

RELIGION.

THE DENOMINATIONS.

THE progress of all matters relating to Denominational Religion since the early years of Australasian settlement has been steady and remarkable. For the first fifteen years after the foundation of the Colony of New South Wales only a single denomination was recognized by Government, or possessed either minister or organization—the Established Church of England. In those days the whole of Australasia was ecclesiastically within the Diocese of the Bishop of Calcutta, of which it formed an Archdeaconry; this continued until 1836, when the Bishopric of Australia was constituted, and the Rev. William Grant Broughton, D.D. (formerly Archdeacon), was consecrated the first Bishop. There are now nineteen Bishoprics throughout the Colonies (six being in New South Wales), and to this day one of the titles of the Bishop of Sydney is “Primate of Australia and Tasmania.” The Synodical system of Church Government, by means of a legislative body consisting of the clergy and representatives of the laity, prevails throughout Australasia.

Church of
England.

Church of Rome. In 1803 a grudging recognition was extended to Roman Catholics, one of whose chaplains was then placed on the Government establishment; but it was not until 1820 that any regular provision was made for an adequate staff of clergy. Until 1834 the Roman Catholics of Australia and Tasmania were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Mauritius, but in that year Sydney was constituted a see, and the Rev. John Bede Polding, D.D., was consecrated Bishop, with jurisdiction over the whole of the Continent, and Tasmania. Some eight years later this Episcopate was raised to the rank of an Archiepiscopal See. There are now in Australasia six Archbishops and sixteen Bishops of the Church of Rome.

Amongst the earliest free colonists who settled in the Hawkesbury district was a small party of Presbyterians, and one of the first Presbyterian places of worship erected in the Colony was put up in 1810 by their voluntary exertions. Services were conducted there for years before any ordained minister of the denomination reached New South Wales ; indeed it was not until 1823 that the Rev. Dr. Lang, the first Presbyterian minister in Australia, arrived in Sydney. The first Wesleyan minister came to New South Wales in 1815, but it was not until 1821 that a Wesleyan place of worship was erected in Sydney, and it was even later before the denomination was allowed to share in the Government provision for religion.

No other denominations beyond these four were ever officially recognized, nor was any State contribution ever made towards the support of any other. This was no doubt owing to the fact that the greater portion of the inhabitants belonged to these persuasions. Nor has the enormous increase of population since then in any considerable degree altered this condition of things. In different Colonies, indeed, different bodies of Christians have represented a larger proportion of the people than in others. Thus, in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria the proportion of Roman Catholics has been, and still is, larger than in the other Colonies, while in New Zealand it has been much smaller. Presbyterians bear a greater proportion to the population in New Zealand than in any other Colony ; while Wesleyans and Lutherans are more numerous in South Australia than elsewhere. The adherents of the Church of England predominate numerically in all the Colonies.

To obtain anything like a comprehensive view of the numerical relations of religious denominations in all the Colonies of Australasia reference must be made to the census. A comparison of the numbers shown by the Census of 1881 gives the following result.

Australasia—Religions, 1881.

Colony.	Church of England.	Roman Catholic.	Presbyterian.	Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist.	Congregational.	Baptist.	Lutheran	Unitarian.	Hebrews.	Pagans.	Others and unspecified.	Total.
New South Wales..	342,359	207,606	72,545	64,352	14,328	7,307	4,836	828	3,266	9,345	24,696	751,468
Victoria	311,291	203,583	132,591	108,393	19,878	20,373	11,149	942	4,330	11,270	38,546	862,346
Queensland	73,920	54,376	22,609	14,351	4,764	5,583	16,889	...	457	16,871	3,705	213,525
South Australia	75,812	42,628	17,917	52,788	9,908	13,979	19,617	747	762	4,151	41,556	279,865
Western Australia..	16,263	8,413	1,004	2,084	1,262	.....	.....	...	.....	145	537	29,708
Tasmania*	47,208	29,644	14,486	12,230	2,442	1,932	1,122	127	544	844	5,126	115,705
New Zealand.....	203,333	68,984	113,108	46,657	6,699	11,476	5,773	489	1,536	4,936	26,942	489,933
Total	1,070,186	615,234	374,260	300,855	59,281	60,650	59,386	3,133	10,895	47,562	141,108	2,742,550
Per cent.	39·02	22·43	13·65	10·97	2·16	2·21	2·17	·11	·40	1·73	5·15	100·00

* Estimated ; the religions are not enumerated in the Tasmanian census.

Thus, in 1881 it appears that 86 per cent. of the population of all the Colonies was attached to the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan denominations. Next to these, although at a great distance, came Baptists, Congregationalists, and Lutherans, the numbers of each being about the same. With the exception of Pagans (under which term the Chinese have for the most part been erroneously classed), no other persuasion held adherents amounting to 1 per cent. of the population.

Between April, 1881, and June, 1889, the total addition to the population in the Colonies of Australasia has amounted to 982,344 persons, representing an increase of more than one-third in the eight years. The following table, compiled from the latest data available, presents a view, which is substantially accurate, of the comparative progress of the various denominations during this period; and from this it will be seen that the Salvation Army is a new element which does not appear in the Census of 1881; any adherents of this denomination that then existed being grouped with "Other Persuasions." Considerable progress has been made by the Army of late years in various parts of the world, and it is probable that the ranks are largely recruited from the different Protestant denominations. It will be observed that the proportion of the four leading denominations to the whole population remains as before at 86 per cent., while their relative proportions exhibit scarcely any perceptible change. During the eight years the Church of England has increased its numbers in New South Wales by 160,744, and in Queensland by 65,000, while in each of the other colonies the increase has been comparatively small. The Roman Catholics have added 97,904 to their numbers in New South Wales, and 57,139 in Victoria. The Presbyterian body have gained 34,268 in New South Wales, 37,138 in Victoria, while in Queensland they have made an advance of 23,843, and 25,149 in New Zealand. The Wesleyan increase in New South Wales was 30,519, and 30,416 in Victoria.

Predominant
denominations.

Salvation Army.

Numerical
increase.

Australasia—Religions, 30th June, 1889.

Colony.	Church of England.	Roman Catholic.	Presbyterian.	Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist.	Congregational.	Baptist.	Lutheran.	Unitarian.	Hebrews.	Salvation Army.	Pagans.	Others and Unspecified.	Total.
New South Wales ..	503,103	305,510	106,813	94,871	21,119	10,836	7,187	1,327	4,865	4,100*	16,500	29,180	1,105,720
Victoria	398,648	260,722	169,729	138,809	25,509	26,061	14,245	1,215	5,522	5,067	14,356	44,405	1,104,238
Queensland	138,920	94,770	46,452	30,532	8,695	10,521	26,362	....	873	1,534	26,336	12,032	397,027
South Australia	85,410	48,049	20,178	59,462	11,161	15,732	22,101	851	852	1,698	7,000	42,787	315,231
Western Australia ..	23,415	12,114	1,446	2,998	1,818	....	....	....	....	....	400	584	42,775
Tasmania	60,291	37,859	18,501	15,619	3,118	2,468	1,433	162	695	446	1,000	6,179	147,771
New Zealand	245,850	85,379	138,257	58,450	8,263	15,178	6,243	490	1,653	3,398	4,713	44,158	612,032
Total	1,455,637	844,403	501,376	400,741	79,683	80,796	77,571	4,045	14,460	16,252	70,605	179,325	3,724,894
Per cent.	39·08	22·67	13·46	10·76	2·14	2·17	2·08	0·11	0·39	0·44	1·89	4·81	100·00

* Soldiers only.