priesthood would be for the congregation to take a greater part in the service. Cullen wanted more beauty, dignity and improved music. He commended the chanting of the Psalms, and advocated the use of a service-book, as was the practice in some English Congregational Churches.² Few supported this suggestion; most who

1

W.J. Green, On the Conduct of Divine Service, Independent, 15 October 1880; Green's paper was also published in the Presbyterian, 1 January 1881.

2

Congregational Year Book, 1886, pp.73-8. There had been a growing liturgical movement in English Congregationalism and in Presbyterianism from the beginning of the century
(footnote continued on p.139)

heard Cullen's paper agreed that there was need for improvement but deprecated the proposal for a liturgy.

Wesleyans possessed a formal liturgy in John Wesley's abridgement of the Book of Common Prayer, but York Street, in its palmy days, was the only church in the colony to use this liturgy.¹ However, in his presidential year, 1884-5, J.H. Fletcher discovered various attempts to improve Methodist worship and reported them approvingly to the conference. Psalms, though not chanted, were read alternately in some churches; three shorter prayers replaced the old 'long prayer' and occasionally printed forms were provided to guide worshippers. Fletcher, however, hoped that the conference would appoint a committee to guide the changes and prevent confusion of practice,² but suspicion of formalism prevented official encouragement of liturgical innovation. In 1885, however, a correspondent in the Advocate supported J.F. Cullen's proposal for more dignified worship and the use of a prayer book in Nonconformist churches.³

{footnote 2 continued from p.138)

but John Hunter (1848-1917) was the most notable Congregational liturgist. His Devotional Services for Public Worship, a fine combination of traditional forms and modern expressions, was first published in 1882, and found its way into some Australian Congregational Churches, although not, as far as I have found, in the 1880s. See Horton Davies, op.cit., pp.221-37.

1

J.E. Carruthers, 'A Half-Century's Retrospect', cutting from a journal, [1921] (Mitchell Library), pp.37-8.

2

S.M.H., 21 January 1885.

3

'Progress', Advocate, 31 October, 7, 21 and 29 November 1885.

The Advocate, however, thought that the truth lay somewhere between those who argued for more aesthetic services and those who sought more 'spirituality of the heart',¹ but the trend was toward beauty and order. In 1888 the General Conference appointed a committee to prepare a lectionary for Sunday morning services 'to secure the systematic reading of the Holy Scriptures in our congregations'.² Chanting the Psalms was adopted by some Wesleyans; they also began to draw on the liturgical tradition they had inherited from Anglicanism through John Wesley.³

The Catholic bishops at the Plenary Council enjoined uniformity in the Divine Office and forbade priests to introduce anything new, or to use prayers in the vernacular at any liturgical function.⁴ In 1891 the Diocesan Synod of Sydney decreed that priests should encourage congregations to sing and to give responses in the services,⁵ for the faithful were largely passive at Mass. But Catholics were not as concerned as Protestants about changes in worship. The teaching that it was a mortal sin for a Catholic not to make his confession and not to assist at Mass gave the Catholic Church a sanction

¹ Ibid., 5 December 1885;

² Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference, 1888, p.32.

³ J.E. Carruthers, 'Half-Century's Retrospect', pp.37-8.

⁴ Acta et Decreta, 1885, Decrees, 174, 183, 187, 191.

⁵ Decrees of the Diocesan Synod of Sydney, 29 July 1891, Decree XXXVII.

over the faithful which Protestants could not exercise over their adherents. However, larger Catholic churches paid considerable attention to music in their services.

The Catholic Church had set the choral standard for the colony. Archbishop Polding's taste in music was ornate; the Masses of Mozart, Haydn, Weber and other great composers were performed in Catholic churches with orchestras and opera singers taking the arias. Polding hoped that this music would attract Protestants to Catholic churches,¹ and in January 1880 the Freeman's Journal claimed that a 'great proportion' of the large congregation which heard the Christmas performance in St Patrick's Church in 1879 were Protestants.²

Protestants aimed to raise their musical standards in the 1880s because, as the Presbyterian observed, it was 'pre-eminently a musical age'. Every home, it exaggerated, had a piano or harmonium; singing was taught in public schools, and to play a musical instrument was the 'sine qua non' in every young ladies education.³ Pipe organs were installed in larger churches and harmoniums or American organs in smaller or less affluent churches, particularly in the 1870s and 1880s.⁴ These

¹ H.N. Birt, op.cit., vol.2., pp.213-4.

² F.J., 3 January 1880.

³ Presbyterian, 6 August 1881.

⁴ See Bishop Marsden, M.S.D.B., 1885, p.10; Advocate, 13 February 1886. There are numerous press reports of the installation of pipe organs in churches of all denominations in the 1880s.

replaced fiddles or improvised orchestras and facilitated choral singing.

Protestant churches in the 1880s adopted the same florid music to compete with Catholics. But choirs began to dominate the service; more ambitious music diminished congregational singing, and longer portions of the service were given to anthems; the choir sometimes undermined the intention of serious liturgists who desired to make worship more congregational.¹ And while Protestants progressed in choral achievements some Catholics reacted against the musical taste Polding had bequeathed to them. In 1884 the Congregation of Rites published a circular to correct musical abuses in Italy; it forbade profane music reminiscent of the theatre; it declared that 'Solos, cadences in theatrical style, not to say cries, which distract the faithful in their devotion, are to be avoided as much as possible'.² In October 1884 a correspondent in the Express declared that it was time to expel the 'half-bred Opera singers' used too long by city and suburban churches and to revive Gregorian chanting by the whole congregation. He believed the new Archbishop, Dr Moran, favoured Gregorian church music.³

¹ Watchman (Bathurst), 1 August, 1 September 1877; Advocate, 8 April 1882; Independent, 15 August 1886, 15 March 1887, Public Meeting Bathurst Street Baptist Church, S.M.H., 20 January 1885, Harry W. Little, S.M.H., 25 May 1888.

² Cit. F.J., 27 December 1884.

³ W.A.D., Express, 4 October 1884. Gregorian chanting had already replaced orchestral and operatic music in English Catholic churches. Horton Davies, op. cit., p.27.

Two laymen supported this proposal, but another sharply defended the lady soloists.¹ In 1889 there were more outbursts against the 'modern' composers and arguments for Gregorian chanting, but the difficulty of obtaining trained singers and the indifference of the clergy stood in the way of Gregorian revival.² The operatic masses continued, but in 1890 when Cherubini's Grand Mass was performed in St Mary's, the critic found it classically cold and severe unlike the warm impulsive music of Mozart and Haydn so familiar to Catholic congregations.³ There were reactions to choral styles among Protestants also, they were mostly nostalgia for the old familiar tunes or a preference for the sentimental but catching tunes of Sankey's Sacred Songs and Solos, which were generally used in evangelistic meetings.⁴

Many reasons lay behind these changes and attempts to improve the liturgy and music of the churches. In almost every case colonial churchmen were following the more recent trends in their respective denominations in England. But it was not a thoughtless imitation of new ideas from abroad. Notwithstanding the differences,

¹ Correspondence, Express, 11, 25 October, 15, 29 November 1884; see also 'One of the Congregation', F.J., 19 September, 10 October 1885.

² Correspondence, Nation, 22 August, 5, 12 September 1889.

³ D.T., 11 August 1890: this Mass took two hours, but no sermon was preached.

⁴ J.R. Independent, 15 April 1882; Harry W. Little, S.M.H., 25 May 1888.

there were many similarities between the situation of the churches in Britain and in the colonies. New scientific theories and literary criticism were forcing adjustment of religious belief on both sides of the seas. The old biblicism was dying and evangelicalism was on the wane; this sapped the impulse which had sustained long seasons of prayer and preaching with little singing and no aesthetic aids to devotion. Ministers who found the old form increasingly burdensome turned to other liturgical modes, while laymen, less sophisticated liturgically, desired an end to the bleakness and tedium of old Protestant services. There were some, however, who deplored the clamour for more 'ritual and a higher class of music'. They attributed the malaise of the churches to lack of spirituality in the pew and the want of evangelical sermons from the pulpit.¹ But few could recapture the old spirit, and although many resisted a formal liturgy most Nonconformists incorporated some changes in their services, even if it were no more than to recite the Lord's prayer, read the Psalms responsively and sing more hymns.

Apart from religious reasons or liturgical principles there was a strong feeling that changes in worship were necessary to attract more people to the churches. A correspondent to the Presbyterian in 1880 blamed the bald ritual of Presbyterian churches for the

1
J.W. Brown on 'The State of the Work of God' at Wesleyan Conference, 1886, S.M.H., 1 February 1886; see also, F.H. Browne, 'The Spiritual Condition of our Churches', Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, pp.79-83; J.B. Presbyterian, 28 October 1882.

absence of colonial youth who were 'generally fond of aesthetics',¹ and in 1886 Alexander Osborne advanced similar arguments to make Presbyterian services more attractive.² In 1889 George Littlemore told the Congregational Union that great changes in public taste dictated changes in church services.³

New fashions in church architecture accompanied the changes in worship; Nonconformists turned to gothic styles with spires, which one Methodist contended would not be confused with post offices or banks;⁴ the Presbyterian thought that more comfortable buildings were in keeping with 'the improved dwelling houses of the worshippers'; Wesleyans agreed that it was necessary to make their churches comfortable and attractive, and Charles Bright exhorted Baptists to build churches that men would 'not be ashamed of attending'.⁵ A beautiful church would not convert a sinner, but neither would an ugly one, said Dr Kinross at the laying of the foundation stone for the new Presbyterian Church at Ashfield; but a beautiful church showed the attachment of its people to their God.⁶

1

David Moore, Presbyterian, 9 October 1880.

2

A. Osborne, 'Presbyterian Worship,' Part II, Presbyterian, 27 November 1886.

3

D.T., 28 October 1889.

4

Wesleyan Chronicle, February, 1867, p.51, cit. Renate Howe, op.cit., p.9.

5

Presbyterian, 28 November 1885; A.C.W., 18 June 1886; Charles Bright, cit. A.C. Prior, op.cit., p.121.

6

D.T., 19 October 1885.

Critics of contemporary worship in the 1880s also looked to the pulpit, not only for shorter sermons, but for better preaching. Nonconformists used lay preachers, but by 1880 they were sometimes an embarrassment to sophisticated congregations. The schoolmaster had been abroad since the days of Wesley and Whitefield, Alfred Allen told a conference of Congregational lay preachers; congregations would no longer endure uncouth manners from barely literate preachers.¹ Wesleyans and Baptists also looked for more culture and learning from their local preachers.² Advocates of a higher standard of ministerial recruitment and training also appealed to the growth of education. 'An increasing intelligence...among all classes' demanded men possessed of both spiritual zeal and a 'full-orbed culture' said George Martin, retiring President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1883.³ But the shortage of candidates hardly encouraged the exclusion of all but graduates or matriculants;⁴ the

1

Alfred Allen, 'Helps and Hindrances to Lay Preachers', Independent, 15 January 1880.

2

M.W.C., 1884; p.64, 1888, p.87; Baptist, November 1889.

3

S.M.H., 24 January 1883; laymen also advocated a higher standard in the ministry to meet the needs of the age (S.M.H., 7 February 1884) and the Pastoral Address of the conference in 1885 declared that 'a cultured ministry is a sine qua non if we would reach all classes of the community'. (M.W.C., 1885, pp.22-3.)

4

Miss Ruth Teale has calculated the following percentages of graduates among clergy in Anglican dioceses in New South Wales in 1885: Sydney, 30 per cent; Newcastle, 33 per cent; Goulburn, 20 per cent; Grafton and Armidale, 30 per cent; Bathurst, 20 per cent. Presbyterians had the highest
(footnote continued on p.147)

uncultured but godly men, however, had their champions.¹

Alongside the desire to attract more worshippers was the determination not to be outdone by other denominations or to lose adherents to them. This was one of the reasons advanced for the introduction of organs into Presbyterian churches.² The Wesleyan Advocate supported chanting since the want of brightness and beauty put Methodism 'at immense disadvantage' in competition with Anglicans and other Nonconformists.³ The conference's Pastoral Address in 1885 declared that as other denominations were making strenuous efforts

(footnote 4 continued from p.146)
proportion of graduates in the ministry; in 1890 there were 50 out of 116 ministers, 43 per cent. Congregationalists had 14 graduates out of 64 ministers in 1890, 22 per cent. Wesleyans had only four graduates, including one supernumerary, among their 135 ministers in 1890; two ministers had honorary doctorates. Baptists had only one graduate in their ministry in 1890. Ruth Teale, 'By Hook and By Crook', p.104; M.P.G.A., 1890, Roll of the General Assembly, pp.9-12; M.W.C. 1891, Appendices, A, B1, pp.127-31; D, pp.136-41; Congregational Year Book, 1890, pp.180-4. For Baptists see Return of ministers registered to celebrate marriages, N.S.W. Government Gazette, 25 January 1890.

1

The Rev. George Hurst, a self-educated Wesleyan minister, replied to lay critics that more valuable work had been done by men without college training: he thought college men were too conceited because of their intellectual advantages. S.M.H., 9 February 1884; George Hurst, obit., M.W.C. 1886, p.9.

2

R. Sutherland, The Presbyterian Church of Victoria, London, 1877, p.352.

3

Advocate, 29 May 1880.

toward a cultured ministry Wesleyans also had to obtain a high class of men.¹ It was easy for members to move from one Nonconformist church to another, even if the Scottish accent put Presbyterians at some disadvantage with other Nonconformists. But people who desired relief from bald services might be tempted to transfer their allegiance to the Anglican Church. 'A Country Minister' asserted that Presbyterians and others were flocking to the Church of England, he thought, because it was the 'largest, wealthiest and most fashionable Church in the colony'.² Some ministers also left Nonconformist pulpits for Anglican altars;³ although their reasons varied, they had all lost their objections to the liturgy of the Prayer Book. Some Anglicans, on the other hand feared that the Church of England was losing ground to Catholics and Nonconformists;⁴ but competition with Anglicanism was at least one of the factors in the desire for ritual and spired-gothic churches in the 1880s. It also helped Congregationalists to overcome their Puritan objection to Easter and Christmas services, though Presbyterians resisted the introduction of those

1

M.W.C., 1885, pp.22-3.

2

'A Country Minister', Presbyterian, 18 December 1886.

3

Presbyterian, 12 February 1881; Advocate, 9 April 1881; Independent, 15 June 1881.

4

Harry W. Little, S.M.H., 25 May 1888; 'Progressive Churchman', ibid., 29 May 1888.

'pagan' feasts longer.¹ Though Nonconformists in the colony approached liturgical changes more cautiously than their respective denominations in Britain, the changes they allowed helped those who were discontented with the older forms to remain in their fold instead of moving to the Anglican Church,² just as Anglo-Catholic worship satisfied the desires of some Anglicans who might otherwise have transferred to the Catholic Church. But the changes were less successful in attracting new worshippers than in preventing the loss of established adherents; they were, however, aimed at the more sophisticated, and not all outside the churches were 'cultured despisers' of religion. It was quite a different problem to attract the alienated working classes.

Attracting the Working Classes

The urban working classes were largely outside the churches in Britain and Australia in the nineteenth century and in the 1880s churchmen sought ways of

1

Independent, 15 December 1884; Presbyterian, 16 April 1881, 24 December 1887. John Hunter, the Congregational liturgist, was the first to observe the Christian Year in Glasgow, but by 1895 most Presbyterian Churches in Scotland were observing the Christian festivals. Horton Davies, *op.cit.*, pp.106-7, 235.

2

George W. Sprott, one of the founders of the Scottish Church Service Society claimed justly that 'The Society has kept many in the Church who, but for it, would have gone over to Episcopacy'. *Cit.* Horton Davies, *op.cit.*, p.97.

attracting them.¹ There had been some attempts to reach them well before 1880. In 1849 Pitt Street Congregational Church appointed Samuel Goold, formerly a city missionary in London, to work among the poorer classes in Sydney² and in 1850 Nathaniel Pidgeon became a city missionary for the Wesleyans in Sydney.³ In 1862 Benjamin Short, an insurance salesman who had been a London City Missionary before his arrival in the colony in 1860, led Protestants in the establishment of the interdenominational Sydney City Mission which aimed at conversion and moral reformation as well as the relief of poverty.⁴ Some Anglicans also sought to reach working men in the 1860s through open-air preaching and special working men's services at St Barnabas, Glebe, and St Luke's, Sussex

1

Dr J.D. Bollen states that 'The Absence of urban working-classes from public worship was a perennial concern after 1890'. It was, however, a burning question in the 1880s and even earlier. Apart from attempts to reach the working classes in the 1850s and 1860s, the concern of the British churches to attract the working classes, which Professor K.S. Inglis has so well expounded, was reflected in colonial churches in the 1880s. See J.D. Bollen, 'The Protestant Churches and the Social Reform Movement in New South Wales, 1890-1910', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1965, p.7; K.S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes, London, 1963.

2

Minutes of the Committee of the City Mission in Connection with the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney, 10 October 1849. Congregational Union Papers.

3

See Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.2, 1788-1850, I-Z, p.333.

4

Ten Decades: A History of Sydney City Mission, Sydney, 1962.

Street.¹ During the 1870s urban church extension absorbed the interest of churchmen more, but from 1880 there was renewed interest in attracting the working classes to the churches. As the suburbs grew the wealthier middle classes moved away from the inner city and the congregations in city churches diminished; this movement exposed to the eyes of city ministers a large and irreligious urban proletariat who, if there were means to attract them, could replenish their depleted congregations. Moreover, the Advocate warned that it was neither right nor safe to leave them without the gospel.²

The alienation of the working classes was peculiarly a Protestant problem in the 1880s. Protestants thought that the Catholic Church held its working classes, and the Freeman's Journal confident this was true, stated that Protestants had lost their poor because of the affectation and worldliness of their preachers.³ James Jefferis, however, observed that Protestants, unlike

1

Robert Withycombe, 'Church of England Attitudes to Social Questions in the Diocese of Sydney, c. 1856-1866', Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings, Vol.47, Pt.2, June 1961, pp.106-11.

2

Advocate, 18 September 1886.

3

F.J., 2 June 1888: Ironically, the same anxiety overtook Catholics in the next century; Pius XI declared in 1925, 'the great scandal of our time is that the Church has lost the working class'. Cit. Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, p.260.

Catholics, could not command attendance.¹ But some Protestant churches had working men in their congregations; a number of miners at Newcastle and Broken Hill were Methodist, especially of the Methodist sects, and there were some of other denominations.² Moreover, Dr Jefferis stated from his Pitt Street pulpit in November 1889 that the alienation of working men from the churches was exaggerated; he claimed that there were working men and their families before him in the pews that night. Some people, he said, could not see a working man unless he was in working clothes or poorly dressed, but in colonial society one did not see 'a remarkable difference...between the [Sunday] dress of a well-to-do mechanic or artisan or even the labourer and those engaged in commercial or trading pursuits'. Most churchmen, however, referred more to the unskilled workman, the poor of the city living in depressed and degrading conditions. But it was rare enough to find even the respectable working man in church as Warlow Davies admitted in 1881,³ and Jefferis

1

J. Jefferis, 'The Alienation of Working Men from the Churches', D.T., 12 November 1889.

2

R.B. Walker, 'Presbyterian Church and People in the colony of New South Wales in the late Nineteenth Century', Journal of Religious History, vol.2, no.1, June 1962, p.56.

3

He described the thrifty industrious artisan who owned his own cottage, was a good father and neighbour, but who mostly regarded religion as 'mummery' and 'cant', though he might permit his wife and children to attend church and even call for the minister in time of sickness or accident. Congregational Year Book, 1882, p.45. George Campbell, Chairman of the Congregational Union in 1884 lamented that so many clean-living skilled workmen should be hostile or antagonistic to the churches. Congregational Year Book, 1885, p.66.

readily admitted that Protestant churchgoers were mostly of 'the respectable burgher class'. He attributed the absence of working men firstly to class antagonism and poor relationships between employer and employee; he thought it unlikely that men estranged on week-days would join in religious fellowship on Sundays. He attacked pew renting and condemned the exclusiveness of churchgoers to strangers. A successful preacher himself, he also blamed unattractive services and dull, cold preaching.¹ It was easy enough to blame the preachers, but pew renting and the social distinctions it implied was a more serious reason. Some leading churchmen saw this custom as a large factor in the absence of working men from the churches.

Opposition to Pew Renting

Rented pews were found in many churches, Protestant and Catholic, in the colony in the nineteenth century; the custom came from England where it had prevailed from around the seventeenth century.² Georgian churches

1

J. Jefferis, 'The Alienation of the Working Men from the Churches', a sermon in a series, 'Problems that Perplex Us', D.T., 12 November 1889. Dr De Witt Talmage, a distinguished preacher of Brooklyn, New York, also thought that some exaggerated the alienation from the churches, and claimed that better services and preaching would fill the empty pews. Sermon cit. Advocate, 18 March 1882.

2

Owen Chadwick, op.cit., pp.329-31. Chadwick states that in Catholic Churches in Britain seats were free, although educated Catholics objected to sitting among the unclean poor. Catholic Churches in Sydney and the larger towns of the colony, however, rented pews.

generally had high-backed box pews with doors and latches; colonial churches did not exhibit monstrosities such as the Bute family pew at Luton, which hid the chancel from the nave,¹ but box pews were installed in most Anglican churches and in some others.² Christ Church, St Lawrence, consecrated in 1845, was the first Anglican Church to build low back open pews, but three quarters of the sittings were still rented.³ Lower open pews replaced the old box pews in most churches around the turn of the century, or the doors were removed from the old pews.⁴ Benches at the back or sides of the church accommodated the poor. Bourke's Church Act, which accepted rented pews as the norm, stipulated that at least one-sixth of the seats in the church were to be free for the poor.⁵ But the free seats were often placed so close together that they prevented the worshippers from kneeling for prayer.⁶ Moreover, pewholders provided

1

See Owen Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.520.

2

Mary Gilmore, Old Days, Old Ways, Australia, 1934, pp. 69-70; K.J. Cable, St James' Church, King Street, Sydney, 1819-1894, pt.II, *loc.cit.*, p.357.

3

Laura Mary Allen, A History of Christ Church, S. Laurence, Sydney [1939] p.17.

4

K.J. Cable, St James' Church, Sydney, 1819-1894, Part I, Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, vol.50, no.4. October 1964, pp.241-2. The old pews remain in St Matthew's Windsor, but the doors have been removed.

5

7 William IV, No.3.

6

Bishop Pearson, Address, P.S.D.N., 1885, p.17.

their own prayer books and hymnals as well as cushions for kneeling and sitting; it was rare to make these provisions for visitors.¹ Pewholders guarded their rights jealously and should they arrive late and find a stranger in their pew some would insist, not always politely, that he move. Opponents of the custom quoted instances where visitors had been offended by the treatment resentful pewholders had given them.² Rents ranged from ten to 30 shillings per annum; in 1880 Bishop Barker considered one pound per sitting the fair and average rental.³ Churches in wealthier suburbs charged the higher rental and had more appropriated than free sittings,⁴ but a few churches in poorer parts of the city were entirely free.⁵ But by 1880 no church had five-

1

In 1882 Bishop Pearson suggested that every church should provide a few hymn books and prayer books for the use of strangers. He had been distressed to see how many visitors were without hymn books. He thought the provision of books 'an inexpensive courtesy' which would make them feel welcome. (Address, P.S.D.N., 1882, pp.28-9): A visitor to Pitt Street Congregational Church in 1890 complained that many in the congregation were without hymn books. 'One of the Visitors', Independent, 15 May 1890.

2

'A Stranger and Ye took me not in'. S.M.H., 17 February 1880; Advocate, 9 May 1885, 15 August 1885, 'A Methodist', ibid., 31 May 1890, 'Another Old Methodist', ibid., 14 June 1890.

3

Australian Churchman, 4 November 1880.

4

St John's, Darlinghurst; St Mark's Darling Point.

5

E.g. St Barnabas, Glebe; St Luke's, Sussex St, St Peter's, Woolloomooloo; SS Simon and Jude, Campbell Street. Ecclesiastical Statistics, Easter, 1886, P.S.D.S., 1886. This was the first time these figures were published.

sixths of its sitting appropriated; in 1886 half of the sitting in St James' Sydney, two-thirds of St Mark's, Darling Point, and slightly more than three-quarters of St John's, Darlinghurst were rented. Though there were a few rented seats in St Andrew's Cathedral it was practically free. Miss Ruth Teale found that pew rents were a negligible factor in smaller, especially newer, parishes in the diocese of Bathurst.¹ Twenty three per cent of all Presbyterian sittings in 1880 were rented, but only 37 out of 64 charges rented pews.² The Wesleyan Church did not provide figures for rented and free sittings in its statistical returns, and information is not available for Catholic churches in the 1880s. Congregationalists in the colony had largely abolished pew rents by 1880. 'The great event of the year has been the introduction of the purely voluntary system', wrote Jefferis in his pastoral letter for 1880.³ But Congregational churches still allocated family pews and provided their occupants with weekly 'freewill offering' envelopes. At least one church, however, stipulated that occupants had no exclusive claim and asked them to make the accommodation of the church available to all who desired to worship there; the church building

¹ Ruth Teale, 'By Hook and By Crook', p.87.

² Statistical Report, M.P.G.A., 1880, pp.71-2.

³ Year Book of the Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney, 1879-80, p.7.

existed for the public worship of God, not private convenience.¹

The first attack on pew rents came from J.C. Corlette who arrived in the colony in 1863, influenced by the campaign for 'free and open' churches in Britain.² But few took notice of Corlette's novel notions. But by 1880 there was growing discontent over pew-renting among Anglicans. The Australian Churchman, a High Church journal, took up the cause of 'free and open' churches in 1880; it produced figures to show that offerings per sitting in free churches exceeded combined offerings and rents in other churches.³ There was a dispute over pew rents at All Saints Petersham in 1880; the majority of parishioners wanted free seating but a strong minority stood out for rented sittings. The parish appealed to Bishop Barker who recommended that half the seats should be free, the other half rents at one pound per sitting with free and rented seats placed alternately. He also advised the churchwardens to fill all vacant places after the bell

1

Year Book, Woollahra (Point Piper Road) Congregational Church, 1880, p.114; see also Year Books, Burwood Congregational Church, 1880, pp.111-24; Petersham Congregational Church, 1881 pp.4-5; Redfern Congregational Church Manual, 1885, pp.4, 17. Newton Congregational Church did not decide until 1889 to abolish pew renting in favour of voluntary offerings. A Brief History of Newton Congregational Church: Issued to Commemorate the One Hundreth Anniversary, 1856-1956 (not paginated).

2

Corlette wrote 'bitter letters' to the Church of England Chronicle, see Robert Withycombe, loc.cit., p.106: on the campaign for 'free and open' churches in Britain see K.S. Inglis, op.cit., pp.48-57.

3

Australian Churchman, 14 October 1880.

had ceased to ring.¹ In 1882 Bishop Marsden voiced his hope that one day offerings would be large enough to dispense with pew rents in the diocese of Bathurst.² But more vehement opposition came from Bishop Pearson, a Broad Churchman, who had been minister of a church in England which became free during his incumbency. He argued that pew rents discouraged generosity and were contrary to the Bible, Catholic usage and English common law.³ Bishop Barry, though not as militant in his opposition, agreed with Pearson's judgment.⁴ The most persistent opposition came from H.L. Jackson, another Broad Churchman and incumbent of the fashionable St James' Church, Sydney. In 1886 he asked the Sydney synod to declare itself against pew rents; he wished 'to assert the Democratic character of the church by making the House of God in every parish free and open to all'.⁵ But the synod would not condemn pew renting; it rejected an amendment that free seating should be available in equally good positions to rented seats and declined to express an opinion on the matter.⁶ Jackson, who declared

1

Ibid., 4 November 1880.

2

Address, M.S.D.B., 1882, pp.11-12.

3

Address, P.S.D.N., 1884, pp.22-5.

4

Address, Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1884, pp.11-12: see also Alfred Barry, A Charge delivered at His Primary Visitation of the Diocese, pp.11-12.

5

P.S.D.S., 1886, p.81.

6

Ibid., p.84.

that there would be no proper church life until the churches were entirely free and open,¹ continued unsuccessfully to secure the authority of the synod in his campaign.² Neither was he able to persuade his own church to abolish pew rents; but he held this goal before the church,³ and discouraged the practice. By 1891 the proportion of rented seats had fallen from 50 to 15 per cent of the sittings and were rented at an average of one pound instead of ten shillings a sitting.⁴

Some defenders of pew rents argued that the 'Church Act', in this case the English Church Temporalities Act, 1837,⁵ was an insuperable obstacle to the free system. This was the argument the churchwardens of St John's, Ashfield, used at the Easter Vestry meeting in 1884 when Dr Corlette proposed that the church should become 'free and open'; but the churchwardens also feared the financial consequences.⁶ But these appeals to the 'Church Act' in defence of pew rents irritated Bishop Pearson. He asked

1 S.M.H., 17 April 1888.

2 P.S.D.S., 1887, p.101; 1888, p.65.

3 St James' Kalendar and Monthly Record, February 1889.

4 Ecclesiastical Returns, Easter, 1886, 1891, P.S.D.S., 1886, 1891. I have calculated the average rent of sittings from the published figures and pew rents received.

5 8 Wm IV, No.8.

6 S.M.H., 8 May 1884.

What was there so specially bright and promising in the condition of the Church of England in the eighth year of King William IV that we should be forbidden all development from that date, and all return to the methods of an earlier time?¹

Although there were in fact, some 'free and open churches' the 'Church Act' of 1837 took no account of them. It provided that electors at vestry meetings should be pewholders, seatholders or subscribers of one pound or more; thus communicants who did not rent were unenfranchised while a pewholder might have as many as six votes. There was some discussion of a 'safe and useful substitution' for the Church Act during the 1870s, but the reformers desired to remove ambiguities concerning church property and the elections of churchwardens where there were no pewholders rather than to remove any legal sanction for pew renting.² However, proposals to repeal the Church Act lapsed temporarily when the dioceses of Bathurst and Grafton and Armidale applied independently to parliament for legislation to deal with property in their respective dioceses.³ But the movement for repeal of the Church Act revived in the 1880s. In 1883 the Sydney Synod sent a recommendation to Provincial Synod for the repeal of the Church Act, but in 1884 it rejected a proposal to remove all reference to pewholders and

1

Address, P.S.D.N., 1884, p.26.

2

See Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1872, pp.8-9; 1875, pp.22, 26; 1879, p.33; P.S.D.G., 1868, pp.16, 20-1; 1871, p.31.

3

Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1879, p.33.

subscribers.¹ Bishop Barry advocated the repeal of the Act in his first address to the Provincial Synod; among other things he regretted the prominence it gave to pew renting.² But this session made no decision to seek the repeal of the Act. Barry was more urgent at the next Provincial Synod. The dioceses of Newcastle, Sydney, and Bathurst were pressing for repeal; Barry stated that the Act presupposed state aid, made no provision for 'free and open' churches and left the qualification of other than pewholders 'dangerously vague'.³ Apart from the lack of provision for the election of churchwardens in 'free and open' churches there was growing opinion that all communicants over 21 years of age, whether pewholders or not, should vote at vestry meetings. The liberal Church of England Guardian thought it 'a strange anomaly and a standing disgrace to the Church' that a pewholder should have six votes, while a more regular attender who contributed to the offertory but did not rent a seat should have no vote at all.⁴

The Provincial Synod in 1887 appointed a committee to prepare a scheme for the repeal of the Church Act.⁵

¹ P.S.D.S., 1883, p.41; 1884, p.57.

² Address, Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1884, pp.11-12.

³ Address, Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1887, pp.15-16.

⁴ Church of England Guardian (hereafter Guardian), 14 April 1888.

⁵ Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1887, p.27.

But in 1888 Bishop Barry, uncertain that the Provincial Synod would be able to devise an ordinance satisfactory to all parts of the colony, had the Sydney Synod pass a provisional church ordinance for the diocese.¹ However, the Provincial Synod did pass an ordinance for parochial government in the province in 1892,² and in 1895 passed an ordinance to seek the repeal of the Church Act.³ Both the Sydney and the provincial ordinances provided for pew renting, but they also provided for 'free and open' churches in as much as persons attending for three months were considered 'occupiers of seats' and were qualified to vote at vestry meetings. The ordinances also required that at least one-third of the seats in every church should be free; this was a safe provision for few churches could rent as many as two-thirds of their sittings. And in 1889

1

P.S.D.S., Special Synod, December 1888, pp.19-20. An Ordinance for making provision for procuring lands and for the building and maintaining of Churches, Parsonages, and Schools, and for the management of Glebes and Burial Grounds, and for determining the mode of election of Churchwardens and defining and regulating their powers. Ibid., pp.38-51.

2

An Ordinance for making provision for Parochial Government and for the Management of Church Property in Parishes and for other matters. Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1892, Appendix XXIII, pp.161-74.

3

The ordinance to repeal the Church Acts (including the Church of England Property Management Act, Private Act of New South Wales, 1866) lapsed at the second reading in 1892 for want of a quorum. The following Provincial Synod passed it, and in 1897 parliament repealed the Church Acts. Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1892, pp.88-9; 1895, p.45; Church Acts Repealing Act, 1897, Act No.16.

the Sydney Synod agreed with the principle that all seats in Anglican churches should 'be considered free after the commencement of Divine Service'.¹

Presbyterians and Wesleyans were no more willing than Anglicans to abolish pew rents although some objected to them; but there was no serious attempt to abolish them. Many regarded them as necessary adjuncts to church finance since 'liberal and systematic giving [was] a grace apparently hard to cultivate'.² However, the proportion of rented sittings in Presbyterian churches fell from 23 per cent in 1880 to 18 per cent in 1890;³ J.M. Ross, the General Agent of the Church, thought the custom was dying out in Presbyterianism, but in 1900 there was a marked increase in appropriated sittings; some churches, however, allocated seats without rents, as in Congregational churches.⁴ Wesleyans also regarded pew rents as a financial necessity; in 1876 the conference, dismayed that liberal grants from the Sustentation and Extension Society had prompted some trustees to abolish pew rents, advocated a regular system of pew rents in all churches.⁵ In 1877 the conference resolved that churches which did not take weekly collections and pew rents should not receive a full subsidy to meet any deficiency in the

1

P.S.D.S., 1889, p.61.

2

Statistical Report, M.P.G.A., 1881, p.87.

3

Table for 1880-1890 in M.P.G.A., 1891, p.106.

4

M.P.G.A., 1901, p.124.

5

M.W.C., 1876, p.22. The conference reaffirmed this resolution annually up to 1891. M.W.C., 1891, p.76.

minister's stipend.¹ These decisions gave official sanction to the pew renting system, and the Advocate in 1884 thought that it ill became Bishop Pearson, situated in 'the Episcopalian paradise of New South Wales', to inveigh against pew rents: it defended seat rents as 'a god-send, and a happy solution' to churches which would face 'insuperable' financial difficulties without them.² But the journal did condemn the rudeness of some pewholders to strangers, and opened its columns to opponents of the system.³ In 1890 it also publicised Hugh Price Hughes' opposition to pew rents which was a feature of the Forward Movement in British Methodism, but it did not advocate the abolition of the system in the colony.⁴ Most Wesleyans remained convinced that pew rents

1

M.W.C., 1877, p.17. It reaffirmed this resolution up to 1889. In 1890 the clause re collections and pew rents was omitted but applicants for a subsidy were required to submit full details of finances raised in the circuit. M.W.C., 1890, p.37. 'The Rev. William Schofield's Free and Perpetual Loan Fund for the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the colony of New South Wales' also required trustees applying for loans to show that they had instituted pew rents as well as other means to raise money. M.W.C., 1894, p.63.

2

Advocate, 17 May 1884.

3

The Advocate claimed that in one country church a pewholder, who objected to strangers using his pew, stuffed the cushion with thorns and stayed away purposely so that strangers might use it. The editor recommended severe punishment for the offender, but not 'free and open' churches. Advocate, 15 August 1885; see also 9 May 1885, 31 May 1890, 14 June 1890.

4

Advocate, 11 January 1890.

were a financial necessity, and in 1891 increased income from pew rents relieved the financial difficulties of the Bourke Street Wesleyan Church.¹

Information on pew renting in Catholic churches is scarce but they used the system, though perhaps not to the same extent as Protestants; it seemed to have aroused no opposition, although the Advocate claimed that a newly-arrived Continental Catholic had left the fold for a Congregational church after pewholders had treated him discourteously in St Mary's Cathedral.² One irate seatholder, who objected to concerts in the cathedral to raise money, thought it particularly unjust that seatholders should have to pay to attend the concert, having already paid rent for their seat.³

A concern for the working classes lay behind the opposition to pew rents, but not all churchmen agreed that it was a cause of alienation or that 'free and open' churches would attract working men. As early as 1880 the Australian Churchman, though opposed to pew rents, recognised that 'free and open' churches in Britain had

1

J.S. Austin, op.cit., p.323. Renate Howe states that in 1891 the Victorian Conference authorised trusts to throw open the churches at night but she doubts whether many took advantage of this concession. 'Pew rents provided a steady means of income and in most churches only a few pews at the back were made available to the lower classes'. Renate Howe, op.cit., pp.106-7.

2

Advocate, 9 May 1885.

3

'Simon Magus', S.M.H., 23 January 1890.

not attracted greater congregations.¹ Zachary Barry denied that abolition of rents would increase attendances; he described the movement as 'a fad and no more'.² The 'free and open' churches in Sydney were no more proof of the principle than those in England. Pew renting was not the cause of the alienation of the working classes, but it was a symptom of the exclusiveness of some middle class churches.³ Pewholders preferred to have a familiar place in the sanctuary guaranteed for their occupation, and sentiment often attached to the family pew. But this did not imply indifference to the working classes, although, admittedly, the alienation of the working classes exercised mostly the clergy and a few laymen. Most churchgoers, however, would have desired the conversion of the masses. But it was one thing to wish the workers Christian; it was another to wish them sitting beside you in the pew. Standards of personal hygiene among the poorer working classes in the nineteenth century were low and middle class folk objected to close contact.⁴ Moreover, an unskilled worker would have felt as uncomfortable in the middle class atmosphere as the doctor, banker or draper might have been to have the labourer at prayer beside him. Some churchmen, therefore, were convinced that it was necessary to provide different places and other modes of worship to reach working classes.

¹ Australian Churchman, 9 December 1880.

² Zachary Barry, S.M.H., 29 May 1888.

³ K.S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes, p.57.

⁴ K.S. Inglis, *op.cit.*, p.106; Owen Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.330.

Missions to the Working Classes.

Mission rooms were necessary to reach 'the tens of thousands' who were indifferent to the claims of Christianity and unaccustomed to conventional worship, argued Dean Cowper in 1881;¹ and some thought that laymen might do more good in the slums than parsons.² There were bands of laymen who preached in the poorer parts of the city around 1880; the Pitt Street Christian Instruction Society conducted services at the Sydney Soup Kitchen and the Female Refuge as well as assisting with the work at Sussex Street Mission³ and Wentworth Lane. But the impressive operations of the Salvation Army in 1883 inspired both admiration and emulation among the churches, notwithstanding some strong objections to its methods.⁴ George Lewis, a lay mission worker, warned the Congregational Jubilee Conference in 1883 that

1

Address, P.S.D.S., 1881, p.19.

2

See 'Conference on 'Lay Agency, and on Reaching those who live in Neglect of Christian Worship', Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Sydney, 1883, pp.166-185.

3

See below, p.171

4

James Jefferis observed the Salvation Army and followed them through the streets of Bristol, his home city, during his visit to Britain in 1881. In 1882 before the Army had reached Australia he lectured to the Congregational Union on its strengths and weaknesses; he recognised that it had presented the gospel to the heathen as no other agency had done but criticised its autocracy and military model, its flippancy and irreverence, and the prominence it gave to young women who retailed their conversion from sinful ways before lewd men. Congregational Year Book, 1883, pp.69-76.

unless the churches expanded their evangelistic activity and used laymen the work would be left to the Blue Ribbon and Salvation Armies.¹ A Wesleyan layman stated that the Salvation Army was simply 'the old Methodist plan'; he hoped that Wesleyans were not too respectable to do this work.² W.G. Taylor showed that at least one Wesleyan would do it,³ and Bishop Barry did not think this work beyond the Church of England. At the synod in July 1885 he suggested that the Church Army, an agency founded by Prebendary Wilson Carlile in 1882, which 'frankly copied the methods of the Salvation Army...',⁴ might be used for a mission to the working classes in Sydney. 'Rough and homely work', Barry said, could best be done 'by rough and homely hands'.⁵ Later that year a handful of enthusiasts, all Evangelicals, attempted, with Barry's approval but without the sanction of synod, to introduce the Church Army to Sydney. On 24 October Bishop Barry presided at the ceremony to lay the memorial stones for the Church of England Mission Hall in Ultimo, to be the headquarters for the Church Army in Sydney. The Church Army corps, led by Captain

1

The Blue Ribbon Army was a temperance movement which sought the reclamation of drunkards among the poor. Its methods were similar to the Salvation Army's.

2

S.M.H., 2 February 1883.

3

See below, pp.173-4.

4

J.W.C. Wand, Anglicanism in History and Today, London, 1961, pp.180-1.

5

Address, P.S.D.S., 1885, p.29.

W.M. Briggs, formerly of the Salvation Army, marched with a band from St Bartholemew's Church, Pyrmont, to the site in Harris Street, Ultimo, bearing the banner

'Church Army, No Cross, No Crown,
Pyrmont and Ultimo Corps'.

At the ceremony Barry gave his 'very warmest sympathy and most thorough sanction' to the work of the Church Army. He hoped that many lives would be reclaimed and won to Christ by this agency.¹

The Church Army, however, was unpopular with many Anglicans, particularly High Churchmen. One correspondent in the Australian Churchman declared that the Army at Ultimo was making a mockery of Church of England services, and another alleged that Briggs was a rejected Salvation Army Officer who had caused great trouble to the Anglican priest at Maitland while he was with the Salvation Army.² In late December the Australian Churchman pronounced the Church Army at Ultimo a failure. It considered it an unsuitable agency for a district consisting mainly of tradespeople with a few mechanics who were as independent as the richest squatter. It questioned whether the agency should be tried again, for it thought there were better ways of reaching the indifferent than

by braying trumpets and trombones,
parading the streets at 5 o'clock a.m.,
and disturbing the rest, not only of
the ungodly, but of the righteous also.³

1

S.M.H., 26 October 1885.

2

'Ultimo', Australian Churchman, 29 October 1885;
'Anglicanus' ibid., 5 November 1885.

3

Australian Churchman, 24 December 1885.

The clergy in Sydney discussed the Church Army at a quiet day on 18 December. A few Evangelicals defended it warmly while C.F. Garnsey, one of the leading Anglo-Catholics, and Dr J.C. Corlette opposed the Army as a mission agency.¹ No decision was made until early January when the clergy, though not unanimous, agreed to form a Church of England Mission Society but rejected the proposal that it should take the form and order of the Church Army.² Thus the first attempt to introduce the Church Army to Australia ended ingloriously.³ At the synod in 1886 Barry confessed his disappointment that the diocese had not adopted the Church Army. He was not ashamed to acknowledge that the Church of England could learn some lessons from the Salvation Army, on which it could improve by its 'sounder doctrine and more varied organisation'.⁴ But few others were so willing to learn from the Army. However, the clergy had agreed on the need

1

Australian Churchman, 24 December 1885.

2

Ibid., 8 January 1885.

3

The Church Army in Australia dates its beginning in 1934 at Newcastle. Its publications record an unsuccessful attempt to establish the Church Army in Footscray, Melbourne, in 1904, but the introduction of the Church Army in Sydney in 1885 seems to have been forgotten. J.S. Cowland, Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory, Newcastle, 1946; A.W. Batley, Soldiers of the Cross: The Story of the Church Army in Australia, Revised Edition, Newcastle, 1959.

4

Address, P.S.D.S., 1886, pp.25-6.

for special mission work in the city and there were other lay agencies in operation at St Peter's, Woolloomooloo, St Stephen's, Newton, St Andrew's Cathedral and Christ Church, St Laurence.¹ In 1884 C.F. Garnsey had opened a mission room at Darling Harbour 'to carry out some sort of practical and evangelizing work amongst the poor and neglected in the slums of the parish'. It continued for about 11 years, providing a variety of club and social activities as well as religious services.²

In 1880 Pitt Street Congregational Church, apparently not expecting the abolition of pew rents to bring great numbers of working men to its services, purchased the property of the Sussex Street Mission from the trustees of Nathaniel Pidgeon as a base for its 'evangelical efforts among the neglected poor'.³ In 1883 converts at Sussex Street were made members of the Pitt Street Church but they celebrated communion in their own chapel with George Lewis as their 'spiritual teacher'. In 1885 fifty members formed a fellowship with Lewis as their pastor, and in 1886 the premises were transformed from 'an ugly mass of brickwork to a well-proportioned and pleasing Gothic edifice'.⁴ The Pitt Street Church also

¹ Address, P.S.D.S., 1886, p.26.

² Laura Mary Allen, *op.cit.*, pp.57-8.

³ Year Book, Congregational Church, Pitt Street, Sydney, 1879-80, p.6, and also an account of the Mission in the Pitt Street Church Manual, 1890, pp.28-9.

⁴ Church Manual, 1890, pp.28-9; A.C.W., 26 February 1886.

supported a chapel in Wentworth Lane and in 1889 purchased land in Barcom Glen,¹ for another city mission chapel.² These were small enterprises; they did not draw great crowds but they provided a homely fellowship for the poor who aspired to religious respectability, and the social life they sustained as well as their distribution of charity ministered some comfort and brightness to the depressed. The Wesleyans, however, developed the mission hall on a much larger scale.

By 1880 the York Street Wesleyan Church had lost a number of its well-to-do members who had moved to the suburbs. Wesleyans debated the future of this once fashionable centre of colonial Methodism. At the conference in 1882 there were suggestions for the sale of the church and the establishment of mission rooms, or the employment of topical preachers, but the conference supported George Woolnough's proposal to set apart the second minister at York Street for 'home mission work... among the large masses not reached by the use of ordinary means'.³ During 1882 this church attempted to reach the

1

Barcom Glen was within the area of lower Paddington.

2

There may have been other mission agencies attached to city churches: and as well there was the work of the Sydney City Mission and the Ladies Evangelistic Association in the slums of the city. In 1881 Roman Catholics established the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Sydney and Cardinal Moran encouraged its work; however, it did not seek to evangelise the poor but devoted itself to the relief of poverty in the city.

3

S.M.H., 28 January 1882.

city poor through its younger second minister, C.W. Graham, and by throwing the church open on Sunday evenings for informal services with hearty singing.¹ This increased the evening congregations but in January 1883 the conference relieved York Street of its second married minister since the movement of Methodist families away from the city had made the support of two married men precarious.² This time the conference decided to try John Osborne, a topical preacher, with a probationer to assist him. Osborne, aware of the attraction of freethought lectures, instituted lectures for working men on Sunday evenings;³ the music was refined rather than hearty. Osborne gathered his own following but was too controversial for the conference which regarded his ministry as a failure.⁴ The conference abandoned the idea of an intellectual ministry at York Street, and in 1884 it appointed W.G. Taylor, a keen evangelist, with a 'free hand to do what "grace, grit or grumpton" might

1 Advocate, 12 August, 16 September 1882.

2 S.M.H., 31 January 1883.

3 Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 14 April 1883.

4 John Osborne proved too liberal in theology and toward Roman Catholicism. After a trial for erroneous views, in which he was acquitted but cautioned, Osborne resigned from York Street, took up journalism and founded the Christian Platform. See Echo., 25 May 1883; Presbyterian, 28 July 1883; S.M.H., 16 February 1884 and J.E. Carruthers, Lights in the Southern Sky, Sydney, 1924, p.107; see also Chapter 4.

suggest'.¹ Taylor soon made York Street a centre of evangelistic activity. He named it the Central Methodist Mission, though he was to wait five years for the name and status of the mission to be confirmed. Taylor did not wait for the empty pews to fill but built a 'gospel chariot' equipped with an organ and conducted services on the Town Hall corner. He met some opposition at first from those who thought his methods vulgar, but he had learnt from the Salvation Army. His open air services attracted many to the services at York Street and the success justified his unusual methods. But the Forward Movement in English Methodism was to influence colonial Methodism further, and in particular Taylor's mission at York Street.

In 1885 the British Conference authorised the foundation of missions in East London and Manchester; it established the Central London Mission in 1886 and in 1887 appointed Hugh Price Hughes, a leader of the Forward Movement, superintendent of the West London Mission; it also accepted Hughes' terms, which it had rejected in 1885, that he should be free of responsibility to circuit and synod and from the itinerancy rule.² The founders of these missions hoped to attract the poor by simpler services and brighter music, and to elevate them through

1

W.G. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.132; J. Colwell, Illustrated History of Methodism, Sydney, 1904, p.532.

2

K.S. Inglis, *op.cit.*, pp.91-3; Neville Hicks, 'The Establishment of a Central Methodist Mission in Adelaide', Unpublished MS., University of Adelaide, 1966, pp.5-10.

social and educational entertainments on week-nights.¹ Wesleyans in Manchester demolished their central chapel, long deserted by its former respectable congregation, and in 1887 opened a new building on the site called the Central Hall; it had no pews and was built to accommodate week-day clubs and meetings as well as Sunday worship. The Central Hall was the base for the Wesleyan mission to the working classes in Manchester.² In the West End Mission Hughes built St James' Hall, another non-ecclesiastical building for its work.³ The central church in Sydney was already moving in this direction.

In 1886 the conference decided to demolish York Street Church and to erect connexional offices and a hall in its place. The 'farewell service' was held in the old building on Monday 15 November 1886,⁴ and on Friday 19 October 1888 the President of the Conference dedicated the Centenary Hall built at a cost of £30,000; it seated 1,750 people.⁵ The status of the charge, however, was in doubt.

In 1886 J.A. Nolan had asked the conference to decide whether York Street was a circuit church or a mission, but the conference deferred the question and

1

K.S. Inglis, *op.cit.*, pp.91-3.

2

Ibid.

3

Neville Hicks, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13.

4

S.M.H., 16 November 1886.

5

S.M.H., 20, 22 October 1888; W.G. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.139.

postponed it again in 1887 and in 1888 to allow the Quarterly Meeting and the trustees to express their opinion.¹ But there was little doubt that York Street would follow the English precedent. In 1887 the conference sent Taylor to England to restore his health and to study the Forward Movement. He visited the Central Mission in Manchester and the West London Mission which greatly impressed him.² Moreover, the Australian General Conference said in its address to the British Conference in 1888 that colonial Methodism was carefully watching the mother church's attempts to overtake the appalling spiritual needs of great cities.³

In 1888, however, there was some opposition to the establishment of a mission at York Street. George Brown, General Secretary of Foreign Missions, opposed the idea of a mission to the working classes because there were also men of culture in the vicinity who wanted good preaching and something better than Sankey's hymns and brass bands. A layman retorted that 'the souls of men in fustian were as valuable as those of the rich'. George Martin opposed the idea of a mission that was not a circuit, but J.E. Carruthers argued that they were now committed to the idea of a mission and if they followed Hughes' pattern in the West End Mission they could cater for culture in the morning, for working men in the afternoon, and have evangelistic services with brass

1

S.M.H., 3 February 1886; M.W.C., 1887, p.83; 1888, p.86.

2

W.G. Taylor, op.cit., pp.285-7.

3

Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference, 1888, p.58.

bands at night.¹ However, the conference delayed its decision until 1889, after the Centenary Hall was opened; it recognised York Street as the Sydney Central Mission, and included the Princes Street Church in the mission which it exempted from circuit and itinerancy rules. The Centenary Hall was the base for its operations. It appointed Taylor, then in charge of the Wesleyan Church, William Street, Woolloomooloo, superintendent, and designated Principal J.H. Fletcher and George Kelynack, a gifted orator, as morning preachers.² In 1890 Charles Prescott, principal of the Wesleyan Ladies College, was appointed another morning preacher at the Mission;³ Fletcher died that year.

Taylor took charge of the Mission in 1889 and soon established a Seaman's Mission and an Evangelists' Training Institute which sent teams of young men to visit homes in the slums, hospitals, wharflabourers, cabmen, and to hold meetings in factories by day; at night these men took part in outdoor evangelism or meetings at the Mission. Ebenezer Vickery, a Methodist philanthropist, supported this programme and gave generously to the whole work of the mission.⁴ In 1890, while other denominations

¹ S.M.H., 3 February 1888.

² M.W.C., 1889, pp.12, 104-5.

³ M.W.C., 1890, p.12.

⁴ W.G. Taylor, op.cit., pp.195-206, 208.

debated the place of women in church work,¹ Taylor introduced the 'Sisters of the People', modelled on Hughes' sisterhood in London, and dedicated to a ministry of comfort and redemption among the poor and degraded of the city's slums.² The Advocate was proud that Sydney Methodism had the first institution of this kind in Australia, but it assured its readers that it was nothing like the sisterhoods of Rome; they would work to raise the fallen and save the lost without religious seclusion.³

1.

Anglicans in Australia discussed the introduction of deaconesses or sisterhoods during the 1880s. Bishop Barry did not see why Roman Catholics should have 'a monopoly of this great evangelistic and benificent instrument in the service of God'. He thought that women could work effectively among the poor and degraded of the city. A committee, much to Barry's regret, recommended an institute of deaconesses, but suggested that sisterhoods be left to private initiative. The synod, however, resolved that it was undesirable to establish sisterhoods in the diocese. (P.S.D.S., 1885, pp.28, 62, 128-21.) Christ Church, St Laurence, had 'Sisters of the Church' at work in 1884 (Laura Mary Allen, op.cit., p.58). In 1891 the General Synod of Australia decided in favour of both deaconesses and sisterhoods, although there was still opposition to sisterhoods. (Proceedings, General Synod, 1891, p.60). Few really doubted the value of women in work among the poor and degraded, but many Protestants saw sisterhoods only in terms of Catholic convents. Most Protestant denominations had Dorcas Societies which served for the poor, and some used voluntary women visitors, but Taylor's was the first Protestant sisterhood in Australia created for a ministry to the poor in the city.

2

Advocate, 9 August 1890; W.G. Taylor, op.cit., pp.207-12.

3

Advocate, 9 August 1890.

During the 1890s the Central Methodist Mission developed its social and philanthropic agencies alongside its evangelistic programme, and introduced the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, founded in England in 1875 by a Congregational deacon.¹ Taylor thought that it was not enough to arrange prayer meetings and open-air services. 'Whether wisely or unwisely', he stated apologetically, 'this Mission has sought to provide healthy entertainment for non-churchgoing people, and with the best of results'.²

The Central Methodist Mission was the institutional church par excellence. It established a Literary and Debating Society, a free reading room, a Boys' Institute and a Girls' Brigade, a gymnasium and several clubs for social and physical recreation.³ The churches had had Mutual Improvement and literary and debating societies at least since the 1860s; but in the 1880s there was a new emphasis on clubs and institutes to hold and attract

1

J.D. Bollen, op.cit., p.105; on the P.S.A. movement see K.S. Inglis, op.cit., pp.79-85. It is remarkable that the colonial churches did not adopt the P.S.A. earlier both to attract working men and to provide an antidote to the secular Sunday concerts (see Chapter 7). The A.C.W. commended the P.S.A. in 1888. A.C.W., 12 January 1888.

2

W.G. Taylor, op.cit., p.278. By 1890 the Salvation Army had also moved officially from a policy of strict evangelism to evangelism and social service, though not as far as I know, to the broader recreational and educational programme of the Methodist missions. See General Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out, London, [1890]; K.S. Inglis, op.cit., pp.194-212.

3

W.G. Taylor, op.cit., p.279.

youth to the churches. Bishop Barry encouraged the formation of Young Men's Associations in Anglican parishes and the Australian Christian World commended educational, social and sporting clubs to the churches; the Rev. A.J. Griffith foreshadowed the institutional church with its many and varied activities in a paper on 'Young Peoples Guilds' in 1889. He described the adoption of these guilds in English churches.¹ But these activities in suburban churches were designed to attract middle class youth. The Central Methodist Mission used them both to attract and elevate the poorer inhabitants of the crowded inner city.

The mission provided the pattern for future work among the working classes by the churches in Australia. In 1890 the New South Wales Conference constituted the Wesleyan Church in Balmain as the Montague Street Mission,² and Methodist in other cities transformed their central churches into similar missions.³ In September 1889 James Jefferis, discouraged by the immigration of middle class families to the suburbs and the unpleasant proximity of hotels and theatres to his church, proposed to his congregation the sale of the Pitt Street property to build a new church in the suburbs and a 'Memorial Hall' in

1

Record, 12 September 1884; A.C.W., 12 January 1888; Independent, 15 May 1889. See also, F.H. Stead, 'Young Peoples' Guilds', reprint from the Congregational Magazine, January 1889. National Library.

2

M.W.C., 1890, p.117.

3

Melbourne in 1893, Adelaide in 1905, Brisbane in 1907.

the city both for denominational meetings and as a centre for mission work among the poorer city population. But the church rejected Jefferis' plan; he had already asked for leave and pastoral absence, but on this decision he resigned the charge.¹ Primitive Methodists established a mission as Glebe in 1888² and in 1889 A.J. Clarke, minister of the Baptist Tabernacle, Burton Street, Woolloomooloo, established the Central Evangelistic Mission. Clarke continued to conduct morning services in the tabernacle, but, while church workers maintained the Sunday School and the evening services, he attempted to reach outsiders by preaching on the Domain on Sunday afternoons and through a less formal service in the New Masonic Hall at night.³

But the effective influence of the churches on urban proletariat in the 1880s was very limited. The Central Methodist Mission and the agencies of other denominations, including the Salvation Army, attracted only a minority of the poorer working classes of the city; they made little impact on sceptical artisans. But the missions and their workers brought comfort and hope to the sick, to prisoners and to degraded men and fallen women;

1

Minutes of Pitt Street Congregational Church Meeting, 5 September 1889. Jefferis himself was debilitated and his wife was recovering from diphtheria; these were the reasons given for his resignation (Presbyterian, 28 September 1889) but the church's rejection of his proposals obviously precipitated his decision.

2

Annual Assembly, S.M.H., 11 February 1889.

3

S.M.H., 19 January 1889; Baptist, February, March, April, August, 1889.

they brought brightness into the lives of women and children otherwise denied pleasure and entertainments; they showed the few they touched that someone cared, and that they had a friend to turn to in distress. It was small reward for the labour spent, but the missionaries had learned that there was 'more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance'.¹

But the righteous came too; the brighter services and entertainments attracted some lower middle class folk and the audiences at Pleasant Sunday Afternoons were largely respectable.² Nor did the majority of the Salvation Army's congregations come from the poor of the city. Both Jefferis in Bristol and a Presbyterian observer in Sydney found that respectably dressed 'church people' predominated in the meeting.³ Richard Sellors, President of the Wesleyan Conference 1886-7, deplored the fact that people who had been regular attenders at churches

in which the Gospel was faithfully and intelligently preached, should forsake them for services which were marked by so much that was foreign to the spirit of Christianity and in the highest sense emotional.

He denied that this was 'old-fashioned Methodism', and warned that intelligent members of the working classes

1

St Luke 15: 7.

2

Renate Howe, *op.cit.*, pp.120-1.

3

J. Jefferis, Congregational Year Book, 1883, p.74; Presbyterian, 17 February 1883.

would be revolted by these caricatures of Christianity.¹ There were some churchmen who knew that working men were attending freethought lectures in theatres, hearing persuasive speakers argue that the Bible was contradictory and unreliable, and that religion was outdated by modern scientific knowledge. Taylor, though well aware of this himself, held that converted and regenerated lives were 'Christianity's unanswerable argument';² but not all churchmen could ignore the secularist onslaught. While Taylor attacked the city with his aggressive evangelism others organised to defend the faith.

1

S.M.H., 19 January 1887.

2

W.G. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.165.

PART TWO

CHRISTIANITY AND CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

Chapter 4

Defending the Faith

The credibility of Christianity was being questioned for most of the nineteenth century. In the earlier years the science of geology contradicted the creation story in Genesis, as it was commonly understood, and in 1859 Charles Darwin's Origin of Species substituted natural selection for the Providence of God in nature, and literary and historical criticism of the Bible weakened the old belief in the infallible Book. The churches in New South Wales had to face these challenges to belief, particularly in the 1880s, for from the late 1870s freethought lecturers were proclaiming the incredibility of Christianity in Sunday night lectures which attracted large audiences, mostly of working men. Charles Bright,¹ probably of a Jewish family but educated as a Christian, came to Sydney from Melbourne in 1879 to lecture at the Theatre Royal, and in 1883 Thomas Walker,² a secularist who had been a

1

Charles Bright (1832-1903), born in Yorkshire, became a full-time freethought lecturer in 1874 after a short career in journalism and insurance. In 1880 he accepted the Australian press directorship of the Mutual Insurance Company of New York; he continued his freethought activities and lectured in other colonies and the United States as well as in Sydney, but after Sir Henry Parkes closed the theatres against secularists in 1887 he confined his lectures to the Hyde Park Unitarian Church; see Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-90, A-C, pp.231-2.

2

Thomas Walker (1858-1932) was born in Lancashire, and had spent some time in Canada and the United States before coming to Australia. For most of his early life he was a
(footnote continued on p.185)

lay preacher in one of the Methodist groups, and then a trance spiritualist lecturer, came to Sydney. They were the foremost freethought lecturers in Sydney.

Most secularists had an Evangelical Protestant background; some had been Sunday School teachers, lay preachers, theological students or ordained ministers.¹ They concentrated their fire on Protestantism exposing the contradictions within the Bible, its absurdity when read literally (and they would read it no other way), and the disagreement between Genesis and science. Their utterances disturbed many churchmen deeply, both because they seemed to threaten Christianity, and to question the integrity of its clerical profession.

(footnote 2 continued from p.184)

journalist and a lecturer. Between 1877 and 1882 he lectured in Australia, England and South Africa. After a year in Melbourne he came to Sydney and achieved notoriety as a secularist lecturer. He was also M.L.A. for Northumberland from 1887 to 1894. As well as his lecturing and writing he taught elocution and worked for temperance. In 1899 he moved to Western Australia where after a short career in journalism he achieved respectability through law and politics. He entered parliament in 1905, was Minister for Justice 1911-1916 and Speaker, 1924-1930. He was also a member of the first Senate of the University of Western Australia. A.W. Martin and P. Wardle, Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, 1856-1901, Canberra, 1959, pp.217-8.

1

Susan Budd, 'The Loss of Faith: Reasons for Unbelief among Members of the Secular Movement in England 1850-1950', Past and Present, no.36, April 1967, pp.106-125; F.B. Smith, 'Religion and Freethought in Melbourne, 1870-1890', M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1960, p.201, F.B. Smith, 'The Atheist Mission', 1840-1900; Robert Robson ed., Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain, London, 1967, pp.205-35.

In his address to the Anglican synod of Sydney in June 1880 Bishop Barker spoke with concern over the hostility to religion in Sydney,¹ and Archbishop Vaughan warned in pastoral letters against infidelity and freethought lectures which were 'striking at the very heart of Christianity'.² Infidelity 'in the form of systematic propagandism' in 'the large centres of population' alarmed the Presbyterian Religion and Morals Committee in 1881.³ Nonconformists generally regarded scepticism as a kindred or even consequent evil to Romanism and clericalism. The Rev. W. Clare, a recent arrival from Britain, told the Baptist Union in 1882 that he had been dismayed by the strength of Romanism, Anglicanism and freethought in the colony.⁴ But the Wesleyan Advocate conceded that 'Scepticism in some of its high faluting aspects' rather than Romanism was the greatest enemy of the Church in that age.⁵ James Jefferis, in his pastoral letter to his congregation in 1880, deplored, above all, the Sunday evening infidel lectures which maintained principles 'akin to those advocated in Paris at the close of the last

¹ Address, P.S.D.S., 1880, pp.24-5.

² R.W.B. Vaughan, A Suggestion for Lent, A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Sydney, Sydney, 1881; and 'Lenten Pastoral' in F.J., 10 February 1883.

³ M.P.G.A. 1881, App F, p.52.

⁴ Banner of Truth, 14 September 1882.

⁵ Advocate, 16 July 1881.

century'.¹ Although Protestant and Catholic might disagree as to the cause of scepticism, or even blame each other for it, they both regarded it as a serious threat to institutional religion and social order.

Not all churchmen, however, were ready to answer freethinkers' criticisms of Christianity. They had long linked infidelity with immorality and attributed doubt to pride.² Some conservative churchmen disparaged apologetics, and held that the churches had only to do their own job better. C. Stead, a Wesleyan minister, told the conference in 1882 that the best way of counteracting vaunting scepticism was in 'sermons full of old Methodist doctrine, full of the spirit of Christ, and imbued with the power of the Holy Ghost'.³ Presbyterians disagreed over the need for apologetics in the early 1880s. One layman, who attended James Greenwood's lectures in the Theatre Royal,⁴ thought that ministers

1

J. Jefferis, Pastoral Letter, The Year Book of the Pitt Street Congregational Church, Sydney, 1879-80, pp.5-7.

2

See John Watsford, at Wesleyan General Conference, Adelaide, 1881, S.M.H., 19 May 1881; Dean Cowper, Address, P.S.D.S., 1883, pp.25-6; Rev. W. Cocks, 'Sympathy as a Power in Church Work', Questions of the Day, p.73.

3

S.M.H., 28 January 1882.

4

James Greenwood, formerly minister of the Baptist Church, Bathurst Street, and a founder of the Public Schools League, left the ministry in 1876. He subsequently renounced orthodox Christianity, and from September 1881 to January 1882 he lectured in the Theatre Royal.

should go to debate with Greenwood; another held that ministers should ignore him. The Presbyterian disliked the idea of ministers debating publicly, but it thought that they should be sufficiently versed in apologetics to show that 'Christianity [was] no bubble, and the Bible no fable'.¹ The Presbyterian's opinion, however, was not constant. Two years later it told ministers to leave apologetics alone. The 'shortest and easiest method' with sceptics was 'to teach and live Christianity after the Bible model'.²

But others, faced by the flood of criticism from freethought could not keep silent. Bishop Barker saw church extension as a large part of the answer to prevailing scepticism: this seemed appropriate to the Riverina, which was reputedly notorious for its scepticism and its scanty religious provision,³ but it hardly answered the need in towns and cities. So Barker also asked his clergy to deal in their sermons with the difficulties which the Scriptures presented 'to thoughtful and enquiring minds'; he also recommended the publications of the British Christian Evidence Society and other literature to pastors and people.⁴ At the Wesleyan

1

See 'Lictor', Presbyterian, 14 January 1882; 'Veritas', *ibid.*, 21 January 1882; and leader. *ibid.*, 28 January 1882.

2

Presbyterian, 28 June 1884.

3

'Aspects of Religious Life in the Riverina', Protestant Standard, 12 July 1879; J.E. Carruthers, Memories of an Australian Ministry, London, 1922, p.83.

4

Address, P.S.D.S., 1880, pp.24-5.

Conference in 1882 Hans Mack advocated a lectureship to set forth 'the claims of natural and revealed religion against the various forms of infidelity....'¹ The conference did not support his proposal; an organised apologetic movement had to wait, but there had already been considerable individual initiative in the defence of the faith.

In 1876, when freethought was first making its voice heard in the colony, Archbishop Vaughan denounced that materialism which was bent on Deicide and the extirpation of all religion,² and Zachary Barry delivered a series of 'Christian Free-Thought Sermons' in the Victoria Theatre on Sunday afternoons.³ Barry reconciled Genesis and geology by interpreting the six days of creation as periods of indeterminable length; clerical geologists had used this allegorical method to reconcile the Bible and science earlier in the century.⁴ It became the standard conservative defence of the biblical narrative. Archbishop Vaughan, impressed by the influence of infidelity in Australian cities, delivered a course of Lenten Lectures in 1879 'touching the shallowness of infidelity' and the 'reasonableness of Christianity'.⁵

¹ S.M.H., 30 January 1882.

² R.W.B. Vaughan, Hidden Springs, 1876, pp.36, 59.

³ Zachary Barry, Christian Free-Thought Sermons, Sydney, 1876.

⁴ C.C. Gillespie, Genesis and Geology, Cambridge Mass, 1951, particularly p.224.

⁵ R.W.B. Vaughan, Arguments for Christianity, Sydney, 1879, Advertisement.

People of all denominations attended Vaughan's eloquent defence of the faith. He quoted Protestant writers as well as Catholics, although in publishing the lectures he stated that he only agreed with non-Catholic writers in so far as they supported his reasoning, and for good measure he appended a few speeches containing short expositions of 'Catholic principle'.¹

Vaughan was rare among Australians Catholics of the time in that he was well acquainted with Thomas Aquinas. He had been a professor of metaphysics and moral philosophy at St Michael's Priory, Belmont, and in 1871-72 published two volumes on The Life and Labours of St Thomas of Aquin. In the same year that Pope Leo XIII sponsored the revival of Thomistic studies,² Vaughan told his Sydney audience that Aquinas' Summa Theologicae was the scientific expression of Christianity. Vaughan's arguments were not greatly different from Protestant apologists who stood in the Paley-Butler tradition,³

¹ Ibid.

² Aeterni Patris, 1879, see Katherine Burton, Leo XIII: The First Modern Pope, New York, 1962, pp.117-20.

³ W. Paley, A View of the Evidences of Christianity (1794): Natural Theology; or the Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, collected from the Appearances of Nature, 1802; J. Butler, The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature, to which are added two brief dissertations (1) Of Personal Identity; (2) Of the Nature of Virtue (1736). Paley and Butler formed the staple of most courses in Christian Apologetics in the colonies up to the end of the century, and Paley's Evidences long held its place as a text-book at Oxford and Cambridge.

although they were defences of Christianity in general and of Roman Catholicism in particular. He maintained that science supported rather than contravened religion, but dismissed evolution and man's alleged descent from the animal kingdom. He used the general philosophical arguments for the existence of God and appealed to the universality of religious belief attested by the study of primitive religion. Unbelief, he warned, led to individual depravity and social disorder. Where Protestants appealed to biblical revelation he asserted that all men needed authority in religion and argued that the Catholic Church was the safest and highest authority; the man who accepted its authority was, therefore, the most reasonable Christian. In confirmation of his claim he invoked the noble army of nineteenth century converts.¹

In his Lenten Lectures in 1882 Vaughan developed the argument from miracles as a proof of Christ's divinity, contending mainly against J.S. Mill's view of Jesus as the supreme moral teacher.² Vaughan is the only Catholic I have found in this period who attempted apologetics on these lines. His lectures were popular with many Protestants; after his death in 1883 Zachary Barry, that inveterate opponent of Rome, praised Vaughan in the Protestant Standard for his expositions to

1

R.W.B. Vaughan, Arguments for Christianity, particularly Lecture V, pp.123-158.

2

R.W.B. Vaughan, Christ's Divinity. Proved by His Character and Claims, and illustrated and enforced by His Parables and Miracles. in Six Lectures, Lent, 1882, Sydney 1882.

undergraduates. Barry declared that his recent Lenten Lectures were 'for the most part thoroughly scriptural and evangelical', and lamented his loss to the intellectual world as well as the Church of Rome.¹

Anglicans also discussed modern objections to Christianity at conferences in the early 1880s. Canon Scott of Bungendore told a clerical conference at Goulburn in October 1881 that there was no fundamental contradiction between the Bible and science. The Bible told of stages of development without the aid of modern science, which only substantiated its divine inspiration.² Charles Kingsmill, whose faith had been 'sorely shaken' at the age of twenty one by Chambers' Vestiges of Creation, pointed out the contradictions among geologists and evolutionists, and asked how anyone could abandon Genesis for geology.³ But Bishop Pearson took a more liberal stand at the Church Congress in Melbourne in 1882. He warned against imputing immorality to doubt and against pretending to omniscience. He recognised difficulties in the way of Christian belief but considered that modern science provided testimony to an ordered creation. He asked Christians not to create obstacles to faith by multiplying 'credenda' or misrepresenting the creed.⁴ But this liberalism was rare early in the decade.

¹ Protestant Standard (hereafter Standard), 25 August 1883.

² Canon Scott, 'Modern Objections to Christianity', Questions of the Day, p.25.

³ C, Kingsmill, *ibid.*, p.33.

⁴ J.B. Pearson, 'The Duty of the Church of England in Reference to Unbelief', Papers read at the Church Congress, Melbourne, 1882, pp.48-55.

Some Protestant ministers introduced apologetics into the pulpit. Dr W. Woolls, and Anglican clergyman and botanist, preached on the internal evidences of Christianity at Richmond in 1879. He held that the perfection of Christ's character and the excellency of his teaching, to which non-Christians also paid tribute, were the 'infallible proofs of his divine mission'.¹ Vulgar abuse of the Bible and Christianity in 1883 provoked Dr Moore White of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church to deliver three Sunday-evening lectures on the Bible, and in 1884 Alexander Osborne, another Presbyterian, delivered apologetic lectures in his church at Burwood. In 1886 George Brown gave a series of sermons on 'Christian Liberty and Freethought' in St. Stephen's Church, Penrith, and Robert Dey did similarly in Marrickville Congregational Church in 1887.² G.G. Howden even warned children against freethought in a children's service in the Woollahra Congregational Church, telling them that Eve was the first member of the Freethought society.³

James Jefferis introduced apologetics as well as social and political subjects into his Sunday evening

1

W. Woolls, Ph.D., F.L.S., A Sermon on the Character of Christ, & c., Sydney, 1879, p.16; see also sermons by Archdeacon Gunther, Watchman (Bathurst), 1 August 1877, and Canon Smith, *ibid.*, 1 October 1877.

2

Advt. S.M.H., 17 February 1883; D.T. 21 April 1884; A.C.W., 28 June 1886. D.T. 21 February, 1887.

3

D.T., 25 February, 1884.

lectures in Pitt Street Congregational Church.¹ In 1880, while most churchmen were arguing with the astronomer, R.A. Proctor, over the Sabbath,² Jefferis debated with him the implications of astronomy for theology. Proctor maintained that agnosticism was the only defensible position in the light of astronomy, but Jefferis held that astronomy, as other branches of science, provided proof of an intelligent and benevolent design.³

The Young Men's Christian Association served as an unofficial Christian Evidence Society early in the 1880s. Apologetics were prominent in its winter series which featured lectures by leading clergy and some distinguished laymen. Alexander Gordon, a staunch Anglican, argued that while there was no absolute proof for faith, Christian belief was reasonable. He elaborated the arguments of natural theology for the existence of God which revelation completed and confirmed.⁴ Dr Arthur Renwick (afterwards

1

See J. Jefferis, Our Bible and Our Belief: Six Lectures delivered...as a help to Young Men of Free Thought, Sydney, 1882; Other Bibles and Other Beliefs: a series of Eight Lectures to Young Men of Free Thought, Sydney, 1882; also 'ISMS THAT HAUNT US', Lectures to Young Men, 7 April to 23 June 1889; see Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 6 April 1889.

2

See Chapter 7.

3

Jefferis lectured on 'the Highest Teachings of Astronomy', on 29 August 1880 and conducted correspondence in the Herald with Proctor subsequently; see S.M.H., 2,3,4, September 1880; see also J. Jefferis, 'The Highest Teachings of Astronomy', Sydney Quarterly Magazine, vol.1 no.3, April 1884, pp.234-246.

4

'Freedom of Thought in Matters of Religious Belief: Its Use and Abuse', S.M.H., 18 August 1880.

Sir Arthur Renwick) revealed wide acquaintance with the discoveries and speculations of science in the nineteenth century. He pointed out that there was much unknown to science and argued that belief was 'the primary condition of reason.' It not only made knowledge possible; it satisfied longings which science could never fulfil.¹

Josiah Mullens, Chairman of the Sydney Stock Exchange, and like Renwick a Congregationalist, described the confirmations of the Bible from archeological discoveries, though he held a liberal view of the Scriptures.²

In July 1882 the Y.M.C.A. and a committee of leading churchmen from the Protestant denominations sponsored the visit to Sydney of Joseph Cook, a Boston Congregationalist whose Monday lectures on religion and science had won him widespread but shortlived fame. Leading Protestant churchmen and many politicians attended his first lecture in the Y.M.C.A. Hall on Tuesday, 11 July. People stampeded for seats and thoroughly packed the Hall. The audience cheered wildly as W.J. Foster welcomed Cook as a champion of revealed religion, a staunch friend of science and philosophy, and of freedom of thought, and 'a pronounced indefatigable expositor and demolisher of infidelity'. Cook stood to speak amid

1

Arthur Renwick, The Realm of Knowledge and the Realm of Faith: A lecture delivered in the Masonic Hall, Sydney, to the Young Men's Christian Association on Monday, 10th July 1882, Sydney, n.d. pp.25-6.

2

Josiah Mullens, Some Elucidations of Old testament History from the Records of Assyria and Egypt...a lecture delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association, Sydney, New South Wales, 15th July 1884 (For Private Circulation), Sydney, n.d.

a storm of applause. His presence was impressive and his speech oracular.¹ He proceeded to demonstrate belief in immortality by appeals to conscience, physiology and revelation. He believed in his own way in evolution, and told the audience that Darwin had 'always asserted that the first living matter was supernaturally created'.² This, however, gave no comfort to those who looked for continuing evidence of the hand of Providence. Large audiences attended the subsequent lectures and Cook consented to give a second series in the following week.³ These were held in Pitt Street Congregational Church to accommodate a larger audience.

Cook had received a good education at Yale and Harvard, Andover Theological Seminary and then at German universities. Although he had learned to reconcile evolution with Christianity his theology was otherwise conservative, and in his lectures he defended the substitutionary theory of the atonement and the doctrine of eternal punishment.⁴ There was little substance in his arguments against infidelity; he sought to convince by rhetoric rather than reason, contrasting the increasing strength of the churches in America with the wane of Unitarianism, and the reaction against infidelity

1

Dictionary of American Biography, vol.4, pp.371-72 and S.M.H., 12 July 1882.

2

'Does Death end All?', S.M.H., 12 July 1882.

3

S.M.H., 15 July 1882.

4

'Certainties in Religion', S.M.H., 13 July 1882,
'Repentance After Death', S.M.H., 15 July 1882.

throughout the world. He claimed that orthodoxy had won a glorious victory over rationalism in Germany, and predicted the triumph of orthodox Christianity throughout the world.¹ Vaughan, similarly, in his Lenten Pastoral of 1883 described the objections to Christianity as bubbles 'that shine but for a moment in the sun'.² Cook readily linked infidelity with immorality and refused to debate with Thomas Walker in Melbourne for this reason. The Presbyterian thought this offensive to the moral freethinkers of Australia,³ but many churchmen relied on the same argument to discredit unbelief. Few were willing to face freethinkers themselves, and the Rev. E.C. Spicer received few thanks for accepting Charles Bright's challenge in May 1883.⁴ But apart from the Presbyterian's demurrer there was no criticism of Cook. He boosted the confidence of colonial Protestants; Liberal Protestants were few, and they probably forgave him his conservatism for the sake of this encouragement.

Organising to Defend the Faith.

In January 1883 a group of zealous but conservative laymen established the New South Wales Association for

1

'The Failures of Unbelief', S.M.H., 14 July 1882.

2

F.J., 10 February 1883.

3

Presbyterian, 12 August 1882.

4

Charles Bright and E.C. Spicer, Are the Statements of Genesis and Science Contradictory? A Public Debate in the Sydney Protestant Hall, 22 May, 23 May, 1883, Hon. G.H. Reid in the Chair, Sydney, 1883. See below, pp.215-6.

the Defence of Christianity. H.G. Picton, a leading lay apologist, convened the initial meeting. The Association proposed to combat the antagonists of Christianity by lectures, discussions, and the dissemination of anti-secularist literature.¹ Its doctrinal basis was 'the divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures', and 'the divinity and all sufficient atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ'.² Few clergymen were among its officers and committee, although Zachary Barry supported it and lectured for it.³ After a year it claimed to have established its reputation with the Christian public,⁴ although the churches offered it little encouragement. The Presbyterian did not expect much of it since the Y.M.C.A. lectures, though given by the ablest minds, had attracted but small attendances. Moreover, it asserted that sceptics were 'more at fault in their hearts than their heads'. It did concede, however, that the circulation of literature might be useful.⁵ The Advocate observed, some months later, that the Association's title was 'somewhat pretentious', and denied that the Ark of God was in any danger.⁶

¹ S.M.H., 17 January 1883.

² cit. Standard, 31 May 1884.

³ See Zachary Barry, Christian Dogma unaffected by the Common Hostile Criticism: a lecture delivered to the Christian Defence Association, Sydney, 1884.

⁴ Annual Meeting, S.M.H., 19 April 1884.

⁵ Presbyterian, 20 January 1883.

⁶ Advocate, 13 October 1883.

Behind this aloofness toward the Christian Defence Association was some timidity in face of militant opposition, and some jealousy of lay initiative. But Dean Cowper, at least, thought that there were no grounds for complacency; however, he was unwilling to leave the defence of the faith to a voluntary lay association. In May 1883 he set up a Committee on Christian Evidences and organised a series of apologetic lectures by Anglican clergymen in St. Andrew's Cathedral on Tuesday evenings. Some of these lectures were repeated in suburban parishes.¹

In 1883 John Osborne also attempted to answer freethought from his York Street pulpit, but his liberal theology and tolerant statements about Roman Catholicism aroused suspicion of his orthodoxy. Although the Sydney District Committee acquitted him of heresy it found him indiscreet in utterance.² In January 1884 Osborne, unwilling to let the Wesleyan Conference control his future, resigned from its ministry and established the Christian Platform to answer freethought untrammelled by orthodoxy.³ Many of his congregation, including the organist and choirmaster, followed him and left York Street Church depleted to a handful.⁴ But Osborne

1

Progress Report of the Committee on Christian Evidences, S.M.H., 16 September 1884.

2

See Echo, 19, 25 May 1883; Presbyterian, 28 July 1883.

3

S.M.H., 24 January 1884.

4

S.M.H., 16 February 1884; and J.E. Carruthers, Lights in the Southern Sky, p.107

spent himself more on attacking orthodoxy than freethought. At the opening of the Christian Platform in the New Masonic Hall he announced that he belonged to the 'Broad Church' party, which he believed included Bishop Moorhouse and Dr Charles Strong of Melbourne.¹ In later Sunday evening lectures he repudiated prayer for rain, disposed of the devil, and declared that the Bible was not infallible, but was a supreme book of faith and morals.² The Christian Platform lasted to July 1885; Osborne found his journalist duties on the Daily Telegraph too much.³ At his farewell he said that he intended to give monthly lectures on phases of modern religious thought,⁴ but a

1

D.T., 18 February 1884. Bishop James Moorhouse, Bishop of Melbourne, 1876-86, then Bishop of Manchester, 1886-1903 was a Broad Churchman. Charles Strong was an advanced liberal in theology; he was strongly criticised following Mr Justice Higinbotham's most critical lecture 'Science and Religion' given to the Scots Church Literary Association in August 1883. In September Strong resigned from Scots Church and later founded the Australian Church in Melbourne. Presbyterians and Wesleyans in New South Wales thought that Strong was better out of the Presbyterian Church, but Bishop Pearson, himself a Broad Churchman, supported Strong whom he thought would be at home in the Anglican Church.* George Durham, who had turned from Methodism to Congregationalism, claimed that Congregationalists allowed great liberty, and would have heard Higinbotham gladly; he was sure that the cases of Strong and Osborne would not have taken place among them.**

*

J.B. Newcastle, Echo, 6 October 1883.

**

S.M.H., 1 October 1883.

2

See D.T., 25 February 1884, 31 March 1884, 7 July 1884.

3

Presbyterian, 20 June 1885.

4

S.M.H., 7 August 1885; I have found no account of later lectures.

year later, after a short time with the Sydney Morning Herald, he became editor of the Star, and announced himself a convert from Christianity to secularism, and from freetrade to protection.¹

Thus in 1883 and 1884, as well as sermons from many pulpits, several agencies were attempting to defend the City of God from the onslaughts of freethought.² But the Christian Defence Association, contrary to the Protestant Standard's claim,³ had not won the support of the leading clergy, and Osborne's Christian Platform was making more breaches in the walls than assaults on the enemy. Anglicans had conducted a sober but unspectacular campaign through Cowper's Committee on Christian Evidences. When Bishop Barry came to the colony in 1884 he soon perceived the need for a more responsible and better organised defence of Christianity.

1

Standard, 11 December 1886; J.E. Carruthers, Memories of an Australian Ministry, p.299.

2

John Frazer M.L.C., a Presbyterian merchant, who died on 25 October 1884, was a layman who encouraged apologetics. He left a bequest of £2,000 to provide an annual prize of £100 for an essay 'in Defence of the Christian Faith'. The first competition was in 1886, when two essayists received the prize for their essays on 'Agnosticism'. One of them, James Milne, a Presbyterian minister in the colony, won the prize again in 1887 for an essay on 'Secularism in Relation to Christianity.' Agnosticism from a Moral and Spiritual Point of View, Frazer Prize Essays, 1886, Sydney 1888; James Milne, Frazer Prize Essay of Secularism in Relation to Christianity, Sydney 1889. These are the only essays I have found.

3

Standard, 31 May 1884.

The Christian Evidence Society

Barry was an experienced and scholarly apologist,¹ and while Principal of King's College, London, he had been associated with the British Christian Evidence Society. At a meeting of the Committee on Christian Evidences in September 1884 Barry outlined his hopes for a Christian Evidence Society on the lines of the British society. He was hopeful of Catholic cooperation as well as the support of other Protestants, and the Anglican committee concurred with his plans.²

On Friday 17 October, Barry who had already won the confidence of Nonconformists, laid his plans for a Christian Evidence Society before a conference of Protestant ministers.³ The ministers agreed to establish such a society, and on Tuesday 18 November a large crowd thronged into the Protestant Hall to support its formation. All the leading Protestant clergy and a number of distinguished laymen were present. Barry, who presided, told the meeting that membership was open to all who confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. He had invited the newly arrived Roman

1

Dr Barry was Boyle Lecturer, 1876-78, Bampton Lecturer, 1892, and Hulsean Lecturer 1894. The following are the published lectures: What in Natural Theology? (1877), Manifold Witness for Christ (1880), Some Lights of Science on Faith (1892), The Ecclesiastical Expansion of England (1895). See Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement, vol.1, 1901-1911, pp.103-5 and Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1908, p.82.

2

S.M.H., 16 September 1884.

3

S.M.H., 18 October 1884.

Catholic Archbishop, Dr P.F. Moran, who declined, stating that his clergy could not take part in the movement; but Moran 'expressed a guarded hope that the meeting might do some good'. The Christian Defence Association accepted the invitation to merge with the new society.¹

Barry held that the primary aim of the Society was not to be the defence of Christianity against infidelity, though this would be part of its task. He saw Christianity's greatest danger not from avowed and distinct infidelity', but from ignorance and indifference. He thought that instructions in the outlines of Christianity would therefore be the Society's main task since too many Christians were hazy about the grounds of Christian faith. He also hoped the Society would correct the impression that Christianity was unnatural and other worldly, indifferent to material progress and the issues of this life, or that it was opposed to learning, culture or modern science. Barry believed that the questioning of modern times had driven Christians to the central truth of their faith, and enabled them to distinguish between human tradition and essential Christianity. It had aroused 'a deeper spiritual and more thoughtful life in the Christian Church'.²

1

S.M.H., 19 November 1884.

2

Ibid.

The Christian Evidence Society's objects were 'to promote the intelligent study and knowledge of the Evidences of Christianity' by the delivery of public lectures and sermons, Christian evidence classes and examinations, and the circulation of apologetic literature.¹ It sounded less aggressive than the Association it had displaced, but some churchmen saw the new Society in the same light as the Association. Dr Robert Steel, who moved the adoption of the objects, was more interested in confounding infidelity. He took little account of 'honest doubt' quoting the dictum that 'faults of life breed errors in the brain'.² The Society embraced conservative and liberal without any obvious conflict. It was born with a better chance of survival than the Christian Defence Association for it was clerically conceived and nurtured. It was to enjoy Vice-Regal patronage, and the support of Chief Justices Sir James Martin and Sir Frederick Darley, of Alderman A.J. Riley, Mayor of Sydney and of Sir Henry Parkes. Its life was guaranteed while freethought lecturers hurled their missiles at religion and society.

Thomas Walker, the freethought lecturer, attended the Society's inaugural meeting. Barry gave him leave

1

For objects see, Back cover, Witness for Christ, Lectures delivered in connection with the Christian Evidence Society of New South Wales in 1884 [actually 1885], Sydney, 1886 - these objects vary slightly from those agreed to initially, particularly re the Classes and Examinations.

2

S.M.H., 19 November 1884.

to speak from the gallery. Walker spoke in favour of the formation of the Society, but challenged its members to debate openly with freethinkers. He stated his readiness to meet anyone from Picton to Bishop Barry. His manner was courteous and conciliatory, and Barry thanked him for his suggestions, although some in the audience hissed when Barry promised to consider Walker's points. But he reminded Walker that the Society was free to determine its own programme; moreover, it was not devoted to propagating controversy but to bringing out 'real truth'.¹ The prospects of an encounter between Christian apologists and freethinkers were in fact remote. In June 1888 a number of freethinkers attended Dr Thomas Porter's lecture on 'The Reasonableness of Christianity'. Porter rejected evolution and relied on the old arguments for the existence of God. When a freethinker challenged him to a public discussion of his lecture, Porter declined, stating that he could spend his time in a much better way.²

The Society commenced its first lecture series on 15 May 1885. There was a large attendance; proceedings began with a hymn and prayer, and the Evangelistic Choir sang 'O Taste and See How Gracious the Lord is'. Bishop Barry explained that as Christian men they had decided upon a devotional opening. He invited those who could not take part to be reverent witnesses or to enter in

¹

S.M.H., 19 November 1884.

²

S.M.H., 20 June 1888.

the pause allowed before the lecture. A collection was also raised at the close.¹

Bishop Barry delivered the inaugural lecture on 'Christian Evidence and Christian Faith'. He reaffirmed that the Society was as much for the instruction of believers as the conversion of unbelievers. He stated that Christ and Christianity were the two great evidences of Christian faith. He distinguished between ideal and actual Christianity; he asserted the uniqueness of Christianity as a divine philosophy, and claimed that actual Christianity, for all its defects, had been an influence for good and social progress. He appealed to the unsurpassed goodness of Christ, his miraculous works, above all in the resurrection, as proofs of his divine character.² There was nothing new in these arguments, though Barry delivered them eloquently. The Presbyterian considered his lecture too 'scholastic and high class' for most agnostics to follow. It pleaded that future lectures should be 'more popular'.³

Two lecturers dealt with the challenge of modern science to Christianity. In his lecture on 'The Bible and Science' Dr Robert Steel stated that the Bible taught religious and moral truth rather than science. He accepted the usual interpretation of the days of

1

S.M.H., 16 May 1885.

2

Alfred Barry, 'Christian Evidence and Christian Faith', Witness for Christ, Sydney, 1886, pp.3-16.

3

Presbyterian, 23 May 1885.

Genesis as eras, and said that the discoveries of science had done an immense service to faith in enlarging men's concept of the Infinite Creator who through endless ages was preparing a world for men to inherit.¹ Canon Sharp, warden of St Paul's College, reconciled Darwin's theory of evolution with Christian belief; far from denying the existence of a creator or undermining the argument from design, he held that it strengthened the substance of Paley's argument by providing an explanation for pain and waste in nature.²

Mervyn Archdall, an Anglican clergyman and secretary of the Society, presented a complex version of the argument from prophecy,³ and other lecturers argued the necessity of religion and the superiority of Christianity. Dr Kinross, Principal of St. Andrew's College, asserted that Christianity produced the highest morality and met the deepest needs of men.⁴ James

1

Robert Steel, 'The Bible and Science in their Mutual Relations', Witness for Christ, pp.19-34.

2

Canon [W.H.] Sharp, 'How Does the Theory of Evolution Bear Upon Religious Belief?' *ibid*, pp.99-112.

3

Mervyn Archdall, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Credible Explanation of the History, Scripture and Principles of Israel', *ibid.*, pp.54-73. Archdall also delivered a lecture in reply to Mr Justice Higinbotham's celebrated lecture on 'Science and Religion.' See M. Archdall, Christless Christianity: a reply to Judge Higinbotham's Lecture 'Science and Religion' with appendices. (Reprinted from the Church of England Record), Sydney, 1884.

4

John Kinross, 'Man's Need of Religion', Witness for Christ, pp.76-95: see also his lecture on the same theme to the Y.M.C.A. in 1882, Presbyterian, 2 September 1882.

Jefferis delivered a learned lecture on 'Christianity and Buddhism', in which he claimed that Christianity was represented among all the progressive nations of the world.¹ Alexander Gordon concluded the series with the claim that 'the deficiencies and incredibility of pre-Christian systems' established 'the completeness and truth of Christianity and the Bible'.² The Society decided in 1886 to publish these lectures under the title Witness for Christ, and incurred a debt from which it never recovered.

The lectures were convincing to believers at least. On the whole they revealed considerable awareness of modern objections to Christianity, but the apologetics were largely eighteenth century in flavour, leaning on Paley and Butler and the early nineteenth century clerical geologists, although Liberal Protestants found Henry Drummond's synthesis of biological evolution and Christian faith in Natural Law and the Spiritual World (1883) more satisfying than Butler.³ Bishop Barry

1

James Jefferis, 'Christianity and Buddhism': a comparison and contrast', Witness for Christ, pp.37-52.

2

Alexander Gordon, 'The Bible, the only Credible Explanation of What Man Was, Is and Will Be', *ibid.*, p.153.

3

Henry Drummond (1851-1897) a Scottish Free Presbyterian influenced by Dwight L. Moody in 1875 became an amateur geologist. He continued in Evangelical Protestantism assisting in, and conducting, 'missions'. He accepted evolution from Darwin and Spencer uncritically, and recast orthodox Protestantism in the light of biological evolution arguing that the laws of the physical universe extended to the spiritual world. Though neither scholarly
(footnote continued on p.209)

mentioned Drummond enthusiastically in one lecture,¹ and James Jefferis supported Drummond's theory.² But not all Protestant churchmen accepted Drummond so readily. Dr Thomas Roseby, a Congregationalist, dismissed Drummond's synthesis of evolution and theology as 'one of the most unsatisfactory and misleading books' on the relation of science to religion; he preferred Butler, whom he called 'the Newton of theology'.³ Presbyterians and Wesleyans were generally unfavourable to Drummond, although in 1883 the Advocate had greeted the announcement of his book as another evidence that devotion to scientific facts was not

(footnote 3 continued from p.208)

nor profound, his style was lucid and his manner persuasive; he enjoyed immense popularity in Liberal Protestantism. His book ran to thirty editions between 1883 and 1890. In 1890 Drummond visited Australia addressing the Y.M.C.A. and students, but did not appear publicly in Sydney. In 1894 he published a further development of his synthesis of evolution and theology in the Ascent of Man. See Dictionary of National Biography, vol.XXII, p.582-3; L.E. Elliott Binns, English Thought, 1860-1900: The Theological Aspect, London, 1956, pp.52-3; Ernst Benz, translated by Heinz G. Frank, Evolution and Christian Hope: Man's Concept of the Future from the Early Fathers to Teilhard de Chardin, London, 1967, pp.156-62.

1

See Barry's address, 'What is of Faith as to Inspiration?' S.M.H., 6 July 1886.

2

In 1890 the Presbyterian reported a story which credited Jefferis with having promoted the sale of Drummond's book in Sydney. Presbyterian, 6 September 1890.

3

T. Roseby, 'The Genetic Unity of Nature Viewed in a Theistic and Christian Light', Livingstone Lectures, 1888, Supplement, Independent, 15 July 1888, p.12n. For discussion of these lectures see below p.227

incompatible with a fervent evangelical spirit; however, in 1885 it quoted with approval the opinion that Drummond's work was neither science nor theology, but a bastard of Calvinism of which Scotland ought to be ashamed.¹ Several Presbyterian reviewers thought that Drummond had not proved his case; they doubted whether nature provided any analogy to redemption and the experience of pardon.² One anonymous critic concluded that Drummond was a materialist and dismissed his work as 'a travesty of apologetics'.³

In November 1885 the Christian Evidence Society appointed H.G. Picton its public lecturer and agent at a salary of £200 per annum. Picton had considerable experience in 'contending for the faith'; as well as his lectures against freethinkers he had conducted a Christian evidence class in St. Andrew's schoolroom during 1885.⁴ His work for the Society included lectures in suburbs and towns and in 'the large workshops of the colony', but his principle activity was to reply to the freethought lectures. He began in February 1886, attending the

1

Advocate, 20 October 1883, 30 May 1885.

2

'Collimator', 'Professor Drummond', Presbyterian, 13 June 1885; 'On "Natural Law and the Spiritual World" by a Brother of the Natural Man,' ibid., 25 July 1885.

3

'Hoonos', 'Professor Drummond's Latest', Presbyterian, 27 June 1885; 'Professor Drummond on Natural Selection', ibid., 4 July 1885.

4

Annual Report of the Christian Evidence Society 1886, S.M.H., 10 April 1886. The class disbanded after several months with the intention of forming local classes in the suburbs if possible, but I have found no evidence of classes in any suburb.

Gaiety Theatre on Sunday nights to take notes from the freethought lecturer, W.W. Collins, editor of the Freethinker; Picton would reply to Collins the following Friday night before overflowing audiences in the Y.M.C.A. Hall.¹

Picton lectured for the Society until February 1887. He visited Brisbane as well as suburbs and towns in New South Wales. In 1886 he published a pamphlet 'Can Man Know God?'. The first edition quickly sold out at a penny a copy. The Protestant Standard commended it to parents and children as 'a great antidote to the Secularist poison'.² In March 1887 Picton left for England to lecture there. In his last lecture in Sydney he sought to refute secularists by highlighting the disagreements between prominent freethinkers in England and Australia.³ T.W. Hawkins, whom Picton had converted from freethought, took the chair on this occasion. Hawkins had been a Vice-President of the Australian Secular Association when Picton's arguments

¹ Advocate, 27 March 1886; S.M.H., 10 April 1886.

² Standard, 26 July 1886.

³ See 'Secularism Unmasked, or the Cat let out of the Bag', Standard, 12 March 1887. This lecture provoked Charles Bradlaugh to protest at Picton's misrepresentation of his disagreement with Joseph Barker. Picton stated that Barker objected to the 'filthy material' Bradlaugh insisted on including in the National Reformer. (In the nineteenth century most people regarded discussion of sexual reproduction and birth control outside medical circles as obscene). Report of Bradlaugh's letter in Standard, 18 June 1887.

had convinced him during a long illness. He decided to lecture against secularism as a result.¹ W.J. McCloskie, the former secretary of the Sydney Secular Association became a Christian and keen supporter of the Christian Evidence Society at the same time. McCloskie was disillusioned by the cupidity of some secularist lectures, their malice toward each other, and the dissidence within the movement.² Picton was no intellectual, but neither were many of his opponents. He fought them on their own terms using ridicule rather than reason. But he and some evangelical ministers were the few who scored triumphs over secularism by converting freethinkers, sometimes at the deathbed.³ Most secularists had a strong conservative religious background,⁴ and seemed more susceptible to the evangelicalism they had repudiated than the theological liberalism they had never shared.

1

See T. Woolmington Hawkins, 'The Secularists' Religion and Christianity' A.C.W., 11 February, 1887; Standard, 12, 19 March 1887.

2

W.J. McCloskie, 'Sydney Secularism Exploded', Standard, 12, 19 March 1887.

3

For accounts of conversions see J.S. Austin, op.cit., pp.311-2; W.G. Taylor, op.cit., pp.174-76; George Preston, Sermon, D.T., 21 April 1884.

4

See F.B. Smith, 'The Atheist Mission', loc.cit.; Susan Budd, loc.cit., and Mrs Charles Bright's reasons for repudiating Evangelical Protestantism, Evening News, cit. Advocate, 27 October 1883.

While Picton was attacking secularism and defending the conservative position other lecturers of the Society were expounding a new view of biblical inspiration, and a more liberal theology which rendered the attacks of freethought and the conservative defence largely irrelevant. The Society at its first annual meeting adopted Bishop Barry's proposal for a series of lectures to correct prevalent misapprehensions about the Bible.¹

A change in Protestant understanding of the Bible was already taking place. Australian churches received the Revised Version of the New Testament in 1881 and of the Old in 1886 with general approval, apart from a few isolated objections. Most denominations commended it to ministers for sermon preparation and to people for family reading and private use; few adopted it in public worship, though there was pressure for its use liturgically.² W.J. Green, a Congregational layman, declared it would deliver a 'wholesome shock' to the superstition of worshipping the letter.³ Josiah Mullens

¹ S.M.H., 10 April 1886.

² G.M. D'Arcy Irvine, and J. Maitland Ware, 'The Revised New Testament', Questions of the Day, pp.9-17, 19-24 (Irvine and Ware differed as to its use in worship). Proceedings, General Synod, 1881, pp.30-31; 1886, p.61; Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1898, p.37; M.P.G.A., 1881, pp.14-5, 1886, pp.28-29. Advocate, 23 July 1881, 10 September 1881, and Wesleyan General Conference in Advocate, 9 June 1888.

³ Congregational Year Book, 1882, p.75.

thought the new version was free from bias to any school of theology, though he considered that it helped clarify the disputed questions of judgment and the future life, in fact favouring the liberal side.¹ But George Campbell, a Congregational minister, lamented in 1885 that the Revised Version was 'not duly valued by the rank and file of our Christian people'.² The familiarity and literary merit of the old took precedence over the accuracy of the new.

Catholics noted the publication of the Revised Version and speculated on the confusion it would cause Protestants who took their stand on the Bible alone.³ But they recognised this achievement of scholarship, and conceded that it might be of use to Catholics in so far as it rendered 'more exactly the true meaning of the Sacred Text'.⁴ Archbishop Vaughan used it himself for clarification in one of his Lenten Lectures in 1882.⁵

It was higher criticism of the Bible rather than the revised version, however, which threatened to undermine Protestant confidence in the Scriptures. Aware of this in 1878, W.B. Boyce, a veteran Wesleyan

1

J. Mullens, 'The Revised New Testament', Independent, 15 August 1881.

2

Ibid., 15 July 1885.

3

F.J., 9 July 1881; Express, 6 August 1881.

4

F.J., 27 August 1881.

5

Express, 18 March 1882.

minister, delivered six lectures on higher criticism of the Old Testament to counter the liberal tendency in English speaking Protestantism, which he feared would drive men either to scepticism or to Rome. Boyce attempted to defend Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and the authenticity of disputed sections of the prophets, but he allowed for religious development within the Old Testament, and made some concessions to science stating that the theory of evolution was perfectly reconcilable with the Bible. Naturally enough, he rejected Ussher's chronology, and took the days of Genesis as stages of creation, but claimed that the findings of archeology were in accord with the narrative of Genesis, including the story of creation and the fall. Nevertheless, he added that the truths of Christianity did not depend ultimately on the conclusions of biblical criticism, for the verities of God's revelation were current among men before the Bible was written, and these truths were self-evidencing to the conscience.¹ Thus, from his viewpoint, Christianity was in an unassailable position.

E.C. Spicer, an Anglican minister who had recently published a pamphlet on The Harmony between Geology

1

W.B. Boyce, Six Lectures on the Higher Criticism Upon the Old Testament, Sydney, 1878, particularly Lecture 1, p.5; see also Willis B. Glover, Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1954, pp.41, 55 and 128.

and Genesis,¹ followed a similar line in his public debate with Charles Bright on 'Genesis and Science' on 22 and 23 May 1883. Bright took a strict literal interpretation of the Authorised Version in his attack on Genesis, but Spicer refused to use the Authorised Version and interpreted the days figuratively. As the debate wore on Spicer asserted the infallibility of the Bible and rejected the findings of higher criticism. He declared that scientists were incompetent to pronounce on theology which was itself another science;² however, he quoted the opinion of 617 scientists who asserted that there was no contradiction between the Bible and science. Most Evangelical Protestants shared this view, but a different view of the Bible and its inspiration was gaining ground.

An aftermath of Spicer's debate with Bright was a controversy between Spicer and Bishop Pearson, who replied in a series of 'Letters for Sunday' in the Echo. Pearson defended Spicer's use of translations other than the Authorised Version, and in his interpretation of days. But he did not share Spicer's concern to prove that Genesis and geology were in harmony. If the biblical references to scientific subjects were not accurate, he argued, the Bible would lose 'none of its

1

E.C. Spicer, The Harmony Between Geology and Genesis; A Lecture given in reply to Mr Denton's Lecture on 'Science and The Bible, Sydney 1883.

2

Charles Bright and E.C. Spicer, Are the Statements on Science and Genesis Contradictory? particularly pp.36-42.

value' for he considered that men had no right to seek in the Bible 'for any knowledge but that of a practical and spiritual character'. He did not think his soul's salvation depended on 'David's acquaintance with the mysteries of the union of oxygen and hydrogen'. He dismissed the 'verbalists' and argued that a more rational approach to the Bible would by-pass the fruitless conflict between them and the Sceptics, and cause 'many of the arrows from "Freethought's" quiver' to 'fly quite harmlessly over our heads'.¹ In his third letter Pearson stated that many things in the Bible were not articles of faith, and that the phrase 'the Word of God' should not be applied to the Book, but 'to Christ himself, as being in speech and deed, in life and death and resurrection, the very utterance of the Father's mind and will to man'. He was relatively indifferent to the question of inspiration; the Church and its faith, he argued, provided the great evidence of Christianity, Christians could therefore meet popular objections to the Bible without 'recourse to a theory of its absolute infallibility' on every subject mentioned in it.²

Bishop Barry was less forthright than Pearson when he began the series of lectures on the Bible for the Christian Evidence Society in July 1886, but his approach was liberal. He held that most of the attacks

1

J.B. Newcastle, 'A Letter for Sunday on the Use of the Bible', Echo, 9 June 1883.

2

J.B. Newcastle, 'A Letter for Sunday on the Study of the Book of Genesis and Certain other Practical Matters', Echo, 16 June 1883.

by freethought arose from ignorance of the Bible as a whole. He maintained that while no perfect theory of inspiration could be framed it was desirable to attempt some definition. He regarded the authors of Holy Scripture rather than the books as inspired and dismissed any idea that the writers were 'merely mechanical instruments through which the Spirit of God spoke'. He distinguished between the revelation of truth from God, and the inspiration by which men received and transmitted that truth. But he warned that even inspired men might not grasp the truth perfectly, thus inspiration did not imply infallibility. Furthermore, the writers wrote in the understanding of their own time, and added something 'to the fabric of the Christian revelation of God'. Barry saw an evolution in revelation and inspiration - 'a progressive revelation of God' leading up 'to the more perfect law and teaching of the great Prophet of prophets, the revealer of God himself'. He concluded by asserting the 'Absolute historic truth' of the Scriptures apart from the early chapters of Genesis, and affirmed that in moral and spiritual truth the Bible was flawless. Above all its authority rested on the uniqueness of the Divine revelation it contained.¹ Barry's admission of criticism and discrimination in interpreting the Bible met the objections of those whom the theory of verbal inspiration offended; his declaration of the Bible's authority in matters of moral and religious truth

1

A. Barry, 'What is of Faith as to Inspiration?', S.M.H., 6 July 1886.

would have allayed the fears of the more conservative. He had cleared the ground for the remaining series of lectures which were useful but not controversial.

The lectures on the Bible, however, left some conservatives unchanged. At the Society's second annual meeting Dr Steel declared that 'the spade had been one of the greatest arguments in favour of Christianity', and claimed that archeological discoveries 'entirely corroborated' Moses' story of the creation, the fall and the flood.¹ In a lecture in the O'Beirne Bible Hall in February 1885 Cardinal Moran also claimed that archeology had thrown 'a flood of light' on 'hitherto obscure' passages of Scripture, and that it corroborated 'the authenticity of the inspired book.'²

Apologetics at the End of the Decade.

The Christian Evidence Society's winter lecture series in 1887 was poorly attended. At the annual meeting in 1888 Barry admitted waning support for the Society, but maintained that it had achieved its original objects. It had shown 'what the Bible was, and what it was not'; it had taught 'the deep truths of Christianity' not to sceptics, but to enquirers after truth and to Christians 'who sometimes held their

1

S.M.H., 15 June 1887.

2

Cardinal Moran, 'The Roman Catholic Church and the Bible', a lecture to commence the series for 1885 in the O'Beirne Bible Hall, 4 February 1885, S.M.H., 5 February 1885.

convictions with more of tenacity than reason'. He claimed that the Society had been free of intolerance; some indeed, had criticised it for allowing 'so large an amount of latitude of thought'.¹ Attendance at the lectures in 1888 confirmed the dwindling enthusiasm for Christian apologetics, although the Society had distributed leaflets on the Domain on Sunday afternoons 'with encouraging results'. The Society's council decided in 1889 to suspend the lecture programmes. It appointed a small executive to watch the cause of Christian defence and exhorted ministers to set aside days for 'the exposition of branches of Christian evidence' from the pulpit.² The closure of the theatres against freethought lectures in June 1887³ had largely silenced the opposition to Christianity and lessened the interest in the defence of the faith. Sunday evening concerts continued after the ban on secularist performances, and though these worried the churches, a Christian Evidence Society could do little to oppose them.

Bishop Barry's address to the Society in April 1889 was one of his last public addressed in Sydney. The Society had endured no longer than his episcopate; it had owed much to his enthusiasm. Barry viewed the relations between belief and unbelief optimistically as he delivered the Society's last public address. He

¹

S.M.H., 20 April 1888.

²

S.M.H., 9 April 1889.

³

See Chapter 7.

considered there was now more sympathy and respect between the two, and predicted a great uprising of faith 'which would assimilate all that was good and true, and throw off all that was false'. The best testimony Christianity could show the world, he said, was evidence of its moral power and concern for humanity.¹ H.L. Jackson of St James' Church spoke in a similar vein in his paper to the Anglican Church Congress in April 1889 on 'The Church and Modern Thought'. Jackson claimed that the churches had gone through a necessary destructive period of clearing away the rubbish of the past, and were now on the eve of a new reformation which the English Broad Churchmen were leading.² J. Fordyce,³ as Chairman of the Congregational Union in 1891 predicted that the nineteenth century would close with the outburst of 'a new and cultured evangelicalism'.⁴ By the end of the 1880s Liberal Protestants believed

1

S.M.H., 9 April 1889.

2

H.L. Jackson, 'The Church and Modern Thought', Papers Read at the Church Congress, Sydney, 1889, pp.112-121.

3

James Fordyce, educated Edinburgh University and theological hall, ministered in Northern Ireland before coming to Woollahra Congregational Church in 1889. He was the author of Aspects of Modern Scepticism, First published London, 1883. He published a second edition on his arrival in the colony. It was not an original book but accepted Darwin's theory of evolution and higher criticism in the British Liberal Protestant tradition.

4

Chairman's Address, 1891, Congregational Year Book, 1892, pp.158-71.

that the battle of faith was won, even though sporadic fighting might continue.¹

Higher criticism had won considerable acceptance at the end of the decade, particularly in the Protestant ministry. Broad Churchmen had led the way, but a liberal Anglo-Catholicism came to terms with modern scholarship in the publication of Lux Mundi in 1889. This volume was an Anglo-Catholic version of the Broad Church Essays and Reviews of 1861. Barry's conservative successor, Bishop Saumarez Smith told the diocese at his primary visitation the Bible had nothing to fear from higher criticism, but he rejected the theories of the 'foreign critics'.² Presbyterians in Australia followed the debate on higher criticism in Scotland; they justified the dismissal of Professor W. Robertson Smith in 1881,³ but in 1888 John Auld defended Marcus Dod's exposition of liberal views which provoked strong dissent at the Pan-Presbyterian Conference that year. Dods blamed the theory of infallibility for

1

See also L.D. Bevan, The Battle of Faith in the Nineteenth Century: Inaugural Address to the Congregational Union and Mission of Victoria delivered in Collins Street Independent Church on Tuesday evening 9th October 1888, Melbourne, 1888.

2

A Charge delivered to clergy of the Diocese of Sydney by W.S. Smith, D.D., Bishop of Sydney at his primary visitation. June 13 1893, Sydney, 1893, pp.17-23.

3

Presbyterian, 23 July 1881; see also Willis B. Glover, op.cit., pp.117-20.

much of contemporary scepticism, and asserted that many people could not continue in the faith if it were bound up with the infallibility of the whole Bible.¹ James Cosh, another Presbyterian minister, claimed that Dods' views were those of an increasing number of ministers and laymen.² Presbyterians and Wesleyans were sympathetic to C.H. Spurgeon in the 'Down Grade Controversy',³ but Wesleyans surrendered to the new biblical scholarship eventually.⁴ Higher criticism had found ready acceptance among Congregational ministers and laymen.⁵

1

J.A., Presbyterian, 1 September 1888.

2

James Cosh, 'The Pan-Presbyterian Council in London' Presbyterian, 8 September 1888.

3

Presbyterian, 7 January 1888, Advocate, 14 April 1888. Spurgeon who deplored the movement of progressive evangelicalism in English Dissent left the Baptist Union in 1887. Baptist, 3 December 1887. 'The Bible for Spurgeon was not a thing for rational justification; it was the starting point for all right reason on religious matters. He was one of the few men who really felt more certain of the truth of the Bible than he did of the truth of contemporary science'. Willis B. Glover, *op.cit.*, p.163.

4

J.E. Carruthers, 'A Half-Century's Retrospect', pp.36-9.

5

See S. Bryant, 'The Promotion of Spiritual Life and Work,' Congregational Year Book, 1883, pp.87-91; G. Clarke, 'Our Theology in its Present Aspects', Jubilee of Congregationalism in South Australia; Report, Intercolonial Congregational Conference, Adelaide, 1887, pp.64-71; T. Roseby, Chairman's Address, 1890, Congregational Year Book, 1891, pp.96-109; W.R. Fletcher, Modern Aspects of the Fight of Faith and the Higher Criticism of the Bible, in the Light of Modern Discoveries, Sydney, 1892. While he departed from the old biblicism Fletcher advised conservative caution as to all the findings of the higher critics.

There had been little, if any, delay in the progress of higher criticism in the colonies compared with Britain. Religious journals followed developments in Britain closely, and a number of ministers influenced by liberal scholarship came to Australia in the 1880s. Higher criticism caused less turbulence in Australia as in England than in Germany and North America since the critics on the whole were orthodox concerning the incarnation and resurrection, though liberal on other points of doctrine.¹ Some churchmen found relief in higher criticism from the futile task of defending the Bible against attacks from freethought and 'science'. Conservative and liberal apologists in the Christian Evidence Society moved at different levels, hardly meeting in conflict, but there was a clash in 1894 when, from the moderatorial chair of the Presbyterian General Assembly, George MacInnes proclaimed the death of verbal inspiration.² George Grimm, a conservative apologist, replied in defence of plenary inspiration.³ Conservatism persisted among some Protestants; and Leo XIII taught Roman Catholics in Providentissimus Deus, against all

1

See Willis B. Glover, op.cit., pp.283-6.

2

George MacInnes, The Death of the Verbal Theory and the Unveiling of Christ, or the Bible as a Sufficient Witness to the Self-Evidencing Christ, Sydney, 1894.

3

George Grimm, The Plenary Inspiration of the Bible, a defence and reply, Sydney, 1894.

modern learning, that the inspiration of the Bible was incompatible with error.¹ But conservatism could not stem the tide of Liberal Protestantism.

Different theological emphases were a corollary of a changed view of the Bible. By 1890 a number of Protestants were preaching modified doctrines of the atonement and man's future state.² Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists had largely abandoned their former Calvinism. In 1888 members of the Presbyterian Assembly applauded the moderator John Auld, when he declared the Westminster Confession inadequate for the nineteenth century and called for a new statement of faith.³ T.E. Clouston, moderator in 1890, declared the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism a thing of the past, and laymen wrote for and against the doctrines of the Genevan reformer.⁴ The Herald's liberal Wesleyan editor, William Curnow, approved Auld's and Clouston's addresses as signs that the churches were identifying themselves 'with the reforming movements of the times'.⁵

1

Encyclical Letter of our Most Holy Father Pope Leo XIII on the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, Sydney, 1894.

2

H.L. Jackson, 'The Church and Modern Thought', loc.cit., p.119; G. Clarke, loc.cit.; J.E. Carruthers, 'A Half Century's Retrospect', pp.36-9.

3

S.M.H., 7 March 1888.

4

T.E. Clouston, S.M.H., 5 March 1890; see also P.D. McCormick, S.M.H., 7 March 1890; 'An Elder', S.M.H., 11 March 1890; and on Calvinism and Arminianism see Baptist, 7 February 1887, and G. Clarke, loc.cit.

5

S.M.H., 6 March 1890.

The hostility to Darwin's theory of evolution had largely disappeared by 1890, although Archibald Gilchrist, Presbyterian moderator in 1889, a conservative between two liberals, denounced evolution as atheistic and irreconcilable with revelation.¹ But there were other churchmen who believed that evolution was consistent with theism and revelation.² Henry Drummond had shown Christians a way, not only of reconciling evolution with religion, but of using evolution to restate the faith. James Jefferis accepted Darwinian evolution but held that God had intervened to impart his spirit to man at the right point in the upward progress.³ (Acceptance of evolution, however, left the providence of God to extraordinary intervention in the natural order; only by allowing for special Divine intervention was prayer plausible, particularly in time of drought.)⁴

1

S.M.H., 6 March 1889.

2

Mrs Ann Mozley places the Australian churches' adjustment to evolution at the end of the century, but some of the leading Protestant churchmen in New South Wales in the 1880s had already accepted evolution as compatible with Christian belief. Ann Mozley, 'Evolution and the Climate of Opinion in Australia, 1840-1870', Victorian Studies, vol.X, no.4, June 1967, pp.411-30.

3

J. Jefferis, 'Science and Over-Science', Presbyterian, 8 September 1888.

4

Broad Churchmen like Bishops Moorhouse and Pearson refused to pray for rain, but most Protestants in the 1880s offered prayer for rain in time of drought, although they felt that they had to justify behaviour that might be thought foolish for modern man. Catholics had no doubt that it was right to ask God to end the drought. See reports of services in churches, S.M.H., 2 March 1878, 18 February 1884; see also A.C.W. 1 January 1886;

(footnote continued on p.227)

Thomas Roseby, a scientist clergyman, dealt with evolution in the first of the Livingstone Lectures in 1888.¹ Roseby saw the origin of the whole evolutionary process in the will of God. He recognised the genetic unity of the lower and higher forms of life, but saw man as unique in nature; his nature and destiny were still unfolding. Roseby told his audience that there was but one God of the Bible and of nature, and charged them not to fear truth, to learn from the scientists, but to take little notice of Darwin and Huxley on religion. Revelation, he pointed out, was also 'a datum of experience', and on that the Christian rested his authority.² Religious experience rather than the Bible became the authority of the Liberal Protestant, and equipped with this anchor he drifted freely on the tides of science and philosophy.³

(footnote 4 continued from p.226)

Guardian, 22 September 1888; R.W.B. Vaughan, Pastoral Letter to the Clergy ordering Prayers for Rain, Sydney, [1878]; P.F. Moran, Pastoral Letter...to the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese [17 April 1886], Sydney, 1886, p.11.

1

In 1878 George Durham, established a foundation for the delivery of annual lectures at Camden College on religion and science. John Garrett and L.W. Farr, Camden College. A Centenary History, Sydney, 1964, p.25.

2

T. Roseby, 'The Genetic Unity of Nature Viewed in a Theistic and Christian Light', Livingstone Lectures, 1888, Supplement, Independent, 15 July 1888, pp.13, 14.

3

See Willis B. Glover, op.cit., chapter XI: Glover shows that personal experience alone proved inadequate for twentieth century Protestantism which looked more to the experience and history of the Church, an emphasis present in Bishop Pearson.

There was less emphasis on apologetics in the Catholic Church after Archbishop Vaughan, although the O'Beirne Bible Hall, which Vaughan had opened before he left the colony for the last time in 1883, was used for lectures on Catholic doctrine; few of the lectures, however, were reported in the press, and they did not attract Protestants as Vaughan's had done. But the hierarchy was aware of the challenge from freethought. In 1885 it suggested that parish priests should establish Christian Doctrine Societies to render Christian truth attractive to little hearers, and also supported a Catholic circulating library to stimulate religion and combat secularism.¹ But while Protestants made their peace with the new knowledge Catholics offered their own particular apology for the Catholic Church in 'an enlightened age'. Following the lead of Pope Leo XIII, they sought to give their Church a progressive image rather than the reactionary image Pius IX had given it. In May 1886 Cardinal Moran listed a number of scientists from Catholic countries, including Columbus and Galileo, to support his claim that the Catholic Church had been the mother of enlightenment, the patroness of art and learning, and the best friend and protector of progress and liberty.² Father Phelan lectured on the same theme at Wagga in September 1886, with many Protestants in the audience.³ But neither

1

Pastoral, Plenary Council, pp.7, 10.

2

F.J., 15 May 1886.

3

F.J., 2 October 1886.

referred to the Church's treatment of Columbus or Galileo. Moran repeated these claims in his commemoration address to St John's College in April 1888.¹ He amazed Protestants who could only think of the Church's condemnation of Galileo's teaching. Father D.F. Barry, as 'Nemo', defended the Cardinal. 'Nemo' adroitly remarked that the Inquisition, not the Pope, condemned Galileo's system; but the Holy Office was not infallible!² He also alleged that Protestants had ill-treated Kepler, and the controversy degenerated into an acrimonious wrangle. But Moran continued to press these claims in commemoration addresses, and in April 1889 Father William Kelly, S.J., told Catholics what their priests had done for science.³ But Moran preferred to support his case with illustrations no later than the seventeenth century and earlier. None of these apologists, however, made any attempt to meet the challenge of modern science to religion. A few Catholic writers began to deal with evolution and biblical criticism mostly after the turn of the century.⁴ But modernism did not seem to affect Australian

1

P.F. Moran, Commemoration Discourses at St John's College, 1888-1891, Sydney, 1891, pp.

2

D.F. Barry, The Church and Science: the 'Nemo' Letters, Sydney 1889, Letter I. This controversy was carried on in the columns of the Evening News.

3

F.J., 20 April 1889.

4

The Australian Catholic Record which began publication in 1895 contained occasional apologetic essays: see T.L. Suttor, 'The Criticism of Religious Certitude in Australia', Journal of Religious History, vol.I, no.1, pp.26-39.

Catholicism, and the revival of Thomism under Leo XIII made no immediate impact in the colony. In 1885 the Freeman's Journal remarked that Protestants in the Christian Evidence Society were trying to out-argue the intellect; but Christianity, it observed, rested on acceptance of the dogmatic authority of the Church, apprehended through faith not reason.¹ Thus, apart from Archbishop Vaughan, it was mostly Protestants, who attempted to resolve the conflict between religion and science, and to reconcile faith with reason.

Science and secularism, however, had only slight effect on religious affiliation and practice in the colony. The numbers of those who formally renounced religion, though very small, increased rapidly in the 1880s; but a few freethinkers embraced Christianity anew. Although there was a decline in the proportion of the population attending churches in the 1880s it is not clear how far militant secularism contributed to this; other reasons for the decline have been discussed earlier. Moreover, attendances improved in the next decade while there was a remarkable decline in the number of freethinkers and those professing to no religion.² But Christian apologetics alone cannot claim all the credit for the decline of freethought. The Parkes Government, in

1

F.J., 15 August 1885. It said this in approval of Sir James Martin's statement from the chair of the Christian Evidence Society that the doctrines of Christianity were to be received as dogmas, not matters of personal opinion. It thought that Protestants could not have agreed fully with Sir James.

2

See Appendix I.

closing the theatres against freethought lecturers in 1887, dealt it a heavier blow than all the Christian evidence lectures. But Protestantism's rapprochement with modern science and the new biblical scholarship rendered much anti-Christian propaganda irrelevant.¹

The main achievement of apologetics in this period was that it enabled educated Christians, ministers and laymen, to reconcile their faith with modern knowledge. Believing that all truth was of God,² the apologists wrestled with religion and science confident that they would vindicate their faith. They persuaded questioning laymen that Christianity restated was still credible, and justified the clerical vocation as intellectually respectable. There were still some who mistrusted science and adhered to the infallible Book as others held to an infallible Church. There were also many in the pews whose piety was unaffected by the ferment, and more without who were as indifferent to freethought as to Christian faith.

Apologetic endeavour continued into the 1890s but did not claim the same attention from churchmen after 1889. By then many realised that argument would not

1

F.B. Smith, 'The Atheist Mission', loc.cit., p.234.

2

See G. Woolnough, retiring address as President of the Wesleyan Conference, S.M.H., 18 January 1882; Bishop Barry, 'Truth and Freedom', a sermon preached before the British Association at Bath, 1888, cit. Guardian, 17 November 1888; see also Owen Chadwick, op.cit. p.572.

overcome indifference, and that the relevance of Christianity had become a more urgent question than its reasonableness, as Bishop Barry had implied in his final address to the Christian Evidence Society. For apart from freethought, there was another kind of anti-dogmatic sentiment abroad at the end of the decade.

Mrs Humphrey Ward's novel, Robert Elsmere, published in 1888, made its impact in the colony.¹ Robert Elsmere was the story of an Anglican parson who renounced his belief in the supernatural, but embraced the practical and social teaching of the man Jesus. H.L. Jackson told the Anglican Church Congress in Sydney in 1889 that there were many Robert Elsmeres leading 'useful and holy lives' who felt compelled to stand outside the life of the Church.² But he confidently expected a new theology to emerge that would 'satisfy the wants of our times'. Jackson's address evoked a strong reply from a critic who dismissed most of the reasons offered for the absence of the working classes from the churches and discounted the intellectual difficulties which Jackson had magnified. He asserted that the churches' greatest enemy was not 'the aggressive and blatant atheism that... undertakes to hound God out of His own universe... but a cold, unreasoning, expressionless unbelief' among the lower strata of society. The reason for this

1

See Lothian Robson, 'The Fame of "Robert Elsmere"', Centennial Magazine, vol.I, no.8, March 1889, pp.564-70.

2

H.L. Jackson, loc.cit., pp.112-121.

unbelief was the churches' tacit acceptance of an unjust and inhumane economic order. The only remedy he saw was for them to abandon the old doctrinal sermons and to preach political economy advocating a more equitable distribution of wealth. But he doubted whether the churches would heed this advice; he thought that they were too preoccupied with internal concerns and too afraid of offending their patrons.¹ No churchman was prepared to abandon doctrine altogether, but some wished to assert the relevance of Christianity to the struggle of the working classes for justice. In his address to the Church Congress in 1889, S.B. Holt, incumbent of St. Paul's Church, Deniliquin, advocated sympathy from the pulpit with the concerns of working men. He wanted ministers to master the economic questions and to put 'more of the human and less of the doctrinal' into their sermons. A 'sympathizing humanity' breathed through the Sermon on the Mount, he declared, and thus a preacher could not adequately expound the 'Holy Book' if he had 'no interest in social and economic concerns'.² And by the late 1880s socialism and the labour movement were forcing the attention of the churches to social and economic issues; but before then some churchmen had shown an interest in these matters.

1

T.J. Hebblewhite, 'Artisan Scepticism and Empty Churches', Centennial Magazine, vol.2, no.3, October 1889, p.162.

2

S.B. Holt, 'The Church in Relation to the Various Grades of Society', Papers Delivered at the Church Congress, Sydney, 1889, p.282.

Chapter 5

The Social Teaching of the Churches

The prevailing view among Protestants around 1880 was that the pulpit should preach 'the simple gospel' dealing with the themes of the fall, redemption and regeneration.¹ Many thought that politics had no place in the pulpit, but some held that political questions as distinct from party politics were appropriate subjects for preachers. In 1878 James Jefferis argued that one reason for the alienation of the working classes from the churches was that there had been too much explanation of the gospel and not enough application of its message. He declared that it was the preacher's duty, not to engage in the strife of parties or to offer solutions to specific problems, but

to lay down principles and truths which are of eternal obligation, by which senates and chambers of commerce and trade unions ought to be guided, and by which too the conduct of the individual man ought to be determined in every department of life.²

Later in the decade, as the conflict between capital and labour forced itself on their attention, more preachers admitted politics into the pulpit.

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The Presbyterian in 1888 described this as the view that prevailed at the beginning of the decade. Presbyterian, 14 April 1888.

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J. Jefferis, The Enfranchisement of Labour, Sydney, [1878], p.22: see also Jefferis remarks on the pulpit and politics, S.M.H., 19 March 1883.

But if 'the simple gospel' avoided political subjects, it did not exclude 'the Protestant ethic'.¹ Many Protestants preached the practice of industry, thrift and sobriety. Christianity was no friend to idleness, William Taylor, a Baptist minister, declared in 1880. Every Christian was to have some occupation or calling, and to carry on his business with diligence, which, 'if associated with prudence seldom fails of its reward'.

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand
but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.²

J.E. Carruthers, a Wesleyan minister of the period, listed a number of Methodists, including his brother, J.H. Carruthers, Premier of New South Wales (1904-7), who rose from humble beginnings to positions of wealth and eminence in proof of the promise that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things....'³ The Presbyterian in 1890 remarked that not all capitalists were large and wealthy; some had been employees who rose by intelligence and perseverance to the rank of masters.⁴ Preachers of all denominations

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I use this phrase in the terms of Max Weber's and R.H. Tawney's exposition of the relationship of Calvinist Protestantism to capitalism without assuming that the economic virtues are exclusively Protestant. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, [English Edition], London, 1930; R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, London, 1926.

2

W. Taylor 'Religion in Business' Banner of Truth, 5 May 1880 (quotation from Proverbs 10:4).

3

J.E. Carruthers, Memories of An Australian Ministry, pp.316-22 (quotation from 1. Timothy 4:8).

4

Presbyterian, 30 August 1890.

expounded the nobility of labour as a divine calling which was both a man's service to the world and the means of his own perfection.¹

The Catholic hierarchy also enjoined the faithful to adopt the virtues of industry, thrift and sobriety, trusting that these virtues would elevate the Catholic population in the community.² These maxims came from the Bible, particularly the Book of Proverbs and some Pauline epistles. But Protestants tended to see the economic virtues as peculiarly theirs, and attributed the prosperity of Protestant countries as compared with Catholic countries to the Protestant religion.³

This ethic largely prevented Protestant churchmen from coming to terms with social injustice. They attributed most poverty to vice, indolence and intemperance. They sympathised with 'honesty poverty' such as resulted from the incapacitation or the death of the breadwinner, but they thought that there was little 'honest poverty'. However, the honest poor

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See E.G. Hodgson, 'The Christian Aspect of our Worldly Calling', Australian Churchman, 16 October 1879; Bishop Barry, 'Amusement: its part in life', S.M.H., 8 July 1885; Bishop Pearson, 'Christianity in relation to personal character', S.M.H., 10 August 1885; Rev. Fr. P.M. Ryan, 'An Ecclesiastical View of Capital and Labour', D.T., 11 February 1884; J. Jefferis, 'The Nobility of Labour', D.T., 19 November 1888.

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Pastoral, Plenary Council, pp.9, 18; Cardinal Moran at Goulburn, F.J., 21 May 1887.

3

J. Jefferis, 'The Sorrows of Wealth', D.T., 26 November 1888.

deserved charitable relief. But Protestants preferred private philanthropy to state relief, although they admitted the need for some state action. James Jefferis, whose wife had taken a prominent part in introducing the 'boarding out system' for destitute children in New South Wales,¹ feared that state relief intensified the evils of poverty but he thought that the 'state should intervene to remove recognised causes of poverty, viz., overcrowded conditions, uncontrolled immigration and to curb gambling, intemperance, and prostitution;² but private philanthropy was still to be the main means of relief. It was, after all, the duty of the wealthy Christian to support religion, charity and works of usefulness in which he could not engage himself.³ In 1886 the Australian Christian World, in a comment on riots of the unemployed in London, denied that the state should set everyone on his legs. Men had to learn that 'competence, comfort and wealth are the appropriate rewards of industry, temperance and thrift'. To teach

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Brian Dickey, 'Charity in New South Wales 1850-1914: A Study in Public, Private and State Provisions for the Poor', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1966, pp.240-52.

2

J. Jefferis, 'Australia Christianised: a lecture, Adelaide Town Hall, 19 June 1890', in J. Jefferis, Historic Records of the North Adelaide Congregational Church, Adelaide, 1909, pp.38-62; also J. Jefferis, 'Pauperism in New South Wales', Sydney University Review, no.3, July 1882, pp.254-76; and D.T., 5 November 1889.

3

E.G. Hodgson, loc. cit.

men otherwise, it held, was to do them a grievous wrong and to sow 'the seeds of famine and civil commotion'.¹

But while pauperism was a curse and even a stigma, there was a poverty which could be a blessing. The blessing of poverty was an ancient teaching, but Jefferis and Cardinal Moran, both better acquainted with 'the sorrows of wealth', reiterated it in the 1880s. The poor, in this case the lower income groups, Jefferis said, were free from the temptations to idleness and vice that beset the rich. Moran dismissed 'utopian' schemes to end poverty; the poor would be with them always, but Christ had made them 'the special object of His love and charity'.²

The churches, Catholic and Protestant, upheld the Pauline teaching on masters and servants as the basis for the relationship of capital and labour. This generally implied a paternalistic relationship between the two: the worker was to show loyalty and respect for the master with a proper concern for his master's interests, while the master, in turn, was to take a kindly interest in the moral and general welfare of his employees; the principle of an honest wage for an honest day's work was to rule both.³ This was not an unqualified

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A.C.W., 19 February 1886: hereafter in the text I will refer to this weekly as the Christian World.

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J. Jefferis, 'The Sorrows of Wealth', D.T., 25 November 1888; 'The Joys of Poverty', *ibid.*, 9 December 1888; Cardinal Moran, F.J., 22 March 1890. The encyclical Rerum Novarum, 1891 reaffirmed this doctrine of the blessedness of poverty.

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Father P.M. Ryan, 'An Ecclesiastical View of Capital and Labour', D.T., 11 February 1884; see also P.F. Moran, Lecture on the Rights and Duties of Labour, Sydney, 1891.

acceptance of the economic status quo for it was always at variance with ruthless treatment, exploitation of labour and inhumane conditions, but it relied on charity and 'the maxims of the Christian life' to maintain justice and harmony in industrial relations.¹

In 1878, in his lecture on 'The Enfranchisement of Labour', James Jefferis described a new relationship which had emerged between capital and labour in the late nineteenth century. He used recent legislation in Britain to illustrate his point. There had been a new recognition of the rights of labour since 1867. Labourers could now vote; the application of the common law of conspiracy to strikes was repealed and the combination of labour admitted. Before 1867, he maintained, the theory of the law was that capital had rights and labour had duties. 'Let capital concede what it will, that is optional; but labour must discharge its obligations, that is imperative.' But after 1867 he thought that the law dealt with the capitalist and the workman on the same level. 'The rights of labour and the duties of wealth', were then 'as clearly established as the rights of wealth and the duties of labour'. Much of this progress he considered was due to the action of trade unions, and he would have no one denounce them because of certain 'manifest abuses'. 'The combination of workers', he asserted, 'is essentially just and actually necessary'. And he admitted that the progress of the worker had been achieved through battles in which 'law, learning, and

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Cardinal Moran, on 'Christianity, Paganism and Infidelity', F.J., 30 October 1886.

even religion herself, have too often been found fighting for an evil cause'. Yet despite the role of organised religion he held that the gospel was the charter of liberty, and that the Spirit of Christ had secured 'the enfranchisement of labour'.¹

All churchmen, Catholic and Protestant, maintained that the solution of industrial problems depended ultimately on Christianity. But a few also recognised that there were grievances to be redressed, and some supported movements for shorter hours and more humane conditions. During the 1880s Bishop Barry, Dr R. Steel and Dr Jefferis took part in the campaign for the early closing of shops.² (Shop assistants and clerk continued to work excessive hours after many manual workers and skilled tradesmen had won an eight hour day for themselves). The Wesleyan General Conference and the Congregational Union declared for the early closing of shops in 1888,³ and in 1890 the Christian World advocated a five-day week and six o'clock closing for shop assistants,⁴ but six o'clock closing with a half-holiday was not achieved until 1900;⁵ the five day week for shop assistants is yet to come.

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J. Jefferis, The Enfranchisement of Labour.

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S.M.H., 9 December 1885.

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S.M.H., 26 April 1888; Minutes, Wesleyan General Conference, 1888, p.48.

4

A.C.W., 23 January 1890.

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But shops could remain open to 10p.m. on Fridays or Saturdays. Early Closing Act, 1899, Act No.38, 1899. This Act took effect on 1 January 1900.

During the 'bus drivers strike in 1882 the Wesleyan Advocate declared that the text, 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord' was the solution to all capital-labour problems, yet at the same time it felt bound to protest at the unenviable lot of the drivers who worked about a fifteen hour day with little time for meals.¹ On the same occasion the Independent stated that the conflict of labour and capital was not the conflict of two classes, but a conflict between money and human forces. While it recognised that trade unionism threatened a new tyranny, it warned that the cure was not in a return 'to the older tyranny of capital', for human labour was a higher master than money. Instead of 'the perverted idea of co-operation', which meant workers co-operating for themselves, it looked for the genuine co-operation of capital and labour to make the most of their resources, 'whether of money or human tissue'.²

Industrial disputes tested the churches' sympathy with the working classes as well as their faith in Christian love to promote justice and harmony in industrial relations. The Presbyterian was apprehensive about workers' combinations in 1880, though it recognised the right of both employers and employees to secure common advantages.³ But the Christian World in its early days of publication was hostile toward the growing power

¹ Advocate, 16 December 1882.

² Independent, 15 December 1882.

³ Presbyterian, 12 June 1880.

of the labour movement. In a comment on a wharflabourers' and seamen's strike in Melbourne it suggested that 'a disinclination to do a fair day's work for a fair day's wage' lay at the root of the conflicts between labour and capital.¹ But others were beginning to assert that capital and labour could not be left to battle their own way to justice and good relations. This conviction emerged during the crisis on the Newcastle coalfields in August 1888.

A strike threatened when the coalminers demanded a new agreement with terms more advantageous to them. The miners' manifesto also protested generally at the unequal distribution of wealth. It was clear that the strike would affect the community more than any previous industrial dispute, both because it would disrupt industry and transport, and because the miners' sought wider support for the protest at the unequal distribution of wealth.² While the country waited some church papers moralised on the struggle between capital and labour.

The Catholic Nation stated that the public should stand by the coalminers as long as they conducted themselves with honour and prudence.³ The Wesleyan Advocate condemned strikes as immoral, and declared that it was the churches' duty to urge both sides to settle their disputes by 'some civilised and Christian

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A.C.W., 22 January 1886.

2

R.A. Gollan, The Coalminers of New South Wales, Melbourne, 1963, pp.73-7.

3

Nation, 17 August 1888.

method'.¹ The Presbyterian thought that the 'moral aspects' of strike implied relative rights that need defining.² The Independent observed that

Either State regulation or Socialism in its absolute form must come. There is deep and wide revolt against unlimited competition for employment. Laissez faire is played out in the estimation of the multitude.

Unless the government governed it saw only anarchy generated by labour unions on the one hand and unions of capitalists on the other.³

Jefferis had voiced this conviction from the pulpit on 19 August; he warned that a strike was impending 'upon a scale of the greatest magnitude ever witnessed in Australia'. He recognised once more the necessity for workers to combine for only through combination had they progressed from serfdom to liberty, although he saw a danger of tyranny from trade unions. He admitted that strikes were 'sometimes necessary...the millenium being yet very far off, and when they did arise they had to be settled by deeds of strife'. But a strike was 'a declaration of war' with the direst consequences to the workers and their dependents, to their industry, and in the case of the coalminers, to society at large. Everything should be done to avoid a strike, and it should

1

Advocate, 18 August 1888.

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Presbyterian, 18 August 1888; it had made a similar observation in 1880, but it expressed more fear of the combination of workers than of employers. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1880.

3

Independent, 15 September 1888.

only be embarked on for an adequate cause. He declined to give a definite opinion on the Newcastle strike from the pulpit, but stated that while men might have a righteous cause in demanding a five per cent increase in wages their cause became unrighteous if it deprived some of earning wages at all and created for others poverty, misery and hunger. Society would 'never sanction the righteousness of a few that brings ruin upon many. If the welfare of all were to be threatened by the action of a few, then there should be proper legislation to prevent it'. He advocated measures to limit industrial disputes and to provide for 'an authoritative settlement'.¹ The Employers' Federation, formed in July 1888, had also given its approval to industrial arbitration.²

At Newcastle there was an attempt to avert a strike through conciliation. A Citizens' Conciliation Committee was formed, and Canon A.E. Selwyn, Vicar General of the diocese of Newcastle, emerged as its leader. Both parties accepted his mediation, but the proprietors used Selwyn in an attempt to bring the men to heel. They handed him a sealed proposed agreement which could only be opened for discussion once the miners withdrew all proposals that were obnoxious to the proprietors.³ On Wednesday 22 August Selwyn and the committee spent two sessions with the miners' delegates,

¹ S.M.H., 20 August 1888.

² S.M.H., 17 July 1888.

³ S.M.H., 22 August 1888.

who refused to negotiate until the proprietors' proposals were opened and set before them.¹ Selwyn tried again to persuade the miners' delegates to accept the proprietors' basis for discussion, but failed, and the strike began on Friday 24 August.² Churchmen were not indifferent to the strike, but they showed more fear of industrial anarchy or the tyranny of unionism than direct sympathy with the coalminers.

The London Dock Strike in 1889, however, aroused widespread sympathy in the colony both among the churches and the wider public. It was less controversial to support workers in Britain than in Australia, but some churchmen in Britain also supported the dockers, notably Cardinal Manning, who mediated the settlement; Protestant sympathisers were too cautious, or in the case of Bishop Temple, too impatient, and therefore ineffective.³ But the opinion that the London dockers were poorly paid compared with Australian workers partly explains the sympathy for their cause in the colony. F.B. Boyce, an Anglican and a clerical social reformer,⁴ and J.F. Cullen,

¹ S.M.H., 23 August 1888.

² S.M.H., 24, 25 August 1888.

³ Stephen Mayor, The Churches and the Labour Movement, London, 1967, pp.109-10.

⁴ F.B. Boyce (1844-1931) an Evangelical and Temperance reformer was a founder of the Local Option League in 1883, of the Old Age Pensions League in 1896, active in the cause of women's suffrage and a leader of the slum abolition campaign 1926-7. F. Johns, Notable Australians and Who is Who is Australasia, Adelaide, 1908; J.D. Bollen, op. cit., passim; S.M.H., 28 May 1931.

a Congregationalist who went from the pulpit to politics, took part in the public meeting to raise funds for the strikers, and Catholic and Protestant laymen were present at the mass demonstration on the Domain.¹ Jefferis made a powerful appeal from the pulpit for the London Dock Labourers' Relief Fund, as did Dr L. Bevan in Melbourne.² The Presbyterian gave the dockers cautious support; it still maintained the poor had mostly themselves to blame for their condition, and that Christianity was the best cure for industrial strife.³ But the Advocate was warmer in its sympathy, proud of the support the Wesleyan London Mission had given the dockers and of the response from Australia.⁴ Boyce uttered the hope that 'once more labour would win a right, true, and a genuine victory over everything that was unfair';⁵ and after the strike Jefferis declared that the dockers' victory was 'an instalment of obedience to Christ's great law of brotherhood and the demand of his apostle, "Masters, give your servants that which is just and equal".'⁶ But John Fordyce, minister of the wealthy Woollahra Congregational Church, made the Dock Strike an occasion to attack laissez-faire and freedom of contract, which,

¹ S.M.H., 5, 9 September 1889.

² S.M.H., 9 September 1889; Independent, 15 September 1889.

³ Presbyterian 14 September 1889.

⁴ Advocate, 26 October 1889.

⁵ S.M.H., 5 September 1889.

⁶ D.T., 21 October 1889.

he said, often meant 'freedom to brutalise and degrade helpless children'. Many good but short-sighted men, he declared, thought

that we best advance the interests of all BY SEEKING EACH HIS OWN INTEREST. They pray on Sundays, 'Thy kingdom come', yet on all the other days of the week they toil for advancement of another kingdom altogether, even the kingdom of selfishness, as if God's kingdom could ever come by every man seeking his own things!¹

But the real test of churches sympathy with labour came with the Australian Maritime Strike in 1890. It coincided with an attempt in parliament to liberalise the Sunday observance laws,² and this absorbed much time and energy of churchmen. The Presbyterian commented in June 1890 that the Sunday question was likely to be more keenly debated than protection, free trade or local option.³ But notwithstanding this preoccupation, many ministers preached sermons on the strike and offered prayers for its settlement, though the press published only a few of the sermons.⁴

Some preachers took a conservative and cautious line. J.W. Inglis, preaching in the Parramatta Presbyterian Church, expounded the conventional argument

1

Independent, 15 September 1889.

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See Chapter 7.

3

Presbyterian, 21 June 1890.

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A.C.W., 21 August 1890; D.T., 27 September 1890: Dean Cowper issued a prayer to be read in Anglican churches in the diocese of Sydney during the strike. Circular, No.257, Archives of the Diocese of Sydney.

that Christian principles alone would solve the conflict. He declared that 'the doctrine of equality in the socialist sense had not a shadow of support anywhere' in the Bible.¹ The Rev. Rainsford Bavin, a Wesleyan, preached on the efficacy of the Golden Rule and suggested that the captain and crew should say the Lord's Prayer together; and in the Wesleyan Church at Singleton the Rev. W. Stiles condemned the excesses of unionism.²

A few preachers expressed strong sympathy with the strikers. At Bathurst Ebenezer Price, the Baptist minister, warmly defended the down-trodden labouring classes and denounced the churches for seeming in many cases to countenance the harshness of capitalism. He declared that God and right were on the side of the oppressed and that they would triumph ultimately.³ James Hill told his congregation in Bourke Street Congregational Church that trade combinations, if rightly managed, could not but have the sanction of Christianity. To believe that employers could deal with employees without individual liberty being affected by a powerful combination behind them was, he said, a pretty theory which in practice had 'resulted chiefly in the rich man grinding the face of his poorer brother'. He insisted that it was sometimes necessary to sacrifice individual liberty to secure 'a larger and more widely-permeating liberty'. He predicted that trade combinations would be

1

D.T., 25 August 1890.

2

Advocate, 30 August, 20 September 1890.

3

A.C.W., 21 August 1890.

instrumental in effecting a juster and more righteous society in the future. Outside the church one member of the congregation who had listened impatiently to Hill 'somewhat excitedly endeavoured to "put the case for the masters"'.¹ Several Anglicans of different churchmanship, were sympathetic with the labour movement;² the liberal Church of England Guardian concluded that 'There must be something wrong in the working of a system that leads to these results'.³ But for most of 1890 the diocese of Sydney was without a bishop. Dr Saumarez Smith, an Evangelical, arrived in October, in the middle of the strike. In his first sermon he declared that as each individual was filled with the spirit of Christ so the mutual duties between men and classes would gradually be recognised.⁴ Dr Stanton, Bishop-elect of Newcastle, was a passenger from Cairns to Newcastle during the strike; he took off his coat and turned wharflabourer.⁵

The Christian World followed the strike closely. T.S. Carey, a South Australian who became its editor in April 1890, was sympathetic with the strikers. Like Hill, he said that it was too late to attack trade unionism in defence of something called free labour. He wrote:

We cannot but rejoice in the general elevation of the toiler, and we recognise that he owes

¹ D.T., 29 September, 1890.

² J.D. Bollen, op.cit., pp.89-90.

³ Guardian, 30 August 1890.

⁴ D.T., 6 October 1890; see also Address P.S.D.S., 1890, pp.22-3.

⁵ F.J., 27 September 1890.

this almost entirely to the power of combination, in other words to trades unionism.¹

If the shipowners were only making five per cent profit, Carey asked, why they did not raise their freights to pay the officers proper wages? It was 'not necessary that a man should sail to Melbourne for 10s., but it [was] necessary that justice should be done to every toiler'.² Cardinal Moran also condemned the ruinous competition that forced wages down.³

The Freeman's Journal, now the only Catholic paper in the colony, had little sympathy with the unionists. It described the well-fed and well-clad appearance of the procession on Saturday 30 August; they were not the gaunt figures seen in the London labourers' procession. It saw them as a new 'self-constituted authority' which aimed to dictate the conditions of trade and commerce in the country. It thought that their procession deserved to pass through the streets in silence, and observed that strange things were done in the sacred names of liberty, truth and justice.⁴

Cardinal Moran, in contrast, showed a warm sympathy to the unionists which won him great popularity among them. In an interview in September he said that the unionists' claims were just and ought to be conceded.

¹ A.C.W., 28 August 1890.

² Ibid.

³ F.J., 6 September 1890.

⁴ Ibid.

He approved of trade unionism; it was 'only another form of the old Catholic guilds'. But at the same time, like many Protestants, he defended freedom of contract, and warned that there was some danger of the unions falling into the same tyranny they denounced. He considered there was need both for conciliation and compromise on both sides.¹ On Saturday 6 September the Maritime Officers in a second procession of strikers led the unionists in three cheers for the Cardinal as they passed St Mary's Cathedral.² But Moran's attitude to social questions was not radical; he reiterated the Christian principles of kindness and charity, which he said were 'often efficacious where justice and equity as recognised by the world failed in the settlement of disputes and in the re-establishment of social relations....'³ Protestants, with a few notable exceptions, said much the same. The Baptist declared that

...there is only one remedy for the social cancer, and until that remedy is applied labour and capital, affluence and wretchedness will travail in vain. Christ and the Golden Rule is the only leaven that can work out the mighty purpose of the Creator in the heart of humanity.⁴

When the strike began, the Christian World recalled the good offices of Cardinal Manning in the London Dock

¹ F.J., 6 September 1890; see also Standard, 13, 27 September 1890.

² F.J., 13 September 1890.

³ F.J., 4 October 1890.

⁴ Baptist, 4 September 1890.

Strike and suggested that the leading representative ministers of the churches should mediate in the dispute.¹ The first attempt at mediation on 8 September came from Protestant ministers connected with the Sydney Peace Association. Those who advocated international arbitration sought it also in industrial disputes; they regarded strikes as a form of warfare:² and the Adelaide Ministers' Association had also sent a telegram asking for the co-operation of Sydney ministers in seeking a settlement. On 10 September Dr Thomas Roseby presided at a meeting which appointed a Conciliation Committee of the six Protestant denominations and a Quaker to meet both sides.³ Roseby sympathised strongly with trade unionism and not at all with free labour, which he considered the greatest threat to the elevation of the worker.⁴ He told this meeting that although there were two sides to every question they might depend on it that thousands of their fellow-citizens were not denying themselves almost the very necessities of life for nothing,

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A.C.W., 21 August 1890.

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S.M.H., 9 September 1890.

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Dean W.M. Cowper, Anglican; Revs J.D. Langley, Anglican; Dr A. Gilchrist, Presbyterian; W. Dill Macky, Presbyterian; W.G. Taylor, Wesleyan; R. Bavin, Wesleyan; W. Taylor, Baptist; Geo. Preston, Congregationalist; J.W. Holden, Primitive Methodist; G. James, Primitive Methodist; B. Stephens, Anglican; Mr J.J. Neave, Society of Friends; Dr Roseby, Chairman, Congregationalist.

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He stated this before the Royal Commission on the Strike, 1891. Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, Sydney 1891, Minutes of Evidence, Q4523-4, p.172.

and that as preachers of the gospel of peace it was their solemn duty to intervene and seek a conciliation.¹ Roseby later told the Royal Commission on the strike that the Shipowners' Association had declined to receive their deputation, but they had held an informal conference with the Labour Defence Committee, which was ready to co-operate.² The next week Cardinal Moran, perhaps inspired by the example of Manning and hoping to succeed where Protestants had failed, offered his services as a conciliator. The Defence Committee was as willing to accept his offices as it had been to co-operate with the Protestant deputation, but the employers were resolved to secure unconditional surrender.³ Moran had been asked to act on a conciliation committee in Queensland, but among other things the shortness of his stay prevented this.⁴ Protestant ministers in Brisbane had also tried to mediate and soften the attitude of employers, but had been rudely rebuffed.⁵

As the strike continued some sympathisers became more critical of the unionists. The Christian World grew alarmed at cases of violence and cowardly ruffianism by some unionists against the free workers.⁶ When the

¹ S.M.H., 11 September 1890.

² Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, Minutes of Evidence, Q4507, p.171.

³ F.J., 20 September 1890.

⁴ F.J., 6 September 1890.

⁵ A.C.W., 11 September 1890.

⁶ A.C.W., 4, 25 September 1890.

shearers came out the Freeman's Journal declared that this act justified all that the worst enemies said of unionism; it was 'selfish, treacherous and utterly untrustworthy'.¹ But Moran stood by the unionists throughout the strike, though he sought to persuade them to end the strike or to suspend it for a few months since the employers refusal to confer had given the unionists a moral victory.² The Christian World agreed that the employers were at fault for refusing 'to meet the men'. It warned them that they could not crush unionism, but they could crush society by prolonging this suicidal strife.³ The Freeman's Journal recognised the fault of the employers in continuing the stalemate, but it was more critical of the unionist leaders. It concluded that 'The great labour battle [had] been fought by the men bravely, but by their leaders worse than badly'.⁴ The Protestant Standard also judged the leaders severely and declared that they deserved to lose the confidence of the men.⁵ And the Christian World, notwithstanding its criticism of the employers, also deplored the way the men had been called out: it concluded that society must find 'some other method of settling trade and labour disputes than this barbarous and costly method of war'.⁶

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F.J., 4 October 1890.

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F.J., 4 October, 1 November 1890.

3

A.C.W., 16 October 1890.

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F.J., 1 November 1890.

5

Standard, 15 November 1890.

6

A.C.W., 13 November 1890.

After the strike the Labour Defence Committee condemned government, press and pulpit for their roles in the strike. The clergy, it said, left public opinion 'to grope amid the gloom of sacerdotal clap-trap'. It professed to respect the 'manly opposition' of Bishop Stanton who worked with the blacklegs, and expressed gratitude to Cardinal Moran, Dr Roseby, H.L. Jackson¹ of St James' Church, and George Walters, the Unitarian minister, 'and a few other clergymen for their Christ-like sympathy with the struggling masses'. But the majority of the clergy, it asserted, had largely lost their 'opportunities of well-doing among the workers of Australia'.²

Sympathy with the unionists was probably more widespread than the unionists recognised, but churchmen who tried to see both sides of the question, or who thought they could put law and order and the welfare of society at large before the interests of either of the contending parties, did not convey much sympathy to the strikers. The Independent rejected the charge that the pulpit was on the side of capital in the strike. It held that the preacher's task was not to be partisan, but to mediate between the parties. Although it said that capitalism was far more dangerous to society than unionism, it still defended freedom of contract and commended the

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See below.

2

Official Report and Balance Sheet of the New South Wales Labour Defence Committee, pp.13-7, cit., C.M.H. Clark, Select Documents in Australian History, 1851-1900, Sydney, 1955, pp.772-6.

Golden Rule as the answer to the industrial struggle.¹
 However well meant were utterances of this kind they failed to satisfy either side.

It is harder to discover the attitude of laymen in the churches; the Christian World reported that everyone was taking sides in the strike; some for the masters were eloquent about the improvidence, intemperance and idleness of the men; others were equally eloquent about the heroic conduct of the toilers.² The incident after Hill's sermon at Bourke Street illustrates the intense disagreement that could arise between ministers and laymen over economic questions. Some months before the strike 'A Man of Business' complained that the great middle classes of master-tradesmen and shopkeepers who formed a large part of a Sunday congregation received little consideration from the pulpit. The preacher, he said, had no message for them except to warn them against 'the unholy scramble for riches', although financial difficulties had harrassed them all the week. He thought that Henry George had so turned ministers' heads that

...in these days a man who wears a respectable coat in church, runs a business and owns an allotment of land...is in most ministers' eyes a bloated monopolist, a land grabber, and the oppressor of the poor working man.³

Radicalism in the pulpit was not quite as widespread as this layman implied, but it was more prevalent than many

¹ Independent, 15 September 1890.

² A.C.W., 28 August 1890.

³ A.C.W., 3 April 1890.

have recognised, for some clergy and laymen had turned their backs on economic as well as evangelical orthodoxy; they insisted on the need for social reconstruction as well as individual regeneration.

Christianity and Socialism

Socialism offered a secular salvation to the working classes in their struggle for justice and a better life, and thus constituted a serious challenge to those who preached the salvation of souls rather than of society. Socialism covered a variety of theories of social reconstruction from Karl Marx, to Henry George and Edward Bellamy, but when churchmen condemned it they thought mostly of atheistic socialism in Germany. Following the death in 1878 of the German socialist, August Heinsch, Jefferis preached on 'Socialism in Germany'. He attacked its atheism and asserted that there never was and never would be an atheistic nation. Fully aware of the injustices of the prevailing order, he rejected the socialists' programme for social improvement; he maintained that the betterment of the world came by evolution not revolution. Christianity, he asserted, had already inspired movements to improve the lot of the working classes and the Spirit of Christ was the guarantee of future progress.¹ But others were more vehement in their opposition to socialism.

The Catholic Church under Leo XIII was as hostile to socialism as it had been to liberalism under Pius IX.

¹

J. Jefferis, Socialism in Germany, Sydney, [1878].

In 1881 on the occasion of the assassination of the Russian Czar, Alexander, Vaughan's Express denounced socialism in Germany, communism in France and nihilism in Russia. It warned that society would 'plunge from one abyss to the other' until Divine order was restored and 'PETER was the Keystone in the arch of order'.¹ In 1886, Cardinal Moran, anticipating Rerum Novarum, condemned both acquisitive capitalism and socialism, and in his sermon at the Requiem Mass for Cardinal Newman in September 1890, during the strike, he warned against the false scientists who in 'an age of ruins...set before us a phantom temple of socialist atheism, or infidelity or pantheism, in which selfishness and pride, the idols of a corrupt heart, demand our homage and worship'.² Like Vaughan, he taught that the Catholic Church alone could provide the basis for a sound, just and stable society. In October 1890, in an interview, he said that the only hope for trade unionism was 'to keep quite free from any Socialist movement. The end and purpose of Socialist agitation is to overthrow society...Socialists are the vowed enemies of all religion'.³

Some Protestants were as uncompromisingly opposed to socialism as Catholics. In 1880 the Baptist Banner

¹ Express, 14 May 1881.

² S.M.H., 19 September 1890.

³ Cit. P. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the A.L.P., Melbourne, 1966, pp.81-2: socialism in Australia, however, was neither as revolutionary nor as atheistic as Father Ford implies. See John Ryan's review of Ford in Journal of Religious History, vol.4, no.3, June 1967, pp.249-54.

of Truth viewed German socialism and Russian nihilism with much the same alarm as the Catholic Express, although it traced the causes to absolute monarchy and ecclesiastical profligacy as well as scepticism.¹ In 1885 the Advocate argued for a three point programme of religious education in home, church and school to avert from the colonies, 'Those terrible evils which are the natural outcome of irreligion and scepticism...and the possible horrors of atheistic socialism'.² In May 1890 it said that Methodism's task was to contribute to 'the conservation and perfecting of human society'. It would do this by

The faithful preaching, not of politics, but of the Word of God, which characterised the work of early Methodist preachers [and] saved English society at the end of the last century from the throes of revolution...we may fairly assure ourselves that with fidelity to truth and wise adaptation to the needs of succeeding years, the Methodist Church in Australia will be one of the strongest safeguards against the evils which now seem so inseparably connected with Socialism.³

After the strike in 1890 J.S. Austin assured his Wesleyan congregation that if the Sabbath were duly observed society would be saved from revolution and anarchy.⁴

Liberal Protestants were less hostile in their criticism of socialism; they maintained that Christianity

¹ Banner of Truth, 3 March 1880.

² Advocate, 21 February 1885.

³ Ibid., 10 May 1890.

⁴ D.T., 9 December 1890.

was indeed the true socialism. In a lecture on 'Christianity and Socialism' at St James' Church in September 1886 Bishop Barry stated that Christianity recognised and sympathised with both individualism and socialism. He thought that capitalism had to be restricted and that socialising forces needed to check excessive individualism for the public good. But he rejected 'State socialism'. The socialising forces were co-operation and combination rather than state action, and therefore Christianity must wish trade unionism well. But Christianity preserved the small units such as the family and left room for charity and philanthropy, which he said was a principle of the Christian socialism of F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley. Christianity stood for

...the life of a true individualism by cherishing in us the sacred freedom of life, which is Christ in the soul, and the inspiring and expanding force of a true socialism, pervading the whole world, which is 'Christ in humanity itself'.¹

Moreover, he maintained that development, not revolution, was the law of Christianity.

A month later Jefferis began a series of Sunday night lectures on 'the Socialism of Christianity'. He praised the aims of socialism, which were those of Christianity also. But Christian socialism looked for the slow but sure progress to the Christian state; slow because it worked through the individual; sure because it took account of the depravity of human nature.

1

D.T., 6 September 1886; see also A. Barry, Lectures on Christianity and Socialism, London, 1890.

Christianity, he claimed, was responsible for all the humanitarian progress of European civilisation. There were monstrous inequalities to abolish, but this would be achieved by piecemeal legislation, by the co-operation of capital and labour, and above all through the Spirit of Christ 'the great Social Reformer' who was 'the Redeemer of Man and the Regenerator of Society'.¹

On 26 August 1890, in the early stages of the Maritime Strike Dr E. Harris, of King's School, Parramatta, delivered a lecture on 'Socialism and the Church' to the Anglican Lay Helpers' Association to show them the serious nature of the industrial problem, and also that the Anglican Church was not indifferent to it. He quoted the Lambeth Encyclical, 1888, on 'the Church's practical work in relation to Socialism'.² He condemned excessive individualism; it was no longer 'every man for

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'Christ and the State', D.T., 4 October 1886; 'Christ and the Church', D.T., 11 October 1886; 'Christ and Labor', D.T., 18 October 1886; 'Christ and the Land', D.T., 25 October 1886; 'Christ and the Man', D.T., 1 November 1886; 'Christ and the Woman', D.T., 8 November 1886; 'Christ and Children', D.T., 15 November 1886. The Rev. A. Gosman, a Victorian Congregationalist and a liberal thinker, also delivered a series of eight lectures on 'Socialism in the Light of Right Conduct and Religion'. His arguments were much the same as Jefferis'. He criticised its atheism, but he thought that the same spirit pervaded socialism and the religion of Jesus. He was more sure that legislation could not make men happy and virtuous than he was about what it could do. He had Jefferis' faith in progress and indulged the hope that the world would 'slide calmly and move peacefully into its industrial millenium....' A Gosman, Socialism in the Light of Right Conduct and Religion, Melbourne, 1891, p.57. See also Dr L. Bevan, Lecture on Socialism, A.C.W., 20 March 1890.

2

Bishop Moorhouse, formerly of Melbourne, chaired the committee which drew up this statement, and Bishop Barry was a member of it.

himself' but 'every man for his brother'. Socialism, he said, was 'a scheme of brotherhood,...the outcome of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ'. He thought that men could change their institutions where it seemed just and wise, but added 'let us not deceive ourselves or others by acting as though a change in the conditions of life were either unnecessary or the most vital need'. The Church's main task, he concluded, was to teach the spirit of sacrifice as the foundation of life.¹

Some churchmen, however, identified rather than contrasted Christianity with socialism. But Christian socialism could be a loose term with a conservative interpretation; the Advocate declared in March 1889 that Christian socialism bade 'fair to solve the great problems of modern life', but by Christian socialism it meant a campaign against drunkenness, and 'vice and pauperism, its natural children'.² However the Christian World in July 1890 said, in a review of General Booth's In Darkest England..., that the Salvation Army's new programme of social work and relief was good but did not go far enough, 'for the reorganisation of society in accordance with the principles of the Gospel is the great Christian work of our time'.³ In July it published a summary of Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward. Although the reviewer criticised Bellamy for overlooking

¹ E. Harris, Socialism and the Church, Sydney, 1890, pp.12, 14-5.

² Advocate, 16 March 1889.

³ A.C.W., 3 July 1890.

drunkenness, lust and other human failings, he dismissed those Christians who, resenting solution from secular sources, objected that the world needed the gospel and conversion to God 'in the generally accepted sense of that term'. Social reform had sometimes to precede conversion.¹ One correspondent, who was more enthusiastic for Bellamy, declared that Jesus Christ was a communist.²

In December 1890 the Christian World observed that although society, changed through evolution, not revolution, every Christian should nevertheless feel some sympathy with the socialist idea. It quoted M. De Laveleye's words that 'every Christian who understands and earnestly accepts the teaching of his MASTER is at heart a socialist', and appealed to Bishop Westcott's defence of Christian socialism at the Church Congress in Hull in 1890,³ to Dr Roseby's recent address to the Congregational Union of New South Wales,⁴ and social movements among German churchmen as evidences of a wider movement in world Protestantism. It thought that Christian men and women of Australasia ought to be in the forefront of 'this battle for a larger social life', and added that as '"grandmotherly Government" in New South Wales had made people more familiar with socialistic ideas and institutions in Australia', there should be

¹ G.C.P. A.C.W., 24 July 1890.

² Adieu, A.C.W., 14 August 1890.

³ See A.R. Vidler, F.D. Maurice and Company, London, 1966, pp.260-1.

⁴ See below, pp.268-9.

freer scope for new departures in the idea of corporate responsibility.¹ But although the Christian World approved socialism generally it offered no clear ideas of how it would change Australian society.

H.L. Jackson, in an address to the Intercolonial Charity Conference in Melbourne in 1890, said that 'Society must be reorganised upon a nobler and sounder basis, such as was contained in the "platform" of the English Christian Socialists'.² But this 'platform' contained no specific programme. Westcott, a founder of the Christian Social Union admitted that 'Christian Socialism' was 'a most vague phase'.³ He stated that it was not 'the office of the Church to propose any social programme but to enforce eternal principles'.⁴ These eternal principles were hardly any different from those enunciated by Barry and Jefferis.⁵ At the synod after the strike Jackson proposed to amend F.B. Boyce's motion in favour of arbitration and industrial co-operation to an affirmation that there could be no final solution to

1

A.C.W., 4 December 1890.

2

'Pauperism - its Nature, Causes and Remedies', D.T., 14 November 1890.

3

Arthur Westcott, Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott, 1903, vol.II, p.261, cit. A.R. Vidler, op. cit., p.260.

4

Cit. A.R. Vidler, op. cit., p.261.

5

Vidler concludes that Westcott's Christian Socialism was '-grounded in a recondite theology, basically conservative, not radical or egalitarian, averse to identification with concrete economic remedies, highly patriotic-' *ibid.*, pp.276-7.

the economic troubles until the following principles were applied: '(i) That every man should work; and (2) [sic] That the produce of labour must be distributed on a much more equitable system than at present'. The synod, however, adjourned for want of a quorum,¹ and the Record considered it 'a very happy despatch to have the matter decently shelved'.² As a Christian socialist, Jackson was a rare figure among Anglicans; three clergy who were members of the Christian Social Union arrived in the colony in 1896 and established a branch of the Union, but it did not take root.³

Thomas Roseby was one of the most vocal and radical of the Christian socialists in the period. In addition to his interest in astronomy and theology, Roseby read widely in political economy and claimed to be familiar with the writings of Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lasalle and the literature of Russian nihilism; he had also followed the controversy of economists over Henry George's doctrines, 'not a single feature of which is new'.⁴ The ethical prophecy of the Old Testament underlay his social theology. The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood

1

P.S.D.S., 1890, p.44.

2

Australian Record, cit. J.T.O. Orton, Australian Workman, 29 November 1890.

3

J.D. Bollen, op. cit., pp.270-9.

4

The breadth of Roseby's reading is evident in the literature referred to in his address 'The Labour Problems from a Christian Point of View', Jubilee Volume of Victorian Congregationalism, 1888, Melbourne, [1888], p.197, and in his sermon, 'Purple and Rags', A.C.W., 30 January 1890.

of man, and the quest for 'the Kingdom of God and His Justice' were the leading ideas of his teaching. He declared that the man who never concerned himself 'about the salvation of his fellowmen...from vice and misery' would never attain salvation himself.¹

In October 1888, when he was moving from Victoria to New South Wales, Roseby prepared a paper on 'The Labour Question from a Christian Point of View', to be read at the Jubilee Conference of Victorian Congregationalism. It was a scathing condemnation of competitive capitalism and its 'iron law of wages'. He was weary of the 'perpetual iteration on "the duties of wealth"'; it was rather time to speak of the rights of labour. But his conclusion was vague. He admitted that workers had done something to improve their lot through combination, but he did not think a just order would come

by any sumptuary legislation, prescribing rates of wages, and endeavouring to regulate the minutiae of industrial relations....It will be by the abolition of the conflict of interests entirely, so that labour itself shall become at once its own employer and its own servant. It will be by capital entering into such partnership with labour as that the interests of both shall become blended into one.

He alluded briefly to the land question, which he said was even a more radical question than that of capital and labour.²

1

'Purple and Rags', A.C.W., 30 January 1890.

2

Thomas Roseby, 'The Labour Problem from a Christian Point of View', Jubilee Volume of Victorian Congregationalism 1888, p.203.

Roseby dealt more fully with the land question in his Christmas sermon for 1889, 'Purple and Rags' published in the Christian World; it became a popular lecture which Roseby delivered among the churches and congregations received it with enthusiasm, even during the strike.¹ In this sermon Roseby proposed the nationalisation of land. He acknowledged his debt to Henry George among many, but disclaimed that he was a single taxer.² He took the Mosaic law literally on the land question. 'The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine', was his proof-text.³ Land tax, he believed, would contribute to public works, particularly to education, as well as lightening taxation generally.⁴ Roseby paid tribute to the charitable agencies which had sought to relieve poverty, but emphatically denied that charity was any remedy for social disorder. He declared that 'To redress the balance between the millions made by the Kings of Wall Street and the pauper labourer by which they are enriched there is needed NOT CHARITY BUT JUSTICE'. He called for greater efforts to Christianise the people to banish the evil spirits of intemperance, indolence, impunity and self-indulgence, yet, although a persistent advocate of temperance reform, he never saw this as an alternative to social reconstruction. But his conclusion blunted the edge of his radicalism.

1

A.C.W., 11 September 1890.

2

Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, Minutes of Evidence, Q.4525, p.172.

3

Leviticus 25:23.

4

'Purple and Rags', A.C.W., 30 January 1890.

He exhorted Christians to work and pray for growth of brotherhood among men and nations; it would not abolish the distinction between purple and fustian by the substitution of a common grey, but it would brighten and elevate the universal lot of the children of men.¹

As the strike was ending Roseby became chairman of the Congregational Union and took the intellectual and social questions of the day as the theme for his address from the chair, but the social question fired him most. He told the middle class Congregationalists that they had preferred the Gospel of Manchester to the Gospel of Galilee and admonished them to 'throw off this incubus of superstition about laissez faire'. But the conclusion was uncontroversial; he affirmed his faith in Christ as the ultimate answer to all social problems.² Evangelical and Liberal Protestants and Cardinal Moran said the same. However, a Christian preacher could hardly proclaim a message which left Christ out. In March 1890 the Christian World supported preachers dealing with social and political questions, but aware of the criticism that the pulpit should abandon theology for political economy it observed that

if God and his Spirit, Christ and His Salvation, are omitted from the programme, if there should be no relief [sic.] in the supernatural elements of power, the survival will be scarcely worth calling by Christ's name.³

1

'Purple and Rags', A.C.W., 30 January 1890.

2

Congregational Year Book, 1891, pp.106-8.

3

A.C.W., 22 March 1890. This was the Rev. E.J. Rodd's retiring leading article before Carey became editor.

Roseby would have agreed with that. Thus his conclusion was sufficiently orthodox to satisfy most and his utterances daring enough to thrill many. The Presbyterian thought him 'ultra-democratic' but a credit to the pulpit.¹ The reporter of the Christian World said that he wanted to shout 'hallelujah', but had to content himself with 'an occasional emphatic hear, hear'.² The Independent observed that Roseby's discussion of social problems would not suit everyone, but thought he had expounded principles, which if applied would bring 'brighter days for all classes of people'.³ The secular press reported the address without comment,⁴ but Peter Proctor, financial editor of the Herald, wrote in strong disagreement to the Independent. Proctor defended capitalism and attributed 90 per cent of poverty to 'moral defect'.⁵ A wealthy family also left Roseby's congregation at Marrickville,⁶ but most heard him without offence.

Roseby had at least one soul-mate in Richard Proctor, a layman from West Maitland. For most of his life Proctor had practised tithing, which was unusual; but in 1887 he experienced a 'conversion' which caused

¹ Presbyterian, 1 November 1890.

² A.C.W., 6 November 1890.

³ Independent, 15 November 1890.

⁴ S.M.H., 29 October 1890; D.T., 29 October 1890.

⁵ P. Proctor, Independent, 15 December 1890.

⁶ Information derived from interview with Miss G.A. Roseby, daughter of Dr Roseby, in November 1966.

him to reject orthodox evangelicalism and orthodox economics. There was an ebionite flavour to Proctor's religion after his conversion. He gave his surplus income to charity and preached Christian socialism.¹ Land nationalisation, state co-operative workshops, state industries and a state bank were part of his platform. He believed that a Christian socialist government would make a return to the apostolic Christian life possible.²

Richard Proctor had more specific proposals to offer than other Christian socialists, but he was an eccentric whom few took seriously. Congregational ministers and deacons listened with indulgence to him at their association meetings, and could only admire one who had accepted literally Christ's advice to the Rich Young Ruler. Proctor attempted to influence working men and the Labour Party through pamphlets; he was still publishing in 1930.³ But as far as I have found he never joined the Labour Party nor attempted to form a Christian socialist party. Nor was Roseby involved in the labour movement. He said some years later that he had kept out of party politics 'to do justice to the

1

A.C.W., 6 November 1890; [Richard Proctor], 'Why I am a Socialist', in The New Evangel, Maitland, 1891, p.66.

2

[Richard Proctor], The New Evangel, pp.117-41, The Epistle of Richard, a late addition to the English Bible, by the Author of the New Evangel [a Political Manifesto to Working Men], Maitland, 1893.

3

Richard Proctor, Reform or Revolution, Which? Melbourne, [1926], and The New Evangel, Melbourne, [1930].

better elements...in all parties'.¹ Roseby delivered his stirring sermons chiefly to middle class congregations; at least he was preaching to the unconverted. But the Christian socialists on the whole gave little serious thought to the political programme necessary to create a just society, or whenever they did they were not as radical as they sounded; Roseby declared in 1904 that political and social changes had to be 'safe' - 'evolutionary rather than revolutionary'.² This was hardly any different from the teaching of Barry and Jefferis. They did not sound as radical as Roseby or Jackson, but their programme of piecemeal legislation, industrial arbitration, and progressive reform was clearer than the daring but vague utterances of the Christian socialists, and moreover, it was a considerable advance on the old evangelicalism which stood for individual regeneration alone. But many were still content to prescribe this simple remedy for all social ills.³

1

Thomas Roseby, Social Unrest-Labour: A Paper read at the Australasian Congregational Union Meetings, 28 October 1904, Melbourne, 1904, p.10.

2

Ibid.

3

Dr J.D. Bollen, whose study of the Protestant churches and social reform begins in 1890, found that most Protestant churchmen in the early 1890s saw individual regeneration as the only remedy for social disorder. J.D. Bollen, op. cit., p.157.

Regeneration and Reform

Wesleyans stated the case for individual regeneration versus legislative remedies or social reconstruction most unequivocally. William McMillan, son of the Wesleyan manse, a prominent freetrader and Colonial Treasurer in the Parkes Government, 1889-91, lectured on 'Social Regeneration' in the Centenary Hall on 7 July 1890. McMillan argued that the Christian was the true social reformer for religion alone could regenerate and bless human society.¹ The Advocate, edited by the conservative Paul Clipsham whose sympathies were with the employers,² greeted this as a truth to proclaim from the housetops, for the work of Christianity was 'to testify unceasingly to the need of heart religion, and to help men into possession of it'. Society then would 'need no political cataclysms to sweep away its evils, nor sweet influences of legislation to bind up its wounds'.³ At the beginning of the Maritime Strike the Advocate discounted the 'loose preaching of brotherly love and a sort of Christian communism' by 'political and religious faddists'. It denied that a society would be brought into 'a condition of permanent peace and love by the clumsy

1

Advocate, 12 July 1890.

2

Paul Clipsham was the only clergyman listed at a meeting of employers at the Centenary Hall on 2 September 1890. See The Labor Crisis: a meeting of Employers and Commercial Men under the auspices of the Employers' Union of New South Wales and the Steamship Owners' Association of Australia, [Sydney, 1890].

3

Advocate, 12 July 1890.

external tinkering of conciliators' either of church or state. The hearts of men needed regeneration by the grace of God; no other remedy was necessary.¹

But there was strong support in other denominations for individual regeneration as the best remedy for social disorder. In March 1890, when Henry George was in Sydney,² the Presbyterian asserted that thousands were poor because they were bad, and they needed a new heart before they could use the equal distribution of God's gifts to any purpose.³ At the synod after the Maritime Strike Bishop Smith affirmed that as the Holy Spirit indwelt each individual 'truth, righteousness and equity would with more and more prevail'.⁴ And in 1892 Bishop Camidge assured the synod of Bathurst that

no nationalisation of property, no labour unions, no getting rid of capitalists will ever readjust the conflicting interests of men, for deep down in men's hearts lies the evil that produces all this distrust, viz., overweening selfishness.

which only the cross of Christ could cure.⁵

1

Advocate, 16 August 1890.

2

Henry George was well received by the churches. The Presbyterians entertained him at a luncheon during their assembly; he preached in Pitt Street Congregational Church on Sunday 9 March, and had a following among younger Nonconformist ministers, but some were strongly critical of him.

3

Presbyterian, 15 March 1890.

4

Address, P.S.D.S., 1890, p.23.

5

S.M.H., 27 April 1892.

At the Anglican General Synod in 1891 Bishop Smith warned that the Church should generally not interfere in politics; its task was to witness to Christ and prepare for his second coming to consummate the Kingdom of God, for it was to this event that Christians looked 'for a solution of the perplexities that vex the world'. But he excepted cases of social morality and the religious rights of the community, where silence might be taken for indifference or cowardice.¹ Smith meant the divorce question, Sunday observance, social purity, gambling and temperance reform; most Protestants agreed that the churches could not keep silent on these questions, and temperance reform in particular was one area in which they were willing to resort to 'the sweet influences of of legislation' to remedy social and economic disorder.

There had been voluntary temperance movements in the colony since the 1830s, but during the 1880s temperance principles became firmly entrenched in the churches. They formed or revived denominational temperance societies,² supported temperance missions,

1

Address, Proceedings, General Synod, 1891, pp.30-1.

2

The Church of England Temperance Society was founded in the diocese of Sydney in 1874; a diocesan branch was formed in Goulburn in 1882 and in Newcastle in 1888. At the Provincial Synod in 1892 a proposal to recommend a branch in every diocese and parish of the province lapsed. Though there had been Catholic temperance societies before 1880 the hierarchy gave its authority to the movement in the 1880s. In March 1885 Cardinal Moran founded the Catholic Total Abstinence Association, and the Plenary Council that year enjoined priests to form temperance societies in their parishes. Presbyterians
(footnote continued p.275)

and Protestants observed Temperance Sundays. By 1890 many Nonconformist churches had substituted unfermented grape juice for wine in their communion services. Protestant churches also supported the Local Option League in its campaign for 'full local option', which meant the right of electors to decide for the closing of public houses in their district, usually without compensation. Catholics in Australia did not take part in the public temperance movement, although Cardinal Manning did in England and Cardinal Moran had done so in Ireland.¹ Leading brewers and many publicans in the colony were Catholics - a factor which deterred the hierarchy from campaigning against the liquor traffic; but it would also have meant co-operation with Protestants,

(footnote continued from p.274)

established a society in 1883 and in 1884 made total abstinence the basis of membership. In 1878 the Wesleyan General Conference adopted rules for temperance societies in Australian Methodist churches; in 1885 the New South Wales and Queensland Conference took steps to form a connexional temperance society in the colony though it was not until 1891 that the conference advised the formation of temperance societies in the congregations. In 1880 Baptists revived a Total Abstinence Society that had been dormant for a decade, and in 1889 Congregationalists formed their own Total Abstinence Society. Many Protestant Sunday Schools had Bands of Hope attached to their work.

1

When Cardinal Moran arrived in the colony, the Local Option League, though strongly Protestant, waited on him to ask him to accept office as its vice-president, as Cardinal Manning had done in the United Kingdom Alliance. It also invited Catholic representation on the League. Moran declared himself in sympathy with the movement and even suggested that the League should aim for Saturday afternoon closing now that public houses were closed on Sunday; but he declined the offer on the grounds that he must avoid political agitation. S.M.H., 25 September 1884.

which the hierarchy wished to avoid.¹ But they advocated temperance to the faithful as strongly as Protestants did to their flocks.

Churchmen regarded drunkenness as the major cause of insanity, crime, vice and poverty. At R.T. Booth's Temperance Mission in 1884 Bishop Barry declared that it was responsible for nine-tenths of pauperism and ninety-nine hundredths of crimes of violence; it also defaced the image of God in man and hindered the progress of religion.² Preachers in Protestant churches on Sunday 11 May 1884 expressed the same conviction.³ In a temperance address in June 1885 Cardinal Moran condemned drunkenness as 'the great social evil of the day' responsible for most of the crime, suffering and disease in the world.⁴ The Intoxicating Drink Inquiry Commission in 1887 quoted with approval Cardinal Manning's thirteen questions which attributed to drink most of the social and economic ills of Britain and her colonies.⁵ Cardinal Moran also stated that the working classes were the 'most

1

The Pastoral Letter from the hierarchy at the First Plenary Council in 1885 warned priests that there were tendencies to union and that parochial temperance societies should be established to prevent Catholics from joining societies beyond the pale of the Church. Pastoral, Plenary Council, p.9.

2

S.M.H., 13 May 1884.

3

Sermons report, D.T., 12 May 1884.

4

F.J., 6 June 1885.

5

Report of the Intoxicating Drink Inquiry Commission, V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1887-8, vol.7, pp.40-1.

affected by this fearful vice'.¹ The Catholic hierarchy also considered intemperance a peculiar weakness of the Irish race and a vice which constantly lowered them in the social scale.² Protestants, however, agreed that it was the vice of the working classes. William Noble, the English Temperance Missioner, said in 1886 that he had heard men on the Domain 'prating' about over-production and re-distribution of wealth, but he maintained that temperance had solved these problems long ago. The trouble was that the working man spent his meagre wages on drink and tobacco and left his wife with little to keep the home. Temperance, he said, 'was the true reform'.³ It was easy then to believe that temperance reform was a panacea that would facilitate the progress of religion, promote national prosperity, restore happiness to suffering families and harmony to society, and relieve the public and private purse of much of the burden of dealing with crime, insanity and charitable relief, and leave property intact. It was appealing not only to churchmen but also to Freetrade Liberals. At the farewell to R.T. Booth in December 1886 Sir Henry Parkes, who presided, said that the temperance cause was 'one of the holiest in their civilised world'.⁴ It was his government that gave the first instalment of local option in 1882 and which introduced a bill for full

1

F.J., 1 October 1887.

2

Pastoral, Plenary Council, p.9.

3

A.C.W., 16 July 1886.

4

S.M.H., 29 December 1886.

local option in 1891, though it lapsed with the prorogation of parliament. The alliance between Protestantism, temperance and the Liberal party in 1904, which Dr J.D. Bollen has established, had its roots firmly in the 1880s.¹

Although Catholics and Protestants were deeply divided there were some similarities between their pronouncements on social questions as well as some differences; Catholic teaching on temperance illustrates this, and Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum, 1891. Its doctrine was not new to colonial ears, for Cardinal Moran had largely anticipated it in his social teaching between 1885 and 1890. Rerum Novarum approved of trade unions, although it preferred Catholic trade unions. It also approved of state action to avert the conflict of capital and labour, and to regulate and improve the conditions of employment. It stated clearly that the Church was to encourage discussion of these questions. The encyclical set forth the principle of 'a just wage' sufficient 'to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner', but while it was more forthright in its condemnation of unrestricted capitalism than most Protestants, it still taught the blessedness of poverty. It hardly differed from Protestants in its condemnation of socialism, its defence of private property and its teaching on the rights and duties of wealth, on works of charity and on thrift and frugality. There was more radical teaching

1

J.D. Bollen, op. cit., pp.435-79, and his article 'The Temperance Movement and the Liberal Party in New South Wales Politics, 1900-1904', Journal of Religious History, vol.1, no.3, June 1961, pp.160-82.

among some Protestants, but most Protestants held the Evangelical view, trusting in individual regeneration and temperance reform to cure the social ills. Moreover, Rerum Novarum was the official teaching of the Catholic Church on social questions. Catholics, however, put varying and contrary interpretations on the encyclical. In Britain Bishop Hedley, writing in the Tablet described it as 'a proclamation of Individualism' while Dr W. Barry, a priest, denied that it condemned ameliorative English socialism.¹ In Australia the Freeman's Journal rejoiced that the Pope had insisted on the rights of property and individual freedom, 'so long as its action was limited by Christian charity'.²

The most significant similarity between Rerum Novarum and Protestant utterances on social justice was its insistence that there could be no lasting solution to the problem apart from Christianity; unless men returned to 'real Christianity' it warned, 'all the plans and devices of the wisest [would] prove of little avail'.³ Real Christianity meant, of course, the Catholic religion, and Protestants implied their own understanding of the faith, but each agreed that Christian charity would heal the divisions of society.

1

These and other views are described in K.S. Inglis, op. cit., pp.313-7.

2

F.J., 18 July 1891.

3

Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Rerum Novarum, 15 May 1891, Translated by the Catholic Truth Society, in S.Z. Ehler and J.B. Morrall, Church and State Through the Centuries, London 1954, pp.324-55.

The churches did not heed the advice of some workers to abandon theology for political economy, but they did not neglect social teaching from the pulpit and the platform, and social doctrine was implicit in the sermons of those who denied politics a place in the pulpit. But the social teaching of the churches as a whole aroused little enthusiasm in the labour movement, notwithstanding the popularity of a few churchmen after the Maritime Strike. Though Protestants desired to Christianise the working classes the teaching of Evangelical Protestants on individual regeneration and the widespread support for temperance reform, aimed mainly at the working classes, alienated rather than attracted them. Moreover, few clergy around 1890 were prepared to support the working classes actively in their struggle for justice. Many churchmen, however, held sincerely that Christianity had to be above party politics if it were to fulfil its pastoral care for all men and its ministry of reconciliation among all classes, though they often overlooked the implicit political affiliation of their congregations, which was as conducive to neutrality as pastoral concern for all men. In 1890, when some younger Wesleyan ministers were preaching the single tax theories of Henry George, a correspondent in the Advocate warned that this would alienate many Methodist landholders, and the editor exclaimed that their theories would turn Methodism upside down, and cost the Church £12,000 a year in land tax.¹

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J. Roughley, Advocate, 5 April 1890; *Leader* *ibid.*, 13 December 1890.

The Advocate in 1890 was the most thorough exponent of the separation of religion and politics.¹

The churches were not willing to go so far in seeking to attract the working classes as to drive the middle and propertied classes away. This did not mean that their sympathies were only with the middle or upper classes; the pulpit condemned materialism, 'the unholy scramble for riches' and the niggardliness of the wealthy, as well as the harshness of some employers. But most clergy remained as neutral as possible and commended Christian charity and the Golden Rule to all classes, hoping thereby to make capitalists more humane, the workers less hostile and industrial relations more harmonious.

But churchmen were not only concerned to keep those already in the pews; they desired also to maintain and extend their position in society. They held that Christianity was a conserving influence which promoted reverence for authority and social order and stability; religion was the cement of society. They pressed this doctrine on those in high places, and cultivated their relations with the state at the same time as they sought to attract the working classes. Thus they taught that Christianity stood for progressive but gradual social change; it was evolutionary rather than revolutionary; indeed, they maintained that it was the best safeguard against revolution.

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Advocate, 13 December 1890.

PART THREE

CHRISTIANITY AND THE STATE

Chapter 6

Christianity and State Education

Churchmen assumed that New South Wales was a Christian society, although by 1880 the ties between church and state had been apparently severed. Parliament decided to abolish state aid to religion in 1862,¹ and in 1880 it passed legislation which ended state aid to denominational schools and dedicated the revenue of the Church and Schools Estate to public education;² it also resolved that grants of crown land for religious purposes should cease.³ Some have seen this as the work of a 'secularist ascendancy', but, as Professor Pike has observed, 'The separation of church and state was neither son nor father of secularism.'⁴

1

Grants for Public Worship Prohibition Act, 1862, 26 Vic., No.19.

2

Public Instruction Act, 1880, 43 Vic., No.23. State aid to denominational schools ceased on 31 December 1882. Church and School Lands Dedication Act, 1880, 44 Vic., No.19. The bill was reserved on 30 June 1880 and assent was proclaimed 20 October 1881. Payments to the four denominations (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Churches) ended in 1883.

3

11 May 1880, N.S.W.P.D., vol.III, pp.2246-9; a later resolution made it clear that this decision did not effect prior promises to any church; 2 July 1880, *ibid.*, p.3193. (All Parliamentary Debates referred to are in the First Series.)

4

Douglas Pike, *op.cit.*, p.485; for an opposite view see T.L. Suttor, Hierarchy and Democracy in Australia, Melbourne, 1965, pp.243-80, 314; Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, pp.100-32.

After 1880 in New South Wales there remained much implicit and explicit recognition by the state of religion in general and Christianity in particular. There were, admittedly, no prayers in parliament, and in 1887 the Protestant churches failed to persuade parliament to observe daily prayers, but sectarian rather than secularist motives had led to the exclusion of prayers from the legislature early in the colony's history.¹ On the other hand the law courts and parliament required religious oaths, but allowed Quakers and others with religious scruples to affirm rather than swear; similar concessions were not made to agnostics and atheists, and in September 1885 secularists were unsuccessful in obtaining this right.² In 1884 the Chief Justice, Sir James Martin, declared from the bench that 'Christianity in its broadest sense' was part of the common law of England and of the colony.³ Nowhere

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See J.S. Gregory, 'Church and State in Victoria, 1851-1872', M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1951, p.46. In 1887 Parkes commended the request for prayers in parliament from 'a number of gentlemen representative of our common christianity'. There was no forthright opposition to the proposal but the Speaker's Standing Committee declined to recommend any alteration to the procedure of the House. 16 March 1887, N.S.W.P.D., vol. XXV, p.240; Speaker's report and petitions, V.&P.L.A.N.S.W., 1887, vol.1, pp.479, 481-5.

2

S.M.H., 19 September 1885.

3

He said this in sustaining the conviction against two men for disturbing a religious service of the Salvation Army. Regina v. Darling and Another, N.S.W. Law Reports, vol.5, 1884, p.411.

was the 'establishment' of 'Christianity in its broadest sense' more apparent than in the Public Instruction Act of 1880, even though to some this Act seemed to bear the mark of the Beast.

The Religious Provisions of State Education

The Public Instruction Act of 1880 was the resolution of a long struggle between a general system of public schools with unsectarian religious teaching and a system of denominational schools supported by state funds. In 1836 the governor, Sir Richard Bourke, proposed to introduce the Irish National System, designed to include Catholic and Protestant in common schools with 'common Christianity' as their basis. Dr Polding, the Catholic bishop, was friendly to the proposal, but Bishop Broughton led Protestants in opposition to the scheme; Broughton, who wanted nothing but denominational schools, also opposed Governor Gipps's attempt to introduce the British and Foreign Schools System, a general system which allowed the use of the Bible without commentary. In 1844 a Select Committee recommended the adoption of the Irish National Scheme which many Protestants and a few Catholic laymen supported, but by this time Polding had changed his mind and joined Broughton and his clergy in opposition to the National system. The government provided a temporary solution in 1848 by establishing a dual system of national schools and denominational schools. In 1866 the Public Schools Act brought both schools under the control of a Council of Education; denominational schools continued to receive aid but had less independence. The Act of 1866 favoured the

expansion of public schools. It had become increasingly clear that if every child in the colony was to be educated it would be through the agency of the state rather than the churches; while state schools extended to remote areas denominational schools contracted to the larger centres of population, and even the Catholic Church, which desired every Catholic child to attend a Catholic school, conceded that Catholic children would have to attend public schools in some places. There was also considerable resentment of the denominational schools by the smaller voluntaryist denominations of Baptists and Congregationalists, who, even if they had accepted state aid, could have maintained very few schools. Public schools were in their interests, for in a purely denominational system their children would have to attend the schools of the larger churches, and they resented the advantages that state aid gave those churches. They helped to found the Public Schools League in 1874 and campaigned for a national system of 'free, compulsory and secular' education. The Presbyterians and Wesleyans, with only a handful of denominational schools, supported them as did many Anglican laymen and a few clergy. It was left to the Anglican bishops and the majority of their clergy, and the Catholic Church to defend the denominational schools, but as these schools had become less important in the education system, and many were clamouring for the withdrawal of state aid, the government decided to dispense with denominational schools in its plans

'to make more adequate provision' for public education.¹

But education in 1880 was in fact neither free nor compulsory and least of all secular. The Public Instruction Act continued the religious provisions which the Public Schools Act of 1866 had included, and which were based on the Irish National System of 1831. The seventh clause provided that 'secular instruction' was to include general religious teaching as distinct from polemical or dogmatic theology; for this the teacher used the Irish Scripture Lessons compiled by Dr Whately, Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, and agreed to by Dr Murray, the Catholic Archbishop, and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Scripture Lessons were a selection of readings in an independent translation; they ranged from the story of creation through the sagas of the Old Testament to the gospel stories and selections from the Acts of the Apostles, the epistles and the Book of Revelation. Footnotes explained obscurities or archaisms and attempted to resolve the occasional conflict between Catholic and Protestant translations, such as whether metanoia should

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John Barrett, op.cit., chapters 6 and 7; Alan Barcan, A Short History of Education in New South Wales, Sydney, 1965, chapter XIV; A.G. Austin, Australian Education, 1788-1900, Melbourne, 1961, chapter 6; K.J. Cable, 'The Church of England in New South Wales and its Policy towards Education prior to 1880', M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1952.

be rendered repentance or penance.¹ One note on Genesis, chapter one, explained that 'This image of God in man, is not in the body, but in the soul', and another warned that

The love of this life, and its enjoyments, is a great temptation to deny Christ, and to renounce His religion, and whoever would wish to save his life in this world on such terms, will fail of eternal life in the next.²

A set of questions to elicit the general sense of the lesson followed each passage, and some of them asked for the explanation of such words as covenant, redemption, propitiation or ordinances. The Scripture Lessons were not used for infants, but their 'moral lessons' included 'the story of Creation, the Fall of Man, the Flood, and the lives of the Patriarchs, of Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist and Christ'.³ In 1885, after he had

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The note explained that while for Roman Catholics penances implied essentially sorrow for sin, it conveyed only extreme austerities to Protestants, therefore 'while Roman Catholics are in no danger of being misled by the use of the words "repentance" or "penitence", Protestants would be in danger of being misled by the use of the words penance and do penance'. Lesson on John the Baptist from St Luke 3; Scripture Lessons for the Use of Schools, Sydney, [1849], New Testament, No.1, p.12n.

2

Scripture Lessons for the Use of Schools, Old Testament, No.1, p.6n; New Testament, No.1, p.36n: for other examples see John Barrett, op.cit., pp.137-8.

3

See Report of Inspector J.S. Jones in Report of the Minister of Public Instruction 1882, pp.116-7, V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1883-4, vol.7, pp.587-762.

read the Scripture Lessons J.H. Fletcher told the Wesleyan Conference that the law provided 'a rich and varied feast' under what it called non-sectarian and non-dogmatic. He saw that the lessons were implicitly creedal, ranging from creation to final judgment and concluded that

if these and their kindred topics in the Scripture lesson books are non-dogmatical and non-sectarian, so long as we get these lessons for the instruction of our children, we do not care much if they never hear anything all their lives about what is dogmatical and sectarian.¹

This general religious teaching was plainly Christian, but the Act of 1880 allowed parents with conscientious objection to withdraw their children from the Scripture Lessons. However, the children also used the reading books of the Irish National Series which contained moral and religious selections. In addition to these provisions the law allowed an hour a day for special religious instruction of children in their denominational groups by their clergy or other representatives of the denomination. (This was taken to include the Jewish faith although it was not specified.)

Most advocates of 'free, compulsory and secular' education expected the new Act to include these provisions. The Manifesto of the Public Schools League, which Catholics dubbed the 'Secularist League', acknowledged the importance of religious teaching and stated that it had no objection to the Scripture Lessons

¹

S.M.H., 21 January 1885.

or to denominational religious instruction provided that the latter was given without cost to the state.¹ In October 1879, shortly before Parkes introduced the Public Instruction Bill, the Congregational Union passed a resolution in favour of the projected bill, and debated another motion in favour of 'secular' education; it was ultimately withdrawn, but during the debate some delegates suggested the substitution of the word 'unsectarian' because they did not want it to be understood that they intended to exclude Scripture from the schools.² Presbyterians also expressed their hope that the Scripture Lessons would remain on the curriculum when they resolved to support Parkes's bill.³ Parkes, himself, pointed out that New South Wales, in contrast to other colonies, had sought 'to carry religious teaching hand in hand with the secular instruction of the State'. When David Buchanan objected to the religious provisions in the seventh clause Parkes replied that he would never consent to give it up; he did not believe that any people became great 'without a profound faith'.⁴ Captain Arthur Onslow supported

1

Manifesto of the Public Schools League of New South Wales, Sydney, 1874 (Mitchell Library).

2

Congregational Year Book, 1880, pp.51-5, 76-9.

3

M.P.G.A., 1879, p.23.

4

20 November 1879, N.S.W.P.D., vol.I, p.268. During the debate on supply in 1889 Parkes once more defended the religious basis of the Public Instruction Act. He trusted that 'our system will always rest on the cardinal principles of our common Christian religion'. 22 August 1889, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XLI, p.4638.

both state aid to denominational schools and religious provisions in public schools; he wished to avert the accusation that their system was 'irreligious and Godless'.¹ He thought that as the Catholic hierarchy had condemned secular public schools as 'seed plots of future immorality, infidelity, and lawlessness',² Catholics would also support the religious provisions, but he was amazed at 'the most singular union between the secularists and the Roman Catholics'.³ Catholics desired state aid for their own schools that religion and education might go hand in hand, but preferred secular instruction in public schools.⁴ There were a few secularists, some out of scepticism and others from strong religious reasons, who opposed the religious provisions, but the majority supported a measure which retained 'common Christianity' as the basis of state education.⁵

1

12 February 1880, *ibid.*, vol.II, p.1118.

2

Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop and Bishops of New South Wales, in R.B. Vaughan, Pastorals and Speeches on Education, Sydney, 1880, p.11.

3

11 December 1879, N.S.W.P.D., vol.1, p.604.

4

See letter of Father C.P.F. Collingridge, S.M.H., 28 July 1884.

5

The seventh clause was carried on a division, 25 to 16, in the Legislative Assembly. Of the 16 opposed six were Catholics, four Anglican and one Jewish. I have not discovered the denominational affiliation of the remaining five except that two were Orangemen. 11 December 1879, N.S.W.P.D., vol.I, p.609. I have obtained the denominational affiliation from A.W. Martin and P. Wardle, Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, 1856-1901, Canberra, 1959, and Miss Martha Rutledge, 'Sir Alfred Stephen and Divorce law Reform in New South Wales, 1886-1892', M.A. Thesis, Australian National University, 1966, Appendix III, p.xii-xxiv.

Common Christianity was a concept of Evangelical and Liberal Protestantism; it regarded the differing church polities and distinctive doctrines of the various denominations as secondary in importance to the basic beliefs they held in common.¹ Common Christianity, therefore, implied that no one denomination could claim to possess the truth exclusively; to the High Anglican and above all the Catholic, common Christianity was an intolerable concept. The Catholic hierarchy in 1880 recognised no form of religious education apart from schools under its control. Thus it ignored the religious provisions in the public schools and condemned them as 'secular and Godless'. It banned the faithful from those schools, except where the Church could not provide a school, and neglected Catholic children who attended the public schools. The clergy exhorted the laity to strenuous efforts to preserve the Catholic school system. The sacrifice of the people,

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The fundamental principle of the London Missionary Society founded in 1795 by Evangelicals and Dissenters illustrates this outlook superbly: '...its design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order or Government (about which there may be differences among serious persons) but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, to the heathen; and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of His Son from among them to assume for themselves such form of Church Government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God'. Cit. N. Goodall, A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945, London, 1954, p.3. This tolerance or neutralism toward the differences between the various religious bodies is also a feature of urbanised society. See Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor, Revised Edition, New York, 1963, pp.9-10.

frequent fund raising and the use of teaching orders of nuns and brothers combined to sustain and extend the Catholic system, but Protestants made few attempts to keep their schools. After 1882 11 Anglican former certified denominational schools continued to operate in the diocese of Sydney, ten of them in the metropolitan area.¹ During the 1880s and 1890s, however, the major Protestant denominations established colleges or grammar schools to offer a good secondary education to middle and upper class boys and girls.² Apart from Catholic schools there was a number of schools classed as denominational, but most of them were private schools, without formal ties with denominational authorities.³ Nevertheless, Protestants had few schools compared with Catholics and they did not rely on them exclusively to provide a religious education. They began rather to look more seriously at the provisions for special religious instruction in the public schools; these

¹ Dean Cowper informed the Minister of Public instruction in 1882 that he expected 11 schools to remain open after the withdrawal of state aid. Dean Cowper to the Minister of Public Instruction, 16 February, 1882, printed in Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1882, Appendix IX, p.35, V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1883-4, pp.587-761.

² A. Barcan, op.cit., pp.187-8.

³ In 1890 the Statistical Register, listed 64 Anglican schools, 32 of them in the metropolitan area but the synod returns listed only 14 schools in the diocese of Sydney, 12 of them metropolitan. Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1890, p.344; P.S.D.S., 1891, Appendix IB, pp.60-2.

provisions were not new, but before 1880 the churches had made little use of them.

The Churches and Religious Instruction in Public Schools

In 1875 the Anglican synod of Sydney narrowly defeated the resolution of Dr Zachary Barry, a supporter of the Public Schools League, to make systematic use of the provisions for religious instruction in public schools.¹ However in 1875 the bishops of the province were convinced that the Church had to attempt systematic instruction in public and denominational schools and recommended the use of paid or unpaid teachers to assist the clergy.² In December 1878 the Sydney synod appointed a committee to work out a scheme for systematic religious instruction in schools.³ The following June the committee presented its recommendations, including the employment of voluntary and salaried helpers, and a scripture prize to encourage interest in the subject. The synod adopted all the recommendations, except the proposal that parishes should contribute to the cost of books and appliances used in the work.⁴ In 1880 the committee presented a suggested syllabus consisting largely of scriptural teaching, but including

1

P.S.D.S., 1875, pp.40-1, 44, cit. K.J. Cable, 'The Church of England and its Policy toward Education, Part II, p.122.

2

Proceedings, Provincial Synod, 1875, Appendix III, p.36.

3

P.S.D.S., 1878, pp.36-7.

4

Report, Religious Instruction Committee, P.S.D.S., 1879, Appendix XI, pp.59-63; resolutions pp.23-39, *passim*.

the Apostles' Creed and the catechism. It also reported that the clergy were attending the religious instruction; most metropolitan schools received weekly visits and some twice weekly; but some country schools were not visited. The committee recommended a minimum of two visits a week to each school wherever possible.¹ This increased interest in religious instruction among Anglicans was also revealed in the returns of the attendance of the clergy to selected public schools for the three years ending December 1879. The clergy had made approximately 6,000 visits to 84 public schools, and 4,000 of these were during 1879; 88 per cent of the visits were made by Anglican clergy. The clergy of other denominations, except the Baptists who did not visit the schools at all, gave religious instruction infrequently.²

1

P.S.D.S., 1880, Appendix XIII, pp.99-115.

2

Church of England	5,129	
Roman Catholic	303	(estimated 300 visits to
Presbyterian	102	Randwick Asylum)
Wesleyan	41	
Primitive Methodist	9	
Congregationalist	271	
	5,855	

(The visits of some clergymen were not recorded.)
 Return showing the number of visits of Clergymen to certain Public Schools, for the purpose of imparting special religious instruction, from 1st January, 1877 to the present time [5 December 1879], V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1879-80, vol.3, pp.355-7.

Although they might have done so, these returns did not provoke the politicians to abandon the provisions for special religious instruction. Michael Fitzpatrick, a Catholic M.P. who did not share the hierarchy's hostility to the public schools, argued that although the religious bodies had shown little disposition to use the facilities they should be retained 'because in future years they might determine a different course'. Whether he hoped his own denomination would change its attitude is uncertain, but he pointed out that in 1879 the Church of England had determined to use the opportunities.¹

Once the Public Instruction Act was passed Bishops Barker and Pearson charged their clergy with the duty of religious instruction in public schools to avert the entire secularisation of the system.² Not all High Churchmen, however, accepted the new education Act readily, and a few opposed the Church's attempts to organise systematic religious instruction; they argued that cooperation with the new Act only injured the denominational schools further, but Bishop Barker warned that secularists would soon repeal the religious provisions if churchmen ignored them.³ Some clergy

1

11 February 1880, N.S.W.P.D., vol.II, p.1113; John Dillon, however, another Catholic M.P., objected to religious teaching in public schools. Ibid., p.1115.

2

Address P.S.D.S., 1880, p.16; Address, P.S.D.N., 1880, p.14.

3

S.M.H., 13 August 1880; see also S.M.H., 31 March 1882.

also argued that religious instruction in schools was not a minister's task and that they were not all suited to the work. True though that might have been, Bishop Pearson had little patience with the excuse. A clergyman, he exclaimed

might as reasonably say that he cannot read prayers, or that he cannot preach, as that he cannot instruct the young of his flock in the elements of Christian faith and duty.¹

Nonconformists began to show more interest in religious instruction after the new Act was passed. Bishop Barker had suggested that other Protestant children might attend Anglican classes if their pastors did not attend.² That constituted a challenge to the Nonconformists. In December 1880 the Presbyterian reported the Anglican efforts to promote religious instruction and reminded Presbyterian ministers that the Act gave them an opportunity to reach children whom they could not meet on Sundays.³ In 1881 the General Assembly expressed its gratitude for the facilities and recognised the obligation that lay upon the Church to use them.⁴ But Presbyterians were not unanimous; in 1882 it required

1

Address, P.S.D.N., 1885, p.14.

2

Address, P.S.D.S., 1880, p.16; see also his address at Anglican meeting on religious instruction in public schools. S.M.H., 13 August 1880.

3

Presbyterian, 11 December 1880.

4

M.P.G.A., 1881, pp.27-8.

the Moderator's casting vote in the Presbytery of Sydney to carry a resolution to take advantages of the facilities.¹ As among Anglicans there were some Presbyterian ministers who maintained that teaching in schools was not their task, but a correspondent in the Presbyterian told the reluctant parsons, with little effect, that the youth of the colony were the hope of the Church, and if they would have full coffers and churches they would have to do more than baptise and bury.²

Wesleyans were also stimulated by Anglican endeavours in religious instruction; in December 1880 the Advocate warned that this work would become a proselytising agency if Methodists left their children to be shepherded by other churchmen in the schools. But it spoke with confidence of the Methodist Sunday Schools and concluded with this agency and religious instruction heartily supported by the churches 'the country ought to be safe'.³ In January 1881 the conference enjoined its ministers to take advantage of the Act to instruct Wesleyan children in the schools.⁴ But while some ministers rejoiced in the opportunities others complained of the difficulties and disappointing results.⁵ Wesleyans

1

S.M.H., 10 February 1882.

2

David Brown, Presbyterian, 25 February 1882.

3

Advocate, 11 December 1880.

4

M.W.C., 1881, p.48.

5

S.M.H., 28 January 1882.

were no more united on the question than Presbyterians. The Baptist and Congregational assemblies did not discuss religious instruction early in the 1880s, but rejoiced instead in the triumph of voluntarism, although a few Congregational ministers undertook the work in schools on their own initiative.

The success of the Nonconformists' Sunday Schools discouraged them from taking religious instruction in the schools seriously. They had less nominal adherents who might be reached through this work than Anglicans or Catholics. Baptists and Congregationalists also doubted whether denominational teaching was appropriate in state schools. But Nonconformists were also satisfied with the general religious teaching given through the Scripture Lessons and the moral content of the schoolbooks.

Returns of attendances of the clergy at public schools in 1879 and 1880 showed a slight improvement; during 1880 the clergy of the various denominations made 6,798 visits to public schools; 82 per cent were made by Anglicans. Most Anglican clergy had visited the schools but some rather infrequently. Only 30 per cent of Presbyterians and Wesleyan ministers attended the schools, but few of them were consistent visitors. Six of the 13 Primitive Methodist ministers paid rare visits; four of 42 Congregational ministers visited the schools, but no Baptists attended at all. One Lutheran visited the school at Jindera five times and 11 Catholic priests, apart from the chaplain to Randwick Asylum, paid a few visits to schools in remote places. But 557

of the 872 public schools in the colony were not visited at all by any clergyman during 1880; 13 of 57 Anglican certified denominational schools and 20 of 77 Catholic schools also received no visits from clergymen, and the four Wesleyan, three Presbyterian schools and the Hebrew school were entirely neglected by their clergy.¹

Visiting in denominational schools, however, was more regular; those visited mostly received weekly visits and a few were visited daily. The clergy made an average of 24.7 visits to the 235 public schools actually visited; only 60 schools received between 30 and 50 visits; 13 received between 60 and 100 visits, and the Newcastle Public School received 172 visits from a theological student.² The most regular instruction was given in city and suburban schools and in the larger country towns, but few schools were visited weekly and

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The number of certified denominational schools in the returns is less than the figures published in the Statistical Register, 1880, which were:

Church of England	63
Roman Catholic	82
Wesleyan Methodist	5
Presbyterian	3
Hebrew	<u>1</u>
	154

Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1880, p.20.

2

A Return showing the number of times the Clergymen... of the various Denominations attended the Public and Denominational Schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction, for each month of the years 1879 and 1880, V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1881, vol.2, pp.1071-98.

none daily. The majority of instructors made less than ten visits to individual schools, but some country clergymen had several schools to visit in their districts, and religious instruction in a small country school was often inconvenient, for classrooms were rarely available and the clergy had to conduct their classes in outbuildings or under trees. In one school a teacher allegedly prevented religious instruction by persuading parents that it was undesirable to take the children out in inclement weather.¹

At the synod in May 1882, following the publication of the report, Bishop Pearson sought to clear the clergy of charges of neglect. He reported that in one parish where there were 17 schools the incumbent and his wife gave religious instruction three times a week at one school and a catechist visited four others weekly, but 12 were not visited at all. In another parish with 12 schools the incumbent visited the home school weekly and others as he had time and opportunity, and in a third parish three of the five schools were visited weekly. In all nine of 34 schools were visited regularly. Pearson denied that the clergy neglected the work; he protested that they could not do impossibilities.²

1

J.K. Black, S.M.H., 8 November 1884. See also the Bishop of Goulburn's comments on lack of suitable accommodation for religious instruction classes in country schools. Address, P.S.D.G., 1879, p.13; 1881, p.21.

2

Address, P.S.D.N., 1882, pp.29-30.

Anglicans recognised that the clergy could not cope alone and endeavoured to extend the work of religious instruction by the assistance of catechists and lay instructors. They sought funds to employ helpers as well as voluntary assistants.¹ And if the large number of Anglican clergy could not meet the demands of religious instruction the Nonconformist clergy had little hope of providing regular denominational instruction in the schools. But they looked not so much to lay assistance as to interdenominational cooperation.

In December 1880 the Presbyterian admitted that it was too difficult for the churches to carry out separate instruction and advocated that Protestant ministers should combine their classes and their resources of manpower. It pointed out that Protestants could not fairly condemn Catholics for refusing to cooperate with the new Act if they themselves could not work together.² No one took this suggestion seriously in 1880 but in 1882 a layman advanced it, confident that the government would agree to combine instruction by the churches.³ That year the Nonconformist ministers at Newtown agreed to combine to give daily religious instruction based on

1

Report, Religious Instruction Committee, P.S.D.S., 1880, Appendix III, pp.99-115; Address, P.S.D.S., 1881, pp.20-21; 1882, pt.II, p.9-10; Address, P.S.D.N., 1880, p.14, Report, Select Committee on the Religious Education of the Young, P.S.D.N., 1882, Appendix VIII, p.75; S.M.H., 31 March 1882.

2

Presbyterian, 25 December 1880.

3

Henry Ikin, S.M.H., 28 April 1882.

the International Sunday School Union Lessons. The Minister of Public Instruction, F.B. Suttor, did not oppose the scheme, but told a clerical deputation on 18 August that it was a matter between ministers and parents; if the parents agreed he assured the ministers that the teachers would cooperate.¹ The following February the ministers laid their scheme before the District School Board seeking approval to approach parents; they also asked for the use of two large classrooms, for three days instead of five, and for the assistance of teachers to keep order. The board, however, was not as cooperative as Suttor had predicted. It doubted whether combined religious instruction was legal, and even if it were the board considered the programme would be too disruptive to the school and impose unwarranted burdens on the teachers.² The Herald maintained quite correctly that the Act clearly intended dogmatic or denominational instruction to be given under the 17th clause; moreover, it doubted whether the proposed scheme would work.³ But some form of cooperation was necessary between the denominations themselves and the schools if religious instruction was to be effective and systematic. The Protestant churches recognised this in 1884 when the question of religion in schools flared up publicly. It began with the fear of some

1

S.M.H., 19 August 1882.

2

S.M.H., 14 February 1883.

3

S.M.H., 19 February 1883; see also Echo, 15 February 1883.

Protestants that the religious content of the curriculum was in jeopardy.

The Religious Instruction Movement, 1884

In March 1884 the Presbyterian General Assembly was agitated over the introduction, under the new standard of Proficiency, of new reading books in the schools - the Collins Australian School Series, which contained almost no religious matter. Dr W. Moore White, an Ulsterman, reminded the assembly that it had supported the new Act on the understanding that the reading books and Scripture Lessons of the Irish system would be used. The Irish reading books, he pointed out, contained lessons on the nature of sin, humility, benevolence and duty to parents, and at a time when immorality and crime was increasing they should not be withdrawn without public approval. The assembly declined to censure the Education Department but appointed White convenor of a committee to watch over the course of instruction in the schools.¹ On 20 March Francis Abigail, a Congregationalist and prominent Orangeman, asserted in parliament that the Irish National Series were being supplanted by books which contained no reference to the Creator. This provoked an attack on the religious provisions of the Act, but most members supported general teaching within secular instruction.² However, the Collins series were not to replace the Irish readers but were alternatives to them. The

¹

M.P.G.A., 1884, pp.22-3; see also Presbyterian, 15 March 1884.

²

20 March 1884, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XII, pp.2420-32.

Independent preferred the Irish books and added that the few insignificant religious references in the Collins series would have been better omitted.¹ The Protestant Standard believed that G.H. Reid, Minister of Public Instruction from January 1883 to February 1884, had intended to abandon the Irish series altogether; relieved that his successors, J.P. Abbott and W.J. Trickett,² had retained them it observed that had Reid had his way the Catholic charge of 'Godless' schools would have been regrettably true.³ Most churchmen, it seemed, preferred poorer books with religious content to improved readers without it. However, the agitation over schoolreaders had aroused wider interest in religious instruction. When he arrived in April 1884 Bishop Barry immediately sought ways to make the religious provisions of the Public Instruction Act more effective.

Though he preferred an established church Bishop Barry accepted the status of the Church of England as one denomination, albeit the largest and most influential, among several in the colony. He assured the Londoners' Club at a welcome which they gave him that he had no intention of seeking an established church, and recognised that separation of church and state might give 'more and freer scope to the power of intrinsic

¹ Independent, 15 May 1884

² J.P. Abbot succeeded G.H. Reid on 21 February 1884 and on 6 May 1884 W.J. Trickett became Minister of Public Instruction.

³ Standard, 31 May 1884.

religious influence'. He thought that Christianity had suffered most from sectarian rivalry and announced that he was willing to act with all who professed 'a common Christianity', and with all who desired to serve humanity 'for the higher life' of the colony.¹

Barry made his first overture for cooperation at a meeting on 1 May when he defined his policy on the education question. He recommended the Anglican Church to preserve the few denominational schools that had survived the withdrawal of state aid; it should also see that the best use was made of the Scripture Lessons in the schools and use the opportunities for religious instruction as far as possible. Barry saw it as a question of Christianity, not of churchmanship, for it was not as important that children should grow up Anglican or Presbyterian as that they should grow up Christian. In a sermon on religious education in August he warned that the issue was between secularism and Christianity. He hoped, therefore, that Anglicans could work in concert if not in combination with other denominations. He did not want the burden left to Anglicans alone, although he expected them to do most. Thus he initiated a campaign for thorough and systematic religious instruction in public schools, which he hoped would be a rallying point for Christian unity.²

1

D.T., 19 May 1884.

2

S.M.H., 2 May 1884; also A. Barry, Three Sermons on Religious Education, Sydney, 1884. Sermon I, p.11.

James Jefferis, whom many regarded as the champion of secular education, responded to Barry's overture in three sermons on 'Religious Education'. On Sunday 11 May he spoke on the work of the Sunday School advocating improved standards of teaching and occasional church services addressed to younger children.¹ The next Sunday Jefferis lectured to a large congregation on 'Religious Teaching in our Public Schools'. He began by refuting the charge that those who believed in 'a free church in a free State' were secularists in national life; the charge was as foolish as it was false. The antithesis of secularism was religion, not the church, and because they believed 'so intensely in a vital union between religion and the State' they warred against 'union between a church and the State'. He voiced the conviction of most churchmen and many laymen when he asserted that the state had a religious basis. However, Jefferis admitted that the battle against a 'national establishment' had, for a while, weakened the sanctions of Christianity. But now, with deeper religious feeling they were asking how those sanctions might be restored 'with more than their old authority'. He confessed that once in his zeal for religious liberty he had advocated the exclusion of religious teaching from the schools,² but now he would rather have state officers

1

D.T., 12 May 1884.

2

This was before he came to New South Wales although many misunderstood him to have changed his position since 1879. In July 1884 he stated that when he came to the colony in 1877 he found that the Public Schools League's
(footnote continued on p.307)

teaching religion than allow children to pass through the schools without learning about 'the living God'. The national system of education, he claimed, was the best solution for the colony. He maintained that the general religious teaching based on the Scripture Lessons compiled by Dr Whately, 'the wisest bishop of the century', contained nothing offensive to Protestant or Catholic, and he quoted as an example the note on the translation of metanoia as penance or penitence. While these lessons were used he thought too much had been made of the content of the school reading books. 'For learning to read we want books of high literary excellence', he argued, although they would be better for the inclusion of Christian history and biography. Jefferis was clearly satisfied with the provisions of the Act, but not with its administration. He asserted that the marks awarded for scripture showed little esteem for the subject and declared that teachers who were unwilling or incompetent to impart religious instruction ought not to be appointed, for momentous issues hung upon the problem of religious instruction:

...the ocean of modern thought is smitten by the wind of pride, and lashed into the foam of folly! How it hurls itself madly against the rocks of truth! Only from the lips of the Great Teacher can we hear words strong enough to still this tempest of human passion which

(footnote 2 continued from p.306)
platform represented a view to which he had been tending, and he entered its ranks 'with joy' and consented to put 'unsectarian' in place of 'secular' in his 'triple-worded motto'. First of a second series of sermons on religious education. D.T., 7 July 1884.

threatens to submerge existing order, and destroy the very fabric of society. Our children must hear them, must learn to reverence them, must be trained to obey them.

For 'The World is saved by the breath of school children'.¹

This utterance promised well for Bishop Barry's proposal for interdenominational cooperation and Jefferis announced in his third lecture that the bishop had convened a meeting of church leaders to discuss the question. This last lecture, which the new Minister of Public Instruction, Mr W.J. Trickett, attended, dealt with the religious instruction allowed under the 17th clause. Jefferis advocated the combination of the 'Evangelical' churches to provide approved instructors who would teach all Protestant children 'the truths... common to all the creeds'. He thought that instruction in special creeds and dogmas should be given in denominational Sunday Schools. Clergymen and others with special aptitude for religious instruction, he imagined, would be trained and employed in the work. Going beyond the provisions of the Act, he also advocated that schools should open with prayers and hymns daily.² He had provided a controversial agenda for the meeting of church leaders the following Tuesday.

1

D.T., 19 May 1884. His concluding quotation was a Rabbinic proverb.

2

D.T., 26 May 1884.

Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Wesleyans as well as Anglicans attended this meeting; its proceedings were private but it appointed a committee of the four denominations to draw up proposals for more effective religious teaching in the schools.¹ Four weeks later representatives of these denominations met to consider the committee's recommendations that the general religious teaching under clause seven of the Act should be given regularly throughout the schools; that the school reading-books should have some religious and moral content; that greater weight should be given to marks for 'scripture'; that the Department of Public Instruction should consider the capability of teachers to give general religious teaching as part of the qualifications for teachers and that they should be given some training in teaching scripture. The committee also recommended that schools should open with brief worship, and desired that these provisions should apply to high schools² as well as primary schools. The church leaders adopted these recommendations and agreed to the proposal for a joint board consisting of two representatives of the participating denominations to watch over the efficiency of the general religious teaching in schools and to coordinate the work of the churches giving special religious instruction, to promote harmony among the churches and to prevent undue interference

¹

S.M.H., 28 May 1884.

²

There were eight high schools, four for boys and four for girls in 1884. They were at Sydney, Maitland, Bathurst and Goulburn.

with the work of the school. The board would see that, as far as possible, all children would receive religious instruction, and to this end it would appoint agents accredited by all the denominations to 'instruct children who would otherwise be without religious instruction'. In these exceptional cases combined classes would receive undenominational teaching; but denominational instruction was to be the norm. The scheme was provisionally to apply within the boundaries of the diocese of Sydney, but Barry intended to recommend it to the bishops of his province.¹

The churchmen arranged to lay their scheme before the Minister of Public Instruction on Friday 27 June. The day before the deputation, however, Jefferis' objections to the proposals of the other churchmen were published in the Herald. Jefferis maintained that their scheme would foster the sectarian spirit and present children with 'the sad spectacle of a divided Christendom in a more open and visible way than before'. Moreover, the denominational scheme for religious instruction would prevent a rational division of children into ages and ability, particularly for the small denominations who would have to take all their children in one class. He advocated scriptural teaching to combined classes without the use of denominational catechisms or textbooks.²

1

S.M.H., 25 June 1884.

2

S.M.H., 26, 27 July 1884.

On the morning of the depuation the Herald published Barry's reply to Jefferis. The bishop pointed out that the 'dual system' of general and denominational religious teaching to which Jefferis objected was the creation of parliament, not the board. He thought that Jefferis was going beyond the Act while the rest of the committee desired to remain within it, except to provide combined religious instruction in small schools where denominational teaching was impracticable.¹ Barry and Jefferis disagreed as to what was practicable, while the Herald opposed the whole programme; it thought that the clergy were out of bounds in assuming to watch over the general religious teaching and considered the proposal to test and train teachers for religious teaching quite improper; the department needed good teachers rather than good Christians. Churchmen, however, thought that these were complementary qualities. The Herald considered prayer harmless enough but it was sure Catholics would oppose it, and it desired no additional pretext for Catholic opposition to the public schools; the Freeman's Journal had already accused the clergy of trying to turn the state schools into 'Protestant Denominational Schools'.² The Herald concluded that the system the Protestant churchmen desired was largely 'a Denominational system' which had little chance of public support.³

1

Alfred Sydney, S.M.H., 27 June 1884.

2

F.J., 21 June 1884.

3

S.M.H., 27 June 1884.

Bishop Barry, Dean Cowper, seven Nonconformist ministers and four laymen waited on Mr W.J. Trickett to seek the department's approval of their programme. Barry told Trickett that if religious truth were absent from the schools some other principle would take its place. The deputation, he claimed, represented 75 per cent of the population; the Catholics and other minorities had the right to abstain or withdraw, but not to interfere with a programme 'which the great majority of the community emphatically endorsed'. But Catholics, he added, had once agreed to the Scripture Lessons used for general religious teaching.

Mr Josiah Mullens, a Congregational layman and stockbroker, thought that there had been some carelessness in carrying out the provisions of the Act, but it ill became the churches to charge the teachers with neglect of the general religious teaching, as the Herald pertinently observed.¹ Mullens asserted that general religious teaching was necessary for public peace and training children in their duties as public citizens. He was confident that, 'without trenching on the idiosyncrasies of any persons whatsoever', children in the schools could be taught that there was a great law above them which had Divine sanction.

Jefferis repeated the argument of his sermon that religious teaching could not be given without worship of the Almighty. He advocated a simple service using the Lords's Prayer, common to all Christians, and a hymn.

¹

S.M.H., 1 July 1884.

Barry added that hymnody was 'the most catholic' of all forms of religion. They were both confident that Roman Catholics could have no grounds for objecting to this simple rite in an unconsecrated building. And they assured Trickett that they had no intention of going beyond the law; they only wished to have it carried out in letter and in spirit.

But Trickett, who interpreted the letter and spirit of the law differently, denied that the state could undertake to be the religious instructor of the people. At the same time he defended the department's administration of the Act. He claimed that the Scripture Lessons were taught daily, although some children withdrew from them. The department had increased the value of scripture in the upper grades from 40 to 60 marks,¹ and it could not go higher since the children received much of their religious knowledge at home and church as well as school. The Collins series, he pointed out, was to supplement rather than replace the Irish National Series; but he added that the department would not consent to use only books with religious and moral content, to which some of the deputation agreed. To allow teachers to comment on the Scripture Lessons, he asserted, would introduce sectarianism, and he saw no way of training teachers in the use of the Scripture

I

The full value of each subject varied in the different grades, but in the fourth class, for example, reading, grammar and arithmetic were valued at 100 marks each, writing and dictation at 50 each, and geography and history at 60 marks each. Scripture counted for 30 marks in the lower grades and for 60 marks in all the upper grades. Regulations under the Public Instruction Act of 1880, 12 November 1885, pp.11-13, V. & P.L.A.N.S.W. 1885-6, vol.4, pp.215-28.

Lessons as he maintained that this would require improper inquiry into their religious beliefs, although it was not clear why. Nor was it any clearer why the religious provisions could not be extended to high schools. Trickett dismissed opening worship in the schools as 'an absolute religious ceremony' which would be very objectionable to some. However, he satisfied Jefferis that there was nothing in the Act to prevent the churches from combining to give religious instruction.¹

The deputation was generally disappointed with Trickett's response. The Australian Churchman asserted that the state had obligations laid down in the Act and the churches asked no more than the fulfilment of these provisions. But it set little store by the 17th clause which it thought was a sop to the churches which the state hardly expected them to carry out.² The Herald, however, advised the churches to forget the general religious teaching under the seventh clause and to concentrate on the special religious instruction allowed under the 17th clause. This time it also supported combined teaching by the churches.³ But Barry was unwilling to abandon the general religious teaching. He had discussed the Act with

1

S.M.H., 28 June 1884; this report does not include Trickett's opinion on combined instruction although it refers to 'conversation' between Trickett and the deputation; however, a letter from Jefferis the same day refers to Trickett's opinion that combined religious instruction was permissible and the Herald discussed it several days later. S.M.H., 1 July 1884.

2

Australian Churchman, 10 July 1884.

3

S.M.H., 1 July 1884.

Parkes before coming to Australia and he understood the seventh clause to be a recognition of a national faith.¹ It was, he maintained, based on the belief all Christians held in common - 'the old basis of "the Apostles' creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments"', and the Scripture Lessons used to impart it the Catholic authorities 'of a less ultramontane age' had accepted.² After the deputation Jefferis also asserted from the pulpit that the state had to deal with the people as a Christian nation, yet recognise the diversity of Christian thought. He considered this was the principle of the Public Instruction Act which excluded sectarian dogmas but included the doctrines characteristic of Christianity. But he regretted that the Act made no provision for prayer, which he thought should accompany general religious teaching.³

Catholics and the Religious Instruction Movement

Barry had sought the cooperation of Catholics in the work of religious instruction in the schools,⁴ but anyone who had witnessed the debate over the Public Instruction Bill in 1879 could hardly have entertained so sanguine a hope. Catholics would have cooperated with

1

'Alfred Sydney', S.M.H., 3 July 1884; see also A. Barry, Three Sermons on Religious Education, Sermon II, p.11.

2

'Alfred Sydney', S.M.H., 3 July 1884.

3

J. Jefferis, 'The State Difficulty', D.T., 7 July 1884.

4

See Address, P.S.D.S., 1884, p.28.

Barry, whom they held in high esteem, had he campaigned for the restoration of state aid to denominational schools, but they had set too much store on his stated preference for denominational schools; they did not realise that he had accepted the Public Instruction Act as the best substitute for denominational education and that he meant to take fullest advantage of its religious provisions. He amazed them by accepting as allies the Dissenters - men 'who but a few years ago combined to blot Christianity out of the schools and to place Secularism in its stead'. 'Presbuteros' chided Barry that he would have found Catholics more faithful allies had he chosen to work for the restoration of aid to denominational schools, but he would not have their cooperation in strengthening religious teaching in the public schools.¹

This was clear from the Catholic reaction to Jefferis' sermons in May. The Freeman's Journal marvelled at the 'Religious Recantation' of the 'fiercest opponent of religious instruction' in public schools, which revealed that it had neither understood Jefferis' position in 1884 nor the voluntaryists stand in 1879.² But the movement in 1884 underlined the inaccuracy of the Catholic condemnation of the public schools as 'secular and Godless'; while they did not drop that epithet altogether, they began to assert that the public schools

¹

'Presbuteros', F.J., 5 July 1884.

²

F.J., 31 May 1884.

were in fact Protestant denominational schools.¹ It made no difference that the schools were equally open to Catholic religious instructors. Catholic authorities advised the Protestant church leaders committee in June that they were not prepared to take any steps on behalf of the large number of Catholic children attending public schools,² although the Anglican Record rumoured that 'enlightened Catholics' were advocating that Catholic children should attend public schools, and that some priests were prepared to give religious instruction in the schools.³

On the day of the deputation the Herald reported an address by Dr Lanigan, Catholic Bishop of Goulburn, who warned that the Catholic Church would have little support in one or two generations if Catholic children were allowed to attend the public schools, which, he asserted, were calculated to weaken and destroy Christianity and to injure society. But now, he protested, the sects

1

See letter of John W. Rogers, Inspector of Catholic Schools, D.T., 24 May 1884.

2

At 31	<u>1880</u>	<u>1884</u>	<u>1890</u>
December	13,983	22,606	22,485
% of total enrolment	16.6	17.0	14.1

Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1880, p.94, 1884, p.47, 1890, p.78, in V.& P.L.A.N.S.W. 1880-81, vol.2, pp.153-247, 1885, vol.1, pp.397-593, 1891-2, vol.3, pp.1-320.

3

Record, 1 August 1884.

who had clamoured for secular education were seeking a change. Their proposals, however, were not as liberal as they sounded; it was 'in plain words an effort to make all the Public schools Protestant schools'. Lanigan conceded that 'some fragments of Christian teaching [were] better than absolute secularism', but he thought that if Protestants were as liberal as they professed to be they would support state aid for Catholic schools; Catholics would then sympathise with Protestant efforts in state schools.¹

To the Protestant contention that the public schools had a religious basis to which the Catholic Church in 'a less ultramontane age' had agreed, Catholics replied with the story that Dr Whately, 'the great liberal archbishop' had described the Scripture Lessons that he compiled as 'the great instrument of conversion' which had prepared many Catholics for Protestant doctrines. They maintained that while Whately professed to be working for the best interests of Catholics he had in fact been carrying out a proselytising tactic.²

1

S.M.H., 27 June 1884.

2

'Catholicus', S.M.H., 17 July 1884. Protestant missionaries had been seeking the conversion of Irish Catholics for some time, but not until they learned Gaelic were their labours rewarded. There was a number of conversions in 1852, which some Catholics attributed to bribery. Whately retorted that scriptural education had been 'the great instrument of conversion'. In 1853 he withdrew from the National Schools Board, according to his daughter, because the board removed the Scripture Lessons and Lessons on the Truth of Christianity from Catholic schools to meet the objections of the new Catholic Archbishop Dublin, Dr Paul Cullen. E. Jane Whately, ed., The Life and Letters of Richard Whately, D.D., London, 1866, vol.II, pp.232-5, 243-5, 264-81.

Thus Catholics in Australia were unlikely to cooperate in a scheme which the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland had abandoned as subversive of Catholic faith. And Father Collingridge made it clear that Catholics considered it safer for them to have only secular instruction in mixed public schools.¹

Dr P.F. Moran, the new Catholic Archbishop of Sydney who arrived in the colony in September 1884, after the height to the religious instruction controversy was passed, confirmed Catholic opposition to the Public Instruction Act and the Church's refusal to provide instruction for Catholic children in public schools. At his welcome on 8 September Dr Sheridan, the administrator of the archdiocese, misinformed him that 'here, as elsewhere, the great struggle of the day is against infidelity and secularism in education'.² A few days later Moran asserted that the state was seeking to force Catholic children to read 'the Protestant Bible'. He denied that the state should be the schoolmaster but maintained that it should encourage education by extending its honours and emoluments to all who taught the arts and sciences whether or not they also taught religion.³ On Sunday, 26 October, at the opening of a new school for the Franciscan Fathers at Waverley, he gave a further exposition of the Catholic position. He asserted that whenever the state claimed the right to

1

C.P.F. Collingridge, S.M.H., 26 July 1884.

2

S.M.H., 9 September 1884.

3

S.M.H., 13 September 1884.

educate children it began 'a crusade against all religion'. He also misrepresented Bishop Barry's position, whom, he claimed, had come to the colony as a champion of denominational schools, wishing to unite with Catholics to assert their common rights to state aid. But now the Protestant bishop had abandoned his principles and had become the champion of state education. When Barry came, Moran romanced, he found the state system 'a sort of godless monster that was spitting fire at every religion' but he had discovered that by feeding and fostering it he might change it into 'a very pious and religious Protestant'. Moran also attempted to justify the presence of Catholic children and Catholic teachers in public schools, which Protestants thought an incongruous fact in view of the Church's attitude to those schools. But Moran denied any inconsistency; he replied that Catholics were better men and better scholars and better suited in every way for the position of schoolteachers, and since Catholic children in some areas would have to attend public schools for some time to come he thought that they could have no better teachers. Moran concluded this provocative utterance with an affirmation that truth and justice would ultimately prevail, but there was little truth in his remarks about the state schools or Bishop Barry, and the Herald denied that there was any justice in the Catholic claim; it observed that

1

At Bungendore in 1886, where there was no Catholic school, Moran found that the children he confirmed knew their catechism well; all the teachers in the public school were Catholics and taught the catechism after school hours. P.F. Moran, Diary, 12, 13 May 1886.

As matters stand the Roman Catholic clergy, rather than give their children religious instruction in a Public school, leave them without any religious instruction whatever. That may be a consistent course, but we fail to see that it is a remarkably Christian course.¹

The Secularist Reaction

The reaction of secularists to the religious instruction movement was a surprise; a few days after the Protestant deputation representatives of the Australian Secular Association waited on W.J. Trickett seeking permission to give secularist teaching under the 17th clause. They claimed that if dogma could be taught in schools they also should be allowed to give their teaching. Trickett doubted whether they were a religious body and asked for their views in writing.² After studying the secularists' programme of morals without religion Trickett informed them that even if such instruction were permissible within the provisions for religious instruction he could see no need for it since the teachers were instructed to impart 'the principles of morality, truth, justice and patriotism.'³ On Sunday, 27 July, the secularists met to protest at the refusal of their rights and at the same time resolved to campaign for the removal of 'the present religious

1

S.M.H., 29 October 1884; Archbishop Moran's address, S.M.H., 27 October 1884.

2

S.M.H., 2 July 1884.

3

S.M.H., 21 July 1884.

clauses from the Education Act'.¹ But secularism had no better prospects of success than the denominationalism which Catholics desired. The Herald asserted that the 'Education Act' made provision for the teaching of Christianity and nothing else. It maintained that

The doctrine which underlies much of our legislation is that Christianity, if not the law of the land, supplies an element which the law of the land ought not to be without. That is the doctrine which underlies the Education Act.²

The Results of the Religious Instruction Movement

Protestant churchmen had not achieved all they hoped for through their approach to the government, but the stir their movement caused demonstrated the security of the state's compromise between denominationalism and purely secular education. The churches could rest assured that the teachers were using the Scripture Lessons and the Irish readers were at least retained; it remained for the churches to provide special religious instruction for their respective children in the schools and it was primarily to organise this work that Bishop Barry had suggested a joint board. Church councils, however, had to approve the plan.

The Anglican synod of Sydney considered the plan in July. A few High Churchmen opposed it strongly and renewed the demand for aid to denominational schools.

¹

S.M.H., 28 July 1884.

²

S.M.H., 24 July 1884; also 3 July 1884.

Mr Shepherd Smith, a banker, called the scheme a 'Protestantising, proselytising proposal'. Barry took grave exception to this remark, and pointed out that Catholics, not Protestants, refused to cooperate in religious education in schools. But the synod approved Barry's proposal on a division of 96 to five.¹ In October the bishops of the province issued a declaration on religious education generally supporting Barry's stand to safeguard the seventh clause and carry out instruction under the 17th clause. However, they did not mention cooperation with other denominations or the proposal for a board to regulate the churches' work in the schools.² Not every bishop was as willing as Barry to work with Nonconformists.

Presbyterians, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists all appointed representatives to the Joint Board.³ The Congregational Union, however, carried Jefferis' resolution that it was inexpedient for them to appoint representatives to a board which was intended 'to strengthen and regulate the separate denominational agencies'. Jefferis hesitated to disagree with the Bishop of Sydney and other Protestant churches, and Samuel Bryant, minister of Woollahra Congregational Church, recognised the generous concession offered

1

S.M.H., 11, 12 July 1884.

2

S.M.H., 20 October 1884.

3

Alfred Sydney, S.M.H., 30 August 1884; M.P.G.A., 1885, p.29; S.M.H., 5 February 1885; P.S.D.S., 1885, pp.55-6. Barry gave the composition of the board at his synod in 1885.

Congregationalists in equal representation on the board, but he was convinced that the denomination had to stand alone for 'the perfect liberty of unsectarian Christianity'. Walter Mathison of Croydon and James Rickard of Glebe, the two Congregational ministers who gave religious instruction most consistently, defended denominational instruction in the schools; Rickard dismissed combined instruction as impossible to achieve. But the Union resolved that 'a system of combined, voluntary and unsectarian religious instruction' was desirable for all public schools in the colony.¹ Baptists, who had shown no interest at all in the facilities for religious instruction, also declined to join the board.²

Anglicans had pastoral reasons as well as reasons of doctrine and churchmanship for preferring separate denominational instruction in schools. The largest denomination, they had a high proportion of nominal adherents and the facilities in the schools enabled them to reach many children who might never attend their Sunday Schools or churches. The public schools offered Catholics a similar pastoral opportunity which they chose to ignore, but pastoral motives were less compelling for Nonconformists, particularly the Congregationalists, who stood to gain more from a system of combined instruction. Bryant argued that the

1

Congregational Year Book, 1885, pp.77-82.

2

P.S.D.S., 1885, pp.55-6. Apart from this statement by Bishop Barry I have found no evidence of the Baptist attitude to the movement in 1884.

separation of children into their denominations in the schools would provoke ridicule from the critics of Christianity and religious jealousy and bitterness among the children,¹ and an anonymous Congregationalist feared that the division would have a mischievous effect on the minorities who would be ashamed to own themselves and tend to go with the larger groups.² This objection was also applicable to Catholic, Jewish and other minorities, whom Protestants said had the right of abstention from general religious teaching. But apart from these fears, Congregationalists would have had great difficulty in providing denominational instruction for all their children in the schools, and unless there was combined teaching some of them would be left without special religious instruction. Barry had conceded the necessity of combination in small schools and Presbyterians and Wesleyans had recognised the merits of combination, though J.H. Fletcher thought that the scheme Jefferis envisaged would be too costly since it included employed agents.³ It was in the interests of Nonconformists to combine, but none supported the Congregationalists in October 1884 when they stood out for combination. The Presbyterian condemned them for keeping the denominational barriers at full height, and the Herald told them that they had cut themselves off from the united Christianity

1

Congregational Year Book, 1885, p.81.

2

Sentio, Independent, 15 October 1884.

3

Advocate, 5 July 1884; Dr R. Steel also advocated combined religious instruction in a sermon in June. D.T., 9 June 1884.

they professed to esteem; moreover, it forgot its lapse of judgment in June 1884 when it had supported combined teaching, and questioned Trickett's opinion that combined instruction was permissible under the Act.¹ But although the Act clearly presupposed denominational religious teaching under the 17th clause, Jefferis maintained that the spirit of the law did not forbid united action,² and in September 1884 the Newcastle Ministers' Association agreed to cooperate in providing religious instruction to combined classes of Nonconformist children; Anglicans declined to cooperate in the scheme.³

In July 1884 Zachary Barry had predicted in the Protestant Standard that if Bishop Barry would not concede the principle of unsectarian religious instruction 'his board and his conference [would] end in smoke'.⁴ This

¹ Presbyterian, 1 November 1884; S.M.H., 25 October 1884.

² Jas. Jefferis, S.M.H., 28 June 1884.

³ Circular of the Newcastle Ministers' Association to the Parents of Children attending the Public Schools, September 1884 (in Newspaper cuttings, Jefferis Papers); see also Presbyterian, 1 November 1884. (This same issue which condemned the Congregationalists for standing out for combined instruction criticised Anglicans for not cooperating in the combined scheme in Newcastle.) In February 1885, the Rev. W.G.R. Stephenson, one of the ministers in Newcastle, reported to the Wesleyan Conference that ten ministers were visiting ten schools weekly, giving lessons to large classes. S.M.H., 4 February, 1885.

⁴ Standard, 12 July 1884.

proved largely true. The scheme Jefferis proposed would have involved Nonconformists heavily in the work, and there was little enthusiasm among them for denominational instruction in schools, despite the agreement of Wesleyans and Presbyterians with Barry in 1884. In March 1885 the incoming Presbyterian Moderator, Roger McKinnon, declared that he had little sympathy with denominational religious instruction and advocated teaching the common principles of the faith in the schools, leaving the rest to parents and Sunday Schools.¹ In September 1885 the Advocate, disturbed that Wesleyan children had received religious instruction from Anglican ministers, suggested that 'the true policy of the minor Churches' might be to seek the repeal of the 17th clause and support the retention of the Scripture Lessons in the schools, at the same time strengthening the work of their Sunday Schools.² Thus the attitude of Presbyterians and Wesleyans to denominational instruction did not augur well for the success of the Joint Board. Barry told the synod in July 1885 that the board had met four times, but had been unable to achieve much for want of accurate information on the amount of religious instruction actually being given by the Protestant denominations.³ It appeared that the scheme collapsed, for neither Barry nor the other churches spoke of it after 1885, and Anglicans continued to promote the work of religious

¹ Presbyterian, 7 March 1885.

² Advocate, 12 September 1885.

³ P.S.D.S., 1885, p.56.

instruction much as they had done before, without reference to other denominations.

The movement initiated by Bishop Barry, however, did make the churches more aware of their opportunities in the schools. In February 1885 the Wesleyan Conference affirmed the 'paramount importance' of the work, although ministers were still not unanimous about it, and the conference failed to organise the systematic programme of religious instruction.¹ In July 1885 the Herald reported that more Presbyterians and Wesleyans were visiting the schools as a result of the movement in 1884,² but this trend was obvious in returns which the Herald published in October 1884, showing the attendances of the clergy of the various denominations and their assistants to metropolitan schools in 1883 and up to 1 August 1884. These figures showed that Nonconformists were doing more than in 1880, but Anglicans made roughly two-thirds of the visits recorded, and more Anglican

1

M.W.C., 1885, pp.73-4; S.M.H., 4,5 February 1885. From 1885 the conference appointed a committee to organise the work but it achieved little and the appointment lapsed in 1890. M.W.C., 1885, p.74, 1888. p.72, 1889, p.84, and resolutions on religious instruction. M.W.C., 1890, pp.88-9.

2

S.M.H., 31 July 1885.

clergy made over 100 visits in 1883 than in 1880.¹ But the attendances of some clergy were still infrequent and visits varied from an hour to a few minutes, although most instructors took 30 to 45 minutes for their lessons.² Many schools also were still without visits from religious instructors. In 1885 the Anglican Religious Instruction Committee reported that of 317 schools in the diocese of Sydney 98 had less than 20 Anglican children enrolled, and were not visited, but the clergy and their assistants visited 160 of the remaining 219 schools. 72 clergy gave 131 lessons weekly, 14 salaried lay instructors gave 159 lessons weekly; there were three voluntary helpers, one of whom gave seven lessons weekly.³ Bishop Marsden commended the zeal of the

1

Attendances of Religious Instructors at Public Schools in Sydney and Suburbs.

	<u>1883</u>	<u>1884</u> (1 January to 1 August)
Church of England	2,292	2,046
Roman Catholic	46	30
Presbyterian	193	143
Wesleyan	37	66
Congregational	53	108
Hebrew	<u>667</u>	<u>474</u>
	<u>3,288</u>	<u>2,867</u>

S.M.H., 14 October 1884.

2

S.M.H., 14 October 1884; see also duration of visits in return of attendances, 1877-9, V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1879-80, vol.3, pp.355-7.

3

P.S.D.S., 1885, Appendix XVIII, pp.123-5. Returns for the diocese of Sydney in 1891 presented a similar picture. Most metropolitan schools were visited weekly; some schools, mostly small country schools, were still without religious instruction. Annual Returns, Public Schools and Special Religious Instruction, P.S.D.S., 1891, Appendix XVI, after p.100.

clergy in the work of religious instruction in the diocese of Bathurst and acknowledged that they could not visit schools often because of the size of their parishes.¹ And this was probably the case in all country dioceses.² The information supplied by 67 ministers to the Presbyterian Sabbath Schools and Religious Instruction Committee in 1885 revealed that they visited 157 of 473 schools within their charges, 31 weekly, six fortnightly, 15 monthly and 105 occasionally.³

In 1887 T.A. Coghlan, the Government Statistician, wrote that the clergy of all denominations took advantage 'to some slight extent' of the privilege of giving religious instruction in the schools,⁴ while in 1900 the Minister of Public Instruction reported that the clergy were largely taking advantage of the provisions.⁵ But

1

Address, M.S.D.B., 1885, p.12.

2

Bishop Pearson indicated this in 1882, and returns of religious instruction given by the clergy and their assistants in the diocese of Newcastle, included in the Annual Statistical Returns for the first time in 1890, showed that few schools outside the municipality of Newcastle were visited weekly.

Annual Statistical Returns, 31 December 1890, P.S.D.N., 1891, Appendix XXI, after p.94.

3

Report of the Sabbath Schools and Religious Instruction Committee, M.P.G.A., 1886, pp.46-7.

4

T.A. Coghlan, The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales, 1886-87, Sydney, 1887, p.438.

5

Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1900, p.6 in V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1901, vol.3, pp.771-887.

the figures of attendances at the end of the century revealed that the clergy were doing proportionately the same amount of religious instruction as in 1884; Anglicans made slightly more than two-thirds of the visits,¹ and the total 19,515 visits in 1899 represented an average of 7.2 visits per school compared with an average of 7.8 visits in 1880.² Returns from 75 Presbyterian charges in 1900 indicated that Presbyterian ministers were making an average of two visits a week to schools, which the convenor of the Statistics Committee thought was a considerable effort.³ However, Nonconformist

1

Attendances of clergy in public schools, 1899.

Church of England	13,315
Roman Catholic	392
Presbyterian	2,421
Wesleyan	1,916
Others	<u>1,471</u>
	<u>19,515</u>

Report of the Minister of Public Instruction, 1899, p.7, in V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1900, vol.4, pp.407-524. These are the only comparable figures I have found for the 1890s. In returns published in the Statistical Register from 1892 Anglicans reported visits made and lessons given, Presbyterians classes conducted and Wesleyans schools visited. Other denominations did not provide any information on religious instruction.

2

This is the average for all the public schools in the colony; the average for schools actually visited in 1880 was 24.7 per school; this information is not available for 1899.

3

Report, Statistics Committee, M.P.G.A., 1901, pp.124-5.

efforts in the first decade of the twentieth century remained far behind the Anglicans whose pastoral concern spurred them to greater efforts; during this decade they managed to provide religious instruction for 80 per cent of their children, with the assistance of voluntary lay helpers and salaried religious instructors.¹ But while there were some enthusiasts for religious instruction in other denominations the Nonconformists lacked the same motivation, and trusted in the efficiency of their Sunday Schools and general religious teaching in the schools. Moreover, the dimensions of the task seemed too great for the resources of the churches; Anglicans could not meet the demands completely; Nonconformists, with even less resources, would not match Anglican efforts until they combined. But during the 1880s, except for the unsuccessful attempt at Newtown and the cooperation at Newcastle, they attempted the task singly and unsystematically, and reached but few of their children in the schools.

Although a few Catholic priests visited the schools occasionally during the 1880s and 1890s this was without the official approval of the Church, which showed no sign of compromise after 1884. The First Plenary Council issued a blanket condemnation of all state schools as secular schools which rigidly excluded from children 'all knowledge of the Supreme Being'.²

1

The Official Year Book of New South Wales, 1904-5, p.546; 1905-6, p.52; 1907-8, p.84.

2

Pastoral, Plenary Council, p.25.

This was not true of state schools in other colonies where, apart from Victoria, the reading books had a theistic if not a Christian content;¹ but least of all was this true of New South Wales. In 1889, however, Cardinal Moran described the public schools as 'a special form of Protestantism'. He did not regard interdenominational education as Christian; it was like a clock without hands.² Thus there was no common ground between Catholics and Protestants on the question of religion and education.

The failure of the churches to provide adequately for the religious instruction of their children in the public schools did not undermine the religious basis of the Public Instruction Act; but it diminished the effectiveness of the religious provisions, for special religious instruction provided an opportunity for fuller Christian teaching and specific application of the

1

After examining the Nelson School Readers in South Australia Bishop A. Short observed that state education in that colony was theistic if not Christian. (I am indebted for this reference to Mr L. Cleland's unpublished typescript on education in South Australia.) In 1887 Dr R.W. Dale, an English visitor, toured some Victorian Schools with C.H. Pearson whom, Dale was informed, had driven the name of God from the schools. Dale described the religious songs the children sang to him and Pearson. R.W. Dale, Impressions of Australia, London, 1889, pp.138-40; see also A.G. Austin, op.cit., pp.167-8, for a discussion of the provisions for voluntary religious instruction in the schools of other colonies.

2

S.M.H., 25 November 1889; F.J., 30 November 1889.

Christian faith to life, as well as imparting denominational principles. Where it was provided it complemented the general religious teaching in the curriculum. The department's attitude to general religious teaching, however, revealed some unresolved ambiguities in the religious basis of the Act. It allowed parents to withdraw their children from scripture, but compelled teachers to teach it, yet refused to train them in the use of the Scripture Lessons. The churches failed to ensure that scripture would be taught intelligently and sympathetically, but while there was the danger that freethinking teachers would ridicule the lessons, as one teacher claimed that they did,¹ professed freethinkers were decidedly a minority among teachers; a high proportion of teachers were Nonconformists and the profession as a whole was a respectable class, imbued with the social and patriotic virtues and dedicated to the moral improvement of children.² Teachers who were also Sunday School teachers or regular churchgoers regarded the Scripture Lessons as an outline of evangelical truth, and resented the charge that all schools were secular.³ But the value of the lessons did not depend on the disposition of the teachers

1

'An Old Teacher', Advocate, 9 March 1889.

2

For a discussion of teachers' social and moral values see B.A. Mitchell, 'A History of Public School Teachers' Organisations in New South Wales, 1855 to 1945', thesis submitted for Ph.D., Australian National University, 1969, chapter 1.

3

Iona, Presbyterian, 6 January 1894.

alone, for inspectors examined the teaching of the subject. Even when taught perfunctorily they ensured that the children acquired some knowledge of the Christian Scriptures, though this was no guarantee that the children would accept them as truth.

Had Catholics joined Bishop Barry's movement in 1884 the government might have implemented the churchmen's recommendations to strengthen religious teaching in the schools. But when Catholics argued that religion was necessary for social stability they meant the Catholic religion exclusively, not Christianity in a broader sense. This was the teaching of the encyclical Immortale Dei, 1885, which reaffirmed the doctrine of the essential union of church and state, and deemed 'it unlawful to place various forms of Divine Worship on the same footing as true religion'. Nevertheless, it did not condemn rulers

who for the sake of securing some great good, or of hindering some great evil, tolerate in practice that these various forms of religion have a place in the State.¹

This qualification adjusted the traditional teaching to the situation of Catholics in British realms, who depended on the principle of religious toleration. But in seeking equality with other denominations within the state the Catholic Church by no means surrendered its claim to be the true Church with the sole authority to

1

Encyclical Immortale Dei, 1 November 1885, translation by Catholic Truth Society, in Ehler and Morrall, op.cit., p.315.

teach the Christian faith. This claim excluded the possibility of cooperation with Protestants to defend the religious basis of colonial society, for to enter such a partnership would have been a tacit admission that the Catholic Church was but another expression of the common Christianity of the colony.¹

That, however, was the light in which the legislators saw all the denominations in the colony, and, in the absence of agreement among churchmen, they settled the religious question in their own way. Although church and state were legally dissociated, Christianity remained a protected religion; but the churches had little influence in politics as they found in their campaign against the secularisation of Sunday and divorce law reform. The 'establishment' of Christianity, if it may be so called, was the devising of laymen who took religion to be the handmaid of the state, not the representative of a higher law.

1

In June 1884 'Presbuteros' wrote 'Were she [the Catholic Church] to recognize the teaching of Protestantism in the slightest degree, she would fail in her divine mission as the sole teacher of Christianity on earth'. F.J., 14 June 1884.

Chapter 7

Sunday Observance and Divorce

Christianity had given the world its 'two greatest institutions' - the Sabbath and Christian marriage, declared Charles Campbell, a pastoralist and a High Churchman, in 1884. Both these institutions, however, were in peril in the 1880s. In 1878 the Legislative Assembly, inspired by the campaign of the Sunday Freedom Society in Britain to open cultural institutions on Sundays, voted to open the Sydney Museum and Public Library on Sunday afternoons, despite strong opposition from the churches.² Many people were also taking advantage of the trains, trams, harbour steamers and a good climate for picnics and other pleasant outings on Sunday. Protestant churchmen feared the coming of the 'Continental Sunday' and organised to defend the Christian and British Sabbath. There was also agitation

1

Charles Campbell said this in the Legislative Council in opposition to G.H. Cox's motion that the colony ought to repeal the Sunday Observance Act, 1677 (29 Car. 2, c.7) which was in force in New South Wales. Cox withdrew his motion after several members, Catholic and Protestant, expressed strong opposition to any repeal of the Sunday observance laws. 16 January 1884, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XI, pp.1260-68.

2

S.M.H., 27 March 1878; a public protest took place on 1 April and petitions against Sunday opening flowed into parliament. S.M.H., 6 April 1878, V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1877-8, vol.2. pp.695-723.

for extension of the facilities for divorce, but in 1880 the sanctity of the Sabbath was uppermost in the minds of churchmen.

Defending the Sabbath

Sunday observance was a prominent concern of the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century. In 1828 American Protestants established the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, and in 1831 the British founded the Society for Promoting Due Observance of the Lord's Day.¹ Colonial churchmen established the New South Wales Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day in 1856 to oppose Sunday traffic on the newly-opened railways and on the Sydney Harbour; a similar society was founded in Victoria in 1871.² The Society in New South Wales fell into abeyance early in the 1860s but the sabbatarian movement revived late in the 1870s to combat increased Sunday entertainment and travelling. At Easter 1879 a 'Week of Prayer for the Entire Sanctification of the

1

Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States, New York 1950, vol.I, p.683; Owen Chadwick, *op.cit.*, p.456.

2

First Annual Report of the New South Wales Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day, Sydney, 1857; see also, Address to the Colonists of New South Wales from the Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day, Sydney 1857; F.B. Smith, 'The Sunday Observance Controversy in Melbourne, 1874-1910', B.A. Honours thesis, History Department, University of Melbourne, 1956.

Sabbath Day' was inaugurated,¹ and in October 1880 Protestants reconstituted the Lord's Day Observance Society.

Survivors of the old Society planned a large public meeting and sent several thousand invitations to working men to join them in defending the day of rest.² But only 300 people met at the Protestant Hall on Monday 11 October to re-establish the Society. R.L. King, an Anglican clergyman, who had been secretary of the old Society, described to the meeting the increasing desecration of the Sabbath. There were more trains and trams on Sunday and harbour excursions on a large scale. Public houses opened legally for a few hours and some illegally at other hours. The Museum and Free Public Library were open on Sunday Afternoons, and above all the Theatre Royal was being used on Sunday nights 'by persons whose addresses are pointedly opposed to our common Christianity'. King said there had been a few feeble protests, but too many religious people feared to be called sabbatarians and virtually sanctioned the desecration of that commandment given to man 'amidst the thunders of Sinai'.³

1

I have not been able to find any account of the inauguration of this 'Week of Prayer' but have found advertisements for the eighth and ninth 'Weeks of Prayer' in the S.M.H., 3 April 1886, 15 April 1887, and a report of the aims of the movement in the Presbyterian, 3 April 1886, 16 April 1887. The Lord's Day Observance Society seems to have sponsored the 'Week of Prayer' after the Society's revival in 1880.

2

S.M.H., 5 October 1880.

3

S.M.H., 12 October 1880.

Speakers at the meeting expounded the various arguments in defence of the Sabbath. Evangelical Protestants, in particular, regarded Sunday as the Sabbath of the Decalogue. They believed that the Apostles had, under divine authority, transferred the observance of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. W.M. Cowper, Anglican Dean of Sydney, held that the fourth commandment was the crucial commandment in the Decalogue because it stood between the first three enjoining duty to God and the remaining six defining duty to one's neighbour,¹ and Dr Robert Steel, of St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, argued that, while most of the Decalogue coincided with the laws of nature, the fourth was the one commandment direct from Almighty God.²

Sabbatarians also used secular arguments to buttress their case. They held that the Sabbath was a British as well as a Christian institution, and that as the colony was a Christian country its laws should protect Sabbath observance. They claimed that the Sabbath was responsible for British power and prosperity, and had even made Australia 'A land of love, of liberty, of light'. Sabbath keeping, they asserted, was a social necessity. Some pointed to the turmoils of Europe as results of the 'Continental Sunday'. National

1

Sermon, D.T., 24 February 1890; see also W.M. Cowper, The Lord's Day Viewed in Three Lights, Religious, Moral and Social, Sydney, 1880.

2

S.M.H., 29 March 1881.

prosperity and social stability depended on proper Sabbath observance. Sabbatarians also invoked humanitarianism. The Lord's Day, said Cowper, was 'the inalienable right of man conferred on him by his Creator', and lunacy and heart disease were products of needless Sabbath work. While Sunday reformers argued that working men needed more recreational facilities, sabbatarians claimed that they were the true friends of the working man for they were defending his day of rest. Banish religion and you banish freedom, Cowper argued; but sanctify the day of rest and you end oppression. George Woolnough, a Wesleyan, remarked that even if the Sabbath were not divine it was humane.¹

Evangelicals were the staunchest sabbatarians. High Churchmen were usually more liberal about Sunday, and it amused 'the Flaneur' in the Freeman's Journal to report Dr D.H. Ellis, Precentor of St Andrew's Cathedral, preaching views on Sunday observance which were contrary to the sabbatarianism of the Dean.² Broad Churchmen also opposed sabbatarianism. Advocates of a freer Sunday in Sydney appealed to Dean Stanley and other English clergy who supported the Sunday Freedom Society

1

These arguments were expounded at the meeting to reconstitute the Society in October 1880 and at a public meeting on 28 March 1881. S.M.H., 12 October 1880; 29 March 1881; see also sermons on Sunday observance, D.T., 24 February 1890.

2

Freeman's Journal, 9 April 1881.

in England.¹ H.L. Jackson, incumbent of St James' Church, Sydney (1884-1895), rebuked the zeal of sabbatarians and defended more liberal Sunday observance.² Bishop Barry, for long a critic of sabbatarianism, dismissed the Evangelical claim that the Apostles transferred the Sabbath to Sunday as 'a baseless figment'.³ But for all their liberalism these men were not prepared to surrender the status of Sunday completely. They believed that they steered a course between secularism and sabbatarianism,⁴ but in effect their policy on Sunday observance differed little from the Evangelicals'. They would allow 'innocent amusements' and recreation, but not Sunday 'trading' and work.

Most Protestants considered Catholics lax about Sunday. Catholics generally supported freer Sunday

1

See debate on Sunday opening of Museum and Public Library, S.M.H., 27 March 1878; on opening Reading Room, School of Arts, S.M.H., 11 August 1880. The Sunday Freedom Society or League was founded in 1875 to promote the opening of museums, libraries and galleries on Sundays in Britain. See M.G. Glazebrook, in J. Hastings, Ed., Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburgh, 1908.

2

'The Sunday Question', S.M.H., 24 August 1885.

3

'Second Visitation Charge', S.M.H., 13 April 1888. Barry had also contributed an article on Sunday to Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, in which he demolished the sabbatarian argument.

4

Dr W.H. Embling, 'The Proper Attitude of the Church of England towards the Question of Sunday Observance', Papers read at the Church Congress, Melbourne, 1882, pp.136-42; see also Guardian, 7, 21, 28 June 1890.

observance, although L.F. Heydon, a Catholic politician, took a sabbatarian stand.¹ Some Catholics delighted in denouncing 'the black-coated Puritans' and their miserable Sabbath; one denied that Sunday was the Sabbath or that Adam had received any command to keep the seventh day holy.² The Pastoral Letter of the First Plenary Council in 1885, however, declared that the fourth commandment retained all its original authority 'quite as fully as the others',³ and the encyclical Rerum Novarum (1891) defined Sunday as a day for rest and religious observances. In 1895 Cardinal Moran, who thought that Sunday in many countries was devoted 'to dissipation and distracting secular pursuits', suggested that the 'Christian observance of the Lord's Day' might be an area for Catholic-Protestant cooperation, but asserted that the anti-Catholicism of Protestants made this impossible.⁴ But this did not imply a sabbatarian view. Providing Catholics attended Mass, their clergy allowed them more liberty than Protestants, except for the few Broad or High Churchmen.

Thus defence of the Sabbath was largely a Protestant cause. But the Lord's Day Observance Society appealed to all Christians, patriots and humanitarians to uphold the Sabbath. King was not too sanguine about influencing the government but he trusted that the Society would place some check on Sabbath desecration, and at least

¹

30 August 1882, N.S.W.P.D., vol.VII, pp.197-99.

²

Clericus, F.J., 12 March 1881.

³

Pastoral, Plenary Council, p.14.

⁴

P.F. Moran, The Reunion of Christendom, Sydney, 1895, p.6.

register some protest against the secularisation of Sunday. The Society disavowed any intention to apply for legislation to prevent desecration of Sunday, but it aimed to secure for all men a day of rest '-of holy rest if they themselves should be happily so inclined'.¹ But if they sought no new legislation sabbatarians certainly meant to apply the old laws.

New South Wales had inherited from English common law a body of statutes designed to encourage the observance of the Lord's Day. These laws prohibited sports meetings, labour, trading and travel on Sundays, and public performances to which admission was by money or ticket.² The Australian Courts Act, 1828, had removed doubts concerning the application of British statutes up to that date in the colony,³ and subsequent legislation reinforced the Sunday observance laws. An Act in 1833 prohibited trading and gaming on Sunday, although butchers, bakers, fishmongers and greengrocers could trade from six to ten o'clock on Sunday mornings and apothecaries at any hour.⁴ In 1841 a further Act prohibited shooting for pleasure or profit on Sundays.⁵ The schedule of the general license for public theatres

¹ S.M.H., 12 October 1880.

² See especially 1 Car.1, c.1; 3 Car.1, c.2; 29 Car.2, c.7; 21 Geo.3, c.49.

³ 9 Geo.4, c.83.

⁴ N.S.W. Statutes, 4 Wm.IV, No.7.s.10, 11.

⁵ 5 Vic., No.6.

in 1873 specifically excepted Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday from the days on which there could be performances for gain or reward.¹

Despite this legislation, only a minority exercised themselves 'in the duties of piety and true religion publicly...',² and the Sunday laws were widely ignored. Prosecutions for Sunday offences were not unusual, but they were chiefly of Chinese gardeners, newsboys, wood-carters, coalmen, fruit-barrowmen and pedlars; and magistrates sometimes inflicted only nominal penalties or dismissed offenders with a caution.³ The government itself did business on a large scale on Sunday trains and trams, and compelled ticket licensees to remain open on Sunday afternoons.⁴ Railway contractors sometimes forced labourers to work on Sundays, and local steamship companies demanded Sunday work from their crews; complaints on behalf of these workers mostly went unheeded.⁵

¹ 36 Vic., No.8.

² 29 Car.2, c.7, s.1.

³ See N.S.W.P.D., vol.XI, pp.1260, 1264; vol.XVIII, pp.692, 694; also 'Sunday Trading', V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1891-92, vol.8., p.1099.

⁴ Letter, S.M.H., 30 November 1887. Tickets for trams were sold by licensed agents; conductors did not collect money on the trams.

⁵ N. Melville, 10 February 1881, N.S.W.P.D., vol.IV, p.360; W.J. Foster, 29 March 1881, ibid., p.1227; E.W. O'Sullivan, 7 April 1886, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XIX, p.1207.

After its revival the Lord's Day Observance Society campaigned for the abolition or reduction of Sunday trains as their predecessors had done in 1856.¹ But attempts to stop Sunday traffic were no more successful in the 1880s than in the 1850s. Sir Henry Parkes defended this government enterprise on Sundays as a matter of necessity and mercy.² The trains ran to meet the emergencies of illness and bereavement; the necessity also consisted in the revenue that Sunday traffic provided. In 1882 John Lackey, Secretary for Public Works, told a deputation of devout ladies that, while the government tried to keep Sunday trains to a minimum, some traffic was inevitable. He reminded them that the engines which drew livestock to the Monday markets also brought many of the faithful to Sunday services.³ Thus while Sunday outings by train were an alternative to church services they also made it easier for some people to attend church, and churchgoers patronised the Sunday morning trains, despite objections from the pulpit. One train-travelling churchgoer went so far as to suggest that the 'church trains' at least should be protected from larrikins who offended churchgoers by playing secular tunes in trains which carried them home 'just after worshipping the Almighty'.⁴

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See Address to the Colonists of New South Wales from the Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day, Sydney, 1857; and Dean Cowper at inaugural meeting, October 1880, S.M.H., 12 October 1880.

2

31 August 1882, N.S.W.P.D., vol.VII, p.230.

3

S.M.H., 14 October 1882.

4

Wm. McCreddie, S.M.H., 17 April 1888.

And a few notable churchmen defended the use of trains on Sunday. Bishop Barry upset Evangelicals by travelling on the Lord's Day,¹ and Dr Thomas Roseby, a Congregationalist, held that train travel to religious services came under works of charity and mercy.² But J.S. Austin, a strict Wesleyan sabbatarian, rejoiced at the end of his life that he had never found it necessary to use public transport on Sundays, except to conduct funerals.³

Sabbatarians also opposed any extension of Sunday opening of cultural institutions; they enjoyed a victory on 10 August 1880 when a meeting of subscribers of the School of Arts rejected decisively the proposal of Charles Bright, the freethought lecturer, to open the reading room on Sundays. Bright claimed, as did all the Sunday reformers, that this would be a great boon to the working men, but Dr Wazir Beg,⁴ a Presbyterian, told the

1

Barry, S.M.H., 13 April 1888; for criticism of Barry see Samuel Fox, S.M.H., 14 April 1888; Advocate, 21 April 1888.

2

Information from interview with the late Mr J.R. Firth.

3

J.S. Austin, Missionary Enterprise and Home Mission Endeavour, Sydney, n.d., p.367.

4

Wazir Beg (1827?-1885) was born a Muslim in Poona, India. From 1842 he was a secret believer in Christianity; in 1846 Scottish missionaries baptised him and he subsequently studied medicine and theology in Scotland and Erlangen, Germany. He came to Melbourne in 1864 and to Sydney in 1865 to become minister of Chalmers' Presbyterian Church. A semitic scholar, he was first reader in Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of Sydney and was an interpreter for the government. See Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3, 1851-1890, A-C, p.130.

meeting that a crusade against Christianity was behind the movement, and Charles Bright's role made this assertion credible.¹

In March 1881 the Lord's Day Observance Society supported the move of Ninian Melville, undertaker, Primitive Methodist, ardent sabbatarian and temperance advocate, to terminate the Sunday opening of the Museum and Library. Sunday opening of the cultural institutions, according to Melville, was 'State aid to infidels', and the work of freethinkers.² But despite a large public meeting of protest the night before Melville introduced his motion in the Legislative Assembly and Parkes's outspoken disapproval of Sunday opening, the House voted against Melville, and the Museum and Library remained open on Sunday afternoons.

The following September Henry Copeland, a nominal Anglican but strongly anti-clerical, who believed that the churches ought to have jurisdiction only over those who professed to belong to them, proposed the Sunday opening of the new Art Gallery. The Society petitioned against Copeland's motion and the House defeated it narrowly.³ A year later Copeland tried again and provoked a long debate. He argued that there was nothing in his

¹

S.M.H., 11 August 1880.

²

S.M.H., 29 March 1881; 29 March 1881, N.S.W.P.D., vol.IV, p.1219.

³

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1881, vol.5, p.1135. 26 votes to 23, 13 September 1881, N.S.W.P.D., vol.V, pp.1073-86.

proposal to hurt the churches and much to benefit the working classes. He did not think attendants in the cultural institutions objected to Sunday work 'because they found they could get through all their prayers and religious duties, and still have 10.s. to the good'.¹ Nonconformists and Evangelicals, including some Orangemen, and L.F. Heydon, who recalled a Catholic movement formed in France in 1857 for the sanctification of Sunday, all opposed the motion emphatically. 'We are either a Christian country or we are not', Parkes apostrophised, asserting that Sunday opening amounted to a form of state aid to competitors of the churches.² He argued that the churches deserved protection because they helped the progress of civilisation and promoted sound morality, while the movement for Sunday opening comprised the enemies of Christianity and good government. New South Wales should follow Britain rather than the Continent. Moreover, Parkes pointed out that not a single voice of the working classes had been raised for Sunday opening, although there were 10,000 petitioners against it.³ The debate was adjourned and in the interim Copeland collected 24,000 signatures in support of his motion; the Society and the churches were busy also, but they secured only 22,000 signatures.⁴ On 26 September

1

30 August 1882, N.S.W.P.D., vol.VII, p.193, Copeland's speech, pp.186-193.

2

Ibid., p.233.

3

Parkes's Speech, *ibid.*, pp.229-36.

4

Petitions for Sunday opening, V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1882, vol.2, p.925; against vol.4, pp.1599-1609.

a considerable majority reversed the decision of 1881, and the Art Gallery became a further Sunday attraction in Sydney.¹ The working classes did not patronise the Art Gallery in great numbers in the 1880s. Indeed, Daniel O'Connor a Catholic politician who supported Parkes on free trade but not on the Sunday question, defended Copeland's proposition on the grounds that these institutions would not attract iconoclasts or the irreverent, but only those of cultivated tastes from the higher walks of life.² But Sunday opening was a victory for the enemies of clericalism and religious conservatism.

The use of theatres on Sundays proved to be a long-standing grievance of sabbatarians; Sunday night lectures, usually hostile to organised religion, became a regular feature late in the 1870s. Admission to John Tyerman's spiritualist lectures was free with a collection at the close, but Charles Bright, who in 1879 hired the Theatre Royal, Castlereagh Street, charged admission, usually by tickets for a series of lectures, and also provided music to increase the entertainment value of his lectures on the fallacies of orthodox religion.

On 2 June 1880 Parkes introduced a licensing bill which included the licensing of auctioneers and theatre proprietors as well as publicans. He aimed to prevent the use of theatres on Sundays except by special permission of the Colonial Secretary. Although he

¹

41 votes to 24, 26 September 1882, N.S.W.P.D., vol.VII, p.582.

²

30 August 1882, N.S.W.P.D., vol.VII, p.205.

denied it in the House, he aimed to close the theatres against freethought lectures. He argued plausibly, that if parliament refused to allow the performance of 'Hamlet' on Sunday nights it could hardly authorise 'unlicensed lecturing upon subjects infinitely more objectionable'.¹ Strangely enough, no one in parliament seemed aware that these performances were illegal under the Sunday Observance Act of 1780, and the amendment to the Public Exhibitions Act of 1873.² Parkes had pleased Protestants with his liberal legislation on Education and the Church and Schools Estate and this bill sought to please them also, but members were not prepared to risk unpopularity by closing the theatres. Thus this Licensing Bill failed partly because of its provisions against the use of theatres on Sundays. But Parkes soon found an opportunity to test public opinion on the question of Sunday theatres.

In August 1880 R.A. Proctor,³ an astronomer whose lectures were not friendly to the churches, came to

1

2 June 1880, N.S.W.P.D., vol.III, pp.2593-4.

2

Imperial Statutes, 21 Geo.3, c.49; N.S.W. Statutes, 36 Vic., No.8.

3

Richard Anthony Proctor (1837-88), astronomer, born Chelsea, England, educated at King's College, London and St John's, Cambridge. He read theology, mathematics and law but turned to astronomy. He was Honorary Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society until 1873 when he undertook a lecturing tour in the United States. In 1879 he came to the Australasian colonies for an extended tour. He returned to settle in the United State in 1881 where he died in 1888. A prolific publisher, his main gifts were in popularising astronomy through writing and lecturing. See Dictionary of National Biography, vol.XVI, pp.419-21.

Sydney. He took over temporarily Charles Bright's lease of the Theatre Royal and advertised a lecture for Sunday evening, 5 September, to which admission was by ticket sold beforehand. During the week preceding the lecture there was a newspaper controversy over the legality of this performance. 'Civis' asserted that it was contrary to the Act of 1780; other correspondents, including Proctor himself, disagreed.¹ But Dr John McGibbon, joint proprietor with Dr Zachary Barry of the Protestant Standard, confident that the proposed performance was illegal, apparently brought the matter to Parkes's attention, and he acted promptly.² On Friday, 3 September, he forbade the proprietor of the Theatre Royal to open in the terms advertised. A rushed exchange of letters followed between Proctor's agent, R.B. Smythe, and the Colonial Secretary's office, but Smythe's arguments and protests availed nothing. Parkes threatened to withdraw the license of the theatre if the lecture went ahead. Proctor was equally determined to deliver the lecture, but at the eleventh hour he gave in to the pleas of the licensee, Samuel Lazar.³

¹ S.M.H., 3 and 4 September 1880.

² Evening News, 6 September 1880, Standard, 11 September, 13 November 1880. I have made a thorough search of the Parkes Correspondence in the Mitchell Library and of the Colonial Secretary's Register of In-Letters for 1880 and have not found any correspondence from John McGibbon to Parkes. Parkes, however, stated a few days later that 'certain influential persons in the community' had brought Proctor's Sunday lecture to his notice. Henry Parkes, S.M.H., 11 September 1880.

³ Letters and sequence of events published in S.M.H., 6 September 1880.

Between two and three thousand people, some leading citizens among them, gathered outside the Theatre Royal that Sunday night. When it was clear that the lecture was cancelled the crowd moved to the Oxford Hotel in Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, and called for Proctor who explained from the balcony that he had only given in for Lazar's sake. He asked them to return to their homes as law-abiding citizens after three cheers for the Queen and law and order. The crowd also gave three cheers for Proctor and three groans for Parkes. Afterwards some repeated this performance outside St James' Church.¹

According to the Herald there were as many in the crowd interested in the Sunday question as in astronomy. The editor declared that Proctor's lecture should have been allowed, and added that if Christianity needed protection the colony should return to a state church and a fixed creed.² But many who were otherwise voluntaryists believed that Christianity was a protected religion.

Nonetheless, Parkes pleased the churchmen. The Presbytery of Sydney congratulated him for his action;³ the Church of England Record remarked that it 'only proved once more that God's command and man's welfare strictly coincide'.⁴ But Parkes had invoked no Sunday

¹ S.M.H., 6 September 1880.

² Ibid.

³ Presbyterian, 11 September 1880.

⁴ Record, October 1880.

observance laws; he told the Presbytery that he had not acted from religious motives.¹ The Herald reported that he had acted on the authority of the Public Exhibitions Act of 1850, which empowered the Colonial Secretary to suspend performances 'for the preservation of good manners, decorum, or the peace', and to revoke a license if necessary.² Parkes claimed to have consulted his cabinet, but some years later it emerged that the opinion of his Attorney-General, Robert Wisdom, had not supported his action.³ But Parkes achieved little by his intervention, for he hurt his own reputation and enhanced Proctor's, who delivered the cancelled lecture twice to crowded audiences in the New Masonic Hall on Thursday and Friday of the following week.⁴ After the Proctor case Parkes had Bright's Sunday night lectures watched but took no action against him.⁵ Parkes, however, had not repented;

1

Henry Parkes, S.M.H., 11 September 1880.

2

S.M.H., 7 September 1880. 14 Vic., No.23, s5, but note, the schedule of the amendment to this Act in 1873 implied a prohibition of Sunday performances, 36 Vic., No.8.

3

Henry Parkes, S.M.H., 11 September 1880. Opinion tabled with others in June 1887, V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1887, vol.5, p.1157.

4

S.M.H., 10, 11 September 1880.

5

The Colonial Secretary's Register records letters from the Inspector-General of Police re Bright's Sunday lecture on 13 and 21 September; unfortunately, however, a large bundle of letters on the Sunday question seems to have been lost. Offices of the State Archives have made a thorough search on my behalf. See Colonial Secretary's Register of In-Letters, 1880, 80/7679, 80/7875, Archives Office of New South Wales.

at an election meeting in December 1882 he told an interjector, who recalled the Proctor incident, that he would do the same again.¹

In May 1883 Sunday afternoon concerts began at the Academy of Music but did not last long.² On 3 June Mr Frank Smith opened a more enduring programme of classical concerts and lectures, for example on 'the Life of Captain Cook', in Sir Joseph Bank's Pavilion at Botany.³ Smith's 'pleasant...Sunday afternoon' was a secular version of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon of music and informal addresses begun in Britain in 1875 by John Blackham, a Congregational deacon, to attract working men to the churches;⁴ Smith, however, demanded the utmost respectability in his audiences.⁵ Not until the 1890s did the colonial churches introduce the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon.

In November 1885 the New Opera House introduced 'Sacred and Classical Concerts' on Sunday evenings.⁶ Not to be outdone, the Sunday Platform Association advertised its programme at the Gaiety Theatre as a

1

S.M.H., 4 December 1882.

2

Advt. S.M.H., 12 May 1883.

3

Advt. S.M.H., 26 May 1883, 2 June 1883.

4

K.S. Inglis, op.cit., pp.74-88.

5

Advt. S.M.H., 26 May 1883.

6

Advt. S.M.H., 14 November 1885.

'Concert and Free Thought Lecture'.¹ The next year other theatres in the city and some suburbs offered a 'Grand Concert Spirituel' or other Sacred and Classical Concerts. These innovations competed with the freethought lectures, and as rivals to church services outdid the lectures, since they claimed a sacred content. In 1886, too, the Sunday Times and the Sunday News commenced publication and congregations heard newsboys crying them on Sunday mornings.²

The Lord's Day Observance Society had opposed the afternoon concerts and evening lectures but could not persuade the Stuart Government that these performances were illegal.³ But the innovation of Sunday evening concerts and Sunday newspapers stirred the churches in 1886 to new efforts to save the Sabbath. In July the

1

Advt. S.M.H., 28 November 1885. The Sunday Platform Association seems to have begun with Charles Bright's freethought mission which he called the Sunday Platform, but I have not been able to confirm this. See Charles Bright, A Plea for the Sunday Platform and a Protest against the attempt to suppress it. Sydney, 1880.

2

Advocate, 29 May 1886, 7 April 1888.

3

Progress Report of the New South Wales Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day, 1883-4, Sydney 1884. A deputation from the Society met the Premier, Alexander Stuart, on 18 July 1884 to ask for action against the Sunday night theatres. Stuart did not agree that these performances were illegal, and although he promised to look into the Blasphemy laws he suggested that churches should exert their influence to persuade public opinion to support a change in the law regarding Sunday performances. S.M.H., 19 July 1884; see also leader, S.M.H., 22 July 1884.

Sydney Women's Prayer Union¹ petitioned parliament to close the theatres on Sundays and to amend the laws to enforce absolute prohibition of Sunday entertainments. Blasphemous lectures, they claimed, were demoralising the youth of Sydney, and moreover, they thought it 'inconsistent in a Christian country' to permit Sabbath-breakers to hurt 'the feelings of tens of thousands of Christians'.² In the same year the Protestant clergy formed the Sydney Ministers' Union, the greatest concern of which quickly became the Sunday question. The Union soon supplanted the Lord's Day Observance Society as the main pressure group on the Sunday question, particularly in the campaign to close the theatres on Sundays.

From May to November 1886 the Ministers' Union sought unsuccessfully to discuss the Sunday theatres with the Colonial Secretary, G.R. Dibbs. Dibbs declined to discuss the question as he had referred it to crown lawyers.³ But the Union grew impatient and on 3 November

1

The Sydney Women's Prayer Union was established on 23 September 1883 during the visit to Sydney of the lady evangelist, Mrs Margaret Hampson. There were branches in some suburbs and country towns. Seventh Annual Report of the Sydney Women's Prayer Union, Sydney, 1890. (This is the earliest report which I have found.)

2

V. & P.L.A.N.S.W., 1885-6, vol.8, pp.1157; the petition was 356 feet long. Australian Christian World, 23 July 1886.

3

Dibbs's reply to W. Teece, a member of parliament who questioned him on behalf of the Union, is reported in the Union's account of its representations to the Colonial Secretary, S.M.H., 3 November 1886. I have not found any reference to the question in the Parliamentary Debates.

published its correspondence with Dibbs, including the opinion of Frederick Darley, soon to become Chief Justice, who had assured the Union that the Sunday entertainments were illegal.¹ Though he continued to ignore the Union Dibbs did receive a deputation from Pitt Street Congregational Church on 3 December 1886; however, he gave them little satisfaction.² The following February the Ministers' Union planned a new attack, hoping for a better hearing from the new Parkes Government. It convened a meeting of the heads of Protestant churches which resolved to memorialise the Colonial Secretary, Parkes, through Bishop Barry, reminding him of the prohibition against Sunday entertainments for gain.³ Bishop Barry received no reply to his memorial.⁴ He was, however, overseas for some months following this, and the ministers decided to act without him.

1

S.M.H., 3 November 1886; see also Presbyterian, 6 November 1886, 13 November 1886. Frederick Darley became Chief Justice in December 1886 and was knighted in 1887.

2

Dr James Jefferis, minister of the church, led the deputation which asked Dibbs to prevent the Gaiety Theatre, immediately behind Pitt Street Congregational Church, from holding rehearsals on Sunday mornings and concerts on Sunday evenings. Dibbs said that he would submit to Darley's opinion that the concerts were illegal if he gave it from the Bench, but until then he could do nothing. S.M.H., 4 December 1886.

3

Under 36 Vic., No.8; the meeting and resolution reported at Sydney Ministers' Union meeting, 28 February 1887, S.M.H., 3 March 1887.

4

See his account in visitation charge, S.M.H., 13 April 1888.

On 10 June a clerical deputation led by T.S. Forsaith, a Congregationalist, waited on Parkes. Forsaith told Parkes that it was the 'duty of every Christian Government to take care that no breach of the existing law' was tolerated, for obedience to the law was 'the foundation of all social safety and progress'. The spokesmen for the deputation attributed growing immorality among the young and the lower orders to these evasions of the law. In particular they mentioned the lectures which ridiculed Christianity, although they were as concerned with the sacred concerts. The Union informed Parkes that it had obtained legal advice, including that of the Chief Justice, and assured Parkes that the existing laws were sufficient to suppress these performances.

Parkes promised to study the law and consult his colleagues, but pointed out to the ministers that some people might suggest that they were doing business on Sundays, carrying the plate around.¹ He no longer seemed willing to plead the protection of the churches, as he had done early in the 1880s, and it is doubtful whether he intended to do anything serious about the matter immediately. But by the end of that day Parkes had decided that freethought lectures were not to be tolerated.

At the time the colony was planning its celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Democrats and secularists had successfully disrupted a public meeting

1

S.M.H., 11 June 1887.

at the Town Hall on 3 June 1887.¹ The following Friday they wrecked a second meeting more spectacularly. After the police had cleared the Town Hall the shocked 'Establishment' retired to the Mayor's reception room to take counsel. Protestant, Catholic and Jew all agreed that these irreligious men were the enemies of society, the throne and of God. They concurred with the Chief Justice that they could no longer allow secularists the liberty to desecrate theatres by 'abuse of laws both human and Divine'. The conclave drew up a solemn declaration condemning the 'riotous conduct of a disloyal minority' and the civic leaders pledged themselves to vindicate the loyalty of the people 'to the laws, institutions, and Throne of the British Empire'.²

The next day at noon Parkes closed the theatres against freethought lecturers. The following Sunday evening a crowd of about 6,000 gathered at the pedestal, by Hyde Park and St James' Church, on which a statue of the Queen was to be placed the next year. When the police asked them not to disturb the service in the church they shouted derisively. Thomas Walker, the

1

S.M.H., 4 June 1887.

2

S.M.H., 11 June 1887. The following Wednesday, a more successful meeting, at which loyalists outnumbered democrats and secularists, took place in the Exhibition Building. S.M.H., 16 June 1887. See also B. Mansfield, 'The Background to Radical Republicanism in New South Wales in the Eighteen-Eighties', Historical Studies, vol.5, no.20, May 1953, pp.338-48.

chief freethought lecturer in Sydney, now a member of parliament, mounted the pedestal and proclaimed that they were met 'within sight of the signposts of despotism, the Prince Consort's statue, the empty pedestal of the Queen's statue, and St James' Church on the other side'. Walker charged Parkes with acting under the effete law of George III and likened to Judge Jeffreys the Chief Justice in his campaign to crush the freethinkers and secularists. The vast assembly resolved to send a deputation to Parkes to 'beard the lion in his den'. At the close Walker ironically called for three cheers for Parkes and three groans resounded across the park.¹

The free Sunday advocates met Parkes the following Monday. He claimed doubtfully that he had not noticed the lectures until the ministers' deputation brought them to his notice the previous Friday. He conceded that he might have been too precipitate but did not admit that the disturbance in the Town Hall had provoked his action. He took his stand on the Public Exhibitions Act; the licenses, he pointed out, did not authorise performance on Sundays or Good Friday and Christmas Day. He added that the lectures were offensive to the Christian majority of the population.² The dissatisfied deputation returned to the pedestal to hold a protest meeting, and the following Saturday afternoon about 1,500

1

S.M.H., 13 June 1887.

2

S.M.H., 14 June 1887, Standard, 18 June 1887: the Standard took Parkes to be defending the Sunday observance laws generally, which was not the case.

marched from the pedestal to Government House to ask the Governor to cable a protest to the Queen at this 'infringement of the liberty of the people'. Lord Carrington dealt courteously with the deputation, but declined their petition in as much as he was a constitutional governor. Once more the crowd returned to the pedestal where Walker denounced Parkes's intolerance; they gave three cheers for Lord and Lady Carrington before they adjourned.¹

Parkes incurred criticism from other quarters. The Bulletin depicted him as the pawn of the parsons,² and the Herald, which also stated that he had acted on behalf of the Ministers' Union, thought he was making martyrs of the secularists.³ Bishop Barry said later that Parkes had done exactly the opposite of what the churches asked. They did not want the freethought lectures put down by 'real or fancied persecution'; they wanted the law applied strictly to all injurious forms of Sunday trading,⁴ which by this time meant particularly Sunday lectures, concerts and newspapers. But Parkes had made no reference to Sunday observance laws. He had not appealed to the Sunday Observance Act, 1780, to justify his action, although it would have been

¹ S.M.H., 18, 20 June 1887.

² Cartoon, Bulletin, 18 June 1887.

³ S.M.H., 13 June 1887.

⁴ Bishop Barry, 'Second Visitation Charge', S.M.H., 13 April 1888.

appropriate since that Act was designed to prevent, among other things, the ridicule of religion.¹ But as in the Proctor case in 1880, Parkes had acted under the Public Exhibitions Act, and it was soon clear how little sabbatarianism had influenced him.

Parkes survived all the criticism and Dibbs's attempt to censure his government for this 'infringement of the liberties of the people'.² Walker and the secularists had shocked people more than Parkes. Even though he had to admit that he had acted without consulting his Attorney General, and tabled opinions of various Attorneys General since 1880, none of which supported his recent action,³ an offended majority upheld him, including John McElhone, who usually took an anti-sabbatarian stand.⁴ W.J. Foster (later Mr Justice Foster), an Evangelical, said in justification of the government that

1

It was sometimes known as Dr Porteus' Act, after Beilby Porteus (1731-1808), Bishop of Chester 1776-1787 and subsequently Bishop of London. Porteus campaigned for due observance of religious holidays and took a leading part in putting down the Sunday debating societies at which sceptical views were aired, and the Sunday promenades 'which had degenerated into meetings for assignations'. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.XVI, pp.195-7: see also J.H. Want's reference to 'Dr Porteus' Act', S.M.H., 27 November 1890.

2

15 June 1887, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXVII, p.2101.

3

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1887, vol.5, p.1157.

4

16 June 1887, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXVII, pp.2124, 2128-31.

Men were now punished for gross blasphemy, not because it was contrary to the Christian religion, but because it was grossly offensive to a large majority of the population.¹

36,200 people signed a petition to support the closing of the theatres; it alleged that Sunday opening was both an infringement of statute law and 'subversive of good government and morality'.² James Balfour also wrote on behalf of the Lord's Day Observance Society of Victoria to congratulate Parkes for enforcing the law;³ but Parkes could allow an infringement of the law where he saw no danger of subversion.

On 25 June Parkes issued new regulations governing the use of theatres which gave the Colonial Secretary sole discretion as to their occupation on Sundays.⁴ He told parliament that he would allow the use of theatres on Sundays for religious services, sacred concerts, and other concerts 'not objectionable on moral grounds', but the government would not authorise lectures against Christianity or the monarchy.⁵ So the Sunday concerts continued, but the freethinkers were driven from their accustomed platforms.

1

16 June 1887, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXVII, p.2124.

2

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1887, vol.5, p.1159.

3

James Balfour to Sir Henry Parkes, 9 July 1887, Parkes Correspondence, vol.4, pp.138-41, Mitchell Library.

4

S.M.H., 27 June 1887.

5

24 June 1887, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXVII, p.2269.

Parkes's action over the Sunday theatres and a Sumprime Court judgment which held that selling newspapers on Sunday was 'perhaps the most innocent and least pernicious form of trading',¹ only increased the anxiety of the churches about the status of Sunday. The Wesleyan and Presbyterian Churches appointed special Sundays for sermons on Sabbath observance.² Letters on Sunday observance featured in the press;³ the subject was prominent in Bishop Barry's second visitation charge in 1888, and in T. Owens Mell's address from the chair of the Congregational Union in October 1888.⁴ In January 1888, John McNeil, a Presbyterian, complained that Sydney was 'on the high road' to the Continental Sunday,⁵ and in September 1889 J.H. McColl, a Victorian politician, warned his colony against the 'Sydney Sunday'.⁶ The Herald defended Sydney's liberalism,⁷ but the Christian World lamented that Sydney had 'the bad pre-eminence' among colonial cities as far as Sunday

1

S.M.H., 10 March 1888. There is not room here to discuss the campaign against Sunday newspapers, which was weaker than the opposition to Sunday theatres.

2

M.W.C., 1886, p.75; 1888, p.85; M.P.G.A., 1888, p.35.

3

S.M.H., 17, 19 and 20 April 1888.

4

S.M.H., 13 April 1888; Congregational Year Book, 1889, pp.59-61.

5

A.C.W., 12 January 1888.

6

S.M.H., 20 September 1889.

7

Ibid.

observance was concerned.¹ One Sydney citizen asserted that the various institutions only opened for a coterie, and had the churches organised their forces he was sure it would have been a different story;² but the churches were already organising to defend the Sabbath.

In March 1889 the Presbyterian General Assembly carried a motion in support of a Vigilance Committee of the churches to watch that the laws regarding Sunday observance should be strictly kept.³ John Walker, Convenor of the Religion and Morals Committee, took the matter in hand, and in June 1889 representatives of the six principal Protestant denominations⁴ formed a Council of Churches to resist all attempts to secularise the Lord's Day.⁵

1

A.C.W., 3 October 1889.

2

R.K.S., S.M.H., 26 September 1889.

3

M.P.G.A., 1889, p.32.

4

Church of England, Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist, Primitive Methodist, Congregational and Baptist Churches.

5

An account of the formation of the Council of Churches is given in the Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1889, M.P.G.A., 1890, p.58. The Council, formed on an ad hoc basis, lapsed temporarily after its victories in 1890 (see below). However, it was resuscitated in the early 1890s. See Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1892, M.P.G.A., 1893, p.66; see also P.S.D.S., 1891, pp.25-6, 55; Report of the Standing Committee, *ibid.*, 1892, Appendix II, p.84; 1893, Appendix I, p.iii.

The Council knew the law regarding Sunday observance, and determined to put it to the test. In September 1889 John Walker, its secretary, sued John Solomon, proprietor of the Criterion Theatre for £200, recoverable by the informant under the Act of 1780.¹ The Criterion was the leading theatre providing Sacred and Classical Concerts. Walker claimed to have studied the past advertisements of all the Sunday Concerts in the Herald and found nothing more sacred than ditties like 'Rock-a-bye-Baby',² but this was quite untrue of the more recent concerts, particularly those at the Criterion Theatre. Its programmes at the time Walker filed his suit included recitations of Abou-ben-Adhem and sacred songs. One programme featured a scenic display of the life of Jesus from the nativity to the resurrection with sacred musical accompaniment. It was an attractive alternative to dreary sermons and arid services, but many clergy believed no good ever came out of a theatre, and refused to recognise a religious content in the programmes.

The Supreme Court delivered its judgment on Walker v. Solomon on 22 May 1890. It awarded Walker the £200 and costs. Although Solomon had an authorisation from the Colonial Secretary, the Court ruled that the latter had no power to sanction Sunday performances. It dismissed the defence argument that the law could not apply because there was no established church in the

¹

21 Geo. 3, c.49.

²

S.M.H., 26 May 1890.

colony. The previous Chief Justice had ruled in 1884 that Christianity was part of the common law of the colony as in England.¹ The judgment in *McHugh v. Robertson* in Melbourne in 1885,² as well as judgments of the English courts, provided some precedent for the Court's decision. But Chief Justice Darley and Mr Justice Windeyer, both Anglican, agreed that there was need for fresh legislation to bring the law 'more into harmony with rational modern ideas on the Sunday question'. Windeyer commented that a law was grotesque which allowed the performance of The Messiah by paid choristers before paying seatholders in a church, but which placed a theatre in which the same performance took place before a paying audience on the same level as a brothel. Mr Justice Foster disagreed with his colleagues'

1

Regina v. Darling and Another, N.S.W. Law Reports, vol.V, 1884, p.411.

2

The case of *McHugh v. Robertson* and *Benn v. Symes* was an appeal to the Supreme Court of Victoria to test whether Act 21 Geo.3 c.49 was in force in Victoria. Mr Justice Williams had held the law to be applicable 'as protecting Sunday as a civil institution beneficial to the State'. The Supreme Court (Molesworth A.C.J. and Higinbotham and Holyroyd, J.J.) upheld the applicability of the Act 'as expressing religious feelings, presumably common to all British subjects in 1828'. (The Australian Courts Act, 1828, confirmed that all the Imperial laws and statutes then in force were applicable in the colony; this law was in force in Victoria also. Act 9 Geo.4, c.83, s.24). Victorian Law Reports, vol.XI, 1885, pp.410-31; see also, S.M.H., 8 September 1885. James Balfour, however, in 1887, told Parkes that although the court upheld the applicability of the Act Joseph Symes, the Victorian secularist, had not been convicted because the jury could not agree whether his programme was for amusement or

(footnote continued on p.369)

recommendation for a change in the law: he did not believe the day had come when either public opinion or the legislature would sanction any change.¹ Future events were to demonstrate the accuracy of Foster's opinion.

The Court's judgment caused all the Sunday entertainments, except the Bondi Aquarium, to close. The proprietor of the Aquarium advertised a Sunday afternoon concert in the papers the following Saturday. The advertisement contained a long condemnation of the Act of 'a licentious German monarch whose life was a reproach and disgrace'. Admission was free and the public was invited to demonstrate its disapproval of this 'vexatious statute' by coming to the Aquarium that Sunday; it claimed an 'enormous attendance'.² Future concerts continued formally as free of charge, but admission was by ticket only,³ usually sold beforehand. For several months the Bondi Aquarium was 'the only Established Classical Concert in New South Wales' but later in 1890 several other Sunday concerts revived with the same 'free' admission.⁴ Early in 1891 the S.S. Invincible offered

(footnote 2 continued from p.368)
instruction. (James Balfour to Sir Henry Parkes, 9 July 1887, Parkes Correspondence, vol.4, pp.138-41.) For another account of the action against Symes see F.B. Smith, 'Religion and Freethought in Melbourne, 1870 to 1890', M.A. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1960, pp.262-7.

1

S.M.H., 23 May 1890.

2

Advt. S.M.H., 24 May 1890, 31 May 1890.

3

Advt. S.M.H., 31 May 1890.

4

See Advts. S.M.H., 25 October 1890, 1 November 1890, 15 November 1890.

free Classical Concerts in 'Sunday night on the Water', although tickets were sold to board the steamer.¹ But after the Criterion case the larger city theatres no longer provided Sunday evening Concerts.

The judgment against Solomon pleased the churches. Soon after the case James Hill said in Bourke Street Congregational Church, that he was opposed to laws preventing people from amusing themselves on Sundays; he saw no reason why they should not hear high class music, but objected to some making money out of it. The same law as applied to butchers, bakers and other businessmen (who were more likely to be found in the churches), he argued, should apply to the amusement business.² Charles Bright, a Baptist minister (no connection with Charles Bright the freethought lecturer), used a similar argument, and the Presbyterian agreed that they had to draw the line against the 'Continental Sunday'. It was satisfied with the existing law which excluded Sunday entertainments for which admission was charged.³ John Walker reported to the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1891 that the Court's decision had

1

Advt. S.M.H., 24 January 1891, 7 February 1891.

2

D.T., 2 June 1890. In 1883-4 the churches, including the Catholic Church, supported the campaign of the Master Butchers for Sunday closing of butchers' shops. Churchmen believed that the sabbath-keeping businessman deserved protection from the 'ruinous temporal advantage' the Sabbath profaner might gain over him, and the butchers, who had tried Sunday closing on a voluntary basis without success, desired legal support for their Sunday observance. S.M.H., 15 December 1883; Butchers' Sunday Closing Act, 1884, 47 Vic., No.8.

3

Presbyterian, 7 June 1890.

resulted in the closing of the theatres and other places of entertainment on Sundays.¹ He seemed oblivious to the evasions of the law after the Court's judgment.

The Herald supported Darley's and Windeyer's recommendation for amendment to the law. It defended the Sunday concerts and said that 'no time should be lost in putting an end to a situation that is intolerable'.² The Colonial Treasurer, William McMillan, told parliament that new legislation was absolutely necessary as some had taken advantage of a very old statute against 'the practical intention' of parliament.³ But the government introduced no legislation on the question until an enterprising individual commenced proceedings to recover from the Herald, the Daily Telegraph and the Evening News a large sum for advertising the Sunday concerts. But the Bill did not amend the laws; it was to remit penalties incurred under the Act of 1780, following the precedent of the British parliament after the prosecution of the Westminster Aquarium.⁴ Some wanted to repeal the old Act altogether, but G.B. Simpson, Attorney General, speaking for the government, refused to go that far. He confessed that the sabbatarian question was too vexed a subject; moreover, it seemed that the government wished to retain an Act which could

1

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, M.P.G.A., 1891, p.62.

2

S.M.H., 23 May 1890.

3

27 May 1890, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XLIV, p.705.

4

Remission of Penalties Act, 1875, 38 and 39 Vict., c.80.

foreclose objectionable Sunday entertainments.¹ The Remission of Penalties Act² actually gave the authorities power to suspend the operation of the Act where it chose, and at the same time took the sting from the sabbatarian tail.

On August 1890, almost simultaneously with the government legislation, J.H. Want introduced a Sunday Laws Amendment Bill to allow Sunday trading for fruiterers, tobacconists, places of light refreshment, and to exempt Sunday newspapers and entertainments from the old Sunday observance laws.³ Want's Bill evoked fierce opposition from the churches. The Council of Churches organised an army of volunteers who canvassed the colony for signatures from persons 16 and over to oppose the Bill.⁴ A record number of petitions totalling some 63,200 signatures poured into parliament from every corner of the colony,⁵ though this was only a small

1

23 July 1890, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XLVI, p.2276; 30 July 1890, ibid., pp.2440-1.

2

54 Vic., No.8.

3

S.M.H., 6 August 1890.

4

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1890, M.P.G.A., 1891, p.62.

5

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1890, vol.8, pp.761-85. The highest number of signatures Miss Martha Rutledge found before 1890 was 36,200 in support of the closure of the theatres in 1887. Next was 31,213 against the Tobacco Duties Bill in 1887. See M. Rutledge, 'Sir Alfred Stephen and Divorce Law Reform in New South Wales, 1886-1892', M.A. Thesis, Australian National University, 1966, p.111.

proportion of the churchgoing population. A number of public meetings took place on 13 October, the night before the date set for the second reading of the bill.¹ Meetings took place as late as December, but the bill never reached the second reading; it lapsed through prorogation of parliament. The next March John Walker told the Presbyterian Assembly that the bill was as good as dead.² The churches congratulated themselves that the secularisation of Sunday had been averted, but they were to suffer defeat in their campaign against divorce law reform.

The Churches and Divorce Law Reform³

The Protestant churches regarded marriage as a sacred institution, and Catholics observed it as a sacrament of the Church. However, the Marriage Act of 1855 established that marriage was primarily a civil contract; the state authorised ministers of religion to solemnize marriage, and also provided for civil marriage.⁴

1

S.M.H., 14 October 1890; see also list of petitions, loc.cit.

2

Report of the Committee on Religion and Morals, 1890, M.P.G.A., 1891, p.62.

3

In this section I am largely indebted to Miss Martha Rutledge's work on 'Sir Alfred Stephen and Divorce Law Reform in New South Wales, 1886-1892', M.A. Thesis, Australian National University, 1966. She has dealt with the question most capably, and there is neither need nor space to repeat the story in detail here; I will concentrate on the churches' opposition to the extension of facilities for divorce.

4

An Act to amend and consolidate the Laws Affecting the Solemnization of Marriage, 1855, 19 Vic., No.30.

There was no provision for divorce but in 1857 the British parliament passed legislation which allowed men to divorce their wives for adultery. But simple adultery was insufficient ground for a woman to divorce her husband; she had also to prove desertion for two years upwards without maintenance, cruelty or some unnatural offence.¹ New South Wales, the last of the Australian colonies to do so, adopted this British legislation in 1873,² and in 1881, after considerable struggle within parliament and between the colony and Britain, the Act was amended to allow a woman to divorce her husband for simple adultery.³

The churches offered no opposition to these measures; Catholics did not recognise the state's right to dissolve the marriage bond on any grounds, but Protestants held that adultery was the one ground that Christ had allowed for divorce, and the law had gone no further than that. During the 1880s, however, the divorce question was under review in North America and Britain, and in 1884 France adopted a new law which allowed divorce after three years' judicial separation, and for cruelty. That year there were three bills to extend divorce facilities in New South Wales; one bill introduced in the

1

Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857, 20 & 21 Vict., c.85.

2

Matrimonial Causes Act, 1873, 36 Vic., No.9.

3

Matrimonial Causes Act Amendment Act, 1881, 44 Vic., No.31. Throughout the 1870s David Buchanan fought persistently to obtain this right for women. See Martha Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.39-44.

Legislative Council proposed to allow drunkenness and syphilis as grounds for divorce and another five years' desertion, and a bill in the Legislative Assembly proposed divorce after two years' duration. Sir Alfred Stephen,¹ though he had opposed the bill to allow women the right to divorce their husbands for simple adultery, criticised these measures for not going far enough.² His experience as a judge had given Stephen close acquaintance with the misery suffered by women with brutal or drunken husbands. Thus humane feelings impelled him, late in life, to take up the cause of divorce law reform.³ In February 1886 he introduced a bill to allow desertion, drunkenness, repeated assault and long term imprisonment as grounds for divorce. He maintained that this measure was in the best interests of morality, for deserted wives were often induced to commit adultery or driven to drink and prostitution.⁴

1

Sir Alfred Stephen (1802-1894) was formerly Chief Justice of New South Wales (1844-1873). In 1875 he returned to the Legislative Council, from which his office had excluded him in 1858. Stephen was active in various philanthropic movements, and wielded immense personal influence in colonial society. Although an active Anglican, he took up the cause of divorce law reform late in life. For a full biographical account of Stephen see the Dictionary of National Biography, vol. XVIII, pp.1044-5; and Martha Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.4-20.

2

Martha Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.54-5.

3

Ibid., p.57.

4

2 July 1884, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XIII, pp.4138-9; 10 February 1886, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XVIII, p.703; *cit.* Martha Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.55, 59.

The Herald, at first cautious, advanced that the state was justified in extending divorce facilities to check 'the spread of pauperism and consequent crime', since the families of deserters or drunken husbands usually became burdens on the state.¹ But compassion for the suffering and the interests of morality were the chief reasons offered in support of divorce extension. These arguments, however, carried little weight with the majority of churchmen who flew to the defence of the Christian law. Bishop Barry published his protest in a letter to the Herald after the second reading of the bill. He spoke with respect of Sir Alfred Stephen, but thought that he had been carried away by exceptional cases of hardship and misery. Although Stephen wished to legislate for cases where marriage had broken down, Barry seemed to fear that any relaxation of the law would cause further marriage to break down. He pointed out that the proposed extensions were contrary to the command of Christ and imperilled the sacredness of marriage and the Christian faith itself; he called for Christians of all communions to cooperate in opposition to the bill.² The following Sunday in St Andrew's Cathedral Barry expounded Christ's teaching on marriage and divorce from St Matthew's Gospel,³ and deplored the tendency to divorce social and political questions from

¹ S.M.H., 27 March 1886.

² 'Alfred Sydney', S.M.H., 8 April 1886.

³ His text was Matthew, 19:3-9.

Christian faith and obedience; Christianity was to cover all thought and action. He warned that anything which weakened the bonds of marriage or disrupted family life affected the moral and social life of their country.¹ In response to his invitation representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Churches, and some Catholic laymen met at the Church Society House on Friday, 16 April, to protest against the bill. At this meeting Barry affirmed that the colony was a Christian nation, notwithstanding the separation of church and state, and therefore they were bound to protest at any change at variance with the Christian law. The argument that it was impossible to enforce the Christian law in its entirety upon society he dismissed; Christ had declared a law regarding marriage and divorce, he protested, and it was for them to affirm that law, not merely to assert a principle. The meeting arranged petitions against the bill and T. Slattery and L.F. Heydon, Catholic M.P.s, volunteered to collect signatures.² Barry's petition objected to the bill on three grounds; it was at variance with the Christian law; it would impair the sense of the sacredness of marriage and inflict serious injury upon the domestic and social welfare of the whole community; and it varied from the law in Britain and other colonies.³ Only 6902 signed the petitions against divorce extension in 1886,

1

S.M.H., 12 April 1886.

2

S.M.H., 17 April 1886.

3

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1885-6, vol.8, pp.1165.

which was far below the number that supported petitions for the protection of Sunday.¹

Cardinal Moran stood aloof from the controversy. In a pastoral letter in April he wrote that the Anglicans deserved some praise for their opposition, but they were in a false position for having already recognised the power of the state to deal with sacred things and to dissolve the marriage bond for adultery. The Catholic Church did 'not recognise any authority on the part of the Civil State to trench upon the Christian Sacrament or dissolve the marriage bond'. Catholics could only regard the bill as 'another instance of the downward course invariably pursued by Civil Governments when they arrogate to themselves an authority in spiritual matters which Christ did not confer upon them.'² But while the Cardinal would not cooperate in a campaign against the bill, several Catholic laymen militantly opposed the measure in parliament, and the Freeman's Journal attacked the bill as a measure which would legalise adultery and largely 'undo the great good that Christianity had done for mankind'.³

Wesleyans strongly opposed divorce extension in 1886; the 'Committee for Guarding Our Privileges' authorised the President and Secretary of Conference to petition against the bill.⁴ But the annual

1

See above and M. Rutledge, op.cit., p.111.

2

P.F. Moran, Pastoral Letter, [17 April 1886], pp.7-11.

3

F.J., 3 April 1886.

4

Advocate, 24 April 1886.

conference passed no resolutions on the subject. In 1890 Hans Mack introduced a resolution protesting against renewed attempts to pass a bill to extend divorce facilities, but withdrew it when it was pointed out that the Committee for Privileges had considered the question, and found that there was such division of opinion that it decided to take no action.¹ The General Conference in May 1890 condemned divorce extension, but only in reference to Victoria.² Presbyterians, so united on the Sunday question, were divided on divorce, for Scottish law and the Westminster Confession allowed divorce for adultery and wilful desertion. Principal Kinross opposed the bill resolutely, but Dr Robert Steel supported it and collaborated with Stephen in his reply to Bishop Barry in 1887.³ In June 1886 the Presbytery of Sydney debated the issue at length, and finally approved the bill in so far as it provided for divorce on the grounds of 'deliberate desertion'.⁴ In March 1887 the General Assembly agreed, on Steel's motion, to petition parliament in favour of divorce for wilful desertion.⁵ The Congregational Union did not express an opinion, although Dr Jefferis condemned divorce as

¹ S.M.H., 11 February 1890.

² Minutes, General Conference, 1890, p.45; Advocate, 31 May 1890.

³ Martha Rutledge, *op.cit.*, p.141.

⁴ A.C.W., 11, 25 June 1886.

⁵ M.P.G.A., 1887, p.33.

desecration.¹ G.A. Lloyd, a deacon of Pitt Street Congregational Church, said in parliament that Congregationalists favoured the bill,² but he was speaking for laymen. Congregational ministers signed the petitions against the bill, but in 1888, when Dean Cowper sought the Congregationalist's support against divorce extension, the Union decided to take no definite action.³ Baptists came out opening in support of divorce law reform. In May 1886 the Executive Committee of the Baptist Union unanimously approved Stephen's bill;⁴ the previous month the Rev. Charles Bright, who became chairman of the Baptist Union in September 1886, had written an article for the Echo in support of divorce extension.⁵ But a few years later Joseph Palmer, a Baptist layman, wrote regretting the Union's decision, and asserted that the majority of Baptists would be opposed to divorce extension if women were counted.⁶ Zachary Barry, often at variance with his bishop, also supported divorce extension.⁷ Thus there was less unity among the churches and between clergy and laity on

¹ S.M.H., 17 May 1886.

² 24 September 1886, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXIII, p.5098.

³ Congregational Year Book, 1889, p.83.

⁴ A.C.W., 14 May 1886.

⁵ Echo, 28 April 1886.

⁶ Joseph Palmer, S.M.H., 17 June 1890.

⁷ Z. Barry, S.M.H., 1 May 1886.

divorce than on the Sunday question, although some Protestant and Catholic laity found common ground in opposition to the divorce bill.

The arguments used against divorce law reform were similar to those advanced against the liberalisation of Sunday. Secularists supported the measure and Daniel O'Connor declared that the main supporters of the bill were freethinkers who aimed 'to wipe out all the great emblems of Christianity'.¹ The sabbatarian Ninian Melville likewise saw a secularist plot behind the bill,² but this was really ludicrous for the secularists were a despised minority, and an embarrassment to the bill's supporters. Respectable Christian citizens supported this bill as they had supported the Public Instruction Act, and Bishop Barry knew better than to attribute the bill to secularism. He recognised that if the bill were carried it would be 'mainly by Christian hands and on motives of compassion and philanthropy'; nevertheless it would be another step toward secularisation of the old English law of which Christianity had been 'part and parcel'.³

As sabbatarians upheld the fourth commandment as divine law, so opponents of divorce extension stood by the teaching of Christ on marriage. But advocates of divorce law reform maintained that Christ's words

¹

26 September 1886, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXIII, p.5096.

²

Ibid., p.5102.

³

Address, P.S.D.S., 1886, p.31.

expressed an ideal of marriage not to be literally binding and legally compelled.¹ The Chief Justice, Frederick Darley, wrote a letter of encouragement to Stephen in which he stated that ecclesiastics overlooked Christ's mission to 'heal the broken-hearted,...[sic] and to set at liberty them that are bruised'.² Stephen, himself, appealed to the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum, a document of the English reformation which recommended adultery, desertion and cruelty as grounds for divorce. It lapsed under the Marian restoration and Archbishop Parker failed to have it enacted under Elizabeth I.³ Parkes also appealed to Protestant reformers who supported divorce on the grounds allowed in the bill.⁴ Zachary Barry declared that the suffering, scandal and wrong which lack of divorce facilities caused were 'simply disgraceful to a Christian country'.⁵ Thus the advocates of divorce extension were as sure that it was Christian as the opponents were that it was un-Christian. Supporters believed their measure was in the interests of public morality and social progress while opponents

1

Nova Cambria (Dr A. Garrahan), S.M.H., 30 April 1887; cit. M. Rutledge, op.cit., pp.145-6.

2

Darley's letter was published with a letter of Sir Alfred Stephen to the Herald. S.M.H., 6 April 1887.

3

M. Rutledge, op.cit., pp.24-5, 141-3.

4

24 September 1886, N.S.W.P.D., XXIII, pp.5098-9.

5

Zachary Barry, S.M.H., 1 May 1886.

warned that divorce extension would undermine Christian civilisation and unlock the floodgates of immorality.¹ It was possible to advance humane grounds for preserving the sanctity of Sunday, but the defenders of the Christian law on marriage could find no humane grounds for preventing the victims of cruelty and misery from seeking divorce; they had to consider them as exceptional cases for which no provision should be made. Compassion and humanity seemed to lie with the reformers.

Although Stephen's bill lapsed in the Legislative Assembly in October 1886 for want of a quorum, both houses passed a bill for divorce extension at the next session of parliament, but on 13 July the Governor reserved it for the Queen's assent. Bishop Barry was in Britain and petitioned the Queen directly to refuse assent until public opinion in the colony expressed itself more decisively, and the Bishop of Bathurst, Canon Selwyn of Newcastle and Archdeacon King sent petitions through Lord Carrington. Stephen also put the case for assent to the bill but in March 1888 the government received word that the imperial government had declined to submit the bill to the Queen.² Five bills introduced between March 1888 and April 1890 lapsed through adjournment or prorogation due to the skilful obstruction of a small minority.³ The reformers had been persistent,

1

M. Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.82-5.

2

M. Rutledge, *op.cit.*, pp.156, 165; Address, P.S.D.S., 1887, pp.22-3.

3

Table of Divorce Bills introduced in the New South Wales Parliament between 1886 and 1892, M. Rutledge, *op.cit.*, Appendix IV, pp.xxxiv-vii.

but so had the churchmen; Protestant clergy petitioned annually against divorce extension, and Anglicans passed frequent resolutions condemning it. But on 13 May 1890 the Queen assented to a Victorian bill similar to the New South Wales proposals, and a bill introduced in the New South Wales parliament in August 1891 passed all stages, though not without strong opposition, and was reserved for the Queen's assent on 24 March 1892; on 6 August 1892 the Governor proclaimed the Act.¹ Churchmen had lost the long hard-fought battle, although some had supported the reformers.

Conclusion

The Protestant Churches saw a more liberal Sunday and more humane divorce laws as a threat to the status of Christianity in the colony, and although they advanced social and moral reasons for their opposition to the secularisation of Sunday and marriage laws, the defence of Christian authority was the strongest motivation behind their campaign. Bishop Barry warned that divorce imperilled the Christian faith, and in 1890 the Advocate asserted that the divorce bill was 'really a revolt against the Christian religion itself'.² Similarly, the sabbatarian argument tied the survival

1

V.& P.L.A.N.S.W., 1892-3, vol.1., p.2. (Divorce Amendment and Extension Act, 1892, 55 Vic., No.37).

2

Advocate, 28 June 1890, cit., M. Rutledge, op.cit., p.226.

of Christianity to the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath. At the reconstitution of the Lord's Day Observance Society in 1880 John Frazer, M.L.C., predicted that no Sabbath would mean no Sunday Schools.¹ In 1889 Dean Cowper maintained that 'The right observance of the Christian Sabbath is the bulwark of religion in the land'.² Archdeacon King warned the Anglican Church Congress in Sydney, 1889, that if the Lord's Day fell it would not fall alone.

It [would] drag with it all other ordinances - the Bible - Public and Private Prayer - the Ministry - the Sacraments - and at the last Christianity itself.³

Thus Protestants looked to the state to protect the churches from the competition of Sunday lectures, concerts and other diversions. They also looked to the secular arm to prevent any departure from standard of conduct which had lost their authority for many, including some church members, as an anonymous letter to the Herald in December 1883 revealed. This correspondent complained of the demoralising influence of fruit-shops near Sunday Schools; he protested that it was

¹ S.M.H., 12 October 1880.

² Address, P.S.D.S., 1889, p.22.

³ R.L. King, 'Observance of the Lord's Day', Papers presented at the Anglican Church Congress, Sydney 1889, p.132.

a burlesque on the Sabbath service when adults and children have just repeated, 'God be merciful unto us and incline our hearts to keep this law', and after which a few steps will find them in the fruit shop.

He thought that the police should prohibit what pastors could not prevent.¹

Robert Potter, a Victorian clergyman, perceived this problem as early as 1876. He admitted that the clergy who sought stricter enforcement of Sunday observance laws were really troubled by 'the inconsistent conduct of members of their own churches, who disregard in fact what they profess to reverence'. Potter thought that church discipline was practically non-existent, and that the application of strict discipline was the only solution.² But it was difficult to enforce strict discipline, particularly in the competitive denominational context, for competition was the great solvent of Protestant church discipline. It was always possible to find a more lenient pastor and congregation. But through legal enforcement the churches hoped to do what moral suasion could not achieve.³

1

'Parramatta Street', S.M.H., 11 December 1883.

2

Rev. Robert Potter, 'On the Relation of the State to the Ecclesiastical Bodies in Victoria', Melbourne Review, vol.1, January 1876, pp.12-13.

3

H. Richard Niebuhr writes of Protestant churchmen in America, 'As reformers they turned, when persuasion failed, to political means, in order that good social habits of temperance and Sabbath observance might be maintained'. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (Harper Torchbook edition) New York, 1959, p.184; see also F.H. Littell, From State Church to Pluralism, Chicago, 1962, p.120; and S.D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, Toronto, 1948, pp.256-7.

But the lay parliament would not buttress clerical authority. The majority of parliamentarians did not share the Protestant clergy's view of Sunday observance; they would permit 'innocent amusements'. Where the interests of Christianity and the social order seemed to coincide, as in the case of freethought lectures, Christianity received some protection, but the government allowed the Sunday concerts to continue, and when they were found illegal it passed the Remission of Penalties Act to discourage further prosecutions. Yet many laymen regarded the 'Continental Sunday' with aversion; they sought a middle way between the churchman's Sabbath and the 'Continental Sunday' and were unwilling to pass legislation that would secularise Sunday.

Thus the old Sunday observance laws remained on the books,¹ but it was a hollow victory for the churches. It did not prevent more liberal Sunday observance, and ultimately the churches had to adjust to the liberal

1

There were several attempts between 1894 and 1902 to liberalise the Sunday observance laws and counter attempts to strengthen them, but all failed. The Police Offences Act, 1901, retained the old prohibitions on Sunday trading, and the ancient statutes remained in force until 1966 when the State Parliament decided that the Sunday Observance Act, 1780, should no longer apply in New South Wales. This Act legalised public entertainments on Sundays after half-past twelve in the afternoon, but gave the Chief Secretary the right to prevent performances which might interfere with religious services or public order. It still affords some protection to morning services which the majority of worshippers attend. Sunday Entertainments Act, Act No.17, 1966.

Sunday and a majority of 'oncers' in their congregations. But the churchmen's opposition to a freer Sunday and divorce extension did not make religion more attractive to those outside the churches who were indifferent to Christianity. The clergy had offered the public little but religion or boredom on Sundays, and to suffering wives they could give little comfort or hope in this world. Nevertheless, through patriotism they sought to identify Christianity with popular aspirations as well as with social stability.

Chapter 8

Religion and Patriotism.

There were several great patriotic events in the 1880s which provided the churches with an opportunity to assert the union of throne and altar and the intimacy of piety and patriotism. The first of these events occurred in February 1885 when the colony received the news of the murder of General Gordon at Khartoum in the Sudan. Many regarded Gordon as the ideal Christian soldier, with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other, and they were shocked by the news of his death. A number of churches held memorial services in his honour, including the Jewish Rabbi, who likened Gordon to Judas Maccabaeus.¹

When the news reached Sydney Sir Edward Strickland, a retired soldier and a veteran of several campaigns, wrote to the Herald suggesting that a regiment 1,000 strong should go from the colony to Britain's aid in the Sudan. 'Every Christian-born subject', he said, felt that he had lost a friend in Gordon, and all Christendom would

ring with praises of the gallantry of Australia in losing not a moment in tendering aid in the hour of need for the maintenance of the integrity of our nation and the ascendancy of Christianity.²

1

S.M.H., 23 February 1885; see also Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 14, 21 February 1885; Australian Churchman, 19 February 1885.

2

E. Strickland, S.M.H., 12 February 1885.

W.B. Dalley, Attorney General and acting Premier at the time, was of the same mind. Early on Thursday 12 February, the day after the colony had received the news of Gordon's death, Dalley secured the support of the commandant of the colony's military forces, of the cabinet and governor, but not of parliament, for an offer of two batteries of artillery and 500 infantrymen to assist Britain in the Sudan.¹ Britain's official acceptance of the offer came on Sunday 15 February,² and on Monday morning volunteers rushed to the Brigade Office to support the government's offer.³

Apart from patriotic sentiment the government had special reasons for its action, as Dalley explained to parliament on 17 March, when the contingent was on the high seas. He confessed that he never imagined that England needed help, but considered it a good opportunity to show England and the world the true relation of the colony to the empire. He wanted to prove that the colonies were not a weight or an encumbrance on England's glory, 'but that they could give substantial, immediate and valuable assistance in moments of disaster and difficulty'.⁴ At the time

1

S.M.H., 13 February 1885. Hutchinson and Myers, historians of the episode, state that the idea originated in 'two great minds at once'. F. Hutchinson and F. Myers, The Australian Contingent, Sydney, 1885, p.10.

2

S.M.H., 16 February 1885.

3

S.M.H., 17 February 1885.

4

17 March 1885, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XVI, pp.6-7.

the Victorian Government was pushing a campaign for Australian federation and British annexation of the New Hebrides and New Guinea, but New South Wales was suspicious of Victoria's intentions and jealous of her pre-eminence.¹ Dalley was strongly in favour of imperial federation, and thus he quickly sensed the opportunity to assert the strength of the colony and to reassert the seniority of New South Wales.² And Britain accepted New South Wales' offer, not out of necessity, but to avoid disappointment to the bellicose colonials. But to her embarrassment, further offers came from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, and they had to be declined. Thus Dalley scored a patriotic triumph for New South Wales over her sister colonies. Furthermore, he vindicated the loyalty of his co-religionists. He boasted that

after all the years [the Orangemen] have been
calling us plotting Papists and Fenian rebels,
the first men from Australia to serve the

1

I am indebted to Dr A.G. Serle, of Monash University, for allowing me to see his typescript 'The Victorian Government's Campaign for Federation, 1883-1889', to be published.

2

The historian J.A. Froude, who visited the colony during the patriotic excitement over the Sudan contingent, records Dalley's views on imperial federation and his opposition to the Australian federation espoused by Victoria. Dalley thought that Australian federation, apart from imperial federation, would lead to separation from Britain. J.A. Froude, Oceana, London, 1886, pp.180-1.

Queen on the field of battle are being sent by a Paddy and a Holy Roman.¹

But these motives had nothing to do with the colony's response. Dalley put the people's patriotism to the test; 'the popular will' vindicated his unconstitutional conduct, and Australia lost its innocence in an orgy of jingoism.

The flood of patriotism carried the churches along with the multitude, though a few stood against the stream. But opposition was suspect if not seditious. Sir Henry Parkes, supposedly retired from politics, opposed the government's action from the outset as a thoughtless, unnecessary, costly and unconstitutional involvement in a lamentable war.² Francis Abigail, a leading Orangeman, was also a vigorous opponent. But other opponents were David Buchanan, a political separatist, the Bulletin, the freethinkers, Thomas Walker and Dr Hughes, and the Christadelphians.³ The daily press, however, sustained the patriotic enthusiasm of the people. The Herald, the spokesman of the Protestant establishment, considered

1

J.T.D., Austral Light, vol.VI, August 1897, p.443, cit. Bruce Mansfield, Australian Democrat, Sydney, 1965, p.268.

2

Henry Parkes, S.M.H., 14, 19, 20 February 1885.

3

Hutchinson and Myers, who applaud the churches' support, record the opposition of 'some unattached Christian bodies to whom any symbol of authority appears an encroachment upon their realm of so-called liberty'. Hutchinson and Myers, op.cit., pp.35; see also Religious Announcements and Lectures, S.M.H., and D.T., 21, 28 February, 7, 14 March 1885.

Dalley's action the most striking way of impressing the public at home and abroad of 'the unity of interest between the mother-country and the colonies'. It gave Parkes, foremost opponent of the expedition, short shrift.¹ Though Protestant churches had little love for the Stuart Government, they had less for some of its critics, and left Parkes and Abigail largely without support. Moreover, Dalley had touched their patriotism, and they had no desire to appear disloyal.

The Protestant Standard was mildly critical of Dalley but dissociated itself from the secularist opposition. It supported the patriotic response of the people and concluded that whatever the issue the colony would profit 'by passing through such an experience'.² The Presbyterian rested on the claim that there could be no going back once the offer had been made. The colony had

1

S.M.H., 16 February 1885. Parkes deserves more credit for his opposition than his contemporaries or later historians have given him. A decided opponent of militarism, he pointed out that he had declined to send a contingent from the colony to South Africa in 1880, and he supported the Peace Society in New South Wales later in the 1880s. There are no grounds to assert that had he been premier in 1885 he would have done the same as Dalley. See Sir Henry Parkes, S.M.H., 14 February 1885; C.E. Lyne, Life of Sir Henry Parkes, Sydney, 1896, pp.329-31:

For sceptical interpretation of Parkes's opposition see Stanley Brogden, The Sudan Contingent, Melbourne, 1943, pp.23-5; B.R. Penny, 'The Age of Empire: An Australian Episode,' Historical Studies, vol.11, no.41, November, 1963, p.36.

2

Standard, 28 February 1885.

to maintain its honour even if 'not fully convinced of the propriety of the step', and moreover, the moral effect on the mother country and their neighbours would be excellent.¹ Wesleyans supported the patriotic movement ardently.² Anglicans were generally patriotic, but Catholics were the most enthusiastic in their support. The Freeman's Journal was proud of the Catholic whose 'generous offer' had 'fairly set the country in a blaze of patriotic enthusiasm, and given the people the most exciting sensation they had ever experienced'.³ John McElhone and Daniel O'Connor, both Catholic politicians, condemned the expedition in parliament,⁴ but E.W. O'Sullivan, another Catholic layman who was soon to enter parliament, contemptuously dismissed the government's critics. He asserted that Parkes would have loved the opportunity to do what Dalley had done; he poured scorn on the separatist Buchanan and the secularists, and declared that the name of Briton would become a bye-word and a reproach if the British people did not assert themselves.⁵

¹ Presbyterian, 21 February 1885.

² Advocate, 21 February 1885.

³ F.J., 21 February 1885.

⁴ D. O'Connor, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XVI, pp.107-18 (18 March 1885); J. McElhone, ibid., pp.150-6 (19 March 1885).

⁵ E.W. O'Sullivan, D.T., 20 March 1885; See also Bruce Mansfield, op.cit., pp.267-9.

The larger denominations quickly became concerned to send chaplains with the troops. The Rev. S. Wilkinson, Wesleyan Chaplain, and Father C.P.F. Collingridge offered to accompany the contingent, but the government declined their offer since the troops would be under Imperial command and associated with British chaplains.¹ And Catholic Sisters of Charity offered to go with the contingent as nurses, but their services were also courteously declined.² The Presbyterian regretted that the contingent 'should go forth panoplied with every requisite save that which has to do very specially with the spiritual life.'³ Nevertheless, pending the ministrations of Imperial chaplains, Presbyterians proposed to equip their men with religious literature and New Testaments, and Wesleyans decided to supply their men with Wesley's Hymns.⁴ Anglicans also offered Prayer Books and New Testaments, and suitable reading matter, but the offer of New Testaments was withdrawn in favour of the New South Wales Auxilliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which undertook to equip the men.⁵ Bishop Barry, however, did not give up the hope of sending chaplains from the colony. He called on Archbishop Moran and their united representations prevailed

1

F.J., 21 February 1885; Advocate, 28 February 1885.

2

P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, pp.962-3.

3

Presbyterian, 28 February 1885.

4

Ibid.; Advocate, 28 February 1885.

5

Australian Churchmen, 26 February 1885.

on the government.¹ On Saturday, 28 February, almost on the eve of departure, Barry and Moran received the gratifying news that the government would send H.J. Rose, an Anglican, and Father Collingridge, as chaplains to the contingent.² The Advocate approved the government's decision, and the Presbyterian gloated that the appointment of chaplains with salaries must have been particularly galling to secularists.³

On Sunday 1 March there were religious services to consecrate the contingent to its crusade, but few of the 760 troops attended the church parades; attendance was not compulsory, and some were still waiting for uniforms. About 12 men marched to Bourke Street Wesleyan Church in the morning; 150 assembled in Hyde Park in the afternoon and divided to attend church parades in St Andrew's and St Mary's Cathedrals. The cathedrals were crowded; many had applied for tickets to St Andrew's Cathedral, and many were disappointed. Judges, ministers and members of parliament were there.⁴ As volunteers entered the cathedral the organ pealed forth 'Disdainful of Danger' from Judas Maccabaeus and other martial music.⁵

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P.F. Moran, Diary, 26 February 1885.

2

, S.M.H., 2 March 1885; P.F. Moran, Diary, 28 February 1885.

3

Advocate, 7 March 1885; Presbyterian, 7 March 1885.

4

S.M.H., 2 March 1885.

5

Hutchinson and Myers, op.cit., p.35.

Bishop Barry's sermon in St Andrew's betrayed his compromise with popular patriotism.¹ He said it was not the preacher's office on that occasion to discuss the policy or justice of the Egyptian war, or the method and spirit in which the colony had offered the contingent, although as a citizen he had a right to an opinion, and even the duty of expressing it; but not in a service of intercession for those who were going forth 'to embody...the spirit of loyalty in this colony to the old mother country'. However, he declared with 'impassioned earnestness' that war was inhuman, unnatural and unchristian; it was an indictment on eighteen centuries of Christian civilisation. But war might sometimes be necessary. Whether they could rightly ask God's blessing on that occasion depended on whether they 'wantonly and selfishly' provoked war, or whether they entered it 'with sad, reluctant seriousness', for there was nothing more hateful than the 'military spirit' in a people if it meant 'the reckless delight in battle, the spirit of ambition, and the passion for glory and aggrandisement'. This was implicitly a condemnation of the Sudan expedition, but

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In the government account of the story Hutchinson and Myers state that Barry sanctioned 'with his wholeheart the cause and the voluntary self-sacrifice it had brought forth', but they misquote him as saying that 'There was not much room for argument on the matter. Dissent would imply a rather narrow mind or profound ignorance than any real critical acumen'. Barry never said anything like this, and much that purports to be a verbatim report in Hutchinson and Myers is in fact a distorted paraphrase. Hutchinson and Myers, op.cit., pp.37-38; compare with S.M.H., 2 March 1885.

Barry hastened to add that the military spirit might yield the fruits of loyalty and self-sacrifice. He told the soldiers it was a noble thing to make sacrifices for the sake of peace, and ignoble cowardice to prefer comfort and ease to the hardship of maintaining the cause of right. The prayer that they might refuse the evil and choose the good gave them confidence to present their supplication before the throne of God. But apart from these qualifications he expounded the 'meanings' behind the event. The departure of the contingent was first of all an expression of loyalty to 'the old country'. New South Wales was now claiming its share in the burden and privilege of the English race. God had made Britain queen of the subject races and the mother of free nations with whom rested the future of the world. There was also 'the glory of voluntary devotion and self-sacrifice for the country' in which God had given them a place. Barry asked the congregation to show the same generosity in support of the patriotic fund,¹ and wistfully longed to see that loyalty and self-sacrifice in 'the true army of salvation'. Thus he drew forth the best possible 'meanings' and exhorted the volunteers to uphold the honour of Britain and the ideals of Christian Knighthood as Christian soldiers in the service of humanity.²

1

Barry gave £50 out of his abundance; Moran contributed £100. Few other churchmen contributed. Hutchinson and Myers, op.cit., pp.278-285.

2

S.M.H., 2 March 1885; D.T., 2 March 1885.

Archbishop Moran told the Catholic soldiers that theirs' was the God of peace and the God of Battles who, in his providence, permitted wars. He said there was no surer guarantee of peace than that the citizens in a free state should be prepared for war. Moran said nothing of the mission of the empire, but spoke of the glory for Australia whose blue flag 'gemmed with the Southern Cross' was taking its place on the battlefields of the world for the first time. It was being unfurled in 'the best interests of civilisation and peace', for they did not champion a cause which could bring 'the blush of shame to those who love justice, religion and the fatherland'. Though they engaged on war they were, he said, 'the champions of peace, the sure guarantee that the blessings of freedom and of peace shall long be the inheritance of this smiling land'.¹

On Sunday morning at the Wesleyan Church, Bourke Street, George Brown, speaking on 'The Good Soldier of Jesus Christ' said that the fighting instinct in man was essential for the survival in the physical and in the spiritual life. Religion, he said, meant duty, obligation, loyalty and love, thus there was a similarity between the soldier of Jesus Christ and the man in the army. At the valedictory service in the evening Wilkinson, the Wesleyan Military Chaplain, assured the congregation that theirs' was a just cause as Gordon had gone on a mission of peace, not of war. Paul Clipsham asserted that they could ask God's

¹

S.M.H., 2 March 1885; D.T., 2 March 1885.

blessing on the campaign with as much propriety as Moses could in his fight against the Amalekites,¹ for the success of the campaign meant 'the abolition of slavery and the advancement of the cause of humanity'. But they did not ask God only to protect the lives of their soldiers, 'for many of them would leave their bones in the Soudan', and whoever was not willing to die for his country was not worthy of the name of man. They prayed particularly that the men's souls might be right with God, so that they would give a good account of themselves at the last.²

Preachers in most Anglican churches spoke about the contingent that Sunday. At All Saints, Woollahra, G. North Ash declared that no dissent or critical sentiments ought to be uttered at that stage as criticism might dampen the ardour of the volunteers. He said that the contingent would do more than anything else to cement the union between 'the grand old mother country and her vast colonies'. Moreover, he argued that war was an instrument of God and therefore not always unchristian. Peace came only from long and bitter conflict, and 'in the sacred cause of liberty' they could trust that God would be with their hosts and bless them.³ Rabbi Davis, who had promised that the Jewish community would 'assist in every possible

1

Numbers, 14.

2

S.M.H., 2 March 1885.

3

D.T., 2 March 1885.

way the patriotic movement set on foot so enthusiastically in our midst',¹ also preached the contingent off 'to victory and distinction'.² There were sermons in churches of other denominations,³ but the preacher of Pitt Street Congregational Church was silent.

Sydney gave the troops a tumultuous send-off on Tuesday 3 March, and so great was the demand that the Herald reprinted its account of the patriotic proceedings a week later.⁴ As the contingent left, J.S. Laing, the retiring moderator of the Presbyterian Church, told the assembly that the volunteers had answered the government's 'who will go for us?' as the prophet Isaiah answered the divine call, and like Bishop Barry he hoped to find the same willingness in Christian service.⁵ But the following Sunday evening at the Theatre Royal Thomas Walker, the freethought lecturer, spoke on 'The Departure of our Troops and the Day of Reckoning,' and the Misses Horan sang 'When will the birds come back?'⁶

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S.M.H., 23 February 1885.

2

S.M.H., 2 March 1885.

3

Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 28 February 1885; D.T., 28 February 1885 and S.M.H., 2 March 1885; D.T., 2 March 1885.

4

S.M.H., 4, 11 March 1885.

5

S.M.H., 4 March 1885 and Isaiah 6: 8.

6

Advt. S.M.H., 7 March 1885. The full title of Walker's lecture was, 'Charles the First and Mr Dalley, or, The Departure of our Troops and the Day of Reckoning.'

More opposition emerged after the contingent had departed. Several suburbs and country towns refused to support the patriotic fund,¹ but churchmen were often strong in defence of the government. At Bathurst the Presbyterian Dr Geekie said that Australia owed a great debt of gratitude to Dalley, who with 'one stroke of his pen' had raised them 'to Imperial rank'.² At Rockdale the Rev. J. Bowes, a Wesleyan, who could not see eye to eye with Dalley, nevertheless gave him credit for the 'best and purest intentions' and argued that the colony should reciprocate Britain's protection by coming to her aid.³ Dissent was strong at Newcastle, particularly at Wallsend, where the Rev. S. Maddern, a Wesleyan, was one of the few to defend the government. He dismissed the constitutional question and saw the subject 'in the brighter light of patriotism, loyalty, and considerations of a higher character....'⁴ Another speaker was dismayed to find Maddern and so many other clergymen on 'the side of bloodshed and war', and at Marrickville, where the Mayor and many respectable citizens decided against the patriotic fund, two men argued as to whether Christians had any place on the battlefield.⁵ Not all Christians were ready to sanction the militarism which gripped the colony.

1

See W.A. Wood, 'The Sudan Contingent of 1885 and the Anti-War Movement,' Bulletin of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, no.3, November 1962, pp.52-69.

2

Stanley Brogden, op.cit., p.22.

3

S.M.H., 11 March 1885.

4

S.M.H., 14 March 1885.

5

S.M.H., 24 March 1885.

On 12 April the Society of Friends recorded their 'great regret' at 'the war spirit' that had taken hold of the people in the colonies, and affirmed their belief that the 'true safety' of individuals and nations was to be found 'in obedience to the commands of Christ, the Prince of Peace'.¹ On 29 April the Society of Friends sponsored a peace meeting in the Temperance Hall. J.J. Neave, the Quaker lecturer admitted that peace was not a popular subject at the time but someone had to put forward 'the teachings and example of the Saviour'. He hoped that a peace society might be formed in Sydney,² though the Peace Society seems not to have been formed until 1889.³ Meanwhile on Sunday 19 April the brooding Jefferis donned the prophet's mantle and broke his silence in a lecture on 'War: the Government Impeached'. Since the war fever had faded he thought that calmer reflection on the recent conduct of the colony was possible.

Like the Old Testament Prophet Jefferis declared, 'Blood shall pursue thee'⁴ as he 'eloquently condemned

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See publication of minute, Religious Announcements, S.M.H., 25 April 1885.

2

S.M.H., 30 April 1885.

3

I have not yet found the establishment of the society, but 24 April 1889 Sir Henry Parkes presided at a meeting in favour of international arbitration in the Pitt Street Congregational Church (S.M.H., 25 April 1889), and the Sydney Peace Society held its Annual General Meeting 2 June 1890. S.M.H., 3 June 1890.

4

His text was from Ezekiel, 35: 6.

the position' of the colony.¹ Not a pacifist, he defended the necessity of a police force and an army for defence in an imperfect world. But while he did not denounce all war as criminal or the profession of the soldier as 'a disgrace to Christendom' he was decidedly anti-militarist, and declared that 'it was not good, it was a sin to fight for the sake of mere "war and glory"'. He arraigned both statesmen and people at the bar of judgment, first of all for their militarism. The colony had entered a new stage in its history - 'The heroic stage some call it', he said sardonically, but for him it was tragic. They had revealed to the world the rude fighting instincts of the people. But some had dreamed 'that here in the southern seas, far away from the ferment of European politics, we might build up a new and great nation, whose motto should be "Peace"'. Now that dream was 'swiftly and forever dispelled'. Like Barry, he said Australia had 'decided to take a full share of the burdens and responsibilities of the Empire', but for him this meant that the colony had entered 'upon England's heritage of hatred, engendered by a thousand years of war and of conquest...', and henceforth would be involved in every British war. He also condemned Dalley's unconstitutional behaviour in not consulting 'the popular will'. He feared this would have mischievous results and endanger the federation movement. Lastly he denounced the Sudan war. The contingent, he said, had gone to fight for the

1

D.T., 20 April 1885.

Egyptians, a race of miserable cowards who had always been ready to enslave, against a nation of the bravest men who fought to be free. It was a war in which they could gain no honour 'save the honour of slaughtering brave foes against whom there is no just cause of war'. Had the empire been in real danger, he said, they would have shown, 'not by a contingent from a single colony, but by a federal army of all the colonies combined', that England and Australia were one. He concluded hopefully that Australia was not a nation of soldiers, but a land of peace whose men would only be compelled to fight to maintain peace.¹

Jefferis uttered unpopular sentiments; he would have shown more courage, but perhaps less prudence, had he spoken them two months earlier. The difference between him and the prelates was not so much in his teaching on war; all agreed implicitly that there could be a just war. But Jefferis considered the Sudan war unjust, Barry kept his private opinion to himself, Moran declared the war unambiguously just. There was more Australian nationalism in Jefferis and Moran than in Barry, but for Moran the contingent was the beginning of Australia's greatness; for Jefferis it was almost the end. Jefferis cared more for democracy and cherished the hope of a great commonwealth. It hurt him deeply to see the constitution laid aside in a military frenzy. Barry and Moran gave the contingent

1

D.T., 20 April 1885, not reported in S.M.H.

their blessing, and most of the clergy in the colony followed them; Jefferis, belatedly, but not too late, chose to share the shame of dissent.

The contingent, which after a few skirmishes had occupied itself in clearing a path for a railway, returned in June. Dalley studied the map but could not find another battlefield from which the colony could wrest some compensating glory.¹ Representatives from other colonies came to welcome the warriors who disembarked in pouring rain.² But the rain did not dampen Lord Loftus' spirits. He told the intercolonial banquet on 25 June that the Sudan Contingent was 'the announcement to the world that Australia had become a nation'.³ Bishop Barry allowed the troops to rest on their first Sunday home, and held a Thanksgiving Service in St Andrew's on 5 July. He assured the veterans that the absence of any tangible result of conquest would not prevent their freewill offering from constituting an epoch in the history of the colony or on the larger history of the world. It had elevated and broadened the character of the men themselves and showed the strength and unity of the empire; its grander truth was the fresh consecration of the national life to the service of God and man.⁴

1

Hutchinson and Myers, op.cit., pp.173-182, 270-275.

2

S.M.H., 24 June 1885.

3

S.M.H., 26 June 1885.

4

S.M.H., 7 July 1885. As far as I can find other churches did not celebrate the return with thanksgiving services. See also Barry's references to the Sudan Contingent in his address on 'National Greatness', S.M.H., 4 July 1885.

Some churches exploited the patriotic spirit the Sudan Contingent had evoked in fund-raising. There was a lantern lecture at St Andrew's Scots Church on 16 September.¹ On 5 October W.B. Dalley lectured on 'the Australian Soldier' at a fete at Manly for the Sisters of the Good Samaritan,² and on the 24 November he opened 'the Soudan Encampment', a monster fund-raising effort for the Sisters of Charity in the Exhibition Building, to which, Moran said, the enemies as well as the friends of the campaign were invited.³ Dalley's lecture in October was a reply to Parkes, who in an earlier lecture under the same title had denounced standing armies, the military spirit of the colony and the Sudan Contingent.⁴ Dalley said, in defence of the military spirit, that the whole English speaking world had acclaimed the Australian contingent. Afterwards, in reply to a vote of thanks, he claimed that the soldiers had won distinction for all Australians who could have no greater honour, but they could 'look forward with hope and exultation to the opportunity of performing a nobler service'.⁵ Thus the military spirit survived the inglorious Sudan expedition. In

¹ Adv. S.M.H., 16 September 1885.

² F.J., 10 October 1885.

³ S.M.H., 25 November 1885.

⁴ A lecture in aid of the widow and children of Staff Bugle Major Thomas Edmonds (not apparently a member of the contingent), S.M.H., 18 September 1885.

⁵ F.J., 10 October 1885.

December 1885 Wesleyans held a patriotic service in York Street. Flags adorned the church and enveloped the pulpit. Blue jackets, marines, and members of the Permanent and Volunteer forces attended.¹

The Christian World, in reviewing the year 1885, said

The sending of troops to the Soudan made a profound impression on the enemies of England, aroused much enthusiasm in the old country, and...marked an epoch in the development of Australia.²

In March 1887 Presbyterians appointed Alexander Osborne their first chaplain to the Volunteer Forces,³ and on the third anniversary of the contingent's departure a military parade was held in St Andrew's which was crowded for the occasion - the unveiling of a memorial tablet to the contingent.⁴

The Queen's Jubilee

Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in June 1887 provided another opportunity for patriotic demonstration both in community and churches. The fiasco at the Town Hall on 11 June, which led to the closure of the theatres against the secularists, drew church and state closer. The churches, Catholic, Protestant and the

¹ A.C.W., 1 January 1886.

² Ibid., 1 January 1886.

³ M.P.G.A., 1887, p.24.

⁴ S.M.H., 27 February 1888.

Jewish community presented addresses of loyalty to the Queen, and the Governor called for services of thanksgiving in churches for the mercies vouchsafed to the Queen during her reign.¹ On Sunday 19 June almost every pulpit resounded with Victoria's virtues and the achievements of her reign. In the afternoon the military forces assembled at Circular Quay and marched in sections to the two cathedrals and St Stephen's Presbyterian Church.

Archdeacon King, who gave the eulogy in St Andrews, in the Bishop's absence, said that they delighted most in the Queen's private life for she was 'a true Christian woman'. Cardinal Moran extolled the material progress of the reign and above all the victories in 'the sacred cause of religious toleration, religious equality, and religious liberty'. Future ages would associate all these achievements with 'the appropriate name of Victoria Regina'. Moran praised the Queen's own loyalty to God and stated that loyalty to the throne and to God were not in conflict. Without laws of order, authority and obedience, he warned, 'the human family would lapse into barbarism and savagery'. Finally he told the soldiers that they were to uphold loyalty to the Queen, for their very lives might be needed as 'a bulwark a rampart around the throne'.²

1

The Queen called for national thanksgiving and Lord Carrington published the proclamation in the colony. N.S.W. Government Gazette, 16 June 1887.

2

S.M.H., 20 June 1887.

Protestant loyalty could hardly excel this or the Catholic hierarchy's address of loyalty,¹ although Protestants continued to doubt the loyalty of Catholics. The Presbyterian, forgetting Dalley's part in the Sudan contingent, observed earlier in June that Dalley had much to say about the Pope and the Cardinal, but little about the Queen's jubilee. It stated, 'Mr Dalley clearly is first a Catholic and then a British subject'.² But Dalley, following the Town Hall riot, had initiated the resolution affirming the colony's loyalty, which Parkes put to parliament on 16 June; Parkes confessed it was substantially Dalley's draft.³

Orangemen held united services in the Protestant Hall and at the Petersham Town Hall the same afternoon. Speakers praised the Queen's Protestantism and linked the Protestant religion with the liberties of England and the security of society. Social disorder on one hand, and superstition and priestcraft on the other, were the enemies they opposed, but, like Moran, they asserted that loyalty to the throne and constituted authority was fundamental in Christianity. George Martin, a Wesleyan, said at Petersham that atheism was a disintegrating principle. Religion and politics were closely interwoven, he continued, 'for it was the religious sentiment which existed among the

¹ S.M.H., 13 June 1887.

² Presbyterian, 4 June 1887.

³ 16 June 1887, N.S.W.P.D., XXVII, p.2163.

English people that had made constitutional Government so splendidly possible among them'.¹

At other Protestant services that day preachers dwelt on the progress of the nation, the influence of the empire, the character of the Queen and the inseparability of piety and patriotism. Dr Steel added the progress of Presbyterianism throughout the world to the triumphs of the reign and praised the Queen's patronage of the Church of Scotland. Several preachers referred to the recent assaults of the secularists on the monarchy. Pastor Daniel Allen who preached on 'Christian Loyalty and Seditious Tyranny' strongly attacked the secularists of the colony, and in St Andrew's at night Canon Kemmis defended loyalty to the throne against the contemptible minority whose motto was 'Republicanism and Mount Rennie'.²

Dr Jefferis hardly did justice to the occasion. He preached an appeal for the funds of the Congregational Church Extension Society in which he referred scantily to the jubilee. The Queen, he said, was a Christian first and an episcopalian second. The Herald

1

S.M.H., 20 June 1887.

2

Ibid. The Mount Rennie Outrage of 1886 was a mass rape by nine youths who had 'rescued' the girl from the immoral intentions of a cabman. The nine were sentenced to death but five were reprieved. Republican sentiments were strong among a radical minority who formed the Republican Union in July 1887. B. Mansfield, 'The Background to Radical Republicanism', loc.cit., p.348.

published his prayer of thanksgiving to make up for the paucity of patriotism in his sermon. Nevertheless, Jefferis invited women and girls to sign a petition of loyalty organised by Lady Carrington. The congregation sang patriotic hymns and the organist thrilled them with 'Rule Britannia' as they left the sanctuary.¹

The Hebrew congregation of Sydney so rejoiced in the jubilee that they assembled in the Great Synagogue on Sunday at the same time as the Christians. It was a gala time for the Anglo-Saxons, Rabbi Davis told the synagogue, but no subjects had more cause 'to bless her royal name...for the benefits conferred on her era than the Jews'. He believed that England's treatment of the Jews had shown the world that 'difference of religious belief should cease to be a bar to civil equality so long as its followers carry out the duties and obligations of good citizenship'. The Queen, he said, was a godly woman, and 'When the godly are in authority the people rejoice'.² The Herald voted the service at the synagogue the outstanding feature of the day and praised the Rabbi's 'eloquent and loyal address'.³

The next Saturday there was a monster Sunday School Demonstration. Some hoped it would be a rallying of all

1

S.M.H., 20 June 1887.

2

His text, Proverbs, 29: 2.

3

S.M.H., 20 June 1887.

the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but Catholics did not reply to the invitation from the Protestant organisers, and the choice of Saturday prevented Jewish participation,¹ thus it was a demonstration of juvenile Protestant patriotism. Between 10,000 and 12,000 children mustered in Hyde Park at 12.30 p.m. to march to the Agricultural Society's ground which they reached at 2.10 p.m. The children carried portraits of the Queen in the procession and banners emblazoned with texts such as 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth' and 'Fear God, Honour the Queen'. The Governor and Lady Carrington arrived at 3 o'clock to receive an address of loyalty from the Sunday School scholars of the colony. After their display of loyalty and affection the children were summarily dismissed without refreshments, though some had travelled some distance and marched on empty stomachs.²

Only the Catholic press, the loyalty of the hierarchy notwithstanding, sounded a discordant note in the festival of patriotism, giving some apparent substance to Protestant suspicions. The Express, under Vaughan the eloquent champion of throne and empire,³ now complained of the language of hyperbole and exaggeration as the colonies sought to outdo each

¹ S.M.H., 1 June 1887.

² S.M.H., 27 June 1887.

³ Express, 14 January, 4 February, 11 March, 27 May 1882.

other in their protestations to the Queen.¹ The Freeman's Journal observed pertinently that if the Queen were to be personally credited with all the glories of her reign she should be held equally responsible for its shames.² After the celebration 'The Flaneur' wrote,

Laus Deo! The Jubilee racket is over. And if our gracious Queen is not heartily sick of the farce, I can honestly assure her that the majority of her Australian subjects are.³

The 'racket' should not have seemed so strange to those who had exulted in the Sudan contingent. That would have been impossible without strong loyalty to Queen and empire, and the jubilee celebrations were a healthier expression of that loyalty. It was an opportunity for Australians to express a pride they genuinely felt in being British. They believed that Britannia ruled so widely under God for good, and that England was the mother of freedom. They rejoiced in the social, political and material progress of Britain in the nineteenth century and included the achievements of their own colony in that progress, though they were to say more of that in 1888 at the colony's centenary. Militant Irish nationalists, naturally enough, did not share the same pride in the empire, nor did the

¹ Express, 11 May 1887.

² F.J., 14 May 1887.

³ Ibid., 25 June 1887.

disaffected secularists. The more conservative Irish, however, could boast that the empire had been defended 'as much by the valour of Irishmen as by any means under heaven'.¹ But Anglo-Saxon Protestants brooked no rivals in their loyalty to the empire and devotion to its Queen.

Patriotic feelings were genuine enough, but religious motives and interests were as powerful in the churches' celebration of the Queen's jubilee. In an age when churchmen were feeling less and less relevant in public life they welcomed the opportunity to enhance their authority by asserting that religion was essential to social and political stability. And the government was glad to have the churches teach that loyalty to constituted authority was fundamental to Christianity, particularly in June 1887 when secularists attacked the monarchy as well as Christianity. It was not too difficult for the churches to praise the Queen herself for rarely had the nation been able to look to a monarch who was a paragon of domestic virtue and religious devotion. Victoria symbolised the values the churches strove to defend, particularly in her piety, and thus Protestant, Catholic and Jew honoured this godly woman as an example to all in high places.

1

J.P. Garvan, proposing the loyal toast at St Patrick's Day Banquet, 17 March 1883, *F.J.*, 24 March 1883. The banquets were usually loyal and patriotic affairs.

The Centenary Celebrations, 1888

The proposal for a united thanksgiving service during the centenary celebration of the colony came first from Sir Henry Parkes, who included it among his suggestions for the centenary to the Premier Sir Patrick Jennings. Parkes thought such a united service would 'add to the moral grandeur of the events'.¹ Jennings adopted the proposal in his recommendations to parliament on 27 August 1886.² Following Jennings' announcement the Christian World circularised representative Protestant clergy to gauge what support there might be for a religious celebration of the centenary, including united services and a Sunday School demonstration. Dr Linton, bishop of the newly created diocese of Riverina, Baptists, Congregationalists, Primitive Methodists and the United Methodist Free Church replied promptly and favourably. Dr Turner, the High Church Bishop of Grafton and Armidale, opposed any religious celebration of the centenary, but Bishop Barry in an interview warmly approved the idea, but would not commit his diocese. However, he did promise Anglican cooperation in a Sunday School demonstration.³ The Christian World suggested that the religious celebration should proclaim that 'the Christianity of

1

Sir H. Parkes to Sir P.A. Jennings, 7 August 1886, Parkes correspondence, vol.46, pp.51-8.

2

27 August 1886, N.S.W.P.D., vol.XXII, p.4403.

3

A.C.W., 24 September, 8 October 1886.

Australia has largely made it what it is today'. It was the guarantee of the nation's safety and future prosperity.¹

In September 1886 J.F. Cullen read a paper to the Congregational Ministers' Association on 'The Religious Celebration of the Centenary',² and Dr Jefferis developed Cullen's proposals in an address to the Congregational Union in October 1886.³ In defence of a religious celebration he asserted that 'the true God-made union between Church and State' had never been severed in these new lands. Theirs' was a Christian nation with the principles of Christianity 'interwoven in its laws and expressed in its polity'. It would therefore be a disgrace 'if national blessings came without national acknowledgement of Divine help, and if our seasons of State rejoicing were passed without expressing our gratitude to God'.⁴ He proposed denominational services and conferences for the first week, a united service and conference for the second week, and Sunday School demonstrations in Sydney and

1

A.C.W., 1 October 1886.

2

J.F. Cullen, 'The Religious Celebration of the Centenary'. Independent, 15 September 1886.

3

J. Jefferis, 'The Religious Celebration of the Centenary of the Colony', Congregational Year Book, 1887, pp.87-90. (This address was also published as The Religious Celebration of the Centenary of Australasia, Sydney, 1886.)

4

Ibid., p.87.

other large centres. He did not expect cooperation from Roman Catholics, Anglo-Catholic clergy, or the Salvation Army and other small sects, but estimated that 'the remaining sections of the Christian Commonwealth' comprised two-thirds of the population, 'really representing the religion of our people'. He suggested that Bishop Barry, 'a recognised Christian leader', was the appropriate person to bring the churches together, and he thought that a united thanksgiving service would show that 'if the Churches are many, Christianity is one', and might read a lesson to the legislators who were apt 'to think that Parliament is the only power in the State'.¹

The Presbyterian supported these proposals,² the Sydney Ministers' Union adopted the idea, and Bishop Barry agreed to the Union's request for a conference to consider 'the best mode of imparting a religious character' to the celebrations.³ At a conference of the six Protestant denominations on 28 November 1887 the churches agreed to conduct contemporaneous services of thanksgiving on Sunday 22 January 1888, and to hold a united service in the Exhibition Building on the afternoon of Sunday 29 January. They hoped that churches in suburban and country districts would do likewise. They also decided on a Sunday School

1

J. Jefferis, 'The Religious Celebration of the Centenary of the Colony', Congregational Year Book, 1887, p.90.

2

Presbyterian, 6 November 1886.

3

Ibid., 4 December 1886.

demonstration on 4 February and planned a united conference for April 1888.¹ It was largely the programme outlined by Cullen and Jefferis.

Catholics were also making plans for their religious celebration, and they were also determined that the government (this time the Parkes Government) should not have all its own way in celebrating the centenary.² The Freeman's Journal claimed that Cardinal Moran had planned a programme of interest, not only to Catholics, but to the whole colony and Australia at large. There would be a Provincial Synod with all the Australian hierarchy present; they would commence the completion of the chancel of St Mary's Cathedral as a centenary memorial, and lay foundation stones, bless extensions or open new Catholic institutions; and they would hold special services to commemorate the foundation and growth of Roman Catholicism in the Southern Hemisphere.³ Moran's proposal amounted to a mammoth demonstration of the might of the Roman Catholic Church in the colony to offset the united Protestant celebrations. Both Catholic and Protestant sought a rightful place for religion in the celebrations, but for Moran this meant a place for the right religion.

1

S.M.H., 30 November 1887.

2

F.J., 5 November 1887.

3

Ibid.; see also P.F. Moran, History of the Catholic Church, p.701.

On Sunday 22 January large congregations gathered in most churches; St Mary's Cathedral was filled to overflowing. Bishop Barry and Dr Jefferis found it significant that the church services preceded all other celebrations. For Barry it was

a confession, conscious or half conscious in that Christianity as such had word of teaching and inspiration for our whole society, with which substantially all agreed, and they were the vast majority who in any sense called themselves Christian.¹

Jefferis said it would be 'a burning shame and an evil omen' if they began the second century as their fathers began the first.

We, who so often rejoiced with our American brothers that their history began with thanksgiving and prayer upon that Plymouth Rock, had to remember and mourn that our own history began with no becoming act of religion...

But the second century began under different auspices. The Christian people of the land recognised 'their dependence upon God, and with thankfulness and prayer' commended themselves 'and the generations yet unborn to His favour and help'.²

The sense of a divinely appointed destiny was manifest in many sermons. Bishop Barry said Australia was 'a young growing scion of the old English tree' and would be prosperous and strong as its people

¹ S.M.H., 23 January 1888.

² Ibid.

acknowledged 'the Providential guidance and development of their history' and revered and obeyed 'the great eternal laws of righteousness and love'. Dr Steel in St Stephen's took a tolerant view of the convicts, many of whom were 'a blessing to the colony by their intelligence, integrity and even piety'. Australians, he said, who illustrated the virtues of the British people, had made 'A new Britannia in another world'. Jefferis reaffirmed that Australia's mission was 'largely identical with that of the British race', - to use her science and material progress 'for the comfort and benefit of humanity', and to proclaim 'Pure justice, a free press, free institutions and free trade' by word and to prove them 'by actual experiment in a thousand settlements'. Moreover, it was a Protestant mission for, he said, England shared with Germany the task of restoring humanity by making the Church 'an open pathway to the Eternal'. But Australia was to carry England's mission forward to conclusions she could not reach because of traditionalism and feudalism. England and the world were watching to see the 'great Commonwealth' he said, but the future depended on whether Christianity could rescue men from the injustices and inequalities that remained.¹ The Christian World claimed that the conditions of Australian settlement were 'strictly analogous to those of North America', and that the sentiments of religious

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S.M.H., 23 January 1888. This sermon 'Australia's Mission and Opportunity' appears under the same title in the Centennial Magazine, Vol.1, no.2, August 1888, pp.102-4.

heroism of the Pilgrim Fathers were not entirely absent, even if they were found chiefly in South Australia.¹

Several preachers saw Australia as a new promised land, flowing with milk and honey, to which God had led them 'across the watery wilderness'.² Rabbi Davis also affirmed that Australia was a country like ancient Palestine; the Jews, he said, were attached to its institutions; they had cast in their lot with its fortunes and were ready to sacrifice their lives and wealth in its defence.³

Anglicans and Catholics also celebrated the centenary of their own communions. Bishop Barry told proudly of the progress of the Church of England from its unpropitious beginning to a position of organised strength, and reminded Anglicans of the 'essential character of the Anglican Church as a branch of the Catholic Church of Christ'.⁴ For Catholics the centenary of their church, though it had been organised for less than a century, was more significant than the colony's centenary. On Sunday 22 January they opened the Provincial Synod with grand ceremony. The crowded Cathedral was abundantly draped with crimson and yellow

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A.C.W., 2 February 1888.

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Jefferis, S.M.H., 30 January 1888; Dr Steel, S.M.H., 23 January 1888.

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D.T., 30 January 1888.

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S.M.H., 30 January 1888.

hangings and lavishly decorated with flowers and ornaments. An impressive company of prelates and priests processed into the sanctuary, and an augmented choir of a hundred voices, with professional soloists and orchestra, sang a new mass for the occasion. Dr Carr, Archbishop of Melbourne, preached. Never, he said, in the history of the colony had so many events of such magnitude crowded into one year. They celebrated the centenary of the colony; they commemorated the establishment of the Catholic Church in Australia; they had already rejoiced in the Pope's and the Queen's jubilees. Carr said he would leave the blessings of temporal and material progress to other speakers and occasions more appropriate, and confined himself to the progress of the Catholic Church. That great and imposing ceremony presided over by a Prince of the Church was a significant 'index of the steady and stately advance made by the Catholic Church in this colony within the narrow span of 100 years'. 'The mission of the Church of Christ' was, he said, to propagate the faith and Australia was the latest conquest. It was also to purify morals through the two centres of home and school. After the usual condemnation of 'the godless secular schools' he commended those Catholic parents who refused 'to betray the cause of Christ and Christian education for any worldly advantage'.¹

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S.M.H., 23 January 1888.

The next Sunday Cardinal Moran continued the theme in a sermon on 'The Progress of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia' to another large congregation at a centennial service to mark the close of the Provincial Synod.¹ As the Protestants had done, Moran extolled the wealth and resources of Australia. In the hardy intelligent races which developed its resources there already appeared 'the fair features of a great nation....' But more particularly he spoke of the blessings of Christian civilisation which had come with Catholic truth, brought to Australia by the sons of St Patrick. The Irish had now renewed their mission of earlier times to carry the faith to different lands. They had taken the faith to America, preserved what remained of it in England and Scotland, and had 'conferred its priceless blessings' upon Australia. Wherever the flag of British conquest had been unfurled, Moran claimed, Irish zeal and piety had erected the standard of the Cross. Protestants went unmentioned. He recognised the work of Catholics of other nationalities in Pacific missions and in Australia, but conspicuously omitted his English predecessor, Archbishop Vaughan, to whose remains he refused burial in the Cathedral. But without 'the apostolate of the Irish race', he asserted, the Church would have been 'little better than an empty name throughout Australia'. He concluded with the prayer that it might 'ever be Australia's destiny to be a bulwark of true Christian civilization, a home of freedom, a centre of intellectual light and a

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See S.M.H., 23 January 1888 for title of Moran's sermon.

sanctuary of piety'.¹ Thus he bound up the mission of the Church and the hopes of the nation with the fortunes of the sons of Erin. The Freeman's Journal boasted that Catholics had occupied 'the most conspicuous and the most influential position' in the celebrations.² But while they separately rejoiced in Ireland's mission to Australia Protestants unitedly celebrated the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The United National Thanksgiving was the first official united service in the colony. Some High Churchmen denounced Anglicans who took part as schismatics,³ but the Guardian refuted this narrow view,⁴ and the Protestant Standard gloated over the implied rebuke to Anglo-Catholics in the Primate's participation in the united service.⁵ The Herald declared sanguinely that there was nothing now to keep the churches apart save the 'memory of old traditions and differences of opinion as to doctrine and polity.'⁶ There were united services in some suburbs and other centres,⁷ but never in the history of the colony had so

¹ S.M.H., 30 January 1888.

² F.J., 4 February 1888.

³ Zoilus, D.T., 20 January 1888.

⁴ Guardian, 28 January 1888.

⁵ Standard, 4 February 1888.

⁶ S.M.H., 30 January 1888.

⁷ See Religious Announcements S.M.H., 21, 28 January 1888 and S.M.H., 23, 30 January 1888.

many gathered for one service of public worship. About 8,000 filled the old Exhibition Building, and outside were several thousand who could not gain admission. The service was also a church parade for nearly 700 troops who marched with mounted officers from the Outer Domain to the Exhibition Building. Catholics in the Permanent Artillery followed as far as St Mary's, but other Catholics remained in their ranks and attended the united service.. Combined choirs under P.D. McCormick, who wrote and composed 'Advance, Australia Fair',¹ occupied a terraced stand behind the platform. The Governor attended with Lord and Lady Carnarvon and the Governors of Victoria, Tasmania and Fiji in the vice-regal party. Bishop Barry presided with Archdeacon King, who led the prayers, and Drs Cameron, Jefferis, Kelynack and Steel on the platform. Pastor Daniel Allen, a Particular Baptist, and the Revs George Sutherland, a Free Presbyterian, and G. James, a Primitive Methodist, and all ardent Orangemen, occupied the open-air platform to address the overflow congregation.

Bishop Barry told the vast assembly that this 'spontaneous service' of thanksgiving 'grew out of the deep and instinctive feeling' that there should be 'some common offering of ourselves and of our country to God'. On that day of national enthusiasm 'the frostwork of division [was] quelled as by a glorious

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Published by Palings under the pen name 'Amicus' in December 1890. McCormick bequeathed the copyright to the Presbyterian Church. A.R. Chisholm, Men were my Milestones, Melbourne, 1958, p.12.

flame'; their freedom and unity in God were, he said, the forces which 'would make for national blessing and greatness'. Dr Steel pointed out that the rise of modern missions was coeval with the founding of the colony, and Sydney was now a depot for mission ships to '300 isles of the Pacific owning Christ'. Dr Kelynack, a Wesleyan, said that God had chosen the Anglo-Saxons for the settlement of Australia, and that if they made Christianity 'the royal force to which all other forces must bow' Australia would be great and free, and 'these young Commonwealths [would] rise to occupy that throne of glorious empire to which they are divinely called, and go forth upon their kingly mission to enlighten and subdue and bless the world'. Jefferis proclaimed that the nation entered its second century 'with profound trust in God as ruler of our people'. He mourned over the divisions between the colonies and between rich and poor within society, and declared that 'at the last, and in the highest, it was religion alone that could purify and save. Everything depended on Christianity'. But 'No new nation ever entered upon its larger history with brighter prospects' than Australia, he said, as he called the people to their God-given mission in founding a nation, and in strengthening the empire. The 'Hallelujah Chorus' and the hymn 'God bless our native land' brought this festival of religious patriotism to its triumphant close.¹

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S.M.H., 30 January 1888.

Hot weather reduced the number of children who turned out for the Sunday School Demonstration on Saturday 4 February. About 6,000 children, mostly dressed in white, the girls with blue sashes and boys and girls all wearing blue rosettes marched in grand procession with bands and banners from Moore Park to the Agricultural Society's grounds. They waited patiently in the burning sun for the Governor and electrified the air with their cheering and flag waving when he arrived. Sir Henry Parkes was to have addressed the children but could not come, a merciful absence, as several children were overcome by the heat. Bishop Barry presided and thanked God 'for our Public Schools Act'. The Governor humanely declined to speak at length owing to the heat and the distance the children had marched, but he thanked them for their welcome and exhorted them to grow up worthy citizens of the great colony they loved so well. After a service of song their patriotic endurance was rewarded by a picnic of buns, cakes, ginger ale and cordial, with water for the less fortunate. The organisers had remembered the criticism of the jubilee demonstration.¹

The proposed Centenary Christian Conference does not seem to have been held. Otherwise the churches carried out the religious celebrations they had planned so carefully. Bishop Barry confidently claimed, in review, that they had demonstrated to all the vitality of the Christian faith and the churches' underlying

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S.M.H., 6 February 1888.

unity in Jesus Christ.¹ Their celebrations also testified to the universal belief among them that Australia was a Christian nation, although some read 'Christian' differently from others. Protestants saw themselves as the conscience of the nation; Catholics claimed that they alone were the voice of truth. But both affirmed that the future prosperity of the nation depended on Christianity. Sermons revealed the strength of imperial sentiment, but also a strong sense of Australian nationalism and of 'manifest destiny'. Australia was to become a new and greater home of freedom than mother England. Although they celebrated the centenary of New South Wales they all spoke of Australia as though one nation. The Christian World declared that it was really the centenary of Australasia,² and Jefferis prophesied

the construction of a great Commonwealth...welded together in the strength of an empire which realises the Divine ideal of justice and freedom.³

¹ Address, P.S.D.S. 1888, p.29.

² A.C.W., 2 February 1888.

³ S.M.H., 23 January 1888. The hope of federation belonged to the patriotism of many churchmen; all denominations met intercolonially in synods, conferences or assemblies, and saw that, denominationally at least, they had one mission in Australia. Presbyterians and Congregationalists also looked to federation and annexation to protect their mission fields in the South Pacific, although there was less support for federation and annexation among Protestants in New South Wales than in Victoria in the 1880s. But James Jefferis was a powerful advocate of federation who lectured several times on the subject in the 1880s. Prior to his departure from Sydney in 1889 he delivered two public

(footnote continued p.430)

But one thing marred the centenary celebrations for churchmen: no one said grace at the Centennial State Banquet which the Anglican Primate, the Catholic Cardinal and leading Protestant churchmen attended. They all deplored this omission. Cardinal Moran claimed in an interview that, 'as the first ecclesiastical dignitary of any church', it was his prerogative to say grace, but he conceded that it would be better for the Governor to say it on public occasions. Bishop Barry considered that the chairman of the banquet should have said it, or that the assembly should have sung a grace, as was the custom at large banquets in England. But Dr Jefferis asserted that it was Bishop Barry's prerogative to ask the blessing at the banquet, since his 'catholicity of thought, courtesy, as well as right' marked him out as 'primus inter pares'.¹ In April Bishop Barry told the synod of Sydney that this incident, and the exclusion of prayers from parliament and public schools, reminded them that the divisions of Christians

(footnote 3 continued from p.429)
lectures on the subject; Sir Henry Parkes presided at the first and Dr Andrew Garran at the other. But Catholics, who had no sympathy for Protestant campaigns for annexation in the Pacific, also supported federation, particularly after Cardinal Moran called on them in 1888 to support a federation 'based upon the feelings and principles of Christianity'. J. Jefferis, Australia Confederated: A Lecture delivered in the Town Hall, Adelaide...., Sydney, [1880]; 'Australia Federating', S.M.H., 10 August 1883; 'Australia Cautiously Federating', S.M.H., 4 December 1889; 'A Federated Dominion of Australia', S.M.H., 17 December 1889. For Cardinal Moran on Federation see F.J., 11 February 1888.

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Interview with Cardinal Moran, Evening News, 2 February 1888; James Jefferis, *ibid.* 4 February 1888; Interview with Bishop Barry, *ibid.*, 7 February 1888.

played 'into the hands of godlessness',¹ During the 1880s, however, opposition to secularism had united Protestants; nevertheless, they did not achieve all that they desired to make the state more Christian, and they were unable to prevent some measures which they feared would make it less Christian. Their waning political influence only strengthened the churchmen's wish that prayer should hallow parliament and great events in the life of the nation. Through patriotism they sought to identify Christianity with the secular aspirations of the people.

¹Address, P.S.D.S., 1888, pp.28-9.

Conclusion

During the 1880s churchmen worked hard to maintain their constituencies, to extend their influence and to uphold the position of Christianity in colonial society. R.W. Dale, the English Nonconformist who toured the colonies in 1887, found 'remarkable proofs of religious energy and liberality'.¹ The programmes of church extension and evangelism in New South Wales, the churches' attempts to make religion more attractive, and their endeavours to reach the working classes were evidences of this energy and liberality. But what were its results?

The churches failed to penetrate the mass of religious indifference around them. Indifference to religion had been widespread in the colony since the first settlement, and immigration from Britain, where indifference strongly prevailed among the working classes, helped to swell the numbers of the indifferent in the 1880s. The percentage of the total population attending churches declined despite the tireless efforts of the churches to attract people. Admittedly they rose again in the 1890s, although not to the level reached in 1870.

Religious doubt, engendered by modern science and higher criticism of the Bible, may have contributed to

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R.W. Dale, *op. cit.*, p.228.

the overall decline in church attendances in the 1870s and 1880s, but how far is difficult to assess. All told, the number which expressly repudiated religious belief was small, and diminished rapidly in the 1890s. The majority was as indifferent to anti-Christian views as to the churches themselves. Although many in the pews and some in the pulpits adhered to evangelicalism and a belief in the infallibility of the Bible, leading Protestant churchmen were sensitive to the intellectual challenges to faith. They showed that Christianity and science were not necessarily incompatible, and that the value and authority of the Bible did not depend solely on the theory of its inerrancy. Mostly the same churchmen also reinterpreted Christian social teaching in response to the demands of social justice, although evangelical individualism remained strong, and middle class churchgoers found temperance reform a more attractive remedy for social disorder than any theory of social reconstruction.

Modern knowledge together with commercial progress and prosperity, however, had a more subtle effect on those within the churches as well as those without. As early as 1850, Dr Michael Roe argues, the new faith - 'Moral Enlightenment' was ascendant in New South Wales.¹ This entailed a belief in progress, a confidence in man's rationality and his ability to control his environment for good and, above all, a faith in the power of education to increase his goodness. Expanding

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M. Roe, Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, Melbourne, 1965, p.204.

knowledge and increasing prosperity only enhanced this confidence in the 1880s and diminished the sanctions of religious authority, even over those who continued to support the churches. Thus the content and meaning of Christian faith and practice changed for many, and Protestant church discipline was weakened. Only the Catholic Church rested confident in its authority over the faithful, although some Catholic parents continued to send their children to public schools, despite the penalties threatened against them, and the Church's strictures against mixed marriages did not prevent a considerable number of Catholics from choosing Protestant partners.¹

As the churches lost authority over their members, so they enjoyed less influence in society at large. Bishop Barry hoped that the separation of church and state would give 'more and freer scope to the power of intrinsic religious influence',² and Dr Jefferis, in his theory of 'the true God-made union between Church and State', saw Christianity as 'a spiritual power, impelling, directing and purifying' social and political life.³ But the Protestant churches dared not rely on moral authority alone, and, moreover, the moral influence of

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In 1891 24 per cent of married Catholic women had Protestant husbands and 13 per cent of Catholic husbands were married to Protestant wives. T.A. Coghlan, General Report, 1891, p.166.

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Speech to Londoners' Club, D.T., 19 May 1884.

3

Chairman's Address, Congregational Year Book, 1888, p.123.

Christianity was undermined by the craving for 'formal and public recognition' of religion, which Dr Dale observed among colonial churchmen.¹ United in the fear of secularism, the Protestant denominations sought to reinforce the sanctions of Christianity 'with more than their old authority'.² Although some of them had repudiated the financial aid of the state, nearly all turned to it for assistance in teaching Christianity in public schools and to demand protection for Christian institutions. Bishop Barry declared, in an election sermon in January 1889, that Christian statesmen should help to make the state pro-Christian rather than anti-Christian; he expected them to safeguard the sanctity of the Lord's Day and marriage, and to have the great public occasions hallowed by prayer, for as the community was 'mostly Christian', he thought that parliament ought to uphold Christianity.³ But this willing dependence upon the state, the utilitarian arguments which churchmen used in support of an alliance between Christianity and the state, and the manner in which the churches entered into patriotic occasions all tended to identify Christianity with the established order, and lessened the possibility of a prophetic Christian witness in society.

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R.W. Dale, op. cit., pp.261-2.

2

J. Jefferis, Sermon on 'Religious Teaching in our Public Schools', D.T., 19 May 1884.

3

Bishop Barry, Sermon, 'The Christian as a Citizen', D.T., 29 January 1889.

To most laymen, however, religion and politics were separate spheres. They regarded religion as a private concern, and attended to the business of secular life with little reference to religious sanctions or considerations. Nevertheless, many valued religion as a source of moral teaching and as a useful ally to social stability. This view, however, left little room for religious influence in politics.

But churchmen did not abandon their desire for the formal and public recognition of Christianity. In the 1890s, as federation drew near, the churches, Catholic and Protestant, campaigned for the acknowledgement of the religious basis of society in the constitution. This was one of the main objects of Cardinal Moran's candidature for the Federal Convention in 1897.¹ Protestant churches and the Catholic hierarchy petitioned the conventions to acknowledge Almighty God in the Commonwealth Bill as 'the Supreme Ruler of this world and the ultimate source of all law and authority in nations', and to provide for prayer in the federal parliament.² The Constitution Act enshrined the principle of the separation of church and state, but the founding fathers professed to enter federation 'humbly

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Cardinal Moran and the Federal Convention, [Sydney, 1897], p.6; see also 'The Cardinal's Manifesto to the Electors of New South Wales', *ibid.*, pp.14-5.

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Official Report of the National Australasian Convention Debates, Adelaide, 1897, p.142 and passim. See also petitions in Official Record of the Debates of the Australasian Federal Convention, Second Session, Sydney 1897, and Third Session, 2 vols, Melbourne [1898].

relying on the blessing of Almighty God'. It was less than churchmen asked; nevertheless, it was an acknowledgment of God.¹ Protestants also combined to ensure that prayer should be offered at the inauguration of the Commonwealth.² The Anglican Primate prayed the Commonwealth in; the first federal parliament opened with the 'Old Hundredth', and the Governor General read prayers; within a few weeks of its life both houses adopted the practice of daily prayers.³ Thus at federation the churches obtained the public recognition they craved for Christianity. The Commonwealth was formally religious, not secular, and on Sunday 6 January the churches celebrated the Epiphany by hailing the manifestation of a new Commonwealth to the world. There were thanksgiving services in all churches, and the Governor General attended a National Thanksgiving Service in the Sydney Town Hall. There were also united Protestant services in Hyde Park and other places.⁴ The patriotic rhetoric, the spirit of

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Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900, 63 & 64 Vict., c.12, preamble and Chapter V, clause 116. A brief account of the insertion of the religious clause is given in J. Quick and R.R. Garran, The Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth, Sydney and Melbourne, 1901, pp.204-5, and Gerald O'Collins, S.J., Patrick McMahon Glynn. A Founder of Australian Federation, Melbourne, 1965, pp.137-43.

2

See Report of the General Purposes Committee, M.P.G.A., 1901, p.81.

3

S.M.H., 2 January 1901; Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, vol.1, pp.1, 815-21, 1077, 1136, 1338-9, 1568-78.

4

S.M.H., 7 January 1901.

nationalism, and the insistence on the recognition of Christianity as the only guarantee of the nation's safety and progress were all reminiscent of 1888. But at least one preacher wondered if the acknowledgement of God in the constitution was of any deep significance. Whether public recognition has made any difference to the influence of Christianity in federated Australia is a question for future historians to consider.

APPENDIX I

Religious Affiliation of the Population of New South Wales, 1851 to 1901

	1851		1856		1861		1871		1881		1891		1901	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<u>Protestant</u>														
Church of England	93,137	49.74	124,505	49.95	159,958	45.59	229,243	45.49	342,359	45.56	502,980	44.75	623,131	45.99
Presbyterian	18,156	9.70	25,718	10.32	34,692	9.89	49,122	9.75	72,545	9.65	109,390	9.73	132,617	9.79
Wesleyan	10,008	5.34	14,952	6.00	23,682	6.75	36,275	7.20	57,049	7.59	87,516	7.79	137,638	10.16
Other Methodist							3,291	0.65	7,303	0.97	24,932	2.22		
Congregationalist							9,253	1.83	14,328	1.91	24,089	2.14		
Baptist	6,472	3.46	3,566	1.43	9,863	2.81	4,151	0.82	7,307	0.97	13,024	1.16	15,440	1.14
Lutheran							-	-	4,836	0.64	7,950	0.71	7,387	0.55
Unitarian							849	0.17	828	0.11	1,329	0.12	770	0.06
Salvation Army							-	-	-	-	10,315	0.92	9,585	0.71
Other Protestants							7,208	1.43	9,957	1.33	9,821	0.87	14,252	1.05
Total Protestants	127,773	68.24	171,510	68.81	233,606	66.58	339,392	67.34	516,512	68.73	791,346	70.41	965,654	71.28
Roman Catholic	56,899	30.39	73,918	29.65	99,193	28.27	147,627	29.29	207,606	27.63	286,911	25.53	347,286	25.63
Greek Orthodox											253	0.02	561	0.04
Total Christian	184,672	98.63	245,428	98.46	332,799	94.85	487,019	96.63	724,118	96.36	1,078,510	95.96	1,313,501	96.95
<u>Others</u>														
Hebrews	979	0.52	1,430	0.57	1,759	0.50	2,395	0.48	3,266	0.44	5,484	0.49	6,447	0.48
Buddhist, Confucianists and Mohammedans	852	0.45	1,369	0.55	12,909	3.68	7,455	1.48	9,345	1.24	10,950	0.97	7,228	0.53
Other Persuasions, Freethinkers Agnostic, etc.	740	0.40	1,055	0.42	3,393	0.97	1,166	0.23	1,042	0.14	781	0.07	937	0.07
No Religion or No Denomination											6,134	0.54	3,434	0.25
Object to state, Unspecified or Ill-defined							5,946	1.18	13,697	1.82	8,063	0.72	6,265	0.46
Total Others	2,571	1.37	3,854	1.54	18,061	5.15	16,962	3.37	27,350	3.64	45,444	4.04	41,345	3.05
GRAND TOTAL	187,243	100.00	249,282	100.00	350,860	100.00	503,981	100.00	751,468	100.00	1,123,954	100.00	1,354,846	100.00

Sources: Tables of 'Religion of the People', Census of New South Wales, 1851, 1856, 1861-1901. I have re-calculated percentages in 1851 and 1856 to two decimal points to conform with later census tables, and in 1891 and 1901 I have re-calculated the percentages of 'Others' to include the proportions of 'Object to State' and Unspecified or Ill-defined. Figures for Other Methodists in 1891 include Bible Christians and those for Congregationalists exclude 'Nonconformists'. I have also excluded Seventh Day Baptists, Mennonites and Campbellites from the figures for Baptists in 1891 and 1901.

APPENDIX II

Regional Distribution of the Denominations in 1871 and 1891

		Total	C. of E.	R.C.	Presbyterian	Wesleyan	Other Methodist	Congregational	Baptist	Other Christian	Other Persuasions etc.
1.	<u>NORTH COAST</u>										
	1871 (Co. Macquarie and (a)	25,066	10,408	6,026	4,531	2,631	153	193	166	391	567
	Clarence and Macleay (b)		41.5	24.0	18.0	10.5	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.6	2.2
	P.Ds.)										
	1891 (a)	61,148	23,679	15,808	10,188	6,811	1,000	201	749	1,490	1,222
	(b)		38.7	25.8	16.7	11.1	1.6	0.3	1.2	2.4	2.0
2.	<u>LOWER HUNTER</u>										
	1871 (a)	62,151	28,257	16,523	6,739	5,626	1,313	1,134	983	427	1,149
	(b)		45.5	26.6	10.8	9.0	2.1	1.8	1.6	0.7	1.9
	1891 (a)	115,386	49,836	23,089	12,068	10,294	9,259	2,528	2,515	2,260	3,537
	(b)		43.2	20.0	10.5	8.9	8.0	2.2	2.2	1.9	3.0
3.	<u>CO. CUMBERLAND</u>										
	1871 (a)	167,153	79,279	46,221	13,858	11,563	811	6,303	1,854	2,845	4,419
	(b)		47.4	27.6	8.3	6.9	0.5	3.8	1.1	1.7	2.6
	1891 (a)	447,014	210,662	104,355	36,946	30,911	6,058	17,701	6,456	12,070	21,855
	(b)		47.1	23.3	8.3	6.9	1.3	4.0	1.4	2.7	4.9
4A.	<u>CO. CAMDEN</u>										
	1871 (a)	23,076	10,071	6,395	2,484	2,878	261	545	99	111	232
	(b)		43.6	27.7	10.8	12.5	1.1	2.4	0.4	0.5	1.0
	1891 (a)	41,318	18,334	9,407	4,962	4,762	1,209	729	233	768	914
	(b)		44.4	22.8	12.0	11.5	2.9	1.8	0.6	1.8	2.2
4B.	<u>SOUTH COAST</u> (below Camden)										
	1871 (Co. St Vincent (a)	15,606	5,895	5,452	1,519	1,284	18	192	210	179	857
	only - remainder in (b)		37.8	34.9	9.7	8.2	0.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	5.5
	Monaro P.D.)										
	1891 (a)	28,440	12,325	8,718	2,939	2,290	172	454	102	549	891
	(b)		43.3	30.6	10.3	8.0	0.6	1.6	0.4	1.9	3.1
5.	<u>NORTHERN TABLELAND</u>										
	1871 (a)	16,898	7,738	4,523	2,564	649	26	41	67	661	629
	(New England P.D.) (b)		45.8	26.7	15.2	3.8	0.1	0.2	0.4	3.9	3.7
	1891 (a)	63,846	29,285	16,510	7,415	4,526	509	216	421	2,054	2,910
	(b)		45.9	25.8	11.6	7.1	0.8	0.3	0.6	3.2	4.6
6.	<u>CENTRAL TABLELAND</u>										
	1871 (a)	75,810	34,465	23,722	5,930	6,362	169	319	373	784	3,686
	(b)		45.5	31.3	7.8	8.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.0	4.9
	1891 (a)	99,022	44,895	28,038	8,305	10,104	1,519	856	669	1,790	2,846
	(b)		45.3	28.3	8.4	10.2	1.5	0.9	0.7	1.8	2.9

APPENDIX II (continued)

	Total	C. of E.	R.C.	Presbyterian	Wesleyan	Other Methodist	Congregational	Baptist	Other Christian	Other Persuasions etc.
7. <u>SOUTHERN TABLELAND</u> 1871 (Cos. Argyle, Buccleuch, Cowley, King, Murray and Monaro P.D., which included part of the South Coast) (a) 1891 (a) (b)	40,166 75,298	16,443 40.9 32,327 42.9	15,313 38.1 26,257 34.9	3,601 9.0 6,689 8.9	2,699 6.7 5,455 7.2	388 1.0 1,040 1.4	127 0.3 236 0.3	121 0.3 145 0.2	376 0.9 1,274 1.7	1,098 2.7 1,875 2.5
8. <u>NORTH WESTERN SLOPE</u> 1871 (Gwydir and Liverpool Plains P.Ds.) (a) (b) 1891 (a) (b)	16,480 21,062	8,674 52.6 10,872 51.6	4,437 26.9 6,220 29.5	1,492 9.0 1,547 7.3	432 2.6 923 4.4	32 0.2 65 0.3	43 0.3 60 0.3	49 0.3 84 0.4	364 2.2 346 1.6	957 5.8 945 4.5
9. <u>CENTRAL WESTERN SLOPE</u> 1871 (Cos. Gordon, Lincoln, Bligh and Wellington P.Ds) (a) (b) 1891 (a) (b)	12,135 40,729	6,019 49.6 19,071 46.8	3,514 28.9 11,997 29.4	1,306 10.8 4,140 10.2	311 2.6 2,419 5.9	5 (0.04) 159 0.4	71 0.6 107 0.3	24 0.2 321 0.8	222 1.8 1,134 2.8	663 5.5 1,381 3.4
10. <u>SOUTH WESTERN SLOPE</u> 1871 (Lachlan P.D. and Co. Harden: includes part of the Riverina) (a) (b) 1891 (a) (b)	18,899 45,925	8,427 44.6 18,798 40.9	6,955 36.8 15,777 34.3	1,526 8.1 4,808 10.5	561 3.0 2,233 4.9	82 0.4 247 0.5	104 0.5 260 0.6	64 0.3 215 0.5	272 1.4 2,313 5.0	908 4.8 1,274 2.8
11. <u>RIVERINA</u> 1871 (Murrumbidgee P.D. includes part of the South Western Slope.) (a) (b) See notes below 1891 (a) (b)	25,027 23,672	10,935 43.7 10,187 43.0	7,312 29.2 5,830 24.6	3,018 12.0 3,999 16.9	1,123 4.5 1,275 5.4	30 0.1 204 0.9	134 0.5 66 0.3	122 0.5 153 0.6	1,196 4.8 576 2.4	1,157 4.6 1,382 5.8
12. <u>WESTERN PLAINS - EAST OF DARLING</u> (Warrego and Darling P.Ds.) 1871 (a) (b) 1891 (a) (b)	4,509 22,360	2,221 49.2 10,045 44.9	1,019 22.6 6,420 28.7	457 10.1 2,557 11.4	83 1.8 955 4.3	3 0.1 77 0.3	33 0.7 108 0.5	9 0.2 128 0.6	193 4.3 592 2.6	491 10.9 1,478 6.6

APPENDIX II (continued)

	Total	C. of E.	R.C.	Presbyterian	Wesleyan	Other Methodist	Congregational	Baptist	Other Christian	Other Persuasions etc.
13A. WESTERN PLAINS - WEST OF DARLING										
1871 (a)	1,005	419	214	127	35	-	13	4	43	150
(Albert P.D.) (b)		41.7	21.3	12.6	3.5	-	1.3	0.4	4.3	14.9
1891 (a)	8,592	3,852	2,313	1,020	318	49	77	37	242	684
(Excluding Co. Yancowinna.) (b)		44.8	26.9	11.9	3.7	0.6	0.9	0.4	2.8	8.0
13B. CO. YANCOWINNA										
1891 (a)	24,438	6,839	5,102	1,217	4,030	3,421	458	761	1,257	1,353
(b)		28.0	20.9	5.0	16.5	14.0	1.9	3.1	5.1	5.5

Abbreviations: Co. County
P.D. Pastoral District.

See also Map and Diagram of the Regional Distribution of the Denominations (inside back cover).

(a) Number in division.

(b) Percentage of total population of division.

References

The censuses of 1871 and 1891 did not follow entirely the same divisions in reporting the religious affiliation of the people in different parts of the colony. In 1871 the tables listed religious affiliation by counties in the more populated parts and by pastoral districts for the remainder of the colony; in 1891 there were returns by counties for the whole of the colony. The census report in 1901, however, grouped the counties into larger divisions, and I have followed these in the table above, assembling the returns for the counties in their respective divisions. To obtain comparable figures for the divisions in the interior in 1871 I have combined the returns of pastoral districts, together with those of counties in a few cases (as indicated in the table), to coincide as closely as possible with the divisions used. The areas represented by these latter figures overlap to some extent into adjacent divisions, but only in the case of Murrumbidgee Pastoral District is the overlap so gross as to provide a misleading comparison. Returns for registry districts largely covering the Counties of Cadell, Townsend, Wakool and Waradgery, within the Riverina, show that Presbyterians were 16.7 per cent of the population in 1871, much the same as in 1891; and Catholics, whose strength lay on the South Western Slope, were in fact below average in the Riverina, forming around 23 per cent of the population of these counties in 1871.

Source: Census of N.S.W., 1871, pp.279-304; 1891, pp.404-33.

APPENDIX IIIA

The Religion and Occupation of Male Breadwinners in New South Wales, 1901

<u>PROFESSIONAL</u>	Total	C. of E.	R.C.	Methodist	Presbyterian	Baptist	Congregational	Lutheran	Salvation Army	Other Christian	Jewish	Other Persuasions etc.
Government, Defence, Law and Protection												
(a)	10,809	5,039	1,940	598	1,053	75	226	20	10	78	46	1,724
(b)	2.4	2.5	1.8	1.5	2.3	1.5	3.0	0.5	0.4	1.7	2.0	7.1
(c)		46.6	18.0	5.5	9.7	0.7	2.1	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.5	15.9
Education: Government and Private												
(a)	3,806	1,490	836	505	635	39	123	8	3	43	5	119
(b)	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.4	0.8	1.6	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.2	0.5
(c)		39.2	22.0	13.3	16.7	1.0	3.2	0.2	0.1	1.1	0.1	3.1
Religion, Charity, Health, Science and Arts.												
(a)	12,240	5,818	2,307	910	1,312	180	370	98	156 ¹	193	129	767
(b)	2.7	2.9	2.1	2.2	2.9	3.6	4.9	2.3	5.8	4.2	5.4	3.2
(c)		47.5	18.8	7.4	10.7	1.5	3.0	0.8	1.3	1.6	1.1	6.3
<u>DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL SERVICE</u>												
Board and Lodging												
(a)	8,258	3,847	2,705	263	619	42	44	96	28	108	38	468
(b)	1.8	1.9	2.5	0.6	1.4	0.8	0.6	2.2	1.0	2.3	1.6	1.9
(c)		46.6	32.8	3.2	7.5	0.5	0.5	1.2	0.3	1.3	0.4	5.7
Domestic Service and Attendance												
(a)	11,870	5,570	3,115	657	947	101	120	141	64	132	56	967
(b)	2.6	2.7	2.8	1.6	2.1	2.0	1.6	3.2	2.4	2.8	2.3	4.0
(c)		46.9	26.2	5.5	8.0	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.5	1.1	0.5	8.2
<u>COMMERCE</u>												
Property and Finance												
(a)	8,985	4,820	1,143	753	1,117	102	371	38	18	111	168	344
(b)	2.0	2.4	1.0	1.8	2.5	2.0	4.9	0.9	0.7	2.4	7.0	1.4
(c)		53.7	12.7	8.4	12.5	1.1	4.1	0.4	0.2	1.2	1.9	3.8
Trade and Storage												
(a)	58,112	25,971	12,497	5,498	5,300	816	1,777	322	323	954	1,141	3,513
(b)	12.9	12.8	11.4	13.1	11.7	16.1	23.5	7.4	11.9	20.6	47.7	14.5
(c)		44.7	21.5	9.5	9.1	1.4	3.0	0.6	0.6	1.6	2.0	6.0
Transport and Communication												
(a)	42,822	19,631	11,494	3,052	3,974	379	571	1,130	172	475	58	1,886
(b)	9.5	9.6	10.5	7.2	8.8	7.5	7.5	26.1	6.4	10.2	2.4	7.8
(c)		45.9	26.9	7.1	9.3	0.9	1.3	2.6	0.4	1.1	0.1	4.4
<u>INDUSTRIAL</u>												
Skilled Trades and Manufacture of Food etc.												
(a)	93,582	43,964	18,750	9,702	9,910	1,471	2,541	730	610	1,293	636	3,975
(b)	20.7	21.6	17.1	23.2	21.9	29.1	33.5	16.9	22.5	27.9	26.6	16.4
(c)		47.0	20.0	10.4	10.6	1.6	2.7	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.7	4.2
Predominantly Unskilled: Roads, Railways, etc., Disposal of Dead, Refuse and Pursuits Imperfectly Defined												
(a)	29,110	12,592	10,554	1,879	2,121	185	261	177	225	239	12	865
(b)	6.5	6.2	9.6	4.5	4.7	3.7	3.5	4.1	8.3	5.2	0.5	3.6
(c)		43.3	36.2	6.5	7.3	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	(.04)	3.0

APPENDIX IIIA (continued)

		Total	C. of E.	R.C.	Methodist	Presbyterian	Baptist	Congregational	Lutheran	Salvation Army	Other Christian	Jewish	Other Persuasions etc.
PRIMARY													
Agricultural	(a)	75,884	32,714	20,553	7,418	7,630	620	434	948	406	395	14	4,752
	(b)	16.8	16.0	18.7	17.7	16.9	12.3	5.7	21.9	15.0	8.5	0.6	19.5
	(c)		43.1	27.1	9.8	10.0	0.8	0.6	1.3	0.5	0.5	(0.01)	6.3
Pastoral and Dairying (Pastoral, 31,312) (Dairying, 15,850)	(a)	47,162	21,596	12,941	3,492	6,021	290	260	176	159	212	16	1,999
	(b)	10.4	10.6	11.8	8.3	13.3	5.7	0.3	4.0	5.9	4.6	0.7	8.3
	(c)		45.8	27.4	7.4	12.8	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	(0.03)	4.3
Mining	(a)	38,378	15,211	8,438	6,513	3,611	552	345	377	481	300	15	2,535
	(b)	8.5	7.5	7.7	15.5	8.0	10.9	4.5	8.7	17.8	6.5	0.6	10.4
	(c)		39.6	22.0	17.0	9.4	1.4	0.9	1.0	1.3	0.8	(0.03)	6.6
Others: Apiarists, Hunters, etc., Fisheries, Forestry, Water Conservation and Supply	(a)	6,788	3,572	1,774	393	524	54	39	46	36	55	7	288
	(b)	1.5	1.8	1.6	0.9	1.1	1.1	0.5	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.3	1.2
	(c)		52.6	26.1	5.8	7.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.1	4.3
INDEPENDENT MEANS													
	(a)	3,597	1,747	688	253	419	50	95	25	16	50	52	202
	(b)	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.1	1.3	0.5	0.6	0.1	2.2	0.8
	(c)		48.6	19.2	7.0	11.6	1.4	2.6	0.7	0.4	1.4	1.5	5.6
TOTAL MALE BREADWINNERS		451,403	203,582	109,735	41,886	45,193	5,054	7,577	4,332	2,707	4,638	2,393	24,306
Percentage of Male Breadwinners in each Denomination			45.1	24.3	9.3	10.0	1.1	1.7	1.0	0.6	1.0	0.5	5.4

- (a) The number of all male breadwinners of each denomination in the particular occupational group.
 (b) The percentage of all male breadwinners of each denomination in the particular occupational group.
 (c) The percentage of each denomination within the particular occupational group.

These occupational groups include everyone engaged in the particular calling or industry, employers and employees, office staff, skilled and unskilled workmen.

Source: This table is compiled from the Occupations of the People, Census of N.S.W., 1901, Table IV, pp.786-93.

Footnote: ¹ 132 'Ministering to Religion'.

APPENDIX IIIB

Religion and Occupational Status in Australia, 1921 - with reference to males of select denominations

	Employer		Self Employed		Employee (wages or salary)		Unemployed		Total Males of all ages
	Number	Percentage of all Male Adherents	Number	Percentage of all Male Adherents	Number	Percentage of all Male Adherents	Number	Percentage of all Male Adherents	
Church of England	52,480	4.3	123,768	10.2	517,371	42.7	60,046	5.0	1,212,772
Roman Catholic	19,881	3.5	52,466	9.3	234,117	41.4	35,257	6.2	565,029
Presbyterian	20,576	6.4	37,647	11.7	130,818	40.6	13,472	4.2	322,072
Methodist	16,751	5.5	35,492	11.6	116,720	38.0	10,571	3.4	306,785
Congregational	2,363	6.8	3,315	9.5	15,071	43.1	1,076	3.1	34,931
Baptist	2,617	5.3	4,750	9.6	20,492	41.6	1,815	3.7	49,194
Salvation Army	298	2.0	1,125	7.7	5,293	36.3	701	4.8	14,584
Total males in each category	129,142		296,291		1,148,132		137,675		2,762,870
Percentage of all males in each category		4.7		10.7		41.5		5.0	

Compiled from the Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1921, Table 30, pp.394-5 - Males Classified according to RELIGION in Conjunction with CONJUGAL CONDITION; with EDUCATION; with SCHOOLING; and with GRADES OF OCCUPATION.

APPENDIX IVA

Average Church Attendance in New South Wales at ten yearly intervals, 1850 to 1900

	1850 ¹		1860		1870		1880		1890		1900	
	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance
Church of England	15,789	37.79	28,098	31.42	48,851	28.35	73,682	33.20	80,754	26.84	105,964	27.34
Roman Catholic	10,950	26.21	20,775	23.23	59,165	34.33	69,363 ³	31.26	96,016	31.91	109,046	28.14
Presbyterian	5,455	13.06	11,198	12.52	16,796	9.75	21,449	9.67	32,453	10.79	27,170	7.01
Wesleyan Methodist	7,439	17.80	22,491	25.15	35,000	20.31	35,357	15.93	43,908	14.60	85,744	22.12
Other Methodist	-	-	1,090	1.22	3,998	2.32	10,500	4.73	11,330 ⁵	3.76		
Congregational	1,295	3.10	4,020	4.50	4,950	2.87	8,012 ⁴	3.61	13,004	4.32	13,525	3.49
Baptist	500	1.20	945	1.06	2,162	1.26	2,107	0.95	4,610	1.53	8,416	2.17
Salvation Army	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,508	5.15	31,530	8.13
Others ²	350	0.84	800	0.90	1,398	0.81	1,452	0.65	3,307	1.10	6,183	1.60
TOTAL	41,778	100.00	89,417	100.00	172,320	100.00	221,922	100.00	300,890	100.00	387,578	100.00
Population as at 31 December	187,243		348,546		498,659		747,950		1,121,860		1,364,590	
Percentage average of total population attending church		22.31		25.65		34.56		29.67		26.82		28.40

¹ 1850 includes Moreton Bay (later Queensland).

² 'Others' includes attendances at the Jewish Synagogue.

³ Some districts failed to send returns.

⁴ Figures for the previous year.

⁵ Includes attendances at Bible Christian churches.

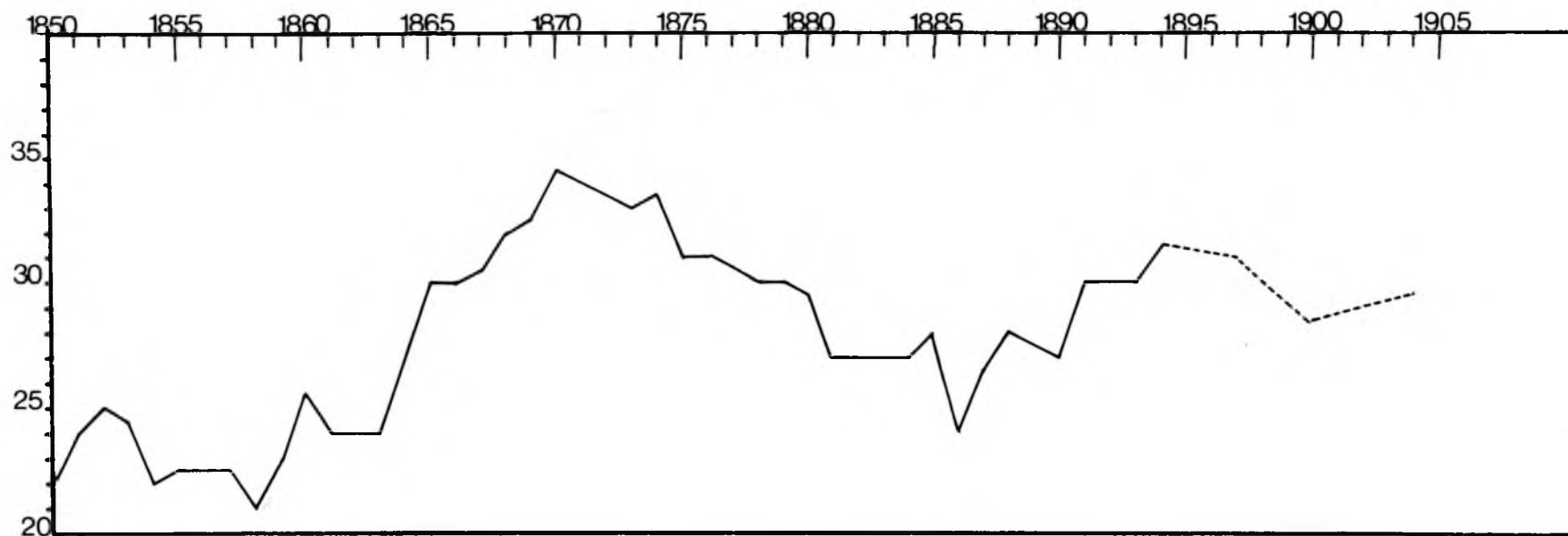
Notes on sources

Church attendances were published annually in the Blue Book up to 1857 and thereafter in the Statistical Register. Figures for the individual churches of each denomination were published up to 1861, but during the 1850s many churches were erratic in submitting returns, and I have interpolated figures where there were obvious omissions for years 1850 to 1860. I have adopted revised figures for Wesleyans and Catholics for the year 1890, and for several denominations in 1900. See Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1891, p.438; 1904, p.729.

Population figures as at 31 December each year, except 1850, are from the Statistical Register, N.S.W. 1860, Statistical View of the Progress of New South Wales from the year 1821 to 1860 inclusive, after p.24; Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1910, Population-Comparative Table, 1860-1901, p.923. The population for 1850 is from the Census of N.S.W., 1851 (taken 1 March 1851). The population recorded for the colony as at 31 December 1850 included the Port Phillip District, and when the population for that district is deducted the result (195,764) is considerably in excess of the figure for 1 March 1851.

APPENDIX IVB

Church Attendances as a Percentage of the total Population, 1850 to 1894 and 1897, 1900, 1904



Note: In 1886 attendances were for the Principal Services only

Sources: See notes to Appendix IVA

APPENDIX V

Sunday School Attendances in New South Wales at ten yearly intervals, 1860 to 1900

	1860		1870		1880		1890		1900	
	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance	Number	% of total attendance
Church of England	6,065	28.74	16,220	31.00	26,843	37.08	36,885	30.26	43,329	33.19
Roman Catholic	3,886	18.41	12,972	24.79	17,372	24.00	25,170	20.65	29,487	22.59
Presbyterian	1,578	7.48	5,085	9.72	6,426	8.88	13,389	10.99	13,782	10.56
Wesleyan Methodist	7,096	33.62	12,008	22.95	12,433	17.17	21,454	17.60)		
Other Methodist	706	3.35	1,972	3.77	4,130	5.70	8,419 ³	6.91	26,356	20.19
Congregational	1,537	7.28	2,864	5.47	4,213	5.82	7,709	6.33	7,207	5.52
Baptist	191	0.90	796	1.52	678	0.94	2,156	1.77	3,312	2.54
Salvation Army							5,721	4.69	4,933 ⁴	3.78
Others ¹	45	0.21	410	0.78	298	0.41	982	0.80	2,131	1.63
TOTAL	21,104 ²	100.00	52,327	100.00	72,393	100.00	121,885	100.00	130,537	100.00
Name of children between 5 and 15 at each decennial census, 1861-1901	77,381		128,199		187,497		267,670		328,309	
Percentage of eligible children attending Sunday School		27.27		40.81		38.61		45.53		39.76

¹ From 1870 these figures include the Jewish Sabbath School, but figures for 'Others' were generally incomplete.

² Returns for several denominations in 1860 were incomplete.

³ Includes Bible Christian Sunday Schools.

⁴ Includes children not enrolled in Salvation Army Sunday Schools.

Sources: Sunday School attendances were published annually in the Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1860 to 1894; attendances for 1900 were published in the Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1901.

APPENDIX VI

Church buildings in New South Wales in 1880 and 1890 - a comparison of the returns in the Statistical Register with figures obtained from denominational sources and other estimates

	1880		1890	
	Statistical Register	Denominational sources etc.	Statistical Register	Denominational sources etc.
Church of England Diocese of Sydney				
Metropolitan	50	50	89	89
Country	<u>87</u> ¹	<u>85</u>	<u>103</u>	<u>103</u>
	137	135	192	192
Newcastle	88	[88]	131	102
Goulburn	97 ²	93	115	111
Bathurst	84	53	108	79
Grafton and Armidale	43	[43]	65	[65]
Riverina (1884)	-	-	<u>32</u>	<u>31</u>
	449	412	643	580
Roman Catholic Diocese of Sydney				
Metropolitan	37	37	56	56
Country	<u>80</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>84</u>
	117	117	149	140
Maitland	52	40	58	47
Goulburn	44	35	64	51
Bathurst	57	45	69	56
Armidale (exclusive of Grafton district)	23	[23]	42	39
Wilcannia (1887)	-	-	17	12
Grafton (1887)	-	<u>15</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>27</u>
	293	275	438	372
Presbyterian Church of N.S.W.				
Metropolitan	18	-	33	-
Country	<u>127</u>	-	<u>265</u>	-
	145	113	298	250
Wesleyan Methodist				
Metropolitan	37	35	-	51
Country	<u>253</u>	<u>252</u>	-	<u>336</u>
	290	287	387	387
Other Methodist				
Metropolitan	18	[18]	24	[24]
Country	<u>52</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>81</u>
	70	[70]	105	[105]
Congregational Union				
Metropolitan	31	22	39	35
Country	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>20</u>
	49	38	66	55
Baptist Union				
Metropolitan	3	3	7	10
Country	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>23</u>
	13	13	22	33
Salvation Army (established 1882)				
Metropolitan	-	-	25	[25]
Country	-	-	<u>74</u>	<u>74</u>
			99	[99]
Other Denominations				
Metropolitan	8	[8]	18	[18]
Country	<u>24</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>49</u>
	32	32	67	[67]
	1,341	1,240	2,125	1,948

¹ Includes two union churches.

² Includes three union churches and one Presbyterian church.

Notes on sources:

(a) Statistical Register, N.S.W., 1880, pp.16-7; 1890, pp.383-5.

(b) Denominational sources and other estimates.

Church of England

The Ecclesiastical Statistics for Easter of each year, published annually in the Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney, provided the number of churches and other buildings used for worship. However, I have taken the figures from the Statistical Register as a more reliable estimate for the diocese of Sydney in 1880, since the Ecclesiastical Statistics for Easter 1881 listed 68 consecrated churches and 113 other buildings used for worship but did not distinguish licensed buildings. The returns for Easter 1891 listed 192 churches and licensed buildings, the same figure as the Statistical Register gave for 1890. I could not obtain reliable figures for the diocese of Newcastle in 1880, but churches and chapels were included for the first time in the Annual Statistical Returns for 1890, in Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Newcastle, 1891: there were 95 churches listed but I have added seven to account for parishes which omitted to send returns. Figures for the diocese of Goulburn are compiled from lists supplied by Archdeacon A. Harris, Registrar of the diocese. Those for the diocese of Bathurst are based on the General Returns for 1878-9 in Minutes of the Synod of Bathurst, 1879, which listed 47 licensed places of worship, and additional information supplied by Miss Ruth Teale. Mrs S.G. Hooper, Registrar of the diocese of Riverina supplied information for that diocese. I could not obtain independent figures for the diocese of Grafton and Armidale, but the Registrar of the diocese of Armidale considers the figures in the Statistical Register 'reasonably accurate'.

Roman Catholic

Mgr C.J. Duffy, Catholic Archivist, has confirmed the accuracy of the figures in the Statistical Register for the diocese of Sydney in 1880. Authorities in other dioceses have been unable to provide figures beyond those in the Statistical Register. But these are mostly inflated as comparison with the figures obtained from the Australasian Catholic Directory for 1890 indicates. The figures in the Statistical Register probably included some school buildings used as stations for Mass. I have supplied a figure for the Grafton district in 1880 which was not included in the returns for the diocese of Armidale, and on the basis of the returns in the Directory I have revised the figures for the dioceses of Maitland, Goulburn and Bathurst in 1880. See Australasian Catholic Directory, 1890, Summary of the Ecclesiastical Statistics of Australasia, after p.175. (The Directory was first published in 1886).

Presbyterian

Until 1900 the Statistical Returns, published annually in the Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly, included the number of charges and preaching centres, but not church buildings; however, in 1880 the Statistics Committee reported that there were 113 churches belonging to the denomination. The figure of 250 for 1890 is a calculated guess. The Statistical Returns for 1900 listed 298 church buildings, the same figure as the Statistical Register provided for 1890. See Statistical Returns, 1900, M.P.G.A., 1901, pp.138-45.

Wesleyan

The number of churches was published in the General Returns of the Minutes of the Annual Conference.

Congregational

The Congregational Year Book published lists of churches and the dates of their foundation.

Baptist

I have compiled figures for this denomination from the account of the churches of the Baptist Union in A.C. Prior, op. cit., pp.82-3, 260-312.

Other figures

Where I have been unable to obtain independent figures I have used figures from the Statistical Register (enclosed in square brackets) to arrive at an alternative but nevertheless approximate estimate of the number of church buildings.

Bibliography

- I Manuscripts
- II Official Publications
- III Newspapers
 - 1. Secular
 - 2. Religious
- IV Contemporary publications
 - 1. Denominational publications
 - 2. Books, articles and pamphlets
- V Later Works
 - 1. Books
 - 2. Articles
 - 3. Theses.

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Correspondence. Letters of Bishops R. Dunne, J. Murray and M. Quinn to Moran were consulted.

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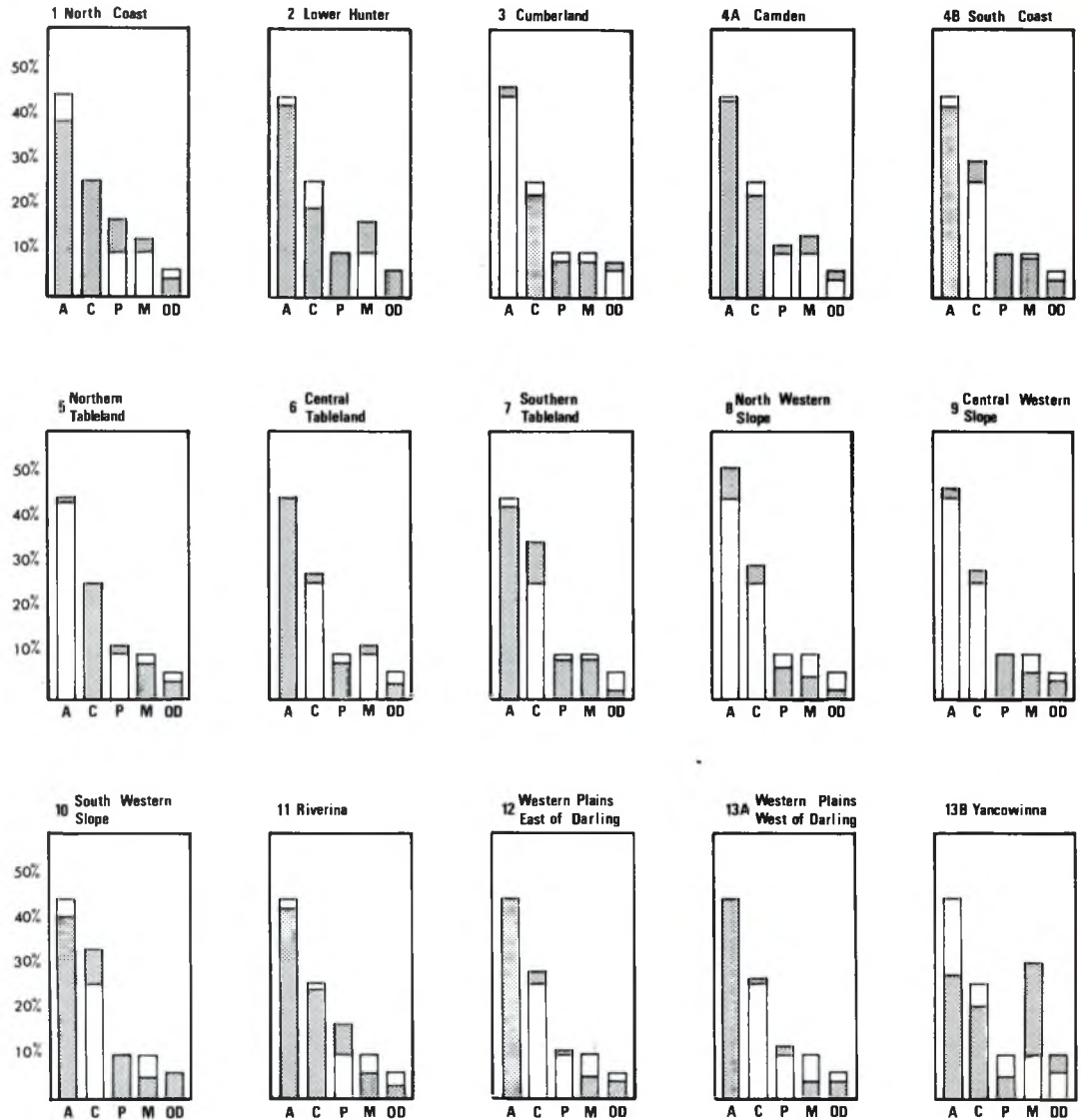
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DIAGRAM OF THE REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE DENOMINATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES IN 1891



A Anglican P Presbyterian OD Other Denominations and unspecified Protestants
C Catholic M Wesleyan and Other Methodists

Above average is represented by shading at top of bar
Below average is represented by blank at top of bar