

## **An Analysis of the Reasons for the Opposition in Tasmania in the 1850s of the Rev Dr Henry Fry and other Evangelical Anglican Clergy to their Bishop, Dr Francis Nixon**

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Dr Henry Fry and the Evangelicals opposed Bishop Nixon over the true character of Protestantism in the Church of England to prevent the exclusion of Evangelicals from the diocese of Tasmania. A critical evaluation of standard portrayals of Fry will be offered. The historical background that led to the conflict will be outlined. The catalysts for the dispute over the true character of Protestantism will be analysed in the context of the wider philosophical and cultural milieu. The predicament of exclusion presented to Fry and the Evangelicals will be highlighted and the options of responding, including opposing Nixon, will be evaluated. Finally the resolution and consequences of the conflict will depict the legitimacy of Fry's concerns in opposing Nixon.

Historians typically portray Fry in a negative light. Stephens uses loaded terms such as 'extremism' and 'hysterical' to describe Fry's actions.<sup>1</sup> Batt and Roe have written the most thorough account of the conflict. They paint some of Fry's opinions as 'confused megalomania', and assert that his theology had undergone a 'revolution', switching 'from an extreme High to an extreme Low Church position' in seven short years.<sup>2</sup> While both works accurately acknowledge Fry lost influence during the 1850s, their depiction of Fry generally adopts the victorious faction's caricature of Fry's theology and actions. Further research needs to explore whether Fry's views became more radical over time, or simply more

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<sup>1</sup> G. Stephens, *The Anglican Church in Tasmania* (Hobart: Trustees of the Diocese, 1991), 55.

<sup>2</sup> N. Batt and M. Roe, 'Conflict Within the Church of England in Tasmania, 1850-1858', *The Journal of Religious History* 4 (July 1966): 40, 55, 59.

alienated. This paper will re-examine the reasons why Fry was willing to oppose Nixon so vigorously.

Tension had existed between the Evangelicals and Bishop Nixon prior to the fierce conflict that erupted in 1850. Tasmania was separated from New South Wales in 1825.<sup>3</sup> Many Evangelicals came to Tasmania as convict chaplains. When the Bishop arrived in 1843, Evangelicals comprised over half of the clergy and the majority of the laity.<sup>4</sup> Henry Phibbs Fry was born in Ireland in 1807, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and became the minister of St. George's, Battery Point in 1839.<sup>5</sup> He also became the leader of the Low Church faction against Nixon. This group included William Bedford, Philip Palmer, William Browne and Alfred Stackhouse.<sup>6</sup> There had been animosity between Bedford, in particular, and Nixon, before 1850, when on three occasions Bedford had refused to allow the Bishop to lecture at the Cathedral.<sup>7</sup>

Bishop Nixon led the High Church faction. He was born in 1803, had a privileged upbringing and studied at St. John's, Oxford. He was consecrated Bishop in 1842 and arrived in Tasmania in July, 1843. He identified with the Laudian tradition.<sup>8</sup> His High Church priorities were clear in his first Charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese. He impressed on his clergy the importance of respecting liturgical ceremony, clerical hierarchy and discipline.<sup>9</sup> Nixon was sympathetic to the Tractarian movement. Fry wrote of Nixon,

‘He is not himself desirous of embracing Romanism. But Archdeacon Marriott and six Oxford Clergymen whom he brought out to the Colony with him have

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<sup>3</sup> S. Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World* (3rd Ed.; Acorn Press), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Batt and Roe, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Batt and Roe, 40.

<sup>6</sup> R. Ely, *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (ed by. B. Dickey; Sydney: Evangelical History Association, 1994), 34.

<sup>7</sup> Ely, *The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Davies, 5 and 9 September, 1851 as quoted in Batt and Roe, 49.

<sup>9</sup> F. R. Nixon, *A Charge Delivered To the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania at the Primary Visitation, in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, the 23rd April, 1846*. (Hobart Town: William Gore Elliston, 1846), 37, 43–44, 64, 69–70.

surrounded the Bishop.’<sup>10</sup>

Marriott, a Tractarian, had recruited from England six other Tractarians who became influential advisers to the Bishop, including Frederick Cox, S. B. Windsor, William Tancred and Arthur Davenport among others.<sup>11</sup> By 1850, no Synod had been established and the theological character of the diocese had not been decisively determined. With an influx of Tractarians at a crucial time into a diocese dominated by Evangelicals, the scene was set for a polarizing conflict.

Baptismal regeneration became the first issue to trigger conflict over the true character of Protestantism in Tasmania after the Minutes were published from the (Australian) Bishops’ Conference held in October 1850. The statement by the majority of the Bishops, which affirmed that they ‘believe that it is the doctrine of our Church that all infants do by baptism receive this grace of regeneration’, caused controversy.<sup>12</sup> This was a ‘Roman’ view held by Tractarians. Only Bishop Perry of Melbourne dissented, stating that baptism ‘is not to be understood as declaring positively a fact ... that every baptized infant ... is regenerate’.<sup>13</sup> His view reflected an evangelical understanding of infant baptism.

The Bishops’ statement on baptismal regeneration came in response to the Gorham Judgment earlier in 1850. In England, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council upheld the position of George Gorham after the Bishop of Exeter had refused him a licence because he held an evangelical conviction that an infant was not unconditionally spiritually regenerated by the sacrament of baptism.<sup>14</sup> The Privy Council instituted a living for Gorham by law, despite the

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<sup>10</sup> H. P. Fry, ‘Letter From the Rev. Dr. Fry, To the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hobart Town, February 20, 1852.’, *Colonial Times* (Hobart, March 5, 1852), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Batt and Roe, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Augustus Adelaide et al., *Minutes of Proceedings at a Meeting of the Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Australasia, Held at Sydney, from October 1st to November 1st, A.D. 1850*. (Sydney: Kemp and Fairfax, 1850), 17.

<sup>13</sup> Adelaide et al., *Minutes of Proceedings at a Meeting of the Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Australasia*, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Wolfe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*, 211.

will of his Bishop. This judgment was meant to secure the position of Evangelicals as not contrary to the principles of the Church of England, granting them liberty to reject the belief of absolute baptismal regeneration.<sup>15</sup> The decision of the Privy Council ruled that the evangelical interpretation was consistent with the sense of the Church of England Articles.<sup>16</sup>

However, Nixon strongly held to the doctrine of the absolute baptismal regeneration of infants and rejected the ruling of the Privy Council. He believed the Privy Council judgment was a 'manifest contradiction' because though the Council ruled the issue was an open question legally, he refused to accept that the baptism was an open question theologically.<sup>17</sup> Nixon was adamant that the 'plain and full meaning' and the 'literal and grammatical sense in which [the Church] enjoins her Articles' was clear.<sup>18</sup> He went so far as to assert that Mr Gorham's view was 'heresy'.<sup>19</sup> The problem for the Evangelical clergy in Tasmania was that if Nixon thought Gorham was heretical, then in the Bishop's opinion they must be heretical on this point. Nixon was convinced his view was clearly the only true interpretation throughout church history, including the Reformers.<sup>20</sup> On this basis he rejected accusations of Romanizing.<sup>21</sup> The Tasmanian Evangelicals thought otherwise, that his view tended 'to narrow the terms of communion with our Church'.<sup>22</sup> Nixon's stance meant that Evangelicals

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<sup>15</sup> D. W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism* (A History of Evangelicalism; Nottingham: IVP, 2005), 147.

<sup>16</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 177.

<sup>17</sup> F. R. Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII* (Hobart Town: Walch, Hobart Town, 1852), 26.

<sup>18</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> F. R. Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May* (Hobart Town: H. & C. Best, 1851), 43.

<sup>20</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 32–33.

<sup>21</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Address of the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Hobart Town, Resolutions Adopted at the Quarterly Meeting of the Chapter, on the 18th March, 1851, as quoted in the appendix of Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May*, 74.

were either dissenters at best, or heretics, at worst. Moreover, for Evangelicals, ‘if imposed, [Nixon’s view would] be equivalent to a new Article of Faith’.<sup>23</sup> So for Fry and the Evangelicals, Nixon’s understanding of infant baptism became the first issue that undermined the true character of Evangelical Protestantism in the diocese.

The second issue that acted as a catalyst for the conflict over the true character of the Church of England’s Protestantism in Tasmania was the dissemination of three books with semi-Roman doctrines by Nixon and his Tractarian supporters. In August 1851, twenty-two Evangelical clergy signed the *Solemn Declaration* to uphold the five Principles of the Protestant Reformation. The declaration was a response to three books which were believed to ‘inculcate principles of Romanizing tendencies’ and that were ‘calculated to undermine the evangelical truths of religion’.<sup>24</sup> *The Steps to the Alter* and *Theophilus Anglicanus* had been used and distributed at Christ College by Tancred, Cox and Windsor. Marriott had also disseminated the book, *Spiritual Communion*.<sup>25</sup> The books were given as manuals of devotion, for preparation for Confirmation and to teach about the religious life.<sup>26</sup> The signatories to the *Solemn Declaration* objected to the principles implied about the Lord’s Supper, confession and absolution, as well as the recognition of the Church of Rome.<sup>27</sup> *The Steps of the Alter* taught that once a Confessor has been chosen, that he is commissioned by God ‘as His ministerial deputy, to hear, to judge and absolve you’.<sup>28</sup> The Evangelicals needed no more evidence about the true nature of the books than the statement by the Roman

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<sup>23</sup> Address of the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Hobart Town, Resolutions Adopted at the Quarterly Meeting of the Chapter, on the 18th March, 1851, as quoted in the appendix of Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May, 74.*

<sup>24</sup> H. P. Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony, 1851* (Hobart Town: Colonial Times, 1851), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony, 1851*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 67.

<sup>28</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony, 1851*, 5.

Catholic Bishop of Hobart in a sermon on 29 June 1851 that the use of *Steps to the Alter* was evidence of the progress of Roman Catholic doctrines.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, *Theophilus Anglicanus* stated that ‘the church of England never did separate herself’ from the Church of Rome and that ‘the Church of Rome is a part of the Catholic Church, as the Church of Greece and Church of England is’. It continues that ‘in the main points of religion they are all ‘one and the same’ and in respect of faith and practice, as teaching all truth’.<sup>30</sup> These statements undermined Protestantism by equating the Church of England and Rome as fundamentally the same in nature and doctrine. Fry believed that the doctrines at stake were the same doctrines that the Reformers were martyred for.<sup>31</sup> Yet, these books had been endorsed and disseminated by Nixon and his faction. The fear was that these devotional books and manuals, if they were not actually Roman doctrine, were so close to it that they mislead young disciples. The ambiguity of the language would distort the true character of Protestant teaching in the minds of the young, impressionable clergy in training. Moreover, the students would naturally be unsuspecting since the books came with the full support of the Bishop and college lecturers.<sup>32</sup>

The cases of Makinson and Sconce secession to the Church of Rome in Sydney highlighted the danger of Catholic devotions adapted for use in the English Church.<sup>33</sup> Thus Evangelicals in the Church of England in Tasmania believed that true character of Protestantism was being undermined by the propagation of semi-Roman books.

The fear of Romanizing in the Church of England in Tasmania reflected a wider concern

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<sup>29</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen's Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 4.

<sup>30</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen's Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen's Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen's Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 19.

among Anglican Evangelicals worldwide, but especially in England. An undercurrent of anti-Catholic sentiment had grown during the 1830s and 1840s. These attitudes had been stirred by several factors. Firstly, Catholic Emancipation in 1829 was a significant change.<sup>34</sup> Many feared that this would encourage the ‘papal aggression’ of Pope Pius IX to seek to restore the Catholic hierarchy in England in 1850.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, the Oxford Movement from 1833, led by John Henry Newman, a former Evangelical, was also perceived to set a clear ‘Romeward’ course for the Church of England.<sup>36</sup> The Tractarians also took an interest in the colonial church in the 1830s and 1840s. The hope of Tractarians was that the English church might be built on Catholic principles, under bishops independent of the state.<sup>37</sup> Newman wrote to Pusey in 1840, that the *Tracts* ‘shall go to Van Diemen’s Land and be welcome: if they have not already gone’.<sup>38</sup>

Fry was not ignorant of these events and movements. In 1849, he took leave and travelled back to England to witness ‘the religious condition of the English Churches’.<sup>39</sup> Fry had always identified as an evangelical. He was concerned by the direction that Tractarianism sought to push the Church of England. In his farewell sermon in 1849 he warned his congregation about the ‘many false brethren, who covered their design of treason against Protestantism under the profession of reviving the Apostolical usages of our Church’.<sup>40</sup> His experience of the religious climate in England only hardened his resolve to oppose the Roman doctrines endorsed by Nixon in the diocese.

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<sup>34</sup> Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*, 205–208.

<sup>35</sup> Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 225.

<sup>36</sup> Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*, 208.

<sup>37</sup> D. Hilliard, *Re-visioning Australian Colonial Christianity* (ed by. M. Hutchinson and E. Campion; Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 197.

<sup>38</sup> Newman to Pusey, 15 July 1840, quoted in Cooper, “The Oxford Movement and Australia,” 188, as quoted in Hilliard, *Re-visioning Australian Colonial Christianity*, 197.

<sup>39</sup> H. P. Fry, *A Sermon Preached at St. George’s Church, Hobart Town, on Sunday, February 4, 1849, by the Rev. Henry Phibbs Fry, A. B., Upon Taking Farewell of His Congregation*. (Hobart Town: H. and C. Best), 12.

<sup>40</sup> Fry, *A Sermon Preached at St. George’s Church, Hobart Town, on Sunday, February 4, 1849, by the Rev. Henry Phibbs Fry, A. B., Upon Taking Farewell of His Congregation*., 10.

The third and most bitter issue that triggered the conflict over the true character of Protestantism for Fry was the rule of faith. The aim of the *Solemn Declaration* was to affirm the principles of the Protestant Reformation. These included salvation by faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, for the faithful alone, according to the Scriptures alone.<sup>41</sup> It was the statement on the rule of faith that was the most controversial. It read,

‘Holy Scripture is the sole rule of faith; and that every individual has the right to read and interpret the Word of God by his own private judgment, with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Denying the authority of Tradition, or the right of any Church or Minister to prescribe to individuals in matters of religion in opposition to their own judgment.’

Nixon interpreted this statement as advocating ‘*solo scriptura*’, a position similar to that adopted by the diverse groups of the radical Reformation. Turning the Evangelicals’ own language against themselves, Nixon described their position as a ‘new article of faith’.<sup>42</sup> He believed the statement was loosely worded and gave every individual the ‘liberty to reject any doctrine of the Church, that does not agree with his own interpretation’.<sup>43</sup> He argued it was not a principle of the Protestant Reformation, but ‘the leading principle of dissent’.<sup>44</sup> It took ‘little account of either heresy or schism, as sin’, and legitimized sects, such as the Socinians, who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>45</sup> Nixon accused Fry of hypocrisy on this matter. In his book, *The Scriptural Evidence of the Apostolic Ministry and Tradition of the Church Catholic*, published in 1843, Fry wrote,

‘the infallible rule of faith, that is, the Holy Scriptures interpreted by the Catholic Church, ... If men have no other guide to the interpretation of

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<sup>41</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 20–22.

<sup>42</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 10–11.



Scripture but their own private judgments, their chief security against error would be incredulity, and the questioning of the evidence of every doctrine.’<sup>46</sup>

It appeared to Nixon that Fry’s theology had been revolutionized. Certainly Fry’s thinking was influenced by the Enlightenment. Fry had a high view of reason. He argued, ‘in admitting this doctrine [of the Roman rule of faith] we dethrone reason, condemn our understanding as a false guide.’<sup>47</sup> Enlightenment philosophy in the nineteenth century stressed the individual as the arbiter of truth, as opposed to traditions of thought.<sup>48</sup> Fry’s views may also have been shaped by a belief in the democratic rights of the individual, also popular at that time.<sup>49</sup> Tasmanians voted for their first elected legislature in 1851 and talk of popular rights filled the air.<sup>50</sup> With his emphasis on the reason of the individual and hyperbolic language, Fry was interpreted as not merely overstating his argument, but preaching the unsound doctrine of the radical Reformers.

Nixon, in contrast, emphasized the authority of the church in determining matters of spiritual truth. He was more sympathetic to the Tractarian doctrines which gave priority to the tradition and ancient lineage of the Church of England.<sup>51</sup> Nixon stated, ‘the declaration which I have declined to affirm is ... equivalent to reducing everything to each individual’s private judgment; before which creeds, catechism, articles, liturgy, all, must give way.’<sup>52</sup> Nixon desired to be guided by ‘Holy Scripture, interpreted by the Catholic Church’, since ‘there must be some authority within the Church, by which a check is placed upon unlicensed

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<sup>46</sup> Fry, H. P., *The Scriptural Evidence of the Apostolic Ministry and Tradition of the Church Catholic* (Van Diemen’s Land: Advertisers Office, 1843), 148–149.

<sup>47</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 89.

<sup>48</sup> T. Ward, *Words of Life* (Nottingham: IVP, 2009), 150.

<sup>49</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 88.

<sup>50</sup> Batt and Roe, 40.

<sup>51</sup> Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 141.

<sup>52</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 6.

private interpretation or repudiation of Catholic verities.’<sup>53</sup> As Bishop in a new diocese, without a synod, Nixon stated, ‘in my own Diocese, I am the authorized exponent, should any doubt or difficulty arise.’<sup>54</sup> Fry argued this gave Nixon absolute power, as the sole rector, sole patron and sole judge in the diocese.<sup>55</sup> The Church’s voice became the Bishop’s voice. The Bishop’s opinion became the rule of faith and supreme authority.<sup>56</sup> Fry illustrated the problem that when new Romanish doctrines were introduced into the diocese, the clergy were bound to receive them, as Nixon was the authorized exponent, otherwise the clergy would face discipline or loss. From Fry’s perspective, Nixon had more power than the Pope.<sup>57</sup> Fry argued that if Nixon’s rule of faith was the Protestant view, then ‘it follows that the Protestant and Romish Churches have the same rule of faith’.<sup>58</sup>

Fry and the Evangelicals actually argued that Scripture was the supreme authority of faith, not the only authority of faith. Fry’s argument was often implied or elaborated in the footnotes and so this vital qualification and nuance was lost in the heated conflict with Nixon. The *Solemn Declaration*, in the footnote under the controversial second principle concerning the Scriptures as the rule of faith, quoted a commentary on Luther: ‘it is not the Fathers who are to be taken to elucidate Scripture, but it is the Scripture that must elucidate the Fathers.’<sup>59</sup> Traditions serve Scripture, rather than complete it. If this was its intended meaning, then Nixon was correct to assert the declaration was loosely worded. The word ‘supreme’ would have been clearer than ‘sole’ rule of faith. Evidently, Fry did not deny other authorities, he

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<sup>53</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 46.

<sup>54</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 47.

<sup>56</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 97–98.

<sup>57</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 140–142.

<sup>58</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 64.

<sup>59</sup> Fry and et al, *Solemn Declaration of Ministers of the Church of England in Van Diemen’s Land, on the Present Condition of the Church in That Colony*, 1851, 20.

just did not believe they were unlimited or infallible.<sup>60</sup> An explanation subsequently followed the *Solemn Declaration* to make clear that,

‘the second article of the “Declaration” does not contradict the right of the Church of England to frame Articles of Religion, and to decree rites and ceremonies (the same not being contrary to God’s Word), which its members are bound to receive and to observe as long as they continue members of the Church of England.’<sup>61</sup>

This explanation upholds a high regard for the inherited traditions of the English Church. Traditions were a tool for the faithful interpretation of Scripture, but only Scripture was an infallible source of divine revelation. For Fry, if the Scriptures were not the supreme authority of faith, then the sufficiency and clarity of the Scriptures were undermined. This would undermine the confidence of believers to read their Bibles. Fry argued that Nixon had misquoted his book of 1843. The book upheld the authority of the Church, tradition and Scripture, against the radical Reformers rule of faith that Scripture is the only authority.<sup>62</sup> But it did not advocate the Roman rule of faith, which understands tradition to have divine authority. The authoritative tradition Fry advocated was the ‘historical testimony, in many cases important, but of course always entirely subordinate to Holy Scripture’.<sup>63</sup> The conflict was intense and bitter because, as Fry stated, the rule of faith in practical influence is ‘perhaps the most important in determining [a person’s] faith, and so influencing their salvation’.<sup>64</sup> This issue was central to the conflict during the Reformation and between Fry and Nixon. Any doctrine that displaced Scripture as the supreme authority of faith undermined the true character of Protestantism.

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<sup>60</sup> Henry Phibbs Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George’s, Hobart Town* (Hobart Town: Burnet, 1856), 36–37.

<sup>61</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 40.

<sup>62</sup> Fry, H. P., *The Scriptural Evidence of the Apostolic Ministry and Tradition of the Church Catholic*, 148.

<sup>63</sup> appendix II Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, iv.

<sup>64</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George’s, Hobart Town*, 22.

The consequence for Fry and the Evangelicals of Nixon's convictions about the character of the true nature of Protestantism was that it effectively excluded them from the diocese. Fry summed it up, 'the imminent danger in this Diocese is caused by the exclusion of Protestant ministers, and the filling of every pulpit with men who will preach the principles of "*The Steps*".'<sup>65</sup> The problem was that when Nixon decided to enforce upon all ministers the doctrine of invariable regeneration in Baptism and condemn the rule of faith as stated in the *Solemn Declaration*, the terms of communion in the Church of the colony were narrowed.<sup>66</sup> Since Nixon's doctrines 'not only subverts the Reformation, but the Gospel', the effect according to Fry was 'to chain our consciences and judgments'.<sup>67</sup> Fry believed that the 'system of religious teaching if not openly Romanizing, [is] at least bitterly opposed to Protestant and Evangelical principles'.<sup>68</sup> Their only hope of peace was to publicly recant and withdraw their signatures from the *Solemn Declaration*. Archdeacon Davies, offered the terms of reconciliation,

'if you retract that portion of the *Solemn Declaration* which your Diocesan considers a denial of the authoritative teaching of the Church as enforced in her twentieth article, I shall be happy to do everything in my power to make peace between your deeply injured Bishop, ... and yourself.'<sup>69</sup>

Some Evangelicals did recant under the pressure. Fry recalled, 'I have been told by a minister of the Bishop's party that he would gladly have taken the opposite side but for the sake of his large family.'<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 59.

<sup>66</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 180.

<sup>67</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 99.

<sup>68</sup> H. P. Fry, 'Letter from Dr Fry to the Bishop of Sydney', July 23, 1856, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Letter IV, Archdeacon Davies to Dr Fry, 3 March 1853, as quoted in Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 14.

<sup>70</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 194.

Many Evangelicals were excluded from the diocese because they were denied licences for either rejecting baptismal regeneration or affirming the *Solemn Declaration's* statement on the right of private judgment. Nixon dismissed the Gorham Judgment as only an 'opinion delivered by five lawyers'.<sup>71</sup> He refused to accept anything legally binding without 'the concurrence of convocation' or 'to suffer the judgment of the Privy Council, in the smallest degree, to fetter or guide my discretion, as to the admission of Candidates for Holy Orders'.<sup>72</sup> Nixon understood it as his duty to guard against both Romanism and Puritanism. Upon this logic, he questioned candidates on baptismal regeneration. After the Bishops' conference, the Evangelicals asked Nixon for confirmation that baptismal regeneration would not be a test for ordination.<sup>73</sup> Nixon responded that he intended to continue asking questions on the issue as an integral part of the examinations, 'even if it is unpopular'.<sup>74</sup> He admitted that some would describe this view of Baptism as Tractarian or Puseyite, but Nixon was adamant that if a candidate 'cannot take upon himself to pronounce a baptized child "regenerate", though the Church declares that he is so' because he 'feels called upon thus to exercise his right of private judgment, and to explain away the ancient doctrine of the Church ... he can scarcely find fault with the Bishop'.<sup>75</sup> Nixon thought it was not uncommon for Bishops to reject candidates, and that it did not make him an illegal persecutor.<sup>76</sup> The result was that Evangelicals felt they could not recruit Evangelical assistant ministers from England, or

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<sup>71</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 26.

<sup>72</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 24, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May*, 57.

<sup>74</sup> Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May*, 58.

<sup>75</sup> Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May*, 60.

<sup>76</sup> Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, 16.

renew their own licences if they sought to change parishes.<sup>77</sup>

Evangelicals were in danger of becoming totally excluded from the Diocese of Tasmania, because Nixon was replacing them with strategic appointment of Tractarians in the diocese. Three of the six Tractarians that Marriott recruited from Oxford were entrusted with establishing Christ College to train young ministers.<sup>78</sup> Nixon also filled vacancies in Evangelical parishes with clergymen who shared his own views.<sup>79</sup> The Rev. Philip Palmer, the incumbent of Trinity Parish, shortly before he died wanted to appoint Mr Medland, a convict chaplain, to succeed him. However, the Bishop declared, ‘while Mr. Medland’s name remained attached to the *Solemn Declaration* he would not to his dying day consent to Mr Medland’s appointment as Curate to Mr Palmer.’<sup>80</sup> Instead, he wanted to appoint Brickwood, one of his supporters.<sup>81</sup> Fry also believed that ‘the Bishop and his party [were] in reality reluctant to our obtaining a Constitution, until such a number of Tractarian clergy shall be introduced as may Romanize the Church and form a majority of the assembly’.<sup>82</sup> Fry and the Evangelicals wanted greater lay representation in a proposed Synod to balance the Bishop’s power.

Since the true character of Protestantism was being undermined in the diocese and Evangelicals were being excluded as a result, the only option for Fry and the Evangelicals was to oppose Nixon. For Fry, given the condition of the Church in the colony, ‘silence and submission in a minister is now a betrayal of religious truth’ since ‘we cannot any longer

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<sup>77</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George’s, Hobart Town*, 64.

<sup>78</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George’s, Hobart Town*, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 49.

<sup>80</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George’s, Hobart Town*, 57.

<sup>81</sup> Batt and Roe, 56.

<sup>82</sup> Letter from Rev. Dr Fry to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 20 February 1852, as quoted in Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, appendix.

indulge the hope that proceedings equally hostile to the principles of the Church, and to the rights of its members, will be silently relinquished'.<sup>83</sup> Silence was not an option because the problem for the Evangelicals was only getting worse as time passed. So Fry felt compelled that speaking out in opposition to Nixon was his only choice. His motivation was 'for saving the people from the grievous calamity of being given over to the Romanism or semi-Romanism inculcated under the disguise of being the true teaching of the Church of England'.<sup>84</sup>

The Evangelicals appealed to politicians in opposing Nixon. When Nixon refused to appoint Mr Medland as assistant minister to Mr Palmer, six hundred members of Trinity Parish signed a petition to Governor Denison. He replied sympathetically to the Evangelicals' cause, advising the Bishop to grant the licence.<sup>85</sup> Nixon refused, despite acknowledging Medland's ministerial usefulness and irreproachable character.<sup>86</sup> Even though Medland had been ministering in the same parish to the convicts for the last ten years under a licence issued by him, the Bishop refused to concede unless Medland withdrew his name from the *Solemn Declaration*. Denison's intervention was unsuccessful and Arthur Davenport, one of Marriott's Oxford recruits, was appointed to Trinity instead.<sup>87</sup>

Fry appealed to the people in opposing Nixon. Fry saw appealing to the people as his main weapon in opposing Nixon. He appealed both to the Church's laity, the majority of whom were Evangelical, as well as the wider public. Fry believed,

'the refusal of the Bishop of Exeter, who preceded Bishop Nixon, was corrected

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<sup>83</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 50.

<sup>84</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 86.

<sup>85</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 56–57.

<sup>86</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 48.

<sup>87</sup> Batt and Roe, 57.

by the law; but in this Colony there is no restriction upon the will of the Bishop but popular opinion, and the combined efforts of the lay members of the Church.’<sup>88</sup>

Fry published letters to the Primate from himself and the Protestant Association in the local newspapers. However, this backfired when it was revealed that he had not even raised some of his concerns with the Bishop, and the first Nixon heard of these problems was only after they were published.<sup>89</sup> The Protestant Association organized a public meeting for a deputation to request the Bishop to overturn his stance on baptismal regeneration, the *Solemn Declaration*, and the use of Romanizing books at Christ College.<sup>90</sup> Nixon published his reply in the newspaper stating, ‘No Bishop can recognize the authority of public meetings to call upon him virtually to render an account to them for the ordinary exercise of his pastoral office.’<sup>91</sup> He went further and condemned the Evangelical clergy, including Fry, for ‘their illegal conduct in appealing to the people through the medium of newspapers and public meetings’.<sup>92</sup> The tactic did not endear Nixon to the Evangelicals, but Fry believed that the public outcry did slow the ‘Romanizing proceedings’.<sup>93</sup>

Fry and the Evangelicals appealed to the Primate of all England in opposing Nixon. They hoped that the weight of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s opinion would vindicate their doctrine, galvanize the laity, and sway Nixon. On all three doctrinal issues of concern to Fry and the Evangelicals in Tasmania, the Primate fully concurred. On baptism, the Primate had

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<sup>88</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 206.

<sup>89</sup> Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May, 34–35.*

<sup>90</sup> Correspondence, Resolutions, as quoted in Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, prefix.

<sup>91</sup> Correspondence, Bishopstowe, 24 May, 1852, as quoted in Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, prefix.

<sup>92</sup> Correspondence, Bishopstowe, 24 May, 1852, as quoted in Nixon, *Substance of a Reply To a Deputation Appointed at a Public Meeting of the Members of the Church of England Held in Hobart Town, On Thursday, April XXII, MDCCCLII*, prefix.

<sup>93</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 56.



said publicly that ‘liberty had been enjoyed by all Churchmen from the Reformation to the present day’ and that ‘the will of God in this matter had need to be very plainly declared, before I could think myself justified in accusing Mr Gorham of heresy’.<sup>94</sup> The irony was that the Primate did not think it appropriate to call Mr Gorham a heretic, unlike Nixon. In reply to a letter from Fry about the three Romanizing books, the Primate wrote, ‘that there is much in the books to which it particularly refers which is far more in accordance with principles of the Church of Rome than of the Church of England.’<sup>95</sup> The Primate’s opinion confirmed Fry’s concerns about that the Romanizing of the diocese was not merely alarmist. On the rule of faith, the Primate had published advice to his own diocese that ‘amongst the population ... too many, unhappily, are little able to test the truth of any religion which is proposed to them by its only sure standard – the Bible’.<sup>96</sup> He affirmed that the laity ought to test everything against the Scriptures, as the supreme authority of faith. This is the crucial point that Fry believed the *Solemn Declaration* expressed, but Nixon had rejected as unsound. These were powerful arguments for Fry against Nixon. Fry asked Nixon the question, ‘Is it not a monstrous anomaly that a body of clergy should be condemned by you as being in great error because they hold the opinions of the Primate of the Church?’<sup>97</sup> In other words, if Nixon consistently applied his stance, he would not have given the Primate a licence to minister in the colony. Ironically then, it was not merely Fry and the Evangelicals who were being insubordinate and dissenters, for Nixon opposed the position of his own ecclesiastical superior.

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<sup>94</sup> Letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury in reply to the Metropolitan Church Union, as quoted in W. Bedford, ed., *Reprint of a Review of The Rev. Mr. Maskell’s Letter on the Dogmatical Teaching of the Church, as It Appears in the Christian Observer of July 1850* (Hobart Town: William Pratt & Son, 1851), 23.

<sup>95</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury’s Letter on Receipt of “the Solemn Declaration,” &c. Lambeth, Feb 19th, 1852, as quoted in Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, xxxiii.

<sup>96</sup> Advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, as quoted in Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, appendix II xvi.

<sup>97</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 13.

Lastly, Fry appealed to the Metropolitan (Bishop Barker) in opposing Nixon. In Fry's final attempt to persuade Nixon to change his stance, and stem his increasing loss of influence, he turned to the Metropolitan. As a fellow Evangelical, Fry hoped for a sympathetic ear from Barker and for his authoritative voice to defend the evangelical cause against the advancing Tractarian movement in Tasmania. Bishop Perry, the Bishop of Melbourne, had dissented at the Bishops' Conference about baptismal regeneration and expressed an alternative evangelical opinion. Fry argued that Nixon would not grant Perry a licence in his diocese either, yet Perry allowed liberty on the issue in his diocese.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, Dr Short, Bishop of Adelaide, and a signatory to the statement affirming baptismal regeneration in the Minutes, had stated, 'The Bishops, at the Sydney Conference, by incorporating in the same Minute the statement of the Bishop of Melbourne, ... thereby indicated liberty of judgment on this subject.'<sup>99</sup> Barker had remarked in a letter to Dr Browne, an ally of Fry, 'It is well known that I do think there was sufficient cause for the *Solemn Declaration*.'<sup>100</sup> Barker had also carefully worded a statement which he hoped would be satisfactory to all parties and secure peace. It read,

'If the Church prescribes anything contrary to the Word of God, it is no man's duty to yield obedience to such a decree. If any individual, in the exercise of his private judgment, conscientiously and prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believes that a prescription of the Church in matters of religion is contrary to the Word of God, it becomes a case of conscience in what way he shall signify his dissent, or oppose what he believes to be an unrighteous decree.'<sup>101</sup>

Barker's statement cleverly upheld the supreme authority of Scripture, without erroneously

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<sup>98</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 61.

<sup>99</sup> Letter from Bishop of Adelaide to Mr Morphet, 31 January, 1851, as quoted in Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, appendix II x.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Dr Fry to the Bishop of Sydney, 23 July 1856, as quoted in F. Barker, 'Reply of the Bishop of Sydney to the Appeal', July 2, 1856, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from Bishop of Sydney to Dr Brown, as quoted in Letter from Dr Fry to the Bishop of Sydney, Hobart Town, 23 July, 1856, as quoted in Barker, 'Reply of the Bishop of Sydney to the Appeal', 5.

implying that Scripture is the only authority or that Church tradition bears no authority. At the same time, Barker's statement liberated individuals to dissent. Fry affirmed this statement but did not believe Nixon would affirm it as Fry thought it was exactly the same as the *Solemn Declaration*.<sup>102</sup> By 1856, the plight of the Evangelicals in Tasmania had become more desperate, so Fry was hoping for a fuller written statement from Barker vindicating Protestant principles to prevent further suppression of Evangelicals.<sup>103</sup> He saw Barker as 'the last hope ... of preserving Protestant teaching in this colony.'<sup>104</sup> But Barker's reply to the Appeal did not help Fry in his cause any further. He wrote, 'Legally, I have no ground for interposition; extrajudicially, I decline to give an opinion.' He defended his reply and said, 'there are many reasons why I should decline to adopt a course so inconvenient and so unsatisfactory', but the only reason he gave Fry was that he desired to stay impartial in the event he needed to adjudicate in a court of appeal in the future.<sup>105</sup> As a result, Fry was mocked in the newspapers.<sup>106</sup>

The conflict only partially lessened with the establishment of a diocesan Synod for Tasmania in 1857. The Bishops' Conference had suggested synods be set up with lay involvement. The Bishops had envisaged that the clergy and laity would consult upon the temporalities of the Church.<sup>107</sup> When the Evangelicals in Tasmania proposed equal participation for lay representatives in all deliberations and judgments, Nixon rejected the idea as too far-fetched as it was a revolutionizing of the Church.<sup>108</sup> However Fry felt that equal representation of

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<sup>102</sup> Letter from Dr Fry to the Bishop of Sydney, Hobart Town, 23 July 1856, as quoted in Barker, 'Reply of the Bishop of Sydney to the Appeal', 5.

<sup>103</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 13–14.

<sup>104</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 16.

<sup>105</sup> Barker, 'Reply of the Bishop of Sydney to the Appeal', 2.

<sup>106</sup> 'Review', *The Courier* (Hobart Town, September 14, 1857), 4.

<sup>107</sup> Adelaide et al., *Minutes of Proceedings at a Meeting of the Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Australasia*, 8.

<sup>108</sup> Nixon, *A Charge, Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tasmania, at the Visitation, Held in the Cathedral Church of St. David, Hobart Town, on Thursday, 22nd May, 1851; and in the Church of the Holy Trinity,*

clergy and laity was the only remedy 'and protection against the design and unrelaxing attempts to render our Colonial Church a Tractarian sect'.<sup>109</sup> After legal clarification from the Solicitor-General in England in 1854 declaring Synods in the colonies were not illegal, Tasmania followed the model established in Melbourne, with the Bishop, clergy and laity, all distinct elements, but requiring concurrent assent to pass all resolutions.<sup>110</sup> Nixon instituted the Synod that Fry and the Evangelicals had originally proposed. It would provide a system to balance the Bishop's power. At the Synod, the newspaper recorded, 'His Lordship here left his place and approaching the Revd Dr Fry, cordially shook hands with him' eliciting a burst of applause.<sup>111</sup> Fry left Tasmania forever soon after in February 1858. Nixon refused to allow Charles Bardin to replace Fry at St. Georges because he had signed the *Solemn Declaration*.

The outcome of the conflict left the Evangelical voice in the colony significantly weakened, but not extinct. Initially, the protest of the Evangelical clergy and laity was partially successful and slowed the 'Romanizing proceedings'.<sup>112</sup> But the Evangelicals, clergy who were once in the majority, became a minority 'now nearly suppressed'.<sup>113</sup> Two dozen Evangelical clergy opposing Nixon in 1851 had been reduced to three or four by 1856.<sup>114</sup> Some of the key Evangelical leaders, such as Bedford and Palmer, had died.<sup>115</sup> Many, such as Medland, had been forced to leave Tasmania while others had recanted under pressure.<sup>116</sup> Fry lamented, 'the cause of truth struggles against error enforced by influence and power.'<sup>117</sup> The

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Launceston, on Thursday, 27th May, 16.

<sup>109</sup> Fry, 'Letter From the Rev. Dr. Fry, To the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hobart Town, February 20, 1852.', 3.

<sup>110</sup> A. Davenport, *History of Synodal Proceedings in Tasmania: With an Appendix Containing the Act of Parliament by Which the Diocesan Synod Is Constituted* (Hobart Town: J. Walch & Sons, 1858), 4–11.

<sup>111</sup> Launceston Examiner, 2 October 1857, as quoted in Stephens, *The Anglican Church in Tasmania*, 55.

<sup>112</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 55.

<sup>113</sup> Fry, *An Appeal to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Sydney, Metropolitan of the Dioceses of Australia, Tasmania, &c. from Henry Phibbs Fry, D.D., Minister of St. George's, Hobart Town*, 50.

<sup>114</sup> Fry, 'Letter from Dr Fry to the Bishop of Sydney', 7.

<sup>115</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, xxii.

<sup>116</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 51.

<sup>117</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy*

large Evangelical congregations in the parish churches, where Tractarian clergy were appointed by Nixon, were often reduced to only a handful people as many of the laity joined the Wesleyans.<sup>118</sup> At the cathedral Bedford, an Evangelical, was replaced by Nixon and Davies, and the cathedral's theology became a mixture of 'Sacramentalism and Tractarianism', with other 'Broad Church' ministers preaching there as well. Palmer was replaced at Trinity by Davenport, a Tractarian. At St. George's, after Fry left for England, his pulpit was occupied by 'High and Dry, Tractarian, Broad Church and Neologian' preachers in rapid succession.<sup>119</sup> Sadly, one itinerant preacher observed, 'I have not discovered any instances of conversion under any ministry.'<sup>120</sup> Fry and the Evangelicals had spent so much time defending the gospel, that they had not been able to advance it either.

Despite the fact Fry and the Evangelicals had the support, in principle, of the Governors, Privy Council, Primate, the Bishops of Sydney and Melbourne, and the large majority of the laity, their opposition was generally in vain against Nixon. Bishop Nixon's stance on baptismal regeneration, his sympathy towards Tractarians, and his caricature of the *Solemn Declaration* as the doctrine of the radical Reformers, led him to exclude Evangelicals by denying them licences to minister. The Protestant character of the Church of England in Tasmania was gradually changed by the replacement of Evangelical clergy with Tractarians promoting semi-Roman doctrines. The strength of the Evangelical clerical voice was reduced to near silence. Many of the laity deserted the denomination. Only through equal participation of the laity in all Synodal decisions was a small victory won for the Evangelical cause.

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*Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, 23.

<sup>118</sup> Fry, *Answer to the Right Rev. F. R. Nixon DD., Lord Bishop of Tasmania: Being a Vindication of the Clergy Condemned for Asserting the Right of Private Judgment.*, xviii.

<sup>119</sup> J. Roberts, *A Mirror of Religion and Society in Tasmania, During the Years 1857 and 1858* (Hobart Town: Walch & Sons, 1858), 8–9.

<sup>120</sup> Roberts, *A Mirror of Religion and Society in Tasmania, During the Years 1857 and 1858*, 9.

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