The Oxford Movement

The Oxford Movement transformed the nineteenth-century Church of England with a renewed conception of itself as a spiritual body. Initiated in the early 1830s by members of the University of Oxford, it was a response to threats to the established Church posed by British Dissenters, Irish Catholics, Whig and Radical politicians, and the predominant evangelical ethos — what Newman called 'the religion of the day'. The Tractarians believed they were not simply addressing difficulties within their national Church, but recovering universal principles of the Christian faith. To what extent were their beliefs and ideals communicated globally? Was missionary activity the product of the movement's distinctive principles? Did their understanding of the Church promote, or inhibit, closer relations among the churches of the global Anglican Communion? This volume addresses these questions and more with a series of case studies involving Europe and the English-speaking world during the first century of the movement.
CHAPTER 5

The Australian bishops and the Oxford Movement

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A recent article in the *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* has argued that the traditional Church of England understanding of the episcopate, and the understanding enshrined in the law of the Episcopal Church of the USA, might substantially differ. The author concluded that "The Church of England still essentially enjoys the hierarchical structure that it has inherited from the western Church ... and its ecclesiology flows from that structure [while] the Episcopal Church still essentially has the democratic and egalitarian structure conceived in the wake of the American Revolution."

This chapter will argue that the Australian bishops, while subject to similar socio-political trends as their American confrères, maintained the traditional Church of England understanding and indeed strengthened it. While allowing a clear role for lay participation, the Australian bishop is not merely a church officer empowered to ordain, confirm and oversee a particular church; the bishop has a unique authority to witness to the faith of the whole Church. Moreover, in this development of the Australian episcopacy, the Church in the Colonies was strengthened and encouraged by the Tractarians.

For the purposes of this chapter, the 'Australian bishops' are the six who met in Conference in Sydney from 1 October to 1 November 1850. William Grant Broughton, bishop of Sydney, the senior of the group, was consecrated in 1836; Francis Russell Nixon of Tasmania and George Augustus Selwyn of New Zealand were both consecrated in 1841, and the remaining three, Augustus Short of Adelaide, Charles Perry of Melbourne and William Tyrrell of Newcastle, were consecrated in 1847.

When Broughton first came to Australia as an archdeacon in 1829, the generous provisions of the Church and School Corporation were still in

place: the Church of England enjoyed a unique role and magnificent financial support. This support, however, was formally and finally revoked by Order-in-Council shortly after Broughton's arrival. In response, he undertook the long, arduous journey home in 1834—6 to seek government redress. His quest failed. But while he was in England, on 14 February 1836, Broughton was consecrated bishop along with George Mountain of Montreal. It is difficult to discern any connection between this relatively quiet event in Lambeth Palace chapel and Tractarian stirrings in Oxford. Rather, Broughton's consecration was political pragmatism at its best: the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, saw Broughton's appointment as a solution to 'the inconvenience arising from the necessity of appeal in certain cases to the Bishop of Calcutta ... [and] for the maintenance of clerical discipline and good order.' Broughton, an old-fashioned high churchman, came under the influence of Tractarian thought through a fortuitous meeting with Edward Coleridge at Eton. This marked the beginning of a life-long friendship in which the younger man gently guided the older, indeed, to this Coleridge connection, more than any other, we owe the importation of Tractarian ideals to Australia. This was 'networking' at its best: family connections, familiarity with and close proximity to the leading Tractarians. Coleridge, a man of boundless energy and enthusiasm, proved an invaluable conduit in transferring ideas. Three years after their first meeting, Broughton, who had relied so much on government support, told Coleridge that:

My augury is that before [long] we shall be called to defend Christian truth not in alliance, incorporation, union or connection with the State, but in positive opposition to it. I think it is better not to shut our eyes against these conclusions because they are disagreeable ones; but to make our preparations betimes 'that we may be able to withstand the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' My reliance, I assure you, begins to rest very little on external aid, but rather on that internal strength of the Church itself.

Broughton was increasingly clear that such 'internal strength' rested in large part on 'the nature and effect of the Holy Sacraments, the office of the ministry, the constitution and authority of the Church.' In the midst of a political and religious 'Babel,' in which each religious tradition sought its place in the sun, the Tractarians provided a discernable Anglican identity. Broughton unashamedly relied on them:

[...]

Broughton told Gladstone that one of his chief aims was to create an impressive visible presence of the Church in Sydney. This was not merely a question of 'degree of architectural pretension.' An impressive visible presence needed substance, and Broughton found this substance in the Tractarian teachings. To three of the four churches in his diocese, Broughton appointed young Tractarians, the best talent available: Robert Allwood at St James, King Street, William Walsh at Christ Church, St Lawrence (both still Anglican oases in the inner city), and Robert Sconce at St Andrew's (the cathedral, now with its altar removed). The fourth church went to William Cowper, an older evangelical who was already firmly ensconced at St Philip's. Broughton confided that Cowper was of the Calvinistic school, but very much of this has worn off (to which I am not without a persuasion that his intercourse with me may have contributed), but yet he is not without a holy horror still, of the Tracts, or rather what he has heard reported of them.

In his Tractarian sympathies, Broughton's concern was always for what might be useful for the Australian scene. For instance, the fracas over the publication in 1838 of Froude's Remains left him unmoved, despite the horrified reports from so influential a correspondent as the old high churchman H. H. Norris of Hackney. Broughton's interest centred on the wealth of theology contained in The Tracts for the Times, the various volumes of sermons and The Library of the Fathers. Not least of the services Coleridge rendered Broughton was the amount of patristic literature he collected from Newman, Pusey, Keble and others; this collection

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1 The Church and School Corporation, established by Letters Patent in 1836 granting the Church of England one seventh of the surveyed land in the colony, Stephen Judd and Kenneth Cable, Sydney Anglicans (Sydney, 2000), p. 6.
2 Lord Glenelg to Bourke, 16 December 1835, Mitchell Library, Sydney, A 1272, fol. 797.
3 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 14 October 1839, MCL.
5 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 3 April 1840, MCL.
6 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 19 October 1839, MCL.
8 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 14 February 1842, MCL.
9 H. H. Norris to W. G. Broughton, 22 March 1843, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Ms. 915.
now forms the nucleus of the Moore Theological College Library, Sydney. Broughton described himself as being in the midst of numerous occupations, planning for the future 'for my successors to give [the] finishing stroke' to the 'Churches, parsonages, Schools — a Cathedral, a College (added) and a Library'. And Broughton was clear that all of this rested on a firm theological foundation. Here is the *via media* in practice:

With regard to the Library I am very much more and more convinced that familiarity with ancient literature generally diffused among the clergy, will alone render them able defenders of the evidences of revealed religion against Deists, and of its doctrines against Unitarians; and more over that we must carefully study those monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity with which you have supplied us, if we wish to find and keep the true path of the Church of England; which directs us to preserve our distance from Geneva without running, as some seem half inclined, back to Rome.11

Broughton found that this stress on patristics offered a practical foundation for his mission, whereas Gladstone’s book, *The State in Its Relations with the Church* (1838), while it placed Anglicans ‘under the most weighty obligations’ of gratitude to the author, was ‘too artificially made up to bear the wear and tear of active service’.12 Given his dependence on Tractarian theology, it is little wonder that Broughton was slow to qualify his respect for the movement. When Tract 90 was published, nearly two years elapsed before he could obtain a copy. Meanwhile he publicly stated: ‘I know nothing and I suspect nothing to have been written by any whose kindred with us we acknowledge, which is in any degree contrary to the holy principles which our Reformers taught, and in the defence of which they died.’13

When he eventually read Tract 90, he tactfully distinguished between the position articulated by William Palmer in his *Narrative of Events* and the extreme views which he labelled ‘Oxford Principles’.14 One of the great constants in Broughton’s mental armoury was an unwavering hostility to anything that smacked of Romanism.

On the wider ecclesial scene, Broughton gave warm support to the proposed St Augustine’s College, Canterbury. Broughton thought that the college ‘must be under the control of one versed in Colonial affairs’. While he suggested the name of William Hart Coleridge, bishop of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, who became the first principal, one suspects

that Broughton would have been very happy to be invited — though he dutifully added, ‘I look for nothing and seek nothing’.15

The Colonial Bishops’ Fund was another venture which drew enthusiastic Tractarian support, and one in which Broughton played a hitherto unrecognized part. He wrote to Dr Pusey urging the need to increase the colonial episcopate.16 Pusey, for his part, then exerted influence on Bishop Blomfield of London, who was a major force behind the plan.17 The proposal took definite shape with the meeting at Willis’s Rooms on 27 April 1841.18

The meeting was addressed by such Tractarian stalwarts as William Gladstone, J. D. Coleridge (later Baron Coleridge) and Henry Edward Manning. George Augustus Selwyn, one of the first appointments made possible by the new Fund, later observed that Manning’s speech ‘never faded from my mind’ and was largely responsible for his decision to be a missionary.19

Shortly before leaving for New Zealand in 1843, Selwyn visited Oxford and met with Newman and others. The meeting was arranged by the Scottish Tractarian lawyer James Robert Hope (later Hope-Scott), who told Newman that Selwyn wanted to see ‘all the Oxford men’. Hope thought it would be preferable that ‘as many good men and true as will come’ should be invited to one meal and ‘moderates, or whatever they are to be called’ to another.20 Newman duly invited John Keble to come to Oxford for the meeting.21 It is clear that Selwyn made no effort to dissemble his Tractarian sympathies in the months following the publication of Tract 90.

The other Australasian appointment resulting from the Colonial Bishops’ Fund initiative was that of Francis Nixon of Tasmania. A committee was formed to raise funds for the diocese of Tasmania in May 1842 and it was a decidedly pro-Tractarian group: Joshua Watson, Edward Coleridge, Lord Courtney, T. D. Acland, T. Alleys and W. J. E. Bennett.22 The Colonial Bishops’ Fund was indeed part of a wider and fast-growing

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11 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 25 February 1839, MCL.
12 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 14 October 1839, MCL.
13 W. G. Broughton, *Charge Delivered to the Clergy of New South Wales, 6 October 1841* (Sydney, 1842), p. 33.
14 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 4 May 1844, MCL.
enthusiasm for missions. The appointment of Nixon to Tasmania was clearly the suggestion of a committee of bishops. The new government was prepared to accept the nomination to the new sees of Tasmania and New Zealand. There is no indication that Broughton was in any way consulted; for his part he thought Corderie would be appointed and advised him not to accept but wait for a 'higher and more conspicuous dignity' (by which he obviously meant Sydney).

The appointment of Nixon was hardly surprising. Although he had been at Oxford before the Oxford Movement began, his published works prior to his consecration as bishop indicate his Tractarian sympathies. He had achieved some prominence as one of the Six Preachers at Canterbury Cathedral. He was certainly no uncritical admirer of the Reformation, believing that one of its effects was 'to destroy, in great part the authoritative teaching of the Church'. Nixon never disguised his support for Tractarian views. In his published Canterbury sermon he lauded Pusey and rejoiced that the Tracts for the Times were having a marked influence. By the time he published his Lectures on the Catechism, prior to his departure for Tasmania, he was even more decidedly Tractarian. Among other things, he argued for a daily celebration of the Eucharist. Nixon never lost his great respect for the 'extraordinary energy that has latterly marked the efforts of the Church at home', although he did distance himself from the extremists 'who have exhibited a lamentable tendency to touch, with undue tenderness, on the glaring defects and corruptions of Rome'. Hostile elements in the colonial press found in Nixon's published work a large store of material to criticise. For instance, after quoting Nixon's claim that in the Eucharist 'a great and mysterious change takes place in the consecration of the bread and wine, a change of character but not of substance', the Colonial Times concluded that this was 'just as bad as the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but not half so honestly stated'. This particular journal was typical in asserting that episcopacy was 'more calculated to alienate, than foster and encourage, true religion'. It maintained an unrelenting hostility to bishops whom it portrayed as those 'greedy, idle, proud, overbearing, and often dissolute men who profanely claim to be the successors of Our Lord’s Apostles'. The editor of the Colonial Times, although not particularly perceptive in matters theological, confidently pronounced Nixon a 'Puseyist'. In each colony these charges were repeated ad nauseam. Charles Perry, bishop of Melbourne, was spared these relentless attacks, and William Tyrell, bishop of Newcastle, was apparently never subjected to them. But the other Tractarian bishops faced a hostile press.

Nixon was to endure many difficulties in Tasmania. It was one thing to come armed with a high theology of episcopacy buttressed by an authoritarian temperament. It was quite another to assert that authority over a largely recalcitrant clergy. He also faced serious legal difficulties. It appeared that his Letters Patent did not, in fact, ensure that he was competent to establish a consistory court through which he could discipline clergy. A visit to the United Kingdom in 1846 did not result in any support from the government, whose only suggestion was that he should have recourse to the Colonial Legislative Council; the very idea horrified Nixon. The only alternative was for the bishops and clerical representatives in the various colonies to 'frame a body of canons which would be applicable to the exigencies of our missionary church'.

In the event, the Oxford Movement provided a way forward. Nixon's younger clerics were of a marked contrast in character to the older. Foremost among them was Fitzherbert Marriott (1811–90), a cousin of Charles Marriott and an Oriel man who is often mentioned in the Newman's letters and diaries as being present at breakfast or dinner with Newman; he was, indeed, another instance of successful Tractarian networking. When he returned to the colony in 1846 Marriott brought with him six young clergymen, well educated, hard working and all Tractarians. They gave unstinting loyalty to Nixon, and their collective careers were one of the success stories of the catholic revival within Anglicanism.

The next three dioceses to be established in the 1840s were Adelaide, Melbourne and Newcastle. In none of these was the Church so well developed as in the older centres of Sydney and Hobart. Broughton’s fertile mind had even toyed with the idea of extending the episcopate on his own authority, and he did venture to New Zealand before Selwyn's
appointment, though his Letters Patent did not authorize him to do so. Another problem exercised Broughton: the Roman Catholics had appointed a bishop in Adelaide before the Anglicans. This ‘holy rivalry’ to be first past the episcopal post was a feature of colonial life, having little to do with pastoral needs.

Determined not to be caught again, Broughton acted on his own initiative and suggested that one of his clergy, Robert Allwood, be appointed bishop of Newcastle. Allwood was, as already mentioned, Rector of St James in King Street, Sydney. Broughton had earlier described him as ‘a staunch Tractarian but sound and cautious’. This ‘soundness’, coupled with Broughton’s offer to surrender half his £2,000 salary to endow the diocese, was appreciated by the government. It helped enormously to have Gladstone at the Colonial Office from December 1845 to July 1846. All was effortlessly decided. Then Allwood, for his part (appropriately), expressed himself unworthy for so high an office. Broughton completely misinterpreted these pious sentiments and had the already prepared Letters Patent rescinded. Broughton would not recommend any other Colonial cleric. However, Allwood’s nomination proved a very successful non-event: a reception was given for him ‘on the occasion of his not being appointed to the bishopric of Newcastle’.

Gladstone’s departure from the Colonial Office in 1846 meant that a window of opportunity had closed. While the government was prepared to accept Broughton’s cut in salary, and welcomed funds raised by the Colonial Bishops’ Fund, it was adamant that the Crown would make appointments. Moreover, James Stephen at the Colonial Office had little time for an episcopacy based on ‘such elements of mysticism and sacerdotal supremacy as are to be extorted from the Anglican liturgy’. In his view the episcopal office was one created by the state. This did not augur well for any further colonial appointments. On the other hand, it did not mean that William Howley, the archbishop of Canterbury, was a mere cipher. Although it is clear that Archbishop Howley did not have the final word, he frequently made clear his preference for the appointment of one who had ‘the same principles as the Bishop [Broughton]’.

As various names were canvassed, it was Stephen who suggested Charles Perry as a man of fortune and of most remarkable munificence in the use of it. He was to assume the poorest of the three new dioceses with but three churches and three clergy. However, rumours of the horrors of Puseyism had reached distant Melbourne. An anxious layman wrote to Broughton: ‘There is much said about it and against it by people here [and it is said] that Puseyism is next door to Popery. ... I will never go to Church if [our new clergyman] is a Puseyite’. Local fears, however, were soon assuaged by Perry’s warm endorsement of the Bible Society. Unlike Broughton, who had laboured long to articulate a separate Anglican identity, Perry rejoiced in the opportunity of cooperating with Evangelical Protestant Dissenters. His impeccable credentials were confirmed shortly after his arrival by his public rebuff of greetings from the local Roman Catholic priest, Patrick Geoghegan. Perry was clearly ‘an uncompromising anti-Puseyite’. His theological position was clear: ‘While retaining, as I have always done, the right, and deeply impressed with the duty, of private judgement in religious matters, I became practically identified with [the evangelical school] in all their undertakings. In practice, as a bishop, Perry could be as authoritarian as any. But this was certainly not due to any exalted notion of the episcopal office. Moreover, from a Tractarian perspective his sacramental theology was questionable: any admission of a doctrine of the real presence, he claimed, had only led to ‘unscripural assumption of dignity and power by the clergy’.

Tractarians for their part lamented Perry’s appointment.

Of the four consecrated Bishops, one is an avowed maintainer of ... doctrinal errors ... We ask, then, in the name of all that is consistent, what possible right can Churchmen have to give an unqualified ‘God speed!’ to such a Consecration? ... We earnestly deplore any supineness on the part of our Church at large in conniving at the future admission of these errors into the colonial Episcopate.

Broughton, too, had reservations. Perry’s sentiments ‘find no echo in my mind or principles’. But he relied on his powers of persuasion and wide

45 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 15 October 1844, MCL.
46 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 14 February 1845, MCL.
48 Sydney Morning Herald, 8 October 1847.
50 J. Stephen to J. Venn, 3 June 1842, Church Missionary Society, London, Venna MSS., C.29.
51 W. Howley to Lord Grey, 21 December 1846, Grey Papers, University of Durham Library, GRE/ Bls03/8-10.
54 Argus (Melbourne), 12 October 1847.
55 Ibid., 12 October 1847.
56 Port Phillip Patriot, 20 February 1848.
58 Charles Perry, A Catechism of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper (Melbourne, 1876), p. 15.
experience: 'I hope he will come by Sydney that he may have the opportunity at least of benefiting by warnings which my experience will justify me in communicating.\(^{36}\)

If Perry was something of the 'odd man out', the other two 1847 appointments did not disappoint Broughton. Augustus Short's promotion to Adelaide came after protracted efforts to secure an endowment for the bishopric. Plans for both a diocese in Adelaide and a diocese of Tasmania had been mooted in the early 1840s. After lengthy correspondence, the irrepressible Edward Coleridge induced Baroness Angella Burdett Coutts to donate £35,000 to endow the sees of Adelaide and Cape Town. Coleridge schooled the Baroness in suitably Tractarian sentiments. He wrote to her to disapprove and dissuade you from supporting the Church Missionary Society, as it is called, but which really does not deserve that name, seeing it has [numerous] supporters who hate Episcopacy, deny Apostolical Succession and do not hold some of the most sacred and essential doctrines of Christianity.\(^{39}\)

With the Burdett Coutts bequest in place, arrangements for the new Australian dioceses were completed in record time. It is not clear who nominated Short. It might have been Benjamin Harrison. In any event, Lord Grey (the Colonial Secretary) accepted this nomination without demur. Short having been Bampton lecturer the previous year and being related to the bishop of St Asaph seemed qualified enough.\(^{33}\) Archbishop Howley ranked him 'considerably above the level of those who can in general be considered to make the sacrifice required' to assume a colonial bishopric.\(^{37}\)

Short was a not-uncritical follower of the Tractarians. He consistently distanced himself from any criticism of the Reformation\(^{44}\) and voted to condemn Ward's Ideal of the Christian Church, though he did not agree with disciplinary action taken against Ward.\(^{39}\) On the other hand, he took part in what the historian of the movement, Ynge Briloth, regarded as the most important Tractarian project – The Library of the Fathers.\(^{40}\)

Short began a translation of St Hilary's On the Trinity. Regrettably this was never completed, though he did complete a considerable amount of work. Perhaps Short was discouraged by Newman's meticulous demands as editor.\(^{47}\)

Rather more controversial was Short's written defence of Tract 90. This was never published, but the manuscript was used extensively by F. T. Whittington, Short's first biographer.\(^{46}\) It has not, however, been located among any of Short's extant papers. In this defence of Tract 90 Short made clear his belief in a Church that taught with authority:

> How is it objectionable to say that the Article teaches that the Church derives 'the faith' wholly from Scripture, and yet not solely from Scripture? Do not Article viii, the Homilies, in every page, and the Injunctions of 1577, show plainly that the Church does use the medium of Catholic consent to ascertain the right interpretation of Scripture. Have we not derived our connected view of the Articles of our systematic faith from the Apostles' Creed? If so, we cannot say that Scripture is the sole, though it is the supreme Rule of Faith. That rule is indeed wholly Scriptural and yet not solely obtained by us from Scripture.\(^{70}\)

Two friends dissuaded Short from showing his defence to A. C. Tait (one of the four tutors who made the first move against Tract 50).\(^{49}\) Had the defence been more widely known, it is doubtful that Short would have been considered suitable, even for a colonial diocese.

In 1846, as noted previously, Short was Bampton lecturer at Oxford and in that turbulent time sought to take an irenic approach in his lectures, which were published under the title The Witness of the Spirit with Our Spirit: None the less, Short's basic Tractarian approach was evident, and reflected in part in his firm belief in baptismal regeneration and in part in his views, similar to those of Newman and Isaac Williams, that our knowledge of things divine depends largely on our obedience to the will of God and that for this we need the Church, ministry and sacraments.\(^{50}\)

The last of those who were to meet in Sydney in 1850 was William Tyrrell of Newcastle. At the time of his appointment the vast diocese of Newcastle had more clergy churches and people than Melbourne. It is not clear how Tyrrell came to be appointed. He had declined an invitation to accompany his close friend Selwyn to New Zealand, but was willing to accept the diocese of Newcastle, once Robert Allwood's nomination had been...
withdrawn. His bishop, Charles Sumner of Winchester, thought highly of him.\(^6\) Once in Australia he enjoyed easy relations with Broughton, who judged him 'an active minded man: full of vigour and indefatigable in his exertions. We agree most cordially,'\(^6\) Tyrell, for his part, thought much of 'the noble Bishop of Sydney', and was willing to accept him as 'a guide and director on all occasions of doubt or difficulty.'\(^6\) Everything known about Tyrell confirms Broughton's judgement: he was a man of single purpose and dedication to the task. The wife of Broughton's successor, Mrs Jane Sophia Barker, confided to her diary of Tyrell: 'he is all business ... with a downright look that seemed to say "I will work and no man shall hinder me."'\(^6\) His theology was clearly that of the Tractarians and his spirituality was to match. He wrote in his diary on the feast of St Peter in 1853:

Rise at 5 or as soon after as I wake and give the first two best hours of the day to devotional reading of God's word and to meditation on the duties of my office and to the employment of the present day.\(^6\)

This was no idle boast. His diary gives vivid testimony of his daily dedication to lectio divina in the best Benedictine tradition and to the offices of the Church. This celibate was deeply dedicated to his work as a missionary bishop and always refused any other post. If his library reveals him as one deeply steeped in the writings of the Tractarians,\(^6\) his life marks him as one who could well be considered the ideal bishop.

These are the six bishops who met in October/November 1850 in Sydney. If the movement in England was initially transferred from the University of Oxford to the parishes, in Australia, Tractarianism at this stage was still very much an episoden phenomenon.

It was becoming increasingly clear that the major challenge to the movement was not the conversion of Newman to Rome or the writings of the younger 'extremists' but rather the debate over whether sacramental grace was a reality or not, and whether the bishops could give a clear lead

\(^{61}\) C. Sumner to W. Howley, 8 March 1847, Grey Papers, University of Durham Library, GRE/ B80/B46/4.

\(^{62}\) W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 4 July 1848, MCL.


\(^{64}\) Mrs Jane Sophia Barker, Diary, 7 July 1855, quoted in J. K. Cable, 'Mrs Barker and Her Diary', Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, 54 (1968), pp. 67-70; at p. 78.

\(^{65}\) W. Tyrell, Diary, University of Newcastle Library, N.S.W., b 658, fol. 190.

\(^{66}\) The library is in the Archives of the University of Newcastle, NSW. The library contains seventeen works by John Henry Newman, more numerous than those of any other single author; thirty-eight volumes of The Library of the Fathers, six volumes of The Tracts for the Times as well as works by other Tractarians.

in asserting the essentials of the Catholic faith. That, at any rate, was the way the Christian Remembrancer saw it: 'It is, and has long been acknowledged, that the great battle of the Church of England will be fought upon the cardinal doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism.\(^8\) The Gorham decision of 1850 offered just such an opportunity for battle. In the aftermath of the judgement Gladstone was foremost among those who wanted an authoritative episcopal statement.

While the right of English bishops to meet in synod was problematic at this time, there was no reason why colonial bishops could not do so. Broughton often mentioned to Coleridge his desire to consult with fellow bishops with the aim of 'coming to a decided understanding with one another as to the Church principles upon which we would act together.'\(^9\) This desire assumed greater urgency in the months after the Gorham decision. Gladstone suggested to Selwyn that the colonial bishops might make a statement on baptism. Once Broughton learnt of this he reacted promptly. He now hoped to hold a synod:

When I trust by God's grace, prompting and directing our determination, we may be enabled to fulfil, not unworthily, the duty which at this crisis we owe to the Church Universal; and more especially to that division of it in which we are ministers.\(^7\)

Broughton informed Gladstone that although he did not know exactly what his fellow bishops thought of the controversy, they 'are perfectly qualified mentally to deal with a question so momentous as this [and would give] what they may hold to be the just interpretation of the formulae of the Church.'\(^7\) Broughton apparently had great confidence in the episcopate and relished the controversy. He wondered why people in England had not protested more vigorously at what he considered the lack of judicial competence of the Privy Council in such ecclesiastical matters. He was confident that the Australasian bishops could act independently. 'We shall be quite free as an assembly of bishops to consult immediately.'\(^7\) Sadly, Broughton's hopes of episcopal unanimity were shattered when he read the Melbourne Church of England Messenger.\(^7\) For it was revealed there that Perry had different ideas concerning baptism.


\(^{62}\) W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 21 December 1843, MCL.

\(^{63}\) W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 10 July 1850, MCL.

\(^{64}\) W. G. Broughton to W. L. Gladstone, 23 August 1850, BL, Add Ms 44,969, fols. 310-12.

\(^{65}\) W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 15 August 1850, MCL.

\(^{66}\) W. G. Broughton to W. Tyrell, 10 September 1850, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Ms. 913.
Not all the difficulties were theological. There was still some lingering uncertainty as to whether the colonial bishops could legally meet. However, the Attorney General made it clear that in his view the praemunire statutes did not apply to the colonies. Broughton none the less thought it better not to call the proposed Sydney meeting a ‘Synod’ though in fact he referred to it as such in private correspondence.

I have treated the Conference and its aftermath in another place. The interesting fact is that the Australasian bishops did meet and did make a pronouncement on a doctrinal issue. In so readily agreeing to pronounce on the reality of baptismal grace, the bishops clearly understood their task as to witness to the faith once given to the apostles. They undertook this task despite unrelenting criticism verging on abuse mounted by the popular press; and while they were sensitive to (and later accommodating of) the role of the laity in the Church, they still calmly and deliberately exercised their unique authority. Writing to Gladstone, Broughton observed that:

We have endeavoured to do our duty by declaring such a declaration of our sentiments on the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration as will evince, we hope, our ... adherence to the true faith of the Church and our resolution to support it by our authority ... [document damaged] Melbourne ... judged it right to make a declaration of his own views separate from his brethren. That he should have done so is a cause of infinite regret to me.

Despite the lack of unanimity, Broughton felt a justifiable pride in having gathered his colleagues and played some part in the Tractarian story. One can argue that these early Australian Anglicans were not a mere addendum to the Tractarian story, but an integral part in it. They displayed something of the extent to which the Oxford reawakening was stirring throughout the Anglican world. However, it is also evident that as one combs through the writings of these several Australian bishops, one finds nothing of originality added to the deposit of Tractarian theology. What they did contribute was more in the area of praxis. They duly addressed a matter of ‘doctrine’ and did so on the basis of their ‘authority’. In a period enthralled by the zest of democratic constitution-making, they took a position which appeared unpopular and which caused them no little trouble. Indeed, Broughton lamented, ‘we are consigned over to democracy unmitigated, without any hope of escape’. Yet they calmly and deliberately exercised their corporate authority.

Moreover, twenty-two years before the cable link with the Australian colonies was established, and seventeen years prior to the first Lambeth Conference, these six bishops overcame the tyranny of distance and thought of themselves, and acted together, as part of the one Church Catholic. Gladstone certainly thought these Australian bishops proved themselves to be a ‘true Anglican episcopate’.

A proper appreciation of people and events at Oxford is not sufficient for an understanding of the whole story of the Oxford Movement. A recent historian of the movement, Fr James Pereiro, has rightly observed that the ‘attention focused on the main actors — particularly Newman — seems to have relegated [the supporting cast of secondary figures] even further into the shadow’. The same could be said of the Tractarians beyond the United Kingdom. It is surely time to bring them out of the shadow. Their part was not merely derivative from the great drama being enacted at Oxford. Rather, they are an integral part of it and their achievements are added proof of the vitality and success of what has become known as the Oxford Movement.

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26 Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), vol. 231 (6 May 1850), cols. 1195–309.
27 W. G. Broughton to W. Tyrrell, 10 September 1850, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Ms. 931.
30 W. G. Broughton to E. Coleridge, 15 August 1850, MCL.
31 This can be seen also in their confidence in adapting the Canons of 1603–4 and the establish-ment of the Australian Board of Missions to inaugurate missions, both ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’. In this later move, they did not seem their episcopal authority limited by their various Letters Patent, ‘Minutes of the Australasian Synod, Nos 11 and 10. See Project Canterbury’, http://anglicanhistory.org/australian_synod85o.html (accessed 12 October 2008).