

How the evangelical convictions of Sir William Edward Parry influenced his running of the Australian Agricultural Company from 1829 to 1834

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Sir William Edward Parry was a successful and well-regarded man in his own right. Previously famed as an arctic explorer and Hydrographer of the Navy, he arrived in New South Wales in 1829 to embark on his newest endeavor: the running of the Australian Agricultural Company (hereafter the ACC). The company had formed four years previously with a government grant of one million acres to establish farms with the purpose of raising fine wool sheep.¹ After a disastrous start, the company altered its operating structure by removing the advisory Colonial Committee and instead appointed Parry as a sole Commissioner.² The task before him was monumental. He was the sole proprietor over the entire company, including its servants (both indentured and convict), property and officers. Only someone with his experience, qualifications and ability would have a chance at success. His brief was to restore to order, and then maintain the AAC's assets and operations, including reviewing, and if necessary, altering the location of the million acre plot, which was then situated on the northern shores of Port Stephens in the Hunter Region of NSW.³ At no point did his brief mention the spiritual plight of his 'subjects'.

In a letter to Sir John Stanley (from December 1830), Parry remarks about the poor state of the AAC's affairs on his arrival: 'I found the Company's affairs, on my arrival, in a loose and disjointed state, as circumstances had led me to expect [...]'.⁴ Until this point, many of the officers and officials had been able to run amok. Indeed, Parry vents some frustration at the company accountant, Mr Barton, who he describes as a dangerous man.⁵ Problems of drunkenness and licentiousness also plagued the community.⁶

After expanding on this comment, he continues:

You must not, however, imagine, from what I have just said, that all I have been doing is of the character above mentioned... In our character of the parson of the parish and his wife, we have visited, admonished and assisted every body within our reach.⁷

Thus from the outset, Parry considered himself to be a 'parson' in addition to his official role as Commissioner.⁸ He certainly spent considerable time fulfilling his official duties to the company, and he succeeded in bringing order to a failing business. Yet in all this, he never

¹ William Edward Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, eds., *In the Service of the Company: Letters of Sir Edward Parry, Commissioner to the Australian Agricultural Company. Vol. 2: June 1832-March 1834* (Canberra: The Noel Butlin Archives Centre, The Australian National University, 2003), v.

² Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, *In the Service of the Company*, v.

³ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, *In the Service of the Company*, v.

⁴ Edward Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry, K.T. F.R.S. ETC.* (2nd ed.; London: Longmans and Roberts, 1857), 254.

⁵ Parry, *Parry of the Arctic: The Life Story of Admiral Sir Edward Parry 1790-1855* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 147.

⁶ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, *In the Service of the Company*, 103.

⁷ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 254.

⁸ Paul Struan Robertson, *Proclaiming 'Unsearchable Riches': Newcastle and the Minority Evangelical Anglicans, 1788-1900* (Monographs in Australian Christianity; Sydney: CSAC, 1996), 38.

neglected the spiritual wellbeing of his charges.⁹ Indeed, both he and his wife Isabella took it upon themselves to do all in their power for the spiritual wellbeing of the employees, servants and others living on company land. Parry's aim was to bring morality and religion to this 'moral wilderness' that they had found themselves in.¹⁰

It is this aspect of Sir Parry's role that this paper will examine. Here we will seek to show not only that Sir William and Lady Isabella were firmly evangelical in their Christian convictions, but that out of these convictions flowed an abundance of gospel-based initiatives to help those under their care. The Parrys went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that those in their charge had access to, and were taught from, the word of God. In this paper we will show the sincerity of their faith in the fact that they went above and beyond what was expected of them in order to care for the lost in their midst.

Church services and pastoral care

With no minister of the church at Carrington (the headquarters for the company at Port Stephens), Parry took it upon himself as a layman to run church in an outfitted carpenter's shop, and then later when the company's headquarters were moved, also at Stroud and Booral. On Parry's first Sunday at Carrington he conducted 'Divine Service' as well as the reading of a sermon. An extract from his journal describes a small congregation of 27 convicts arriving for church: 'Very small congregation—no women—except my housemaid!'.¹¹

From these humble beginnings, the church began to grow under his leadership.¹² By July 1830, just six months later, Isabella Parry could write to her mother-in-law about church attendance: 'There is always now a full congregation, and, I must say, a most attentive one'.¹³

Undoubtedly Parry was gifted for this kind of work. Mr Ebsworth, a member of the AAC, is recorded as praising Parry's church services: 'I scarcely ever heard the liturgy read with so much reverence, feeling, and apparent delight'.¹⁴ Isabella Parry writes similarly in a letter to her mother-in-law as she describes 'Edward's ministerial prowess'.¹⁵ William Macquarie Cowper, a future chaplain of the AAC, described Parry's preaching as 'plain, scriptural and practical; the language simple, the sentences terse, and the whole tone evangelical'.¹⁶

While never making it compulsory, Parry issued 'every encouragement' for inhabitants to attend public worship.¹⁷ By November 1834 attendance was greater than 250 at Carrington.¹⁸ When one considers that Parry never forced church attendance, this growth is simply astounding. But the Parrys' concern was not just for churchmanship and attendance. In a letter to her mother-in-law, Isabella writes: 'For four years they have never heard the word of God preached to them, and have really appeared to live "without God in the world"'.¹⁹ She, like her husband, was concerned for evangelism, convinced of the gospel as the means by which this dark convict settlement may be enlightened. In true evangelical spirit, she continues:

⁹ Brian Dickey, ed., *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 294.

¹⁰ Ann Parry, *Parry of the Arctic: The Life Story of Admiral Sir Edward Parry 1790-1855*, 154.

¹¹ Edward Parry's journal quoted in Ann Parry, *Parry of the Arctic*, 147.

¹² William Macquarie Cowper, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of William Macquarie Cowper, Dean of Sydney* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1902), 113.

¹³ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 249.

¹⁴ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 248.

¹⁵ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 248.

¹⁶ Cowper, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of William Macquarie Cowper, Dean of Sydney*, 113.

¹⁷ Cowper, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of William Macquarie Cowper*, 113.

¹⁸ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834

¹⁹ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 249.

I hope that, in future, God's name and word will be more known and loved than hitherto. Earnestly do we pray that this may be the case. We must expect to meet with disappointments and trials, but, when we consider whose work we are doing, no difficulties ought to discourage us. May God give us strength to persevere!²⁰

Thus, the Parrys were primarily concerned with teaching people the word of God. This can also be seen in the work that Parry carried out in addition to preaching twice every Sunday. He held Bible studies and prayer meetings at Carrington on Wednesday evenings at the request of some indentured servants, with an average attendance of thirty.²¹ He established a choir who met three times a week at his house.²² He ministered to all sorts of people, including women, the sick and the dying.²³

The Parrys also distributed Bibles, prayer books and tracts. On their journey from England to Australia in 1829, the Parrys brought with them eighty Bibles and New Testaments from the Bible Society. In a letter to W. H. Hooper, Esq., Parry explains he has 'distributed upwards of a hundred Bibles, and as many prayer books'.²⁴ Included in the letter is an appeal to send out more Bibles. By 1834 Parry claims to have distributed 'not less than six hundred Bibles and testaments'.²⁵

Naturally, Parry's desire to bring the gospel and sound moral instruction to the people in the employment of the company demanded time, and time was at a premium. Parry describes his duties as a parson as 'somewhat arduous'. Nevertheless Parry saw it as his 'Christian Duty' to continue performing Divine Service. Ann Parry, a descendant and biographer of Sir William Edward, describes the way Parry and his wife went about their work with 'missionary zeal'.²⁶ This level of hard work, which was he was in no way obliged to perform as part of his professional remit, surely flowed from a heart that is convicted by the truth of the gospel and a deep desire to see people taught by the word from God.

Schools and education

The Parrys realised that without education, only so much could be done during home visitations and church services. Because the people needed to be able to read the word of God for themselves, they began to set up schools. Isabella took up the schooling of children as her own special project with keen interest and oversight. The Bible was used as the main means of teaching.²⁷

These schools have been described as a 'key achievement' by Ann Parry.²⁸ Even Ann O'Brien, a writer who regards evangelicals with suspicion, praises Isabella's work on this front.²⁹ Although O'Brien pejoratively describes a general trend in evangelical women to regard motherhood as the highest calling, Isabella describes the moral, spiritual and social improvement of those in her care as the 'one thing needful'.³⁰ O'Brien attributes Isabella's

²⁰ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 249.

²¹ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

²² Broughton-Parry Correspondence, Mitchell Library, MSS.B377, statement dated November 12, 1834.

²³ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 254.

²⁴ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 249.

²⁵ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

²⁶ Parry, *Parry of the Arctic*, 173.

²⁷ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 250.

²⁸ Parry, *Parry of the Arctic*, 154.

²⁹ Ann O'Brien, 'Anglicanism and Gender Issues' in Bruce Norman Kaye et al., eds., *Anglicanism in Australia: A History* (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 275.

³⁰ Paul Struan Robertson, 'The One Thing Needful': Three Evangelical Anglican Women in the Hunter Region of NSW, 1825-1850', *Lucas: An Evangelical Hist. Review* 23/4 (1997): 5.

care for the poor and the needy as a result of her gender, but this view must be rejected. Whilst maternal instinct is not to be entirely discredited as a primary motivation, it was most likely Isabella's sincere evangelicalism that drove her to care for the company's subject. As Sir Edward commented:

In the truest Christian and missionary spirit, my beloved Isabella has gone into every cottage, promoting, by every means in her power, the comfort of every family, peace among quarrelling neighbours, and the temporal and spiritual welfare of every human being around us. She has been a mother to the numerous poor children who, when we arrived, were running about wild, idling, swearing, and going to ruin as fast as possible; and it is now a delightful and cheering sight to see forty-eight of these daily receiving education, under her directions and superintendence, and becoming well-behaved, and well-instructed children.³¹

At its height, the school at Port Stephens numbered forty-eight children, and later the Stroud school numbered twenty.³² The effect of education on the general population is difficult to measure. But it was something the Parrys sincerely believed in. They would visit the families of those children who were in school; especially those who could not read themselves—all the while evangelising them, proclaiming to them 'things which belong to their everlasting peace'. In time, a school for adults that ran evening classes was also established. The people of the Port Stephens area had not received an education of any description for the previous four years.³³ That the Parrys opted, again voluntarily, to implement an education system for the company's people speaks volumes of their sincere love and care for those in their charge, that they might be able to read the words of eternal life.

Risking unpopularity

Parry's evangelical principles also dictated the way he made decisions about the company's estate. The issue of a second pub licence would often crop up—and the principle that Parry used to refuse such a licence was the 'evil' that consumption of alcohol causes.³⁴ Thus he was willing to stand up for the principles in which he believed, without compromising them.

Similarly, in a communication with the Commissioner of the Court of Requests during the sectarian controversy, Parry was asked to attach his name to the memorial 'in behalf of the Roman Catholics of the colony [of NSW]'.³⁵ Parry originally supported the completion of a Roman chapel at Hyde Park, since he believed it better that there would be a place for public worship 'according to the forms of their own church rather than none at all'.³⁶ However, after the death of his mother, a staunch evangelical, he could not help but write against the Roman church, describing it as 'a system of idolatry and superstition of human invention, and directly opposed to the one only standard of right and wrong which I can conscientiously recognise - namely, the inspired word of God'.³⁷ While commentators attribute Parry's faith to his mother, it is clear from this statement that he held personally to Reformation principles and

³¹ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 254.

³² Broughton-Parry correspondence, statement November 12, 1834.

³³ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 249.

³⁴ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, *In the Service of the Company*, 102.

³⁵ John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony* (vol. 2; London: Cochrane and McCrone, 1834), 317.

³⁶ Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony*, 317.

³⁷ Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony*, 317.

the authority of Scripture.³⁸ Furthermore, he goes on to say in reply to the accusation that he is only exhibiting the evangelical faith of his mother: ‘[[...]] I am a Protestant- not merely because I was born of Protestant parents, and in a country chiefly protestant - but because I do from my heart most solemnly protest against the Church of Rome [[...]].’³⁹ He we see the maturity of Parry’s theological convictions.

Seeking a successor

Perhaps no event demonstrates Parry’s convictions more clearly than the events that unfolded as their time at Port Stephens drew to a close, as he sought a full-time chaplain for the ACC. Parry became aware of the need for a chaplain in April 1831, when the Rev. Richard Hill, an evangelical from Sydney, conducted an interim pastoral tour from Newcastle throughout the region.⁴⁰ On visiting Parry at Port Stephens, he performed Divine Service and distributed the sacrament of Holy Communion. This was the first time the Lord’s Supper was distributed at Port Stephens because as a layperson, Parry was not able to preside over the sacrament (although he was permitted to perform baptisms). Parry knew he needed a clergyman to administer the Lord’s Supper on a regular basis to those in his care. After his appointment as chaplain at Newcastle in May 1831, the Rev. Charles P. N. Wilton began visiting Port Stephens twice a month.⁴¹ By late 1831, Parry and Wilton would conduct Divine Service at alternate locations; if one were at Stroud, the other would be at Carrington.⁴² At the close of 1832, a clergyman had visited the estate eight times, something for which Parry was grateful.⁴³

Yet this arrangement was not enough for Parry. He wanted a permanent and full-time chaplain to be employed exclusively at the company estate. Parry knew how much he and Isabella had put their heart and soul into the people under them. Visitations, weekly services, running of the school and general friendships were all required for the ministry there to continue and thrive. A bi-monthly visit from Rev. Wilton would hardly suffice. The people of Port Stephens needed a minister ‘in season and out of season’.⁴⁴

By this point, the Parrys had resolved to build a permanent chapel on the estate entirely at their own expense.⁴⁵ In April 1833, the cornerstone was laid for St John’s Chapel at Stroud by Parry himself, while Rev. Wilton conducted the service.⁴⁶ Isabella prayed: ‘In dedicating this little chapel to God, earnestly indeed did we pray that He would send down His blessing upon it, and permit His Holy Spirit to dwell in that place, and bring forth the fruits of true holiness, so that peace, and “the Gospel of peace” may reign throughout this settlement, when we are far away’.⁴⁷ Parry writes: ‘God grant that some faithful minister of Jesus Christ may be found to preach the word of God within its walls!’⁴⁸ Again we see the Parrys’ unquenchable desire for the gospel to go forward in this place that had become home to them, especially given that they would soon be leaving. Parry persistently petitioned the directors of the AAC to appoint

³⁸ Robertson, *Proclaiming ‘Unsearchable Riches’*, 40.

³⁹ Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales, Both as a Penal Settlement and as a British Colony*, 317.

⁴¹ G. P. Shaw, *Patriarch and Patriot: William Grant Broughton 1788-1853: Colonial Statesman and Ecclesiastic* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 62.

⁴² Robertson, *Proclaiming ‘Unsearchable Riches’*, 41.

⁴³ Broughton-Parry correspondence, statement November 12, 1834.

⁴⁴ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

⁴⁵ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 266.

⁴⁶ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 266.

⁴⁷ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 267.

⁴⁸ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 267.

a clergyman exclusively for their estate.⁴⁹ He was anxious that his successor be someone who followed in his evangelical footsteps.

The directors agreed to appoint a minister from the Church of England.⁵⁰ However, Parry was unable to find a suitable candidate from either England or Australia, and was forced down a different route. He crossed denominational bounds and approached Mr Charles Price, an independent Congregationalist minister, and asked him to consider a chaplaincy position at Port Stephens.⁵¹ Parry saw in Price a continuation of his evangelical convictions, regardless of denominational differences.

Parry was eager to appoint Price. Acting in wisdom, and anticipating the objections of others, Parry requested that Price use the Anglican Prayer Book and perform Divine Service despite Price's independent Congregationalist convictions. Price consented, yet could not abide by the baptismal rite. He believed the 'sponsors' (or Godparents) of a child should be none other than the parents themselves; therefore he agreed to run everything according to Divine Service except for baptism.⁵² This was acceptable to Parry, who writes: 'I remarked that in the prospect which now presented itself of leaving our little flock without any spiritual instruction, I was disposed to accept an offer I had received from Mr Price'.⁵³ Again we see Parry motivated by love and concern for the souls in his care to the extent that he was willing to compromise his own secondary convictions. Price was appointed by the company under the authority of Parry in July 1833, but his position was to be temporary until a Church of England minister be found.⁵⁴

In his biography of Mr Price, Fenton makes a brief mention of the fact that 'there were some high church people who did not approve of the dissenting minister's appointment at Port Stephens; but on the whole there was no cause for depression'.⁵⁵ This was a severe understatement. The appointment of Price put Parry at odds with Archdeacon Broughton of New South Wales.

Parry had written to the Archdeacon about the matter ostensibly to seek permission for Price's appointment, but the letter carried with it more the weight of fact rather than request. Parry wrote about the provision for Rev. Price to conduct Divine Service according to the Church of England except for the baptismal rite. Perhaps the most telling point in the letter is that Parry suggests Rev. Wilton was no longer needed to minister on company property, even though he had not formally offered Price the appointment yet (he was waiting for the Archdeacon's response).⁵⁶

The Archdeacon was certainly hesitant, and made known his objections to independent ministry as a system, calling it 'a perverted mode of belief which in fact is not the gospel'. The main danger, in his opinion, was the trend for independent model churches to succumb to Unitarianism, which was a prominent heresy of the time. However, in Broughton's initial response to Parry, he seemed to accept Price on the condition that Price was willing to abide by Church of England doctrines and ritual and made the following comment: 'I will advance as

⁴⁹ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

⁵⁰ James Fenton, *The Life and Work of the Reverend Charles Price: First Independent Minister in Australia* (Melbourne: George Robertson & Co, 1886), 56.

⁵¹ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

⁵² Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834.

⁵³ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement dated November 12, 1834. It is worth noting the warmth with which Parry describes those living on the Company land. He described them originally as 'nominally Christian' living in '[a] religious and moral wilderness'. Yet after three and a half years, his endearing tone cannot but help reflect the influence Parry's congregation had on him, and vice-versa.

⁵⁴ Fenton, *The Life and Work of the Reverend Charles Price*, 34.

⁵⁵ Fenton, *The Life and Work of the Reverend Charles Price*, 42.

⁵⁶ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, letters to Broughton, 4 July 1833.

far as I can to give him the right hand of fellowship and to forward your views without surrendering my own faith and principles'.⁵⁷

Unfortunately Parry did not receive this first letter from Broughton in a timely manner. Parry then impatiently composed another letter informing the Archdeacon that Price had already been appointed as chaplain to the company, since he had not heard back from him. This was a step too far for high churchman Broughton. It became clear that Parry had written to him not for permission or advice, but merely to inform. Perhaps a little irate, Broughton labelled the independent ministry as 'leaven', pejoratively suggesting that Price's views on baptism reduced the rite from the level of sacrament, not giving it its due regard. He withdrew his offer of 'the right hand of fellowship', suggesting that 'the view which the church of England takes of the nature of baptism [...] is entitled to too much respect in my eyes to allow me to become a party to the substitution of a difference exposition of the sacrament; if indeed according to the independents way of thinking, baptism be a sacrament at all'.⁵⁸ However, there was little Broughton could do about it. Unless he had another minister to send Parry, his hands were tied and thus Price began his ministry at Port Stephens.

The situation calmed down for a time, although the peace was not to last. Hostility came this time from Captain Moffat, the resident magistrate and a constant agitator and arose after Price had baptised the Parrys' son.⁵⁹ In response, Moffat invited the high churchman Rev. Wilton *back* to Port Stephens in order that children be baptised by an Anglican minister.⁶⁰ Wilton received this information, conveyed it to Archdeacon Broughton, and was instructed by Broughton to fulfil the Captain's request. Wilton then informed Parry that he was invited to perform these baptisms and conduct Divine Service. It was a proverbial slap in the face both to Price, and Parry who appointed him. (In the meantime, it conspired that Captain Moffat had also started a false and sinister rumor that Price had been seen drunk.)⁶¹

Naturally, Parry took great offence at the Captain's invitation; there was no need for Wilton, since Price was to do the work of a minister. Parry remarked to Price: 'I feel especial pain in perusing that part of the instructions which relates to your performance of Divine Service, because the Archdeacon is aware that provision is already made for the due and regular performance of public worship at this Settlement'.⁶² Following the Archdeacon's instruction would mean two services running at Carrington simultaneously; one performed by Price and the other by Wilton. Parry responded in an extreme way and suggested that Wilton would be trespassing if he came on to the company estate (although, in a statement in which this letter is copied in a footnote he writes of his regret that he used such strong language). But Broughton denied he required permission to send a clergyman anywhere and accused Parry of not being devoted to the Church of England since his son had not been baptised by an Anglican minister.⁶³ He ensured Wilton attended Port Stephens to conduct Divine Service.

Parry, in Christian charity, realised he overstepped the mark and sent a letter to Wilton, informing him that Price would now conduct the service at Stroud, rather than insisting that two competing services be held simultaneously.⁶⁴ Thus, in a display of grace, Parry put his congregation first, not wanting to cause an uproar and distract from the matters at hand. Despite his grievance, his priority was to preserve his evangelical system of worship at Port Stephens.

⁵⁷ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, letter to W. E. Parry, 15 July 1833.

⁵⁸ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, letter to W. E. Parry, 29 July 1833.

⁵⁹ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, In the Service of the Company, 237.

⁶⁰ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, In the Service of the Company, 238.

⁶¹ Parry and Noel Butlin Archives Centre, In the Service of the Company, 249.

⁶² Broughton-Parry Correspondence, Letter to Rev. Wilton, December 10, 1833.

⁶³ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, Letter to W. E. Parry, November 26, 1834.

⁶⁴ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, Letter to Rev. Wilton, December 24, 1834.

Parry was hopeful that Rev. Price would continue on for the time being in spite of the attack; but given that Price's appointment was always meant only to be temporary until an Anglican minister could be found, he turned his focus to England, where he would make arrangements for an evangelical Church of England minister to take over from Price in due course. It must be noted that Parry had only affection and high regard for Price, as he writes: 'We can truly bear witness, after eight months' experience of Mr Price's ministry that when he came to us declaring the testimony of God, he determined not to know anything among us save Jesus Christ and him crucified'.⁶⁵ It was Price who dedicated and preached at the opening of the Stroud chapel and not Broughton, who boycotted the event.⁶⁶

As the Parrys prepared to leave Port Stephens for good, they left one last bit of encouragement for Rev. Price: £20 and an exhortation: 'to the comfort of the faithful minister whom the Providence of God has placed over the little flock at Port Stephens'.⁶⁷ They knew the importance of Price carrying on the work they started.⁶⁸ The directors of the company were impressed with the work of Parry and Price, seeing its value for the company.⁶⁹ Naturally, they turned to Parry for a recommendation of an Anglican replacement for Price, and he put forward the name of William Macquarie Cowper. In his autobiography, Cowper credits his appointment as chaplain of the AAC to Parry.⁷⁰ Price left on good terms in March 1836 and Cowper took up his appointment soon after.⁷¹ Price's biographer comments that 'No one more truly evangelical, or better suited for the mission work at Port Stephens, could have been selected to take up the labours Mr Price had relinquished'.⁷² Thus Parry saw to it that in Cowper, the evangelical ministry was secured for another generation.

This, of course, was always Parry's core aim, and his passion for the gospel to go forward is so evident in this series of events. We see this not only in his determination to install a full-time chaplain to continue his ministry work in the first place, but also in the fact that he was willing to lay aside his own secondary preferences in order for that to happen. He was willing to look beyond denominational boundaries and even his own personal grievance at Broughton's behavior for the sake of the gospel.

In Parry we have seen the quintessential evangelical. He was concerned for spiritual truth as he ensured the Bible was part of the school curriculum. He preached simply and plainly the word of God, so it was understood easily. He had a high view of the Lord's Supper, not daring to administer it himself, but even relying on a 'high churchman'—namely Rev. Wilton—to do so. He did all within his power to curb drunkenness and licentiousness. Yet he did not mandate attendance at Divine Service. He visited the sick, spent time with his people and showed them what it meant to be a Christian believer. His communication was saturated with the gospel as he encouraged others and exhorted them to keep the faith. He was a man willing to cross denominational bounds if it meant the continuation of the evangelical faith, even at the ire of his acquaintance, Archdeacon Broughton. None of this was required or even expected of him, yet he and Isabella ministered seemingly tirelessly towards caring for those in their care. Thus the sincerity of his evangelical beliefs is made clear in his tireless ministry to those in his care. This apt summary of Parry's ministry in Port Stephens is found in his memoirs, by his son the Rev. Edward Parry:

⁶⁵ Broughton-Parry Correspondence, statement after 15 July 1833.

⁶⁶ He was invited, but declined the invitation. Broughton-Parry Correspondence, August 6, 1833.

⁶⁷ Fenton, *The Life and Work of the Reverend Charles Price*, 43.

⁶⁸ Robertson, *Proclaiming 'Unsearchable Riches'*, 45.

⁶⁹ Robertson, *Proclaiming 'Unsearchable Riches'*, 46.

⁷⁰ Cowper, *Autobiography and Reminiscences of William Macquarie Cowper, Dean of Sydney*, 180.

⁷¹ Elkin, *The Diocese of Newcastle. A History* (Sydney: Australasian Medical Publishing Company, 1955), 100.

⁷² Fenton, *The Life and Work of the Reverend Charles Price*, 59.

Sir Edward Parry found a wilderness, but left it a land of hope and promise. Long will his name be remembered with love and reverence, for services which can never be requited by earthly reward. His reward must be from on high, in that recognition of a good and faithful servant, who, while fulfilling the charge of an earthly stewardship, remembered the yet higher trust of a heavenly commission, and, planting his Master's vineyard with scions of the 'tree of life,' reared a church in the barren deserts of a heathen land. Sir Edward Parry laboured as a missionary among the convict servants of his extensive establishment, contending with a thousand difficulties ever incident to a spiritual reform. He erected a small but beautiful church on the rich borders of the calm Karuah, where a flock soon gladly assembled, to join in the sweet incense of prayer and praise, where never prayer was heard before; and his example animated others to do the like.⁷³

The impact, in turn, on the people of Port Stephens is harder to measure. From education, to moral improvement and general welfare, and of course their exposure to the word of God, the impact of the Parrys' ministry was surely wide-ranging and significant. The following quotation that continues in Rev. Parry's memoirs may be indicative, yet its exact truth may be doubted, since it originates with 'The prisoners of Australia: a narrative', which had the stated aim of 'teach[ing] us how we may best prevent future vice and irreligion, and avert the recurrence of transportation among our female poor!'⁷⁴ Nevertheless, there is most likely some reflection of the truth, and given what we have learned of the Parrys, it is not too difficult to imagine this occurrence. The people of the ACC certainly owed a great debt to the spiritual care of the Edward and Isabella Parry.

It was at the close of a beautiful Sabbath day, that I once sallied forth for an evening's stroll, and almost unconsciously wandered to a convict's hut, which stood on the borders of the coast. Attracted by the sound of voices, as of children reading, I paused to listen, and, although too far from the dwelling to hear distinctly, I saw, through the open doorway, what was passing within. The father of the family, a convict, sat near the entrance with a young child on his knee, while three older ones were grouped around him, reading from the Scriptures, which from time to time he explained to them. Unwilling to intrude upon a family thus engaged, I returned home, un-perceived by those who had thus attracted and interested me, but on the following day I heard, from the lips of his wife, the circumstances of the convict's transportation. Providentially, he had been assigned under the Christian teaching of Sir Edward Parry and his wife, had been led to see the folly of worldly wickedness, and the deep importance of those better things, which now formed his highest privilege and consolation. These blessings were among the many fruits of the missionary exertions of Sir Edward Parry and his now sainted wife, who both lived in the grateful affections of many a chastened heart, long after they had ceased to take a personal share in the interests of that far distant colony.⁷⁵

⁷³ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 272–73.

⁷⁴ Charlotte Anley, *The Prisoners of Australia: A Narrative / by the Author of 'Miriam', 'Essay on Body, Soul, and Spirit,' &c &c* (London: J. Hatchard, 1841), vi.

⁷⁵ Parry, *Memoirs of Rear Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry*, 273–74.

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