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English-Australian Baptist Relations 1830-1860

I

WRITERS of Baptist history have not been impressed by the record of the denomination in Australia. In a survey of world-wide expansion in J. M. Cramp's *History,* published nearly forty years after Baptist ministries began in New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia is left out of account (along with China and Africa), " the returns not being sufficiently clear and full to warrant a definite statement."[1] The founder of the Baptist Historical Society, W. T. Whitley, knew the Australian churches at first hand as principal of the Baptist College in Victoria (1891-1901). His *A History of British Baptists* gives them short notice and draws the almost demoralising contrast with Baptist progress in America.[2] Australian Baptist historians in setting themselves to explain why " growth has not been what might have been expected ",[3] exhibit a local disappointment. The fact that Baptists had overtaken the paedo-baptist Independents by the end of the nineteenth century and bettered their position in relation to the other Protestant Churches, has not cancelled out a strong and unanimous feeling of failure in the colonial period. " Perhaps in no part of Protestant Christendom ", a Sydney pastor lamented in the 1860's, " are the Baptists as a denomination so relatively small as in New South Wales."[4] He sought help from the younger colony, Victoria, where prospects were better—but bad enough for a Victorian to bemoan " the dismal prospects of the scattered Baptists."[5] In South Australia, where Baptists were stronger still, a pastor wrote a jubilee history enumerating " the reasons of failure in so marked a degree during the first half of the period of the colony's existence."[6]

Among these reasons none has been given greater weight than English indifference. On the seriousness of the failure of English Baptists to supply men and meet the cost of their outfit and passage, to support infant churches and meet the stipends of home-missionaries, all writers agree.[7] Experience taught a Victorian pastor to remark " how useless it is to expect help from England ";[8] but where else could an appeal be directed? That colony's Home Missionary Society (1871) suggested that a committee of ministers and laymen be formed in England to raise an " Australian fund " to recruit missionaries for outlying parts; one man only was obtained, three Melbourne churches competed for his services, and the scheme was abandoned.[9] In 1873 the New South Wales Union (1870) appointed a committee to draw up a formal appeal for aid, an effort which proved " no more productive of help than those that had preceded it ".[10] Three years

earlier the Baptist Missionary Society declined an appeal from the minister and deacons at Brisbane for evangelists for inland Queensland.[11] The weight of this evidence is indisputable. Alone among the main divisions of English Christianity, Baptists rendered their churches in Australia insignificant monetary aid, alone they lacked an agency with strong and continuing interests in colonial mission work.

The intention of this article is to consider this apparent block of missionary vision among English Baptists, particularly in the light of the colonial work of the Congregationalists. The Australian complaint will be shown to be well-founded though Australia itself was implicated in the story of lost opportunities. The question of aid for the colonies will take us to an unfrequented corner of English Baptist history; examination of the Australian complaint will raise some questions about the interpretation of local Baptist history.

II

Of the two main themes of modern English Baptist history, mission abroad and consolidation at home, the missionary impulse was the earlier, the more dramatic and, in large part, the cause of a new sense of denominational identity.[12] The formation of a "Union" of Baptist ministers and laymen in London in 1813 has been linked with the expanding activities of the Baptist Missionary Society (hereafter B.M.S.) and a decision to hold its meetings in the capital. The new body was to promote the interests of the denomination "with a primary view to the encouragement and support of the Baptist Mission."[13] A symbol but not a manifestation of unity, the Union was for long unrepresentative of English Baptists and little more than an annual gathering of men whose chief interests were in other societies, whether Baptist or undenominational. Beside the B.M.S., in whose building it had rented rooms, the Union was a pigmy; as late as 1863 only 60 churches sent a subscription giving it a total income of £90. Neither its means nor its constitution allowed the Union to undertake colonial missions and no such purpose was envisaged by its founders. This situation, however, was not peculiar to Baptists. Help the colonies received from English Christianity was dispensed not by unions or assemblies but by societies acting more or less independently of denominational government. It was not to the Union but to the B.M.S. that Australian Baptists looked, the first of the evangelical societies that were to make Britain the chief bearer of Christianity to Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

The missionary societies were a product of the revival of Christianity in England associated with Whitefield and the Wesleys. A rediscovery of the Gospel and of the need of its proclamation at home gave rise to an awareness of world mission and a longing to evangelize races which had never heard Christ's name. Britons who emigrated to colonies of the Crown were not numerous in the revival's formative years, a period disrupted by the American Revolution and the struggle with France, and they fell between the two fronts of evangelical

labour, the lapsed at home and the heathen. The priority given to heathen fields was based on considerations of spiritual need, population size and responsiveness to the Gospel. The Christian West's age-old fascination with Africa and the East also influenced strategy as missionary society executives, a new type in the history of Christian expansion, weighed the attractiveness of alternate enterprises to the subscribing public. British settlement overseas did not arouse wide public interest until near the middle of the century and the pre-occupation of the B.M.S. with heathen work was typical of the evangelical missionary societies.

By its constitution the B.M.S. was committed to evangelism "through the heathen world",[14] a form of words which could be used to fend off other appeals. So requests for a minister from Montreal and Newfoundland were declined in 1822 and 1823.[15] But when a writer in the *Baptist Magazine,* explaining the decision on an appeal from Sydney, remarked that the society "contemplates only the heathen",[16] he was over-simplifying. In 1813 it had sent a deputation to Ireland to survey needs as well as raise funds; a Baptist Irish Society (1814) resulted. A proposal for a mission among Mennonites in Germany was implemented under a formula recommending the missioner "to the friendly attention of all who are concerned to propagate the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ among the heathen".[17] The society was reluctant to jeopardise its "purely missionary" character or to admit new claims on its ever inadequate income; but it was not unaware of the needs of Baptists in Europe or the colonies and in special circumstances could be induced to give them limited support.

In response to a request for a pastor received in the summer of 1833 "from Mr Joseph White, & several members of the Baptist Church at Sydney, N.S. Wales", the B.M.S. secretary, the Rev. John Dyer, did more than has sometimes been allowed. He proposed a former Jamaican missionary, a Mr. Coultart who "was not disinclined to go, if pecuniary means could be found."[18] Whether from a change of mind or because money for his passage was not forthcoming, Coultart withdrew later in the year; he returned to Jamaica and died there in 1836.[19] His place was taken by a young Londoner, John Saunders, who though no more eager for Australian service had means enough to pay for a cabin and to be independent, initially, of local support.[20] Though there is no official record, it is very likely that Dyer brought the Sydney request to Saunders' notice. The son of a family of standing in the City, Saunders had been under the society's notice at least since 1829; his offer of missionary service in July 1833 gave "much pleasure".[21] He had given up the law, studied under a private tutor and attended a term at Edinburgh University; his heart was set on India. But the missionary societies did not put much store on candidates' preferences; that a candidate, even one superior to the common run, should stipulate conditions was intolerable. Saunders' case was further discussed later in the month; he was

accepted subject to attendance for a year at a Baptist academy and his willingness to serve in either the East or West Indies—this was to be "distinctly understood".[22] Saunders declined these terms[23] and though the parting was not unfriendly it probably has a bearing on English-Australian Baptist relations. But its immediate effect was to suggest an answer to the Australian need.

Saunders, his health impaired by study, was at this time ministering to a Baptist chapel in Shacklewell. A later report has it that he decided to go to Australia after being approached by Dyer but with a mind open to the indications of Providence as to whether to stay or go on to India.[24] That this was indeed his attitude is suggested by his announcement in the *Baptist Magazine* of "an intention to visit Sydney".[25] Under the influence of J. D. Lang's *History,* he elaborated the prospects of the colonies and their need of Christian emigrants and pastors; but without Lang's fervour. His advocacy of the claims of emigrants on the home churches reflected a grasp of colonial conditions but not a vision of a great Christian nation of the future. He was a thwarted missionary, not a Christian imperialist. He did not dispute the B.M.S. concentration on heathen work or argue the need for a parallel agency for the colonies; he asked merely for an interest in Australia and prayerful remembrance of his own "ministerial (I cannot say missionary) labour". Neither by nature nor by his relationship with the B.M.S. was Saunders the man to promote an English interest in Australia. More attractive personally, he is a slight figure beside the entrepreneurial giants of early Australian Christianity, Lang and Marsden.

The element of Australian responsibility for a lack of English interest may be brought out by a South African comparison. Emigrants at Grahamstown, Cape Colony, had formed a church in the early 1820's under the Rev. William Millar.[26] A missionary auxiliary was at work by 1824 and thereafter made regular and considerable contributions to B.M.S. funds—as much as £400 in 1842.[27] In good standing as an example of missionary vigour in a young church, the Grahamstown cause pressed on the home society its suitability as a base for work among Kaffirs and Dutch settlers.[28] The B.M.S. declared itself financially unable to open a "distinct and independent" station but supplied pastors on two occasions and seems to have made advances to cover their passage. The case shows that a colonial church could attract a measure of assistance from the B.M.S. and save itself from being forgotten by the friends of missions. The first Australian contributions were listed in the 1843 *Report* and amounted over the next ten years to little more than £100.

Saunders made no serious effort to draw the B.M.S. into the Australian or Pacific fields; his name does not occur in minute books after 1833 and all the signs are that he was not in regular correspondence with the society.[29] Early letters, mainly to members of his family, mention the need of lay helpers to "take out-stations & fill up gaps"[30] and Saunders presumably had a hand in a short document

printed in London in 1835 or 1836 outlining the history of his Australian ministry and appealing for funds for a chapel.[31] But his interest in Australia lay partly in its suitability as a base for work in India and China; he accepted almost with resignation the limits of local work, writing to the *Baptist Magazine* in 1838: "God is graciously raising this colony in morals; he will doubtless give us more help. We must wait for him." He thought a minister willing to start as a schoolmaster could be usefully employed—but "none should come who are [*sic*] doing well in England."[32] Saunders held the pastorate of the Bathurst Street Chapel, Sydney, until January 1848, when ill-health forced his resignation. The experience of Baptists in other colonies, in Van Diemen's Land and South Australia in the 1830's and in the Port Phillip district in the 1840's, small groups served by pastors who came out on their own account or without a regular ministry, would disallow a suggestion that Saunders, by not cultivating a close relationship with Baptists at home, deprived the colony of help which would otherwise have been freely given. Appeals in the *Baptist Magazine* by the Rev. John Ham, who constituted a church of sixteen members in Melbourne in 1843, excited no response;[33] a request to the B.M.S. in 1839 to begin a mission to Aborigines in South Australia also failed.[34] But it can be argued that Saunders missed an opportunity to press Australia's case in London at a time when the colonies were coming under notice; and that a man of his ability but with a different missionary vision could have won Australia a place in the interests of a newly-formed colonial missionary agency.

III

The Baptist Colonial Missionary Society is an almost forgotten fragment of Baptist history.[35] A growing awareness of empire and increasing emigration after the Napoleonic wars brought slowly into view a new field of labour for British Christianity: the spiritual needs of the colonies. John Edwards, a Baptist settler at Clarence, Upper Canada, visited England in 1830 to tell of a flood of poor emigrants, spiritually destitute and powerless to help themselves.[36] The Rev. John Gilmore of Aberdeen, Canada's John Saunders, went out in response. An argument that mission, following Apostolic precedent, should start at Jerusalem and not neglect "our kinsmen according to the flesh", had been used in the 1820's by home mission agencies against the preponderance of foreign work; in the mid-1830's it was applied to the colonies, often with appreciation of the circumstances which led to emigration. "The self-exiled Briton is not to be forgotten . . . he was obliged to go; the wants of a large family have driven him there. . . . He is still our brother."[37] One *Baptist Magazine* contributor urged on the B.M.S. "the *superior* claims" of those who by their faithfulness in distant lands were manifestly "part of 'the election of grace'."[38] Most colonial correspondents emphasised the complementary character of the two fields of mission. "Attend to our

Colony whilst we are yet few in number, and facilities of operation offer; and instead of having to meet our *ungodly* millions at some future period, you will have them join with you in the great and glorious enterprise of evangelizing the world."[39] Partly in response to a stream of requests for ministers and missionaries, a Baptist Union deputation to America was extended to Canada; its report, published in 1836, was a telling exposition of Canada's need.[40] One of its readers suggested that the operations of the Baptist Continental Society be extended to the colonies;[41] the *Baptist Magazine,* in a lengthy review, thought it was "high time that some direct efforts were made for our colonies"; "another society is become absolutely necessary".[42]

When a group of London Congregationalists formed a Colonial Missionary Society in April 1836,[43] they were informed by the Baptist Union deputationist to Canada, Dr. F. A. Cox, of a Baptist interest in co-operation.[44] But in the following month, expressing a new denominationalism in English dissent, the society was formally associated with the Congregational Union.[45] A meeting in the "City of London" tavern in November 1836 produced a Baptist counterpart, a committee sprinkled with B.M.S. men (including Cox and Dyer) but limited in its field of work to the Canadas.[46] North America, closer, older, so much more populous than colonies in the southern hemisphere, was bound to dominate the colonial mission scene.[47] The idea of an exclusively Canadian society, however, was not pressed in discussion prior to its formation and the directors' thinking does not seem to have been essentially regional. By 1841 the society was calling itself the Baptist Colonial Missionary Society;[48] the next annual meeting expressed regret that nothing had been done for Australia and New Zealand and a hope that operations would be extended beyond Canada within the year.[49] The form of the society, clearly, was that which corresponded to the largest and best represented field of need. John Gilmore was in England and Scotland in 1836, sent over by "an association of several small Canadian churches" with a view to raising funds for a theological college to train a native ministry.[50] The first report, of December 1838, traced the society's inception to this visit. The training institution had given need definition; a way of helping the Canadian churches toward self-sufficiency and a project for the furtherance of their evangelism commended itself to the evangelical mind. The first report showed an income since 1836 of £1,448; a college principal had been appointed and sent out and £1,000 allocated for buildings.[51] A little had been done to fulfil another object of the society, the engagement of frontier missionaries.

"Sho[d] our British friends unite to form an Australian mission", John Saunders wrote to his brother Alexander in London in 1835, "I sho[d] be glad enough, but it will not do for me to flourish away until I see our own cause well established and a good opening to support another."[52] He had been only ten months in the colony, a

colony whose widespread indifference to religion and proneness to every kind of disorder must have reinforced the native caution of his mind. But the idea of "an Australian mission" might surely have met a livelier response. It raised no hopeful plans, led to no lobbying in London. Though his family was in a position to keep him informed, it is possible that Saunders did not know of the 1836 discussion until after the society had been formed. But his non-intervention after 1836 on Australia's behalf suggests a failure of initiative. He wrote to the *Baptist Magazine* in 1837 that his Sydney supporters had formed a home missionary society "in correspondence with the Congregational Colonial Mission. When the Baptists deign to notice Australia, it will be my duty to carry out their designs."[53] Though his ministry lasted another ten years, this was perhaps Saunders' last attempt to address the English churches. A successful and public-spirited pastor, he was not a missionary statesman.

IV

The subsequent history of the Baptist Colonial Missionary Society, however, makes it appear unlikely that better advocacy would have attracted significant aid. Despite very modest expenditure, £272 in 1840, £527 in 1841, its finances the next year were "in a state of exhaustion".[54] To a committee dominated by B.M.S. men, a way out of this embarrassment was seen to lie in a revision of the B.M.S. constitution to enable it to undertake "the diffusion of the knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world, beyond the British Isles". This alteration was slipped in as part of a constitution overhaul in 1843 and accepted without lengthy debate.[55] The Rev. William Groser, the Colonial Society's stop-gap secretary and a member of the B.M.S. central committee, accepted the change on behalf of a relieved executive and in August 1843 the Baptist Colonial Society was disbanded.[56] Some of British Christianity's fascination with the heathen world had worn off by the 1840's and the willingness of the B.M.S. to extend its responsibilities is an indication that colonies were within the orbit of missionary interest in a way that they had not been a generation before. But there had been no re-thinking of B.M.S. strategy; and the colonies would have to compete with the demands of the large, long-established stations in India and the Caribbean. This was the message of the first *Report* after amalgamation. "Less for the one we cannot do; what is done for the other must be in proportion to the extra contributions of our friends."[57]

Absorption on these unpromising terms makes a contrast with the steady if unremarkable progress of the Congregational Colonial Missionary Society.[58] Both societies reflected a concern among English Christians that unless something were done for the colonies, communities of British stock might lapse into paganism and the spread of the Empire would "pollute the world, instead of blessing it".[59] As late-comers among the host of evangelical societies, some of which

had national networks of auxiliaries and collectors, both found it hard to win a share of Christian liberality. But while the Congregational society survived the contraction of the 'forties and a series of crises involving its relations with the Congregational Union to undertake operations in two hemispheres at least on a scale commensurate with the size of the denomination, the Baptist society quickly lost momentum and passed over its work without conditions.

It is said that early nineteenth-century Baptists were less homogeneous than Congregationalists, their theological differences sharper, their polity more independent.[60] Among Congregationalists a misgiving about sending out "propagandists of Congregationalism, as such"[61] was over-ridden; the Union welcomed the new society "to establish Churches of our own denomination" in the colonies and drew it under Union auspices.[62] The weaker Baptist Union appears to have taken no interest in overseas work; the Baptist Colonial Society had closer links with the B.M.S. and its concern was evangelical more than denominational. There were Baptist laymen whose wealth and interests might well have served the colonial mission but Congregationalism was stronger in the aristocracy of trade and overall, the richer of the two bodies.[63] Probably more important than these differences of denominational consciousness and social class was a difference of attitude towards colonies and emigration. A *Baptist Magazine* review of books on colonization said no more for "the reluctant emigration of British Christians" than that it might be a means "which unsearchable wisdom has designed to secure the dissemination of truth".[64] A minister who emigrated to America wrote advising against emigration except for those "calculated to succeed" in England; there is, he added, "no place like home".[65] Emigration entailed the breaking of sacred associations and exposure to many moral and spiritual dangers; should not the Christian be intent on another "*new world*"?[66] Here is a separatism more radical than that of the Congregationalists,[67] the piety of a predominantly village denomination unaffected by the expansive mood of the age. For Congregationalism, by contrast, emigration and colonization called up seventeenth-century memories and promised a fulfilment overseas of the destiny unachieved at home. At the launching of their Colonial Missionary Society the secretary of the Union cited America and the Great Migration as proof that colonization was God's way of populating the earth. In Australia, the society's secretary (1837-1850) and guiding genius, the Rev. Algernon Wells, saw the prospect of a second America.[68] Wells' importance to the society can hardly be overstated; there was perhaps no better advocate of the spiritual claims of the colonies in all England. To the society's great advantage he was also secretary of the Congregational Union, an office he used to foster the unitive tendencies of the denomination with a remarkable blend of charity, diplomacy and ambition for its progress at home and abroad.[69] Yet Wells drew on a tradition and his interest in British overseas expansion was shared by a number of Congregational

preachers and editors. "Be ye the Pilgrim Fathers of the nineteenth century", a minister exhorted a company of emigrants at Bristol.[70] Colonization was seen as the last and greatest purpose to which England had been called, emigration as a particular design of Providence, Australia as a land of unique destiny.[71] The histories of their colonial missionary societies suggest real differences of mind between the two branches of Independency.

V

The B.M.S. went on after 1843 much as before. A jubilee appeal freed it from long-standing debts but yielded no surplus for new undertakings. In response to a "very urgent application" grants were made in 1844 to two agents in Canada and a decision was taken to send out three missionaries. Expenditure in the colonial field was £692 in 1846; in 1850 it had dropped to £229 and in that year the society declared itself "constrained to withdraw . . . from supporting any stations or missionaries in Canada."[72] The constitutional change had led to no change in B.M.S. priorities; a tiny subsidy for work in Europe was the only sign left that it had other cares than the "miseries of the heathen world".[73] Australian correspondents did little to remind it of its new responsibilities. The first Australian auxiliary was not formed until 1852, in Melbourne.[74] Saunders appears to have made no attempt to take advantage of the new constitution and contributions from Sydney to B.M.S. funds remained insignificant after his departure. When Australia came at last to the notice of English Baptists the pioneer churches in Sydney, Hobart and Adelaide had less to do with it than Baptists recently settled in the golden colony of Victoria.

Some of these were from Birmingham and it was in that city of forceful, reformist nonconformity[75] that English Baptists first took stock of Australia as a field of mission. In October 1854 the B.M.S. received a letter from its Birmingham auxiliary concerning "the religious destitution of our Colonies, especially of Australia".[76] Operating with a deficit which the retirement from Canada and other retrenchments had yet to overcome, the society was non-committal. Two years later when the Birmingham men presented their case in person the response was slightly more positive: "this Committee is quite disposed to cultivate the Australian Colonies as a field of Christian labour, as far as they are able; and will give their best attention to any definite proposal they may bring before them."[77] The Birmingham auxiliary, under its secretary the Rev. Isaac New and presumably in correspondence with Melbourne laymen, assumed the functions of a colonial missionary agency: held a public meeting, proposed an "Australian Fund", and urged the B.M.S. to appoint the Rev. James Taylor of the Heneage Street Chapel as its Australian agent.[78] The committee met Taylor, Mr. Born of Melbourne and John Saunders (who emerges from the obscurity of his London retirement to render this last service[79]) and passed a guarded resolution:

> [The Society] would encourage him [Taylor] to go to Australia as their Messenger to enquire into the religious condition of our Denomination there and to report the result of his enquiries to this Committee,—leaving it to him to take such steps as may, in his judgement, best tend to promote the interests of the cause of Christ among the Churches in the Colony especially in reference to Missionary objects. And as a mark of their sympathy with him in this design and regard for him as a Christian Minister, they are willing to grant £250 towards the expenses of his outfit and voyage.[80]

Taylor was to be less than an agent—the grant of £250 and another of £100 were to "terminate his pecuniary connexion with this Society."[81] The resolution did not commit the B.M.S. to support colonial work but rather envisaged greater colonial support for "Missionary objects". The second grant was made with a view to Taylor "employing as much time as practicable in promoting the object of this Society". The Birmingham men had been given a measure of support but the B.M.S. had not had a change of heart.

The B.M.S. *Missionary Herald* mentioned Taylor's going but never gave Australia prominence; the Leeds-based *Freeman,* however, took an interest that was fairly typical of English Christianity by the middle of the century. The prospect of "a new society, instinct with the old English spirit indeed, but framing itself into new forms", of "a younger, fairer, more Christian England", caused it to mark Taylor's going with an appeal for "Men For Australia".[82] For its part the B.M.S. was ready to receive remittances and to select pastors —even, on occasions, to advance funds to cover costs of removal.[83] In September 1857 it made an approach to Isaac New on behalf of the Albert Street Church, Melbourne. A meeting largely attended by Birmingham citizens observed the end of New's ten-year ministry at Bond Street Chapel; they heard Australia characterized as a land "of freedom, of intelligence, of enterprise, of indomitable energy", and acknowledged by resolution the spiritual claims of this "cradle of a mighty empire".[84] Taylor had by this time been six months in Melbourne and had travelled to Sydney and the Hunter Valley. The enormity of Australia's need was weighing on his spirit. At first he had indulged the hope that the colonies had been neglected through lack of information.[85] His letters, letters of earnest, pleading entreaty, soon offered a more realistic assessment.

> Baptists of England, arise, resolved that no longer shall you be behind all other denominations in seeking the spiritual welfare of Australia. The Baptist Missionary Society, pressed with the multiplicity of its foreign claims, cannot with its present income do much, if anything at all for Australia. Why not have a Colonial Baptist Missionary Society, to aid in sending out ministers and supporting evangelists?[86]

He must have wished that New would come with strong home backing, more than a resolution at a Birmingham public meeting.

It could be argued that New and his friends took a wrong decision in 1856. What was soon clear to Taylor in Melbourne might have been clear from the start to anyone conversant with the treatment of the colonies since 1843: shortage of funds would not allow the B.M.S. to undertake colonial work and new heathen fields would have first call on any surplus. A second colonial missionary society would have stood a better chance than the first and could hardly have done less than the B.M.S. The 1859 *Report* made mention of four more selections for Australia;[87] " maybe ", it allowed, " . . . the denomination at home has not taken the deep interest it should have done in the spiritual well-being of the rising kingdoms of the southern hemisphere ".[88] But at once a divergence appears between this new sense of denominational responsibility and the interests of the missionary society. The B.M.S. was pleased to be associated with an " eminently successful " development but wanted it known that Australian expansion was financed by Australian money. There was no conflict of interest over recruits; the B.M.S. was not short of men for its own fields and the Australian selection committee was able to fill places promptly.[89] Money forced the choice. " Forgive my importunity," Taylor wrote, " my whole heart is in this work. I am willing to be anything, to do anything your committee will bid me, if they will only aid Australia."[90] But the committee was pre-occupied with losses to property on Indian stations suffered in the Mutiny and with a dazzling new opening presented by the treaty of 1858: China, " the home of *Three hundred and sixty-seven millions of men,* of whose religious condition it may emphatically and literally be said, they are without God and without hope in the world."[91] Taylor's letters became an embarrassment; in 1860 they were acknowledged but unprinted; by 1862 he had stopped writing. Australia was unmentioned in B.M.S. literature after this; *The Freeman* soon deemed Australian appeals un-newsworthy. Assistance would be personal and occasional, given to the man rather than the field. A committee formed in London on behalf of the Rev. David Rees of Braintree, Essex, raised £144.9.0 from 130 subscribers throughout the country towards the cost of his outfit and passage. Regret was expressed by the B.M.S. secretary at a farewell meeting that the society could not do more for Australia.[92] In Melbourne, at a meeting which received news of Rees' coming, remarks in a stronger vein were said to have been made about English indifference.

> This welcome news is sadly marred by the fact that, with Mr. Rees' departure, our prospect of further ministerial help from that quarter, is, as far as can be seen at present, absolutely closed. . . . If the British Baptist churches would but extend a fostering and a helping hand to the colonial churches *now,* in the days of their early struggles, by sending a few earnest men as pastors and evangelists, the past contributions of the colony is [*sic*] an earnest that in five years, more would be repaid in kind, and they would reap a rich harvest of spiritual sympathy and aid,

in the various plans in which they are engaged for the evangelization of the world.[93]

This line of argument, advanced by Canadians twenty years before, might have been used to good effect by a revived colonial missionary society in the 1850's and '60's. But the B.M.S. stayed true to its original goals and applied a different logic.[94]

VI

The complaint of Australian Baptists was to some extent a complaint against themselves as Baptists. John Saunders' limitations as an advocate sprang partly from a distinctly Baptist indifference to denominational progress. The failure of the first generation of Australian Baptists to take advantage of interludes of interest in the colonies at home is at least as remarkable as the failure of that interest to gain a hold on English Baptists. A comparison with the Congregationalists has suggested that Baptists were less excited by the opportunity of denominational expansion and slower to find a Christian meaning in emigration and the Empire. Wesleyan Methodism had no colonial missionary agency but its sense of world mission, of being called to address the Gospel to all men, gave its colonial branches a stronger call on home support than Baptists could make on the B.M.S.; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society interpreted its responsibilities more broadly and gave sustained and somewhat more generous assistance.[95] But English neglect, explicable early in the period in terms of the nature of Baptists as a religious group and later in terms, partly, of the failure of those interested in the colonies to give their interest institutional form, is only part of the story. The Australian grudge, harboured since the 1850's and now part of an historiography, conceals an interesting development. Australian appeals were stimulated by opportunities such as Baptists in England had never known, opportunities most strikingly presented in early Victoria. Ambitions were heightened by the progress of other Churches and the frustration of early Australian Baptists is the measure of their expectation in the new land. Their historians' talk of failure must be seen in this light. In fact they did not fail but flourished and it is doubtful whether their progress was primarily or lastingly affected by lack of English aid. But that is another subject.

NOTES

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[1] *Baptist History: from the foundation of the Christian Church to the present time,* London 1871, p. 578.

[2] London 1923, pp. 344-346.

[3] B. G. Wright, "A History of the Baptist Church in N.S.W. from 1831 to 1936", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1953, p. 2.

[4] *The Victorian Baptist Magazine,* Melbourne, June 1869.

[5] *The Freeman,* Leeds, 3 December 1856.

[6] J. Price, "Digest of the History of the Baptist Denomination in South

Australia", *Truth and Progress*, Adelaide, 1 January 1888. On Baptists in South Australia and nonconformist influences in the colony's early history see D. Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, London 1957.

[7] See for example A. C. Prior, *Some fell on good ground, a history of the Baptist Church in New South Wales, Australia*, Sydney 1966, pp. 16, 113-114; W. T. Whitley(?), "Pioneer Anzac Baptists", *The Baptist Quarterly*, 1928-29, vol. IV, pp. 327-332.

[8] J. Reid, *The Victorian Baptist Magazine*, July 1869.

[9] B. S. Brown, *Members one of another: the Baptist Union of Victoria*, Melbourne 1962, pp. 59-60.

[10] A. C. Prior, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[11] Minute Book, Baptist Missionary Society (London), 13 January, 22 April 1870.

[12] It was the same with the Congregationalists. See A. Peel, *These Hundred Years: a history of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1831-1931*, London 1931, p. 10.

[13] Quoted in E. A. Payne, *The Baptist Union, a short history*, London 1959, p. 21, which is followed in this paragraph. See also S. J. Price, "The early years of the Baptist Union", *The Baptist Quarterly*, vol. IV, 1928-9, pp. 53-60, 121-131, 171-178.

[14] *Annual Report*, 1842, p. 5.

[15] Minute Book, 28 November 1822, 5 March 1823.

[16] Vol. XXVIII, 1836, p. 68.

[17] Minute Book, 26 November 1829, 8 July 1830.

[18] Minute Book, 24 July 1833.

[19] Minute Book, 23 October 1833, 8 September 1836.

[20] J. Saunders to Mrs. J. E. Saunders, 15 December 1834; to J. E. Saunders, 20 January 1835; Letterbook of the Rev. John Saunders, 1834-56 (Mitchell Library, Sydney, MS B1106).

[21] Minute Book, 15 October 1829, 4 July 1833.

[22] Minute Book, 24 July 1833.

[23] Minute Book, 15, 29 August 1833.

[24] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1859; *The Baptist Magazine* (London), vol. LII, 1860, pp. 239-240.

[25] Vol. XXVI, 1834, p. 257. His purpose had been to correct a misunderstanding that he was going as a Baptist minister to Van Diemen's Land.

[26] D. Davies, "The Baptists in South Africa", *The Baptist Quarterly*, 1924-25, vol. II, pp. 70-76.

[27] *The Baptist Magazine*, vol. XVI, 1824, pp. 89-90; Minute Book, 27 October 1842.

[28] Minute Book, 29 April 1829, 1 December 1831.

[29] Saunders was certainly interested in the evangelization of the Pacific and in 1840 put a plan to the B.M.S. concerning the Solomon Islands. But his interest was undenominational; he had no special allegiance to the B.M.S. A Sydney auxiliary of the London Missionary Society was formed at a meeting in his chapel and between 1838 and 1840 he served as that society's ministerial agent. J. Williams *et al.* to Directors, 25 October 1838, J. Saunders *et al.* to W. Ellis, 29 November 1838, J. Saunders to W. Ellis, 25 February 1840, R. Ross to A. Tidman, 11 November 1840, London Missionary Society (Congregational Council for World Mission, Westminster), Australian Letters, Box 3.

[30] Letterbook; to Alex[r] Saunders, 18 September 1835.

[31] Copy in Letterbook, p. 63.

[32] *The Baptist Magazine*, vol. XXX, 1838, pp. 25-26.

[33] Vol. XXXIX, 1847, pp. 103-105.

[34] *The Baptist Magazine*, vol. XXXI, 1839, pp. 69-70, 436-437.

[35] The only mention in the standard histories is in Whitley's *History*, p. 305: "A Colonial Society was formed, but after an uneventful existence it amalgamated with the B.M.S." The later Baptist Colonial Society, formed

in response to appeals from South Africa at the time of the Boer War, is commonly taken to be the first such agency. See H. J. Bates, *History of the Baptist Church in South Africa,* Capetown, n.d., pp. 155-158, and W. Finnemore, *The Story of a Hundred Years, 1823-1923, being the centenary booklet of the Birmingham Auxiliary of the Baptist Missionary Society,* Oxford 1923.

[36] *New Baptist Miscellany and Particular Baptist Magazine,* London, April 1830; *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXIII, 1831, pp. 70-71.

[37] A letter from "one at home", *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXVI, 1834, pp. 330-331.

[38] Vol. XXVIII, 1836, pp. 158-159.

[39] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXVIII, 1836, p. 449.

[40] F. A. Cox and J. Hoby, *The Baptists in America; a narrative of the deputation from the Baptist Union in England to the United States and Canada,* London 1836.

[41] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXVIII, 1836, p. 202.

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 246.

[43] Committee Minute Book (Congregational Council for World Mission, Westminster), 28 April 1836. See also J. Brown, *The Colonial Missions of Congregationalism,* London 1908.

[44] *The Patriot,* London, 16 May 1836.

[45] *The Congregational Magazine,* London, vol. XII, June 1836, pp. 384-385.

[46] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXVIII, 1836, pp. 540-541.

[47] Grants by the Congregational Society to Canada and Australia were commonly in the ratio of ten to one. See Committee Minute Book, 10 January 1842, 22 May 1843.

[48] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXXIII, 1841, p. 287.

[49] *Ibid.,* vol. XXXIV, 1842, pp. 293-297.

[50] *Ibid.,* vol. XXIX, 1837, pp. 29-30; vol. XXX, 1838, p. 349.

[51] Bound with *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXXI, 1839, pp. 89-100.

[52] Letterbook, 18 September 1835.

[53] Vol. XXX, 1838, p. 26. Saunders was aware in 1835 of the appointment of a North American deputation and was personally acquainted with Cox and Hoby. His less than forceful response was a message to be relayed by his brother: "tell both that while they feel for Canada as they assuredly will if they visit it, they must not forget N.S.W. and give encouragement to every Xtian enterprise on her behalf." Letterbook; to Alex[r] Saunders, 13 August 1835.

[54] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXXII, 1840, p. 142; vol. XXXIII, 1841, p. 287; vol. XXXIV, 1842, p. 139.

[55] Minute Book, 19 January, 2 February, 25 April 1843; *Annual Report,* 1843, pp. ix, xi.

[56] Minute Book (B.M.S.), 13 April, 3, 17 August 1843; *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXXV, 1843, pp.481-482.

[57] *Annual Report,* 1843, p. 54.

[58] At the end of its sixth year it had sent to the colonies, or supported, thirty-two ministers; six of these were in Australia. Its income in the year the Baptist Society was disbanded was £3,000. *Annual Report,* 1842, p. 18; 1843, p. 46.

[59] The Rev. J. A. James' speech at the foundation of the Congregational Society, *The Patriot,* 18 May 1836.

[60] E. A. Payne, *Free Churchmen, unrepentant and repentant,* London 1965, p. 99; O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church,* Part 1, London 1966, p. 412.

[61] *The Patriot,* 18 May 1836.

[62] *Ibid.,* 16 May 1836.

[63] G. F. Angas, merchant, banker and founding father of South Australia, helped provide pastors for that colony. He was a life member of the B.M.S.

but his sympathies were widely distributed among evangelical societies. The Congregational Colonial Society had from its inception been interested in South Australia and Angas, who met its committee in 1837 (Committee Minute Book, 20 March 1837), probably saw no need for a Baptist initiative in this field. The railway magnate, Sir Samuel Peto, had business interests in Australia; he was a B.M.S. treasurer but not, it seems, a benefactor of colonial missions.

[64] Vol. XXXIV, 1842, p. 353.

[65] *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XXVI, 1834, pp. 413-417. I have found no Baptist preachers or publicists to balance this thinking. F. A. Cox had numerous philanthropic and political involvements but no great interest, despite his Canadian tour, in the Empire; John Rippon, editor, minister of the wealthy Carter Lane Church and friend of the Angas family, took unusual interest in Baptist work overseas but his ministry pre-dated the era of colonial missions. (See E. A. Payne, *The Baptist Union,* pp. 15-17, 55; A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists,* London 1947, pp. 133, 177-179.) The Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel who left the Church of England in 1848 and was subsequently twice president of the Baptist Union, was instrumental in the formation of the Australian Church Missionary Society (1835) which became the Colonial Church Society (1838). As a Baptist he continued to advocate aggressive evangelism at home and the betterment of the poor but was not active on behalf of colonial missions. See his *Christian Missions to Heathen Nations,* London 1842, pp. xiii-xiv. K. R. Short, "Baptist Wriothesley Noel: Anglican-Evangelical-Baptist" (*The Baptist Quarterly,* vol. XX, 1963-4, pp. 51-61), does not mention his important role as a pioneer of evangelical Anglican interest in colonial missions.

[66] See "Letter to a Friend" proposing to emigrate, *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XI, 1819, pp. 512-515.

[67] See R. H. Bainton, *Christian Unity and Religion in New England,* Boston 1964, pp. 71-87.

[68] *The Patriot,* 18 May 1836.

[69] See A. Peel, *op. cit.,* pp. 83-90, 159-162, 191; Congregational Union of England and Wales, *Year Book,* 1851, pp. 15, 236-238.

[70] *The Christian Witness,* London, vol. IX, 1852, pp. 586-589.

[71] See *ibid.,* vol. IX, 1852, pp. 390, 443; vol. X, 1853, pp. 76-77.

[72] *Annual Reports,* 1844, p. 64; 1846, pp. 44-46, 103; 1850, p. 34. Minute Book, 3 July 1849.

[73] *Annual Report,* 1846, p. 51.

[74] Minute Book, 22 March 1853.

[75] See C. Gill, *History of Birmingham,* vol. I, London 1952, and A. Briggs, *Ibid.,* vol. II; also Briggs' *Victorian Cities,* London 1963, pp. 197-207.

[76] Minute Book, 11 October 1854.

[77] *Ibid.,* 15 October 1856.

[78] *Ibid.,* 4 November 1856; see also W. Finnemore, *op. cit.,* p. 42.

[79] He died 1 May 1859; the *Baptist Magazine* paid tribute to "a most just and gentle, and at the same time humble spirit" but relied for biographical detail on the *Sydney Morning Herald* notice (13 July 1859) and added very little on his later life. Vol. LII, 1860, pp. 239-240.

[80] Minute Book, 18 November 1856.

[81] *Ibid.,* 14 January 1857.

[82] 23 September, 14 October 1857.

[83] Minute Book, 12 May, 28 July, 15 December 1857.

[84] *The Freeman,* 23 September, 6, 14 October 1857.

[85] *The Missionary Herald,* bound with *The Baptist Magazine,* vol. XLIX, 1857, pp. 587-588.

[86] *The Freeman,* 27 January 1858.

[87] The Rev. B. G. Wilson went to Brisbane; the Revs. W. Sutton, D. Rees and G. Slade to Victoria.

[88] P. 13.

[89] A question commonly discussed was not the supply of ministers but their remuneration. *The Freeman* (27 May 1857) supported a claim by C. H. Spurgeon that two out of three Baptist pastors did not have a living stipend; the average stipend, according to one estimate, was under £80 p.a. One has the impression that, as with other denominations, more ministers were willing to emigrate than had the means or opportunity to do so.

[90] *The Missionary Herald, The Baptist Magazine,* vol. L, 1858, p. 393.

[91] Appeal letter by S. M. Peto, treasurer, F. Trestrail and E. B. Underhill, secretaries, 1 June 1859, Printed Committee Reports and Papers, 1849 to 1867 (Baptist Missionary Society, London).

[92] *The Freeman,* 30 March 1859.

[93] Report of first annual meeting of the Baptist Association of Victoria in *The Christian Times and Australasian Weekly News,* Melbourne, 18 June 1859.

[94] Society deputationists visited Australia in the 1850's and 1860's to form auxiliaries and raise funds, especially for the Indian mission. *The Missionary Herald, The Baptist Magazine,* vol. LI, 1859, p. 589; Minute Book, 26 September 1865, 1 May 1866.

[95] See my "Time of small things: the Methodist Mission in New South Wales, 1815-1836", *The Journal of Religious History,* vol. 7, no. 3, June 1973, pp. 225-47.

J. D. BOLLEN

RECORDS STORED AT CLIPSTON BAPTIST CHURCH

MINUTE BOOKS

A. *Church* Vol: 1. 1752 (approx)—1884 6½" x 15"
1a. 1884—1949.
2. 1930—1945.
3. 1945—1957.
4. Cash Book, various periods from 1778.

B. *Sunday School*
Two Minute Books.
One Register. (Up to 1969 December when the Sunday School closed in favour of meetings merged with morning service. Children shared opening and closing services, retiring to vestry for a teaching session of 20-25 minutes. An exception was the first Sunday morning in the month, when a family service was conducted by the minister or some other invited person, with children taking part).

REGISTERS

Births. Leather bound book in which births from about 1800 were recorded by Thomas Talman Gough; the details he must have collected from parents.

Membership. Two books, 1820-1837.

Burials

a. Register. From 1817 to the present date. Early entries in one hand-writing, probably taken from some earlier record, or from living relatives, or from memorials in Chapel Burial Ground.
b. Site plans of four burial areas with lists of deceased and Register Numbers.
c. Rough copies of Memorial Stones (in ring file).
d. Counterfoil Burial Certificates (in box file).

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

1797 Feoffment. Mr. Edward Lanley to David Eames. October 16th.
1862 Builders' Accounts—alterations to Chapel. June 11th.