

William Morley

1842 - 1926

A STATESMAN OF GOD AMONG AUSTRALASIAN
METHODISTS

HIS WORK IN NEW ZEALAND.



The Rev. Wm. Morley, D.D.
(c. 1916)

By Bernard Gadd, B.A.

Published by

THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (NEW ZEALAND)

as Vol. 20, Nos. 1 and 2 of its Proceedings, March, 1964.

SOME BACKGROUND HISTORICAL DATES:

1855 First Australasian Wesleyan Conference, affiliated with the British Conference.

1860-64 Maori-Pakeha Wars. (Hau Hau outbreaks continued until 1870.)

1861 Gold discovered in Otago.

1870-80 The Vogel period of public works and mass, assisted immigration.

1874 First New Zealand Wesleyan Annual Conference.

1875 First Australasian General Conference, separated from Britain.

1879-94 Economic depression.

1881 First Methodist Oecumenical Conference.

1891 Second Methodist Oecumenical Conference.

1896 Union in N.Z. of the Wesleyans, United Methodist Free Churches and the Bible Christians.

1899-1902 Boer War.

1913 Separation of the New Zealand Wesleyan Church from Australia, and union with the Primitive Methodists.

CHAPTER ONE

Early Days

A goodly heritage

From birth William Morley was surrounded by a rich Methodist fellowship. His father, William Morley senior, was a native of Aslockton in Nottinghamshire who had been converted largely through the influence of his wife, Mary, and had attached himself to her denomination, the Wesleyan. William, a quiet man, spoke little of his religion, but lived it. His wife was cheerful and "had the happy art of exhibiting religion in its most attractive forms." (*Mrs. Morley's obituary, "N.Z. Wesleyan", January 1, 1883.*) Their house at Orston, and later at Newark, was always the preachers' home.

In the period 1830-50 when reformist agitation convulsed Wesleyanism and gave rise to new Methodist denominations, the Morleys stood firmly within the Wesleyan fold, and worked to heal the injuries done in their local circuit. William himself later became a class leader in the Newark circuit.

On August 14th, 1842, William Morley was born at Orston. Brought up in the atmosphere of devotion, trained from an early age by his mother in the Christian Faith, nurtured by warm, Wesleyan fellowship, he was led to a personal love of his Lord while still a youth. He was imbued with a deep, abiding affection for his church, its "clear, hopeful, Arminian theology", its "meetings for religious fellowship", its "faithful and powerful preaching", its "hymns surcharged with Gospel Truth" and its "compact and effective organisation." (*Morley's "History", from whence come most unacknowledged quotations.*) Wishing to devote himself to the proclamation of the Gospel he began to preach at the age of 18. Two years later he was accepted as a candidate for the Wesleyan ministry.

About the time the British Conference accepted him an appeal was made for ministers to serve overseas in Britain's expanding colonies. Morley responded to the appeal and sailed for New Zealand towards the end of 1863, with the intention of serving in the Maori Mission.

Serious business losses prompted his parents to sell up and follow their son to New Zealand together with most of their family. Pastor to Pioneers

The Morleys arrived in New Zealand early in 1864, and Mr. and Mrs. Morley senior took up residence at Parnell.

The Conference at Melbourne in January 1864 appointed Morley to assist at Raglan. (*Ian Morley, William Morley's son, gives an interesting account of his looking through these 1864 Conference Minutes: 'There, under the heading — 'Question 3, What preachers are received on trial and are travelling for the 2nd year', the name William Morley was pencilled into the Minutes, as a sort of afterthought, with the note: 'Raglan, N.Z., from English Conf.'*)

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

However, the Maori-Pakeha Wars with the lingering sequel of Hau Hauism had wrecked the Northern Maori Mission. At Raglan the veteran Wesleyan Missionary, the Rev. C. H. Schnackenberg, forced to flee from Aotea in the first few months of 1864, continued to minister to a handful of faithful Maoris amid the wreckage of his life's work. Certainly another agent was not needed. Morley's appointment was altered to Waiuku, where he was to be the first resident Methodist minister.

Morley moved to this southern extremity of the Manukau Circuit in March. Settlers were already reoccupying farms deserted during the months of fighting in the area, while new immigrants were arriving to take up the fertile acres confiscated from the Maoris.

The Manukau Circuit's superintendent was James Wallis. There were only 25 members in all and a total worshipping community of 500, but there were eleven chapels and preaching places scattered in a long arc along the Manukau Harbour between Onehunga and Waiuku. Morley had special oversight of the Waiuku, Pukekohe, Karaka areas.

From the small group of Methodists at Waiuku he received a warm welcome. But at Waiuku he found neither church nor parsonage. "Services were held alternately with the Presbyterians, each ministering once a fortnight in the old school room. Everyone in those days rode on horse-back, the roads being impracticable for buggies, and it was no uncommon thing to see 25 to 30 horses hitched to the fence as the hour for service drew nigh."

As immigration increased the demand for Morley's services grew. He had the honour, when taking a service the night after one batch of provincial-assisted immigrants had arrived, to have the Provincial Superintendent and Secretary in his congregation.

Travel at that time was arduous. The whole area around Pukekohe, for example, "was then covered with dense bush," wrote Morley, "The track through the bush had only been recently cut; it was very narrow, and the mud was literally up to the saddle girths. A vivid recollection of the first visit is cherished, when, on a moonlight night, the few settlers had been gathered — had united in praise and prayer — a sermon had been delivered and the young preacher spent the night in Mr. Hawke's whare with springing fern to serve as a mattress, and could study astronomy through the well-ventilated nikau covered roof after retiring." To reach Port Waikato, then an important steamer depot and military supply post, the wide lower reaches of the river had to be negotiated. No wonder "crossing the Waikato River, often in a broken canoe, which had to be baled out constantly, with a strong current running, and the horse swimming behind, at first caused some perturbation."

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Membership at each place was small, but services and class meetings were zealously attended and enjoyed for their spiritual and their social benefits. By the end of 1864 circuit membership had climbed to 47.

Morley threw himself into the work with the zeal and ability which he was to display increasingly throughout his whole ministry. The September Quarterly Meeting held at Onehunga, some 40 miles from Waiuku, invited him "to remain another year in the circuit." However, the constant travel under difficult conditions, the times he lodged in the settlers' earthen-floored, ponga-walled, nikau-thatched, sack-partitioned huts, following so closely upon a three-month journey half way round the globe had exhausted the young preacher. His health broke down and he was forced to withdraw his acceptance of the circuit's invitation. The March Quarterly Meeting, 1865, proposed a vote of thanks to him "for his past services and an expression of regret at losing him from the circuit."

Morley returned to his parents' home at Parnell to recuperate. ("Conveyance of Mr. Morley's box 8/6" notes the Circuit Minute Book.) The period had been a brief, severe but valuable introduction to pioneering New Zealand. Nor was that all, for Morley had also made the acquaintance of that kindly, genial supernumerary, George Buttle, beloved by all for "the fragrance of his piety' the urbanity of his manners, the liberality of his purse and the hospitality of his house," (**Minute Book of the Manukau Circuit, 1875.*) and of Hannah Buttle, his lively young daughter.

CHAPTER TWO

The Circuit Minister

Auckland, 1865-67.

The 1864 census revealed that Auckland had a population of 12,423. The Auckland Circuit in 1865 included not only this growing township on the shores of the Waitemata, but also outlying areas as far flung as the North Shore, Kawau, Henderson, Three Kings and Titirangi, a total of 14 chapels and preaching places. By 1866 the number of these preaching places totalled 16, including such distant places as the Wade and Whangarei. In addition, once a quarter an Auckland minister exchanged with the Manukau minister.

The Wesleyan worshipping community numbered 1,703 in 1865, including 378 members meeting in class. Three ministers manned the circuit — the Rev. J. Warren, superintendent, Thomas Buddle, with special responsibility for Maori work, and William Morley. A strong band of local preachers enabled the circuit to supply services regularly at all preaching places.

Even so, the ministers were required to travel extensively and constantly. The Wade Home Mission Station, some 16 miles to the north, was reached by a weekly cutter service to the Wade. Morley long remembered one visit when "after we entered the Wade River, the tide ran out, and we were stranded on a sandbank. Unfortunately, provisions had run out too, and we went supperless to bed. Next morning the worthy skipper poled his dinghy up to a farmhouse and begged or borrowed two loaves of bread. Meanwhile, the passengers had collected pipis, and on this brain-strengthening food, and hot coffee prepared by the ship's cook, we breakfasted." Understandably, Morley returned to Auckland "on shank's pony." To reach Devonport Morley was rowed "over in a whaleboat on Saturday night, and back to the city on Monday morning." In order to assist at the opening of the Whangarei church in 1866 Morley and the Rev. J. B. Rishworth had to travel overland on horseback. "The journey was long and toilsome, the tracks sometimes difficult to find, and stopping places for refreshment not numerous. However, it was the height of summer. At the deserted Maori villages luscious peaches hung temptingly on the branches!" But at the end of the journey, as was usually so, the weary travellers found that "the hospitality of the settlers was profuse."

Morley, as the junior minister, was stationed at Parnell. "Immigrants were arriving in considerable numbers, and the little church became crowded to the doors. At that time no fewer than six local preachers were members of the congregation. Revival services were held and not a few passed 'from death unto life.' Three classes met regularly." Part of the heavy debt was paid off and the church was lined. During this time

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Morley's parents were of considerable help to him, music and Sunday School work being of particular interest to them.

At High Street Chapel, then Auckland Methodism's leading church was found "an earnest spirit of Christian fellowship, crowded congregations and lively prayer meetings. The adjoining schoolroom was filled for special services, and scores were led to decisions for God" There, said Morley, it was "a joy to preach." Dignity was given to morning worship by the use of Wesley's Abridgment of the Anglican Liturgy.

When Morley began his term in 1865 a canvass for funds to erect a larger chapel was being conducted. Auckland's population was rising rapidly, and with it the Methodist community, which by 1866 had reached 1,850. In 1866 Pitt Street Church was opened. Morley preached on the second Sunday of the opening celebrations. Although the canvass had met with a good response, a heavy debt remained for many years to trouble the Trust. Here, as in High Street, Wesley's Morning Service was at first used.

In 1866 Morley returned to Waiuku to assist at the opening of the new Wesleyan chapel, where a pulpit Bible he presented was used until 1958.



Hannah Buttle 1866



William Morley 1866

1867 was a turning point in Morley's life. William Morley and Hannah Buttle were married. The new Mrs. Morley had been born on the Te Kopua Wesleyan Mission station, the eldest child and only daughter of George and Jane Buttle, on January 24th, 1845. Her father, widowed in 1857, had returned to England. However, failing health

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

was restored only after the family had migrated back to New Zealand in 1862, when George Buttle settled at Spring Farm, Otahuhu. His daughter was chiefly responsible for collecting funds for a church which was opened in 1866. It was from behind the harmonium of this church that Morley whisked Miss Buttle in 1867.

While Hannah had been receiving her education at Wesley College, the school established at Auckland for missionaries' children, her mother had written to her: "My dearest girl, let all your learning, all your attainments prepare you for a useful, and then you will have a happy life; industry with the blessing of God will place you in circumstances where you may be useful to your neighbour." Prophetic words!

Conference of that year received Morley as a minister in full connexion, and at the same time appointed him to the Hutt.

The Hutt, 1867-68

In April 1867 the newly married couple moved to Morley's next appointment. Here they found "a somewhat primitive community" of about 1,000 settlers. The churches and preaching places — the Hutt township, Wainui-o-mata, Taita and Stokes Valley were part of the Wellington circuit whose superintendent in 1867 was William Kirk.

The Hutt church had been opened in 1854 and was "exceedingly plain in appearance. The pews were the old, straight-backed kind, and at the further end opposite the minister was the singing gallery, approached by narrow break-neck stairs." At the rear was a small Sunday School room. The parsonage, also erected in 1854, was as plain as the church. But Morley long remembered its unusual furnishings, its "extraordinary oval mirrors, the wonderful study chair, the huge four-poster (big enough for an ordinary room), and the chest-of-drawers, which bore the inscriptions 'Triton' " (on board which mission ship Mrs. Morley's father had come to New Zealand in 1839) "or 'John Wesley' " (the other pioneer mission ship).

The Hutt congregation proved to be rather intimidating at first. "There was an array of ancient men to be seen there, such as could scarcely be paralleled at the time. Grey heads were then scarce in the colony, but here they predominated. It was quite an ordeal for a young pastor to advise these fathers of the church in meetings for religious fellowship." However, these venerables included several very capable leaders who assisted Morley greatly. Morley moved into the work with customary energy and in 1868 a new Sunday School room was erected debt free. Wanganui, 1868-71.

In April 1868 Morley took up a fresh appointment at Wanganui A traveller writing in 1879 enables us to picture the arrival (*N.Z. Wesleyan, August 1, 1879*) - "We have come from Wellington in about 12 or 14 hours in a somewhat dirty and crowded steamer of 70 to 80 tons. We have been sadly tossed in crossing the bar and have, perhaps, been wet to the skin by a shower of spray from a breaker that struck us!"

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

About 2,160 people lived in Wanganui township. The surrounding district and the Taranaki district were still harassed by Hau Hau insurgents, who were not finally expelled until 1869, after the Rev John Whiteley's murder. When Morley arrived in 1868 the Hau Hau leader, Titokowaru, had his headquarters only 20 miles away at Waiototara. It was against this troubled background that Morley began his work.

He found at the Wanganui church "only a skeleton congregation " the result of considerable dissension over the twelve months before Morley's arrival over the use and subsequent disuse of a liturgical service at morning worship. Consequently the circuit was in dire financial straits. Morley quickly rallied a core of workers around him. The ordinary contributions increased, and great satisfaction was expressed when in 1869 it was found that the debt was extinguished, and a credit balance of 1/6 in hand at the end of the quarter. A little later a parsonage was erected for £300 debt-free from the proceeds of a bazaar and a subscription list. The ramshackle church fence was repaired by a working bee. A report in the *'Christian Observer'* of April 1, 1870, said, "The annual sermons in aid of the Wesleyan Sunday School were preached by the pastor, Rev. William Morley. The congregations were good."

Meanwhile population in the surrounding areas was increasing. In 1868 Morley organised regular services throughout the newly settled, thickly forested Rangitikei district. "This," he noted involved long rides, but they were kept up." With the defeat of the Hau Haus settlers moved into the land east of Wanganui Morley and his supernumerary helper, the Rev. George Stannard, supplied regular monthly services at Patea, where "all the houses were small, and the service was first held in the billiard room of an hotel and afterwards in the courthouse," Kakaramea, Waverly and Waitotara in addition to the older preaching places at Matarawa and Springdale.

At the end of 1871 Morley accepted an invitation from the Lyttelton congregation. He had revitalised the Wanganui circuit given it financial stability, and ensured that the district's rising population was adequately supplied with Methodist ordinances. Membership had risen from 26 to 34, Sunday School scholars had increased by ten to 140, seven, in place of four, preaching places were supplied and the whole Methodist worshipping community had grown from 200 to 350. The result had been obtained by "patient, plodding, persevering effort."

Lyttelton, 1871-73.

Lyttelton's population in 1871 was 1,427. By 1874 it had risen to 2,974. The people were largely middle class, and there were neither slums nor aristocrats — a fertile area for Methodism.

Of his stay at Lyttelton Morley later recalled, "There are few places where a minister has warmer supporters, and no circuit in the colony in which, while doing his work thoroughly, he can secure so much time for study." Lyttelton circuit had been

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

constituted only in 1870 Its parsonage was "on a pleasant and commanding site, while its church, "cruciform in shape, with a carved altar rail and a somewhat elaborate pulpit, was exceedingly attractive" Services were held in the church in Norwich Quay, at Heathcote Valley, and for a time at Banks Peninsula. A Maori pastor cared for Raupaki and a few other preaching places.

The December Quarterly Meeting, nine months after Morley's arrival, reported a membership of 57 with 21 on trial, and expressed "thankfulness to God for the prosperity which had been granted during the past quarter."

Early 1872 brought the first public recognition by the church of Morley's outstanding abilities as an administrator. He was elected one of New Zealand's representatives to the Australasian Conference, the body overseeing the churches in Australia and New Zealand. At the Conference Morley made his debut as one of the delegates who defended the editor of the "*New Zealand Wesleyan*" magazine against attacks on his rather critical attitude towards the Conference. The issue was significant, for Morley was to raise the question of New Zealand's relationship to the Australian churches repeatedly at later Conferences.

To the 1872 "*New Zealand Wesleyan*" Morley contributed a series of articles on Sunday Schools, placing stress upon the ways in which they could be made more effective. Adequate Christian education in the home and in the church was always regarded by Morley as a matter of paramount importance.

In 1873 a small weather-board church was erected in Heathcote Valley with a temporary debt of £50, a creditable achievement.

Morley had willingly accepted the September Quarterly Meeting's unanimous invitation to continue for a third year in the circuit. However, the 1873 Conference elevated Morley to the superintendency of the Wellington circuit. At his farewell the representatives of the circuit's 400 men, women and children expressed to Morley "their deep and heartfelt regret at your removal" and conveyed "their deep appreciation of the invariable kindness and urbanity of manner they have experienced at your hands." The esteem in which the Morleys were held was tangibly expressed in the gift of a silver kettle and inkstand and "a hair watch guard".

Wellington, 1873-76.

Wellington's population in the census year of 1874 was 10,547 Since being made the capital in 1865 Wellington had increased rapidly in population and in wealth. Morley's new circuit in 1873 embraced a worshipping community of 1,300 men, women and children (including 154 full members) who received Methodist ordinances at eight chapels and preaching places. The principal church, in Manners Street, was "a handsome Gothic church" opened only in 1868 (to be burned down in 1879). Nearby

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

was the two-storied parsonage built in 1865. Morley was assisted by a younger minister, just as he had assisted Mr. Kirk five years previously.

Upon arrival Morley found a circuit debt of £3,460. Immediately he initiated a scheme to liquidate this burden. The debt on the Thorndon church was decreased by £300 through a bazaar before the end of 1873, and the whole five year old circuit debt was cleared by the end of 1874. We learn that fellowship in the Manners Street church was brightened by the introduction of gas during 1873.

In 1873, too, Morley was elected secretary of the Wellington District.

In January 1874 the first New Zealand Annual Conference was held at Christchurch. Hitherto New Zealand and Australian Wesleyans had been governed from Australia by an Annual Conference affiliated to the British parent body. Now a triennial Australasian General Conference was created to act as the legislative assembly, while in each major colony an Annual Conference was established to administer the churches.

The first Annual Conference held in New Zealand was a youthful one. At 31 Morley was only two years younger than the mean age of the members. The 'Fathers' of the Conference were President Thomas Buddle and James Buller, both at the ripe old age of 61, J. Aldred at 56 and Secretary Alexander Reid, 52. Young as the members may have been, they included a strong band of conspicuously able men. W. Morley, J. Crump, R. Bavin, H. Bull, W. J. Williams and W. Lee were each to give worthy service as both President and Secretary of Conference in the future.

Morley was elected assistant secretary of this Conference, beginning in this humble way a career that was to take him to the highest offices in Australasian Methodism.

Morley's care for methodical administration was soon revealed when he successfully moved that Conference appoint a Secretary of Church Properties to prepare a proper schedule of all church properties, and that Conference consider establishing both a Church Building Fund and a Connexional Fire Insurance. Morley was elected to a committee to work out the rearrangement of Foreign and Home Mission Funds following administrative independence, and to another set up to consider the creation of a Wesleyan Sunday School Union. He was also appointed a treasurer of the Contingent Fund, a position he held with one brief intermission until 1884. In addition, he was elected chairman of the Wellington District, a responsible position involving much travelling over a wide area.

With 1874 Morley entered that pattern of life that was to be his until he retired, occupying several responsible positions at once, travelling great distances in the execution of these offices, and at the same time successfully building up his own circuit spiritually and financially. Any other tasks that came his way were likewise discharged energetically and capably. For instance, in early 1874 we find him chairing

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

a meeting of the parents and friends of the Dixon Street Wesleyan Day School, a ten-month old school with an enrolment of 120.

On July 10th, 1874, came sorrow when the Rev. George Buttle died at the age of 64, mourned by all who had known him as a man of "high Christian worth, amiable and gentlemanly character." (*Obituary reference in the Northern District Meeting.*)

Christian education always impressed Morley as being a vital part of the church's life. He chaired the circuit Sunday School Union and lent his support to the Wellington Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, concerning which societies he later wrote, "A minister's time cannot be better spent than in thus meeting weekly the young men of his congregation, and discussing with them questions of science, politics and the social problems of the day," in view of "the more manly and intelligent type of Christianity they will produce and foster." The Wellington Society certainly grappled with the problems of the day — papers read to the group included the topics "Is defensive war justifiable?", "Mormonism", "Religious bigotry", "Science and Revelation", "Direct and indirect taxation".

At the December Quarterly Meeting Morley's salary was raised to the then princely level of £300 per annum.

At the 1875 New Zealand Conference Morley joined the Rev. J. B. Richardson in an unsuccessful bid to prevent the reappointment of the editor of the Wesleyan magazine because his theological thought was regarded as too liberal by most Wesleyans. Morley's own theological views avoided the twin extremes of a literal approach to the Bible and the more radical views thrown up during the controversies over scientific Biblical criticism. (However, within two years Morley was to get his opportunity to put his ideas into practice.) Conference took advantage of his wide reading and active mind by appointing him to examine the theological students on Christ and the Holy Catholic Church, a position he held until 1877.

In May, Morley attended the first Australasian General Conference, where New Zealand had only six delegates among the 36 present. There Morley strenuously advocated lay representation at the Conference and even on the stationing committee. Conference allowed the former but not the latter. The shape of things to come was seen in a motion proposed by a Mr. Daniel and Morley favouring Methodist union, but which had to be withdrawn because of lack of time to discuss it. But the important step was taken of deciding upon the drawing up a Model Deed to settle church property legally upon each annual conference.

Connexional work did not distract Morley from his chief task of overseeing his own circuit. During 1875 "a commodious dwelling situate on the Terrace was purchased, interest on the cost being provided by rent from Manners Street" property. In October

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

we hear of a congregation of 1,000 for a musical service, while later in the year a series of special evangelistic services were held.

The 1876 Conference was held at Wellington. Morley was elected to a committee to study recent British Conference legislation on temperance, and to another to consider the status of communicants who did not meet in class — two topics about which Morley was deeply concerned. The Conference appointed him to his second superintendency, that of the Durham Street circuit.

During his term at Wellington the Wesleyan worshipping community had grown, with the city, from 1,300 to 1,650, including a rise from 154 to 177 full members and from 475 to 690 Sunday School scholars. To the March Quarterly Meeting Morley expressed his "thankfulness that the circuit had been blessed with peace and prosperity, and stated that though the labour had been heavy, his term of service in the circuit had been most happy, and he should always look back to his residence in Wellington with pleasure." A large congregation gathered to farewell the Morleys a few days later. Speakers thanked him for his work in liquidating the circuit debt and in erecting a new parsonage, and presented the family with "a hand-some clock and two pretty chandeliers."

Durham Street, 1876-79.

Christchurch was the largest city in which the Morleys had yet made their home. And indeed it was to be more of a home for Morley than anywhere else, for here he was to serve 18 out of 38 years in New Zealand.

The circuit was numerically the strongest Morley had yet encountered. There was a worshipping community of 2,760, including 321 full members and 1,022 Sunday School scholars. Five ministers ministered at seven chapels. The Durham Street church, built twelve years previously, was "a noble and commodious building" seating 1,200 people, a veritable "Methodist Cathedral of Canterbury". During Morley's term a gallery was added, but even then the congregations overflowed.

From the moment he arrived Morley was involved in the work of opening new churches, resiting or enlarging old ones, purchasing sections, all as a consequence of Christchurch's rapid expansion. On his first Sunday on "a pouring wet morning" he opened the new East Belt church. By 1879 three churches or sites had been relocated, two churches enlarged and two churches and several Sunday School rooms erected. That same year the Colombo Street circuit, comprising the Colombo Street, Lincoln Road and Halswell churches, separated from Durham Street.

Circuit debts, those evils usually attendant upon swift progress, were resolutely tackled and steadily reduced. In 1878 a scheme of regular contributions of 1/- or 2/6 weekly over twelve months was introduced to cut £1,000 off a £2,500 debt. Within the twelve months £800 had been subscribed or promised.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

The December Quarterly Meeting paid tribute to their new minister's "ability, zeal and success as a preacher, pastor and circuit superintendent."

At the Conference of 1877, held at Christchurch, Morley became the third and youngest Secretary of a New Zealand Conference receiving 13 votes out of 20 cast. This Conference took a first step along the road to Methodist reunion, a goal towards which Morley was patiently to urge his church over many long years. He had sent letters to the Wesleyan and United Methodist Free Churches' magazines, in October, 1876, posing the question, "What keeps us apart?" He detailed the main differences between these two branches of Methodism — the greater power of the U.M.F. congregational meetings, the wider representation on U.M.F. Quarterly Meetings, the ability of U.M.F. laymen to chair church meetings, the Wesleyan insistence upon parity between lay and clerical representation at Conference, and the Wesleyan reluctance to permit longer ministerial appointments than three years. Union, urged Morley, was favoured by many in both denominations, and would not only conserve men and money, but would also release new energies for evangelism. At this 1877 Conference the Christchurch ministers and circuit stewards were appointed to confer with U.M.F, and Primitive Methodist representatives on the prospect of eventual reunion.

An additional task was laid upon Morley, to be shared (briefly as it turned out) with the Rev. J. W. Wallis — the editorship of the Wesleyan magazine. Under Morley's guidance the magazine assumed a more sedate tone than it had under the lively hand of Mr. Fitchett, who had goaded the Australasian Conference with passages such as this one depicting a scene at the first General Conference of 1875:

"Pathetic in his look of imperturbability sat the President, as, for about the space of two hours, the storm surged and eddied round him, oscillating continually between tragedy and farce. His efforts to vindicate his ruling had the unfortunate effect of exciting laughter. At length came the climax. The laymen gathered themselves, took counsel together, and announced by one of their number that they were about to retire. . . . They withdrew to the door, pursued by some of the fathers' who besought them to remain."

Greater emphasis was given now to the value of connexionalism and the itinerancy, to temperance, Sunday School work, the need for a methodical approach to church accounting and statistical returns and to criticism of modern theological trends.

At the 1878 Conference, voting for the Presidency resulted in Morley receiving four votes out of the 18 cast — the second highest total — while voting for the Secretaryship gave Morley 15 votes out of the 18 cast, sure indications of the impression the talents of this 35 year old pastor had made. Morley was reappointed to two committees to consider projects dear to him — the establishment of a Loan Fund, and the drawing up of a proper property schedule and register. An ardent democrat, Morley successfully moved that any minister "in full connexion be deemed eligible for

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

the office of President or Secretary of an Annual Conference" without having to have first served a given period of years.

Morley was always first a preacher and pastor. His pastoral concern comes out clearly in his observations during the Conference debate on the spiritual condition of the churches that although he rejoiced in the size and liberality of his Christchurch congregations, yet their spiritual state gave him much concern. Indeed, he felt that throughout New Zealand spiritual results were "not commensurate with the labour bestowed." Constant, diligent pastoral visitation was required, he suggested.

The General Conference in Australia that year elected Morley a journal secretary. At this Conference he vigorously urged the recognition of communicants who did not meet in class as church members. "Large numbers of pious and estimable people," he said, "Methodists in every other sense, were kept out because they could not accept this particular method of worship." Morley prized the class meeting, but realised that "Sooner or later we will be compelled to recognise the membership of communicants, and now ... is an opportunity His motion to this effect was lost 33 to 48. He also failed to persuade Conference to accept the New Zealand recommendation, which he moved, that pastoral appointments be lengthened. Morley valued the itinerancy, but knew it would have to be adapted to the needs of the expanding populations of cities, in which "a minister just began to be known outside his own church and exert an influence with the benevolent institutions, when he is removed." It was to be many years before the Conference recognised the wisdom of this suggestion.

Morley was wholly modern in his appreciation of the key importance of Christian education. Too often he saw piety that was by no means of a sufficiently intelligent type." From his first appointment, where possible he promoted Sunday School unions, encouraged among young men particularly "a desire for mental culture, fostered self government of Bible Classes and solicited the support of circuit leaders in these aims. Invited to address the Christchurch Ministers' Association, he gave a comprehensive blue print for Christian education. Classrooms should be designed and equipped with the needs of the scholars as the first consideration. Each age group should have its own suitably furnished, well-lighted, "sweet and tasteful" room. Up-to-date maps, a museum of Bible-land curiosities and illustrations, blackboards, desks — "The success of the school depends on these accessories" to a large degree. Finance for these should be a priority. The school itself "should be distinctly regarded as a department of the church work," staffed by pious teachers, trained and tested, for "one competent teacher is worth four others. The school session should be orderly and brightened with lively singing. (A glance at his own church reveals that the Durham Street Sunday School had 519 on its roll with an average attendance of 108 in the morning and 302 in the afternoon. Each class had a box for its mission collection.)

Morley's term at Durham Street was drawing to a close. To the September Quarterly Meeting the circuit stewards expressed their regret that the law absolutely forbade their hope of the Rev William Morley's remaining beyond the three years, otherwise

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

the whole circuit would have desired it." (One hopes that the member who had taken Morley to task in the columns of the "Wesleyan" a year previously for the introduction of chanting into Durham Street had meantime been mollified!)

Presidential honours were accorded Morley by the 1879 Conference at Pitt Street when he received 13 out of the 19 votes cast while he was thanked for his "untiring, devoted and faithful work as Secretary." The New Zealand Conference had already adopted the Wesleyan custom of elevating their retiring secretaries to the presidency, a custom which has been retained to the present day. The new President was the sixth and by far the youngest yet elected Morley was also appointed superintendent of the Pitt Street circuit.

At the valedictory service on April 6th the "spacious edifice" of Durham Street church was crowded, seats being placed in the aisles 250 took communion at the close of the service. The Thursday following the circuit stewards called at the parsonage to thank their minister for his labour in the circuit. "As a friend," their spokesman said, the families of the congregation had become exceedingly attached to him, and as a representative of the Wesleyan church in public questions, he had had their confidence and won their admiration " In a too rare tribute to Mrs. Morley the speaker added that "Mrs. Morley was very highly esteemed by them, and would be remembered with affection. After expressing a hope that the Morleys would one day return to minister in the circuit, the stewards presented a "very hand-some album and a purse of 140 sovereigns" to them. After he had thanked the visitors, Morley with his last words echoed his first action in the circuit, as he urged the need for still further efforts in church extension to keep abreast with Christchurch's explosive growth.



"The New Zealand Morleys"

Back Row: Frank Morley, Mrs. W. Morley (Jun.), George William Kirk Morley, Ethel Mary Morley
(later Mrs.F.J.Denton)

Front Row: Mabel Hannah Morley, Dr. Morley, Helen Morley, Sidney Morley
(later Superintendent of Deaconess House.) (late Mrs.W.H.Drake)

CHAPTER THREE

The Church Statesman

President at Pitt Street.

During 1879 New Zealand was entering a protracted, weary period of financial and commercial depression. The monetary difficulties, the shifts of population, the unemployment, the sheer misery thus caused set the churches formidable problems. Against this sombre background his church made increasing use of Morley's already recognised considerable abilities.

On April 23 Morley was officially welcomed to the Auckland Circuit. He found that the circuit still included the whole of the Auckland urban area. But over the twelve years since his last appointment there the circuit community had grown 75 and the ministerial staff had swelled to eight to serve the fifteen chapels and preaching places.

Further growth was to be anticipated, since Auckland's population, which had risen 2½ times since 1866, continued to increase. There was, then, a pressing need for immediate church extension. However, Morley found the circuit weighed down by debt. On Pitt Street church alone there was a debt of "nearly £4,000, while during the previous twelve years a larger sum than that had been paid in interest, and the annual charge on this account was still £274" — enough to pay another minister's salary! Morley acted quickly. "The Trustees were called together, the facts placed before them, and a scheme outlined by which the whole amount could be paid off by systematic contributions extending over two or three years." The Trustees and some wealthy friends promptly promised £900. "A vigorous canvass of the congregation secured £1,400 more, and the back of the debt was broken." "Hear ye this," exclaimed the magazine *'Free Lance'* in December 1881, "ye Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Holy Romans; while each and all of you have been blowing about your extension of churches and liberal donations, the Wesleyans at Pitt Street have quietly, by a special effort, during the past eighteen months, wiped off £2,000 of their church debt, and, not content with this, they have determined to rub off the balance of £1,800 within the next fifteen months."

And they did it, too! A repeat canvass was so successful that "before the chairman left at the end of his three year term, he had the satisfaction of knowing all was promised." All this with not one non-Wesleyan being approached for contributions, without one single bazaar or sale of work, and while ordinary contributions actually increased — and in a time of depression.

Within the three years, also, two new circuits were constituted — Grafton in 1880 and North Shore in 1882, and sundry necessary enlargements, relocations, and property purchases were made within the Pitt Street circuit itself.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

All this time the active pastoral work of circuit superintendency continued unabated. We hear of Morley in 1879 encouraging his local preachers at Quarterly teas and meetings, addressing a Local Preachers' Convention, helping to found a Wesleyan Methodist Temperance Society, planning to establish new, regular preaching places "and not shut up small outside places, as was done in former years" (*NZW September 1879*) and chairing a Sunday School Convention to stimulate interest in Sunday School work. The work of the Three Kings College (*Opened 1876 to educate young Maoris and to train European students for the ministry.*) also engaged his attention. On November 26, 1879, Morley gladly carried out the Auckland Chairman's annual duty of assisting in the examination of the Maori pupils. Morley took the spelling exam (testing competency in such words as breakfast, machine, material). The whole procedure of examinations, school concert and inspectorial visitation must have taken quite some time. At its conclusion Morley expressed on behalf of all the visiting ministers the "extreme surprise and gratification they had realised throughout the proceedings" and complimented the staff upon the excellent progress of their students. (Having thus nobly acquitted themselves, the visitors left in a heavy downpour of rain!)

Yes, 1879 was a busy year. The duties of President, District Chairman and Circuit Superintendent, as well as the annual Home Missions deputation work, all "involved considerable travel" (although the recent extensions of railways speeded up travel. For example Morley left Auckland by the morning train on October 21st. reaching Hamilton at noon. A cross-country ride on horse brought him to his destination at Raglan the same evening.).

Dunedin played host to the 1880 Conference. Morley was again elected Secretary by 11 out of the 17 votes cast, and was re-elected chairman of the Auckland District.

Continued, rapid immigration posed grave problems for the Conference. Morley had reminded Conference in his Presidential address of the crying need for church extension to keep abreast of the "continued stream of new immigrants." After presenting the report of the committee set up to examine his cherished project of a church loan fund, he moved that such a fund be approved and raised by voluntary donations. This suggestion was forwarded to the Districts for discussion. A further motion calling for "further evangelistic effort to cope with continuing immigration" was passed.

Morley delivered the ordination charge on the occasion of the ordination of the Revs. W. Baumber and J. H. Luxford at Trinity church on January 26th, 1880. Morley took 1 Timothy, iv. 16 as his text — "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." "To begin with what may seem to be the lowest, yet which is at the very base of success," said the preacher, "I urge you to take heed to your bodily health. If you are strong in body, necessary studies can be prosecuted with ease, your preaching will

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

have force, and pastoral work will be a delight. It is the more necessary because Methodism has in her ministry no sinecures or easy places." Morley slipped in a novel suggestion: "Personally, I believe the congregations would be gainers, as well as the brethren themselves, if each minister could have an annual holiday."

He stressed the importance of continual learning. "Take heed also to continued mental culture." During "the four years or more of study certain tools have been placed in your hands. Your mental horizon has been enlarged and extended, and you have come to see the boundless fields of knowledge which stretch before you." Do not let "your mental powers become ossified. By use, exercise, and friction, your powers will develop and mature, and each new acquisition be a stepping stone to further attainments. To this end keep up fixed hours of study. Perhaps what is chiefly wanted among us ministers in the colony — and I refer not only to our own church, but all the churches — is greater intellectual activity. You will often find it a great relief, and ultimately a considerable help, to pursue studies which do not seem directly to bear on your work." (It is worth noting that Morley himself, though lacking any formal higher education, was an omnivorous reader, with a great interest in history. At no stage in his life did he cease to read or to acquire knowledge.)

"Take heed to your behaviour as ministers. Never become flatterers of the great, nor toadies of the rich. Never despise the poor, and never improperly pander to them because they may be in the majority. Get to know your people familiarly, but never condescend to become gossips. Those that sin rebuke with all authority, but with all tenderness." And always "pay special attention to the young and to the sick."

"Above all, take heed to your own spiritual growth. It is not sufficient for you to preach holiness: you must become patterns of it."

"Learn to know the needs of your congregations." This "will impart freshness and vitality to your ministrations."

It is the minister's task also to maintain and defend Christian doctrine. "Make yourselves thoroughly familiar with the doctrines of our own church. Study also the history of Christian doctrine. At the present day there is what I cannot but regard as a senseless outcry against formal creeds, and an aversion to what is termed dogmatism. The great historic creeds are not only convenient summaries of important truths but every phrase was intended as a protest and defence against some formerly prevailing error," the sort of error that arises to confront every generation. Theological opinions today toss upon conflicting currents. "With regard to all new theories, I would say, 'Be swift to hear, slow to speak.' The history of the past few years shows that the theological views propounded by eminent scientists are often as evanescent as they are startling."

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Remember that your work is to save men. But "your personal salvation must never be forgotten. Fierce temptations will assail you. Constant familiarity with holy things may insensibly lead to a lack of fervour and present realisation of their importance." Your flock's failings, "misconstruction of your motives", unreasonable opposition will try you. Amid all this take care to keep your own heart right with God."

"Two of Mr. Wesley's terse utterances may, in conclusion be commended to you:" the first is " 'The world is my parish'. Wherever you go, you will seek to extend Christ's kingdom." The second is " 'You have nothing to do but to save souls.' "

This "appropriate and able" address was published on both sides of the Pacific when the *'New Zealand Wesleyan'* and its distant cousin the Baltimore *'Methodist Episcopal'* both carried it.

By early 1880 the depression was causing unemployment among Methodists. Concurrently the Pitt Street Quarterly Meeting noted 'increased attendances and greater attention to spiritual things" To take advantage of this trend a series of special services was held at Ponsonby (where "only one man was converted") and at Pitt Street (where "many were found to have received good").

During late 1880 a new Auckland paper, the *'Observer'* ran a series of articles on preachers and churches, of which Pitt Street was the third. The correspondent wrote:

"This church is, in many respects, the best appointed place of worship in Auckland. The pews are comfortable, without being luxurious; the building is stately, and yet simple; and the service seems to me just what it should be." The congregation "appears to be composed of all classes, the families of respectable tradesmen and the smaller shop-keepers predominating. There are a great number of young folks too at Pitt Street, and they somehow give one the impression of having been well brought up."

"The service was conducted by the Rev. W. Morley This gentleman is by far the ablest preacher I have yet heard. Besides owning a clear voice, and knowing how to use it, he has evidently plenty of brains. The subject of the sermon on the occasion of my visit was a tough one: "Conditional Immortality versus Scripture Teaching'. (*Conditional Immortality is the theory that the soul is not necessarily immortal, but that immortality depends upon behaviour during life.*) Few parsons could tackle such a problem without sending three-fourths of their listeners to sleep. Mr. Morley, however, did nothing of the kind. His sermon was from the first to last most interesting, and immense congregation listened to it with wrapt attention. Personally, I never lost the thread of the discourse for an instant, or found myself at all weary, and when the preacher ceased, and people pulled out their watches, it was quite a surprise to find Mr. Morley had been talking for fully forty minutes. Those who care for an intellectual treat should certainly make for Pitt Street when this gentleman is

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

announced on a special subject. He reminds me more of the Rev. Stopford Brooke (1832-1916. *Well-known British Anglican broad-church leader.*) than anyone. There is the same liberal broad-church tone and coherent logical reasoning running through his sermons. It was pleasant, too, to notice the complete absence of vulgar rant." This was "grand fare."

Nelson was the venue of the Conference of February, 1881. Morley missed re-election as secretary by one vote out of 22, and missed election as representative to the first Methodist Oecumenical Conference by one vote out of 52. But the duties of District Chairman were laid upon him by a vote of 27 to 1, and he was given the onerous task of chairing the committee charged with the drawing up of a Model Deed for church properties.

By far the most important discussion at the Conference was initiated by Morley's proposal "that New Zealand be constituted a separate and independent Conference." In a cogent speech he pointed out that conditions in New Zealand and Australia differed widely, and that New Zealand ought to be free to adapt its church's polity as need arose. Already, he contended, the New Zealand church was numerically large enough to support her own Conference. Two of the fathers of the Conference opposed him. 69-year-old Thomas Buddle thought the New Zealand Conference was "far too juvenile"; Alexander Reid was anxious not to forgo "the benefits of association with a much larger and generally more experienced body of men." In reply Morley quite rightly noted that "as a body they were not more youthful than other bodies in the colony to whom were entrusted the management of either civil or religious affairs." The younger men of the Conference agreed with him and the motion was carried 31 to 9.

The third Australasian General Conference at Adelaide opened in the shadow of tragedy. On April 29th the S.S. *'Tararua'* was wrecked on its way to Bluff Harbour with the loss of 131 lives, including the two New Zealand ministerial delegates to the Conference, the Revs. J. B. Richardson (President of the New Zealand Conference) and John Armitage.

It was a doubly determined Morley who faced the Conference a few days later, and in a powerful address urged the need of a separate Conference for New Zealand. He put fact after fact before the assembly — the great distance between the two countries, the eight weeks absence necessitated by attendance at the Conference, the expense incurred by the New Zealand Conference of £40 per delegate, the opportune time that now existed with the needs for separate legal settlements of church property for each colony, the near-unanimity of New Zealanders is asking for separation. And what he deliberately left unsaid was equally potent — the fact that one disaster in the stormy southern oceans might well be followed by others. The motion was eventually

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

narrowly lost, by 31 to 37. But Conference did accept Morley's plea that they meet next at Christchurch "to mitigate the disappointment" at the adverse vote.

Twice more New Zealand recommendations were unsuccessfully moved by Morley — that communicants be regarded as church members, and that ministerial appointments in towns be lengthened.

Back in New Zealand "years of futile discussion" on the formation of a church loan fund were drawing to a close. In 1882 the committee of the New Zealand Conference set up to examine this proposal was authorised to obtain information on the working of such funds overseas, to draw up a set of rules and to initiate an appeal for funds. Morley was elected General Secretary of the committee. The same Conference appointed Morley editor of the "Wesleyan" and Secretary of Conference.

That year, writing in the "*Wesleyan*", Morley put forward a suggestion that was to bear fruit 13 years later — that the church should consider establishing a school to replace Auckland's defunct Wesley College. For the moment, though, he was too busy to pursue that particular train of thought.

With March came the time to leave Auckland. Bidding farewell to the Morleys on behalf of the circuit, the Rev. H. R. Dewsbury spoke of "the high esteem and affection in which they held them." Morley, he said, "had proved himself to be an effective preacher, and an able administrator." Circuit prosperity was due to the "cool, clear-headed way" he had helped them. His own happiest years in the ministry, Dewsbury added, had been his three years in Wellington and two years in Auckland under Morley. Of Mrs. Morley the senior circuit steward said that she had "taken as deep an interest in that work as her husband." Morley was thanked for his "fresh and instructive" preaching, his worthy representation of Methodism "in public movements." Replying, Morley belittled his own achievements, saying he could only claim to have initiated the fund raising scheme. He thanked the circuit for their forbearance during his frequent absences on District business. A purse of 81 sovereigns expressed tangibly the circuit's gratitude to the Morleys.

Church building and loan fund secretary, St. Albans, 1882-85.

After three years' absence the Morley's returned to Christchurch in March, 1882. The new appointment was at St. Albans, where the Rev. J. B. Richardson, victim of the '*Tararua*' tragedy, had served. The borough of St. Albans was a pleasant, compact, growing little settlement along the main arterial route between Christchurch and North Canterbury. Christchurch itself had changed in those three years the Morleys had been in Auckland. Unemployment and sweated labour were on the increase, together with their accompanying evils of poverty, larrikinism and drunkenness. It was against the latter that the Wesleyans directed their chief attack. Organised assistance of the poor seems to have been left largely to organisations such as the Salvation Army whose

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

unorthodox methods were greeted with a storm of abuse from the larger churches when they commenced operations during the 1880s in the large cities. This abuse shocked Morley. "Street preaching," he wrote in early 1883, "and the visitation of the poor and vicious in their homes should be regularly maintained. Are we not, as a church, losing our adaptation to the needs of the uncultured and vicious?"

St. Albans circuit contained a community only half the size of that in the Durham Street circuit when Morley had left it in 1879. Two ministers officiated at six chapels. But "St. Albans was an important circuit. It carried with it certain opportunities of leadership and responsibility in both the church life and the civic life of the city, and almost invariably the minister there found himself raised to the position of President of Conference." (*C. T. Luxton: "John Bell Richardson."*)

Not long after Morley arrived his mother became ill, and on November 17th she passed away at the age of 67, praising God with her last words. Her husband survived her only eleven months, dying peacefully on October 29th, 1883, at the age of 70. Warm tributes were paid to the worth of these Godly people. Perhaps their greatest memorial has been the devoted work of their descendants for Methodism right down to the present day.

During 1882 Morley's own health suffered, the result of overwork, and a period of rest near Lake Wakatipu became necessary.

Morley's greatest work during these years at St. Albans was to be the creation of the Church Building and Loan Fund. Funds to aid church extension were already in successful operation overseas, and New Zealand's need for one could not be doubted.

Between 1871 and 1881 New Zealand's population had risen from 256,000 to 498,000 a 91% increase. Thereafter immigration slowed down, but nevertheless, between 1881 and 1886 population was to rise a further 28%. The Methodist adherency among the population was meantime steadily expanding. (*See statistical appendix.*)

During June and July of 1882 Morley energetically publicised the need of a loan fund through the '*Wesleyan*'. The 1883 Conference at Auckland officially approved a Church Building and Loan Fund to assist the purchase of church sites, the erection of substantial churches, the provision of parsonages and the liquidation of debts. Money was to be raised by special canvasses by donations and an annual subscription from each Trust. An interesting condition of obtaining a loan was that the Trust must maintain a satisfactory system of pew rents, a custom which did not die out until the second decade of this century.

Morley's motion that a "suitable minister should be set apart to advocate the claims of the fund by preaching sermons and holding meetings in every circuit and that a young man should be appointed to assist him in circuit work" was carried. There was no real doubt as to whom the Conference would choose: Morley was elected by 16 votes

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

against 6 for the Rev. R. Bavin, another capable energetic young minister who had just been elected President of Conference.

The Fund was launched at an inaugural meeting "at Pitt Street church, when £1,080 was promised." "During the next twelve months" Morley wrote of the period that followed, he "visited every circuit and almost every preaching station, travelling from the Bay of Islands in the North to Riverton in the South. The aim was to raise £10,000 by subscriptions payable within two years." Administrative expenses in connection with initiating the Fund were met by collections at special lectures given by Morley while on tour. The connexion as a whole was kept informed of his activities and of the Fund's progress by means of the detailed, regular reports Morley sent to the 'Wesleyan'.

Despite the intensifying depression the results of the campaign were satisfactory:

Within three years subscribers paid up	£5 947
The Auckland District's Jubilee Fund paid up	83
Conference voted from the Emsly Bequest	<u>1,500</u>
	£7,530 total.

In its operation the Fund was a tremendous success. By 1900 the original capital had been loaned out four times, for "no sooner are instalments paid than they are again advanced to other enter-prises. Between 1881 and 1901 (just before Morley left New Zealand) the number of Wesleyan churches increased 77, from 163 to 288, an adequate growth to keep pace with the increase in attendants upon public worship from 37,734 in 1881 to 67781 in 1901 a 79 rise.

The Loan Fund by no means consumed all of Morley's time or interests. Elected to the committee to confer with representatives of the other Methodist denominations on reunion, he attended the meeting in July 1883, at Christchurch, which drew up a proposed basis of union, a basis which Morley commended to the Wesleyans in a letter in the Connexional magazine. It was a stirring moment when the 1884 Conference voted 38 to 9 in favour of immediate reunion.

At the age of 41 Morley was elected President of Conference for the second time, to become the tenth holder of that office. (*No other Wesleyan Minister was twice President of the N.Z. Conference. Samuel Lawry 1904 and Charles Laws 1910 were each President of the Methodist Church of Australasia in N.Z. and, after separation from Australia, of the Methodist Church of N.Z. in 1913 and 1922 respectively.*) In his capacity as President he attended the General Conference at Christchurch that year resolved again to do his utmost to secure separation of New Zealand from Australia. Separation had been provided for in the plan for union, since some of the proposed changes would be unlikely to receive the sanction of the highly conservative General Conference. In answer to Morley's pleas that he had personally ascertained that 95 of New Zealand Wesleyans favoured separation and that the recent New Zealand Conference had unanimously called for it,

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

other speakers expressed their fears that separation would result in drastic changes in Wesleyan doctrine or policy. Finally, Conference voted 58 to 23 that it was "inexpedient" to sacrifice the advantages of an Australasian connexion. This effectively quashed unity movements in New Zealand for many years to come, and convinced the Primitive Methodists that no useful negotiations could be carried on until New Zealand Wesleyanism was entirely separated from Australia.

However, the Conference did take another very important step when it authorised a committee to take the necessary steps to ensure that each Annual Conference in New Zealand and Australia had its own Model Deed, by which all property was to be legally settled upon the church. Morley continued on this committee as one of its most able members.

On April 18th, 1885, came the time for the St. Albans circuit to farewell the Morleys. All through these busy years the circuit superintendent had continued to promote the spiritual welfare of his people, and to organise church extension. At the farewell function the Rev. F. W. Isitt bitterly attacked the church law which forced a man "so beloved and useful" to move on. The circuit stewards noted how the circuit had prospered numerically and financially over Morley's ministry, and others spoke of the spiritual strength and comfort his ministry had brought them. Morley, thanking the meeting, said that although his term had been broken during the first year by family bereavement and ill health, and in the second by Connexional duties, never-the-less, his term had been a happy one. "St. Albans circuit," he later wrote, "is a most desirable field of labour."

Trinity, Dunedin, 1885-88.

"The work of the church in Otago differs from the more northerly Provinces," commented Morley. "The places are fewer, and the number of adherents considerably smaller. To some extent the Presbyterian idea of having a minister for each congregation has prevailed." Trinity, the principal Otago circuit, embraced a community only a little larger than Morley had found at St. Albans. There were two ministers ministering at two chapels and two preaching places. Trinity church "was well situated, solid looking and attractive," while the Manse was large, "a good family dwelling."

In Dunedin, as in Christchurch, unemployment and poverty with all their attendant vices were rampant. But it was not until the arrival of William Ready in 1891 that any branch of Methodism had much contact with the poorer classes.

The usual activities of church extension occupied Morley from the start — relocations, enlargements, the establishment of new causes and debt reduction, which was considerably assisted by the new Loan Fund.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

To his office of Loan Fund Secretary the 1886 Conference at Christchurch added that of Registrar of Church Properties. The same Conference received from him detailed reports on the functioning of the Loan Fund and of the progress of the committee drafting the New Zealand Model Deed. (A glance at the back of a Methodist Law Book will reveal the enormous amount of detailed work involved in preparing this document.)

Years of incessant labour and travel had left their mark on Morley's health. The Conference appointed a committee to arrange "for the Rev. W. Morley to have a trip to England next year in view of his valuable services to the Connexion." The committee was able to report to the 1887 Conference that arrangements had been made for Morley to rest during 1888.

At this 1887 Conference in Auckland Morley again raised the matter of a separate Conference for New Zealand, urging the need for it in a speech lasting an hour and a half! He was vigorously opposed by the Rev. R. Bavin, whose contrary motion was defeated 26 to 39. Significant was the large number of those who joined Bavin in opposition to a separated Conference. A long and rather warm debate was ended when Morley's motion was carried.

Morley had been requested to lecture to the Conference on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical position of Methodism. His address was at once clear, thorough, learned and inspiring. At the request of the Conference it was published during 1887 as a 40-page pamphlet, retailing at sixpence a copy.

A day or two later, prior to the meeting of the Loan Fund Committee, Morley was presented with £157 and a valuable writing case. The committee assured him of their warm appreciation of his services for the Loan Fund, in the energetic execution of which his health had broken down.

On Sunday, February 19th, Morley preached his final sermon at Trinity, a few days before leaving. At the social function tendered the Morleys, the chairman spoke of the circuit's affection for him and the high esteem in which they held him. In his three year term Morley had lifted off the congregation's shoulders a load of some £500. Among other gifts given was an illuminated address, which contained eulogistic references to his work for the Connexion, the District and the circuit. Morley took the opportunity to refer to his wife: "A helpmate to me through the whole of my married life, she has been one of the best and truest helpmates a minister of Christ could have."

The 1888 Conference added its thanks, expressing "its high sense of his personal worth, and of the eminently valuable services rendered by him to the Church of this colony." Thus farewelled, the Morleys left for the home country neither of them had seen for over 24 years.

CHAPTER FOUR

Theologian — Traveller — Organizer

The Faith and the Church

This is as good a place as any to pause and glance briefly at Morley's views on the Christian faith and the Methodist Church. His lecture in 1887 was an excellent exposition of the viewpoint of nineteenth century liberal Methodism. (*This chapter gives the substance of this lecture, amplified at certain points by brief quotations from his two later books.*)

Morley disagreed thoroughly with those who claimed that theological studies were a needless or even pernicious addition to Biblical studies. "While we glory in the Scriptures as the only infallible standard," he told his audience, "we must also remember that without close and connected study, and without definite and reasonable rules of interpretation, there can be in our minds no clear conception of what the Scriptures teach and what we ought to believe." Methodist theology, however, is anything but authoritarian. Indeed Wesley was far "from wishing rigidly to bind men to his own views of theology." In fact "our theological teaching throughout is closely connected with and claims to be based upon experience."

Methodists revere the traditional doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church. "The compact and terse expressions and the careful theological distinctions of the three most ancient creeds we very honestly admire, and with the single exception of a single expression in the Apostolic (i.e. "He descended into Hell"), and the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian, we yield to them a hearty and unfeigned assent." And "with the great Reformer Luther we assert that justification is by faith only."

Methodism has had a part to play in the development of theological thought, having "done something to liberalise and humanise theology, and also to prevent dogma being too harshly pressed." For "while holding firmly to the doctrine of a common natural depravity of the race as a consequence of the Fall, and that there is by nature no power in us to attain unto a good life, we also argue . . . from portions of God's Word that the light and help of the Spirit are given to every soul. The truth, therefore, has been consistently held that no soul will perish except for its own conscious rejection of the truth."

The heart of the "generous theology" of Methodism lies in the doctrines of "salvation obtainable for all, the possibility of a present pardon, and assurance of full salvation." But salvation must be personally appropriated. "While we glory in the sufficiency and completeness of our Lord's atoning work, we hold that adults, until actually saved, are as verily and deeply guilty as though no atonement had been made for them."

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

There is one doctrine "on which Methodism has been singular in the sisterhood of Churches — singular, that is, for the distinct and definite teaching of the truth." — the doctrine of Christian Perfection. Of this doctrine Wesley had said, "Pure love reigning in the heart and life — this is the whole of Scriptural perfection." Morley reminded his hearers, "That the attainment of this state of grace is attainable in the present life, and that it is our duty as Christians to persistently seek after it, we consider may be plainly proved from the Word of God." The perfection is in love alone. Of course, "Christians are not perfect in knowledge. Nor are they free from imperfections or temptations." But "Methodist teaching upon this point does not encourage a mere emotional simulation of this blessing, much less a fanatical exaggeration."

Controversies on the afterlife had stirred the church during the 1870s and 80s. Morley's views were clear. "The state of the dead in Christ is regarded as one of distinct and continuing consciousness. We believe that immediately they pass out of this world they enter upon their reward. On the other hand, we hold with equal firmness that for those to whom the Gospel is come, and by whom its offers have been rejected, there is no probation beyond the present world, but they must remain forever in banishment from the light and joy of God's presence."

On the sacraments, Morley was firm against those who held to a believer's baptism only. "As we believe the place and part of children — of all children — is recognised in this covenant, we hesitate not to impress upon them the outward sign of the sacrament."

Of church government Morley said, "The belief is tenaciously held that no special form has been laid down by our Lord and his apostles in the New Testament. We do not feel bound to be always arguing on this subject. We have a more important and more honour-able task — 'to turn men from darkness to light'. From my point of view it is not a matter of great importance whether a particular meeting is precisely the same in form as it was in the Apostles' day. A far more momentous enquiry is whether the spirit that animated the first believers — the spirit that is of ardent attachment to their Lord and a burning zeal for the salvation of men — possesses the members of the church now. If it does, the outward expressions may be left, as Gregory put it, to be governed "by the dual reign of charity and common sense". So far would I personally go in this matter as to say, even in the same church, the prudential regulations that are eminently fitted for one state of society may be quite unsuitable in another land. For instance, the Methodism of New Zealand might very well differ on some points of policy from that of Australia."

Morley pointed out that "Wesley never sat down and elaborated a system of church government, and then sought to recommend and enforce it. The Methodist Polity is a thing of growth."

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

At its best "the economy of the church is at once flexible, stimulative and corrective." Several features peculiar to Methodism contribute to this result. Connexionalism is beneficial "to ministers in giving them a wider experience and to the people in educating them "to take an interest in the work of the church generally."

"The itinerancy of the ministers is at once a cause and a result of the vitality and power of connexionalism: a cause inasmuch as ministers coming from churches at a long distance, yet of the same faith and order, excite interest in their condition, and a result because it is felt that with such a system no one locality can be allowed to monopolise the gifts of particular pastors." A warning was sounded; the stationing committees "will do well in the future to look more at the needs of the place and the special gifts of the minister, and less at the wishes of people and preachers."

While "there is an absolute consensus of opinion in favour of 'a separated ministry'", nevertheless "to a larger extent than in any other denomination laymen are entrusted with spiritual gifts." Indeed, by the extensive use of lay preachers "our church has extended more rapidly than could have been the case otherwise." Class leaders are important since "the tone of any Methodist church depends upon its leaders," as they conscientiously exercise their spiritual oversight.

"Only second in importance to the work of the minister him-self is that of the circuit steward. He carefully studies the needs of the circuit, frequently visits all parts of the same, considers its possibilities, and is ever solicitous for its development and growth." At meetings "he carries weight, not by any dictatorialness, but by his evidently having studied the whole subject." Good stewards do not "simply echo the minister's views and opinions" but "form plans of their own."

Morley defended the Wesleyan system whereby officers were nominated by the superintendent minister. "It arose from the desire to ensure every officer of the Church being a man of spiritual mind. I am bound to say that the experiment made in some branches of Methodism of a free election without nomination is not of a character to much encourage further advances in that direction." (Our mid-twentieth century system is a compromise between the Wesleyan and the freely elective systems.)

Morley's comments on the terms we use in our church life are of interest at this time in our own generation of Church Union negotiations. "It is to be confessed, too, that our nomenclature is not at all ecclesiastical, and to a stranger somewhat perplexing. Our stewards would in other Churches be known as deacons. What the Anglican Church calls the Vestry has with us the ambiguous name of the Quarterly Meeting. A Presbytery with the followers of Geneva is with us simply a District Meeting, and we speak of conversations in Conference instead of a debate in the General Assembly." These names were given in haste as the forms of organisation were created to meet particular needs, and, "sooth to tell, the people have so little taste for ecclesiasticism that there has been no disposition" to change them.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Improvements were suggested by Morley. He returned to a favourite theme when he advocated extending the term of ministerial appointments, especially in the large cities. Other proposals foreshadowed later developments within Methodism. "It seems, too, that some better plan should be devised for utilising to the full men's special abilities." Morley noted approvingly overseas appointments of ministers to specialised jobs, such as editorships, city missions. "The elasticity of our system has been one of its strongest recommendations in the past. If we are convinced that any part of our Church machinery needs to be set aside or replaced, we should resolutely set ourselves to the adaptation."

Morley concluded, "If ministers, stewards, local preachers, leaders and members are all 'filled with the Holy Ghost', and each asks, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?', God will honour their faith and reward their toil."

This, then, was the faith that inspired Morley, and the form of church life which claimed his loyal affection and untiring devotion. Durham Street, 1888-92: the Jubilee Fund.

Sailing to Britain in early 1888 via Cape Horn, the Morleys stopped off briefly at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The trip, once Britain was reached, was a Morley-style vacation. In addition to sending back to the 'New Zealand Methodist' regular articles recording his observations on the British scene, he addressed both the British and the Irish Conferences. At both he was welcomed as an honoured guest. Notwithstanding all this activity, the 1889 Conference found Morley much benefitted in health.

During his absence his new circuit had been in capable hands, for wrote Morley, "Among the outstanding facts in connection with the Christchurch circuit is the service rendered by the lay preachers." No doubt this made easier the task of the man sent to replace Morley during 1888.

Upon his return to New Zealand he was immediately placed in harness again by being elected chairman of the Canterbury District.

Arriving at the Durham Street circuit he plunged into the work with customary vigour. In 1889 a new parsonage was acquired and in 1890 the Durham Street church was renovated and its choir gallery enlarged. Elsewhere in the circuit steps were taken to provide new churches and reduce debts.

1890 was the jubilee of the annexation of New Zealand by Great Britain. Although the date held no special significance for the Wesleyan Church, whose first missionaries had arrived in 1822, the Conference decided to mark the occasion suitably. A Jubilee Movement was launched with the twin objectives of deepening spiritual life and of raising a fund of £15,000. Part of the money was to be used to increase the Loan Fund's capital to £10,000; part was to be used to form a special branch of the Loan Fund for the purpose of liquidating stagnant debts and of purchasing sites in new

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

towns. Home Missions were also to benefit financially. Morley was appointed General Secretary of the Fund, and, by virtue of his many administrative offices, General Secretary of the church.

The new Fund was inaugurated at a public meeting during the Conference. Morley was instructed to prepare a plan of services and meetings to be taken by prominent ministers and laymen throughout New Zealand on behalf of the movement. Both he and President Lewis threw themselves into the movement. Between April 13, 1890, and February 10, 1891, Morley once again travelled New Zealand visiting every chapel and preaching place. By 1900 £9,138 had been raised. "As the effort was made during a period of general depression, this was thought to be highly successful," commented Morley. The Loan Fund received £1,000, its special branch £2,250 and Home Missions £1,000.

A few months after his return from his Jubilee Fund engagements, Morley sailed for Washington as New Zealand's delegate to the Second Methodist Oecumenical Conference. Here he was elected one of several Presidents, and he addressed the assembly a number of times. Methodist historian Rupert Davies has described these conferences as speech-making assemblies at which a few leaders came to know one another well, but by which little was achieved. Nevertheless, it must have been heartening to see representatives of almost every branch of world-wide Methodism sharing information and discovering one another's viewpoints. The trip was a personal triumph for Morley, who made a very favourable impression upon both the members of the Conference and the American congregations to whom he spoke.

The 1892 Conference was a momentous one for Morley. A successor was to be chosen to the Rev. Alexander Reid as Principal of the Three Kings College. Morley moved that the whole question of the church's policy on higher education be examined by a special committee. He expressed his regret at the thorough-going secularisation of the 1877 Education Act which had abolished the Bible from the public schools. He reminded the Conference that the church already possessed a valuable school property in Queen Street, Auckland, which had originally been a Wesleyan boarding school established some 44 years previously, but which had since 1856 been leased out to various bodies as a private school. Morley told the Conference that the time had come to consider reopening the college as a church school. His motion was carried unanimously. His further motion that while the committee was making enquiries as to the requirements of such a college, a minister be appointed to the Three Kings College as principal and tutor to the theological students, and to assist the committee in formulating plans for attaining a college, was also carried unanimously.

When it came to the vote for the new Principal of Three Kings, the Rev. J. H. Simmonds received 28 votes and Morley 51. His acceptance of the post, after earnest consultation with his friends, was greeted with warm applause.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

But a motion by the Rev. J. J. Lewis portended still further changes in Morley's future. Lewis moved that a minister be set apart as a Connexional Secretary, to act as secretary to the Home Mission, the Jubilee Fund and the Loan Fund. The Connexional Secretary's office was to be primarily a pastoral one, its function being to stimulate extension of God's work in growing and neglected areas, to visit circuits to assist in deputation work, and to advise ministers and circuit officials on all matters connected with the welfare and advancement of the church's work. He was supported by several speakers, including Morley, L. M. Isitt (the future M.P.), W. Baumber (a future President) and ex-President Dewsbury. He was opposed by ex-Secretary Lee, Dukes, and two future Presidents, Fee and Lawry, on the grounds that a minister's primary job was to serve a circuit. Lewis's motion was eventually carried 42 to 35.

In April the Morleys left Christchurch for the new appointment in Auckland, taking with them the affectionate good wishes of the Durham Street circuit. The leave-taking was more significant than any yet known, for Morley was leaving the last circuit in which he was to labour.

CHAPTER FIVE The Educator and Administrator

Principal at Wesley College, Three Kings, 1892-93.

In 1892 the Three Kings College had a roll of fourteen boarders. There were also two students for the European ministry and one for the Maori ministry. The boarders were given elementary education in return for which the boys helped on the farm attached to the school. The theological students received training and were expected to assist with the tuition of the boarders in English.

This year was the closest Morley ever came to working among the Maori people. He may have regarded the English settlers as " 'the heirs of all the ages', and of the noblest civilisation," and he may not have expected "any general mingling of the two races," but he did have a genuine concern for the Maori race and he did give earnest thought to their future. He was convinced that education was of prime importance. "The way should be open for the capable Maori to learn any trade or fit himself for any profession to which his natural gifts predispose him, and the duties of which he can discharge." Morley considered that the church ought to do far more to provide higher education for selected Maori boys likely to become leaders of their people. As regards the Maori Mission, he saw that the church must thoroughly train and oversee Maori pastors, for "it is by them that the work must in future be carried on." To the Maoris the Church must become "not an exotic, but a growth among themselves." Failure in this, he felt, had led to "the wholesale departure from Christianity" during and after the Maori-Pakeha Wars.

Mrs. Morley was very much at home at the College. She had been born on a Mission Station and had spent her first twelve years there. Her affection for the Maori Mission had never waned. She plunged straight into the work at the College, mothering the boys with a generous love.

Throughout 1892 Morley was working to bring to a successful conclusion one of his long cherished projects. Together with the Chairman of the Auckland District he went exhaustively into the possibilities of establishing a Wesleyan secondary school at Auckland. Information was obtained from overseas and a minute assessment made of the requirements of this type of institution. A committee of laymen likely to be interested in the scheme was formed to assist in working out the practical problems involved. The time seemed propitious. The committee agreed to go ahead. The 5½ acre property of the former Wesley College at Queen Street was acquired, which provided both the grounds and the building needed.

The removal of the Chairman of the Auckland District held up progress for a little time. However, in 1893 a committee with Morley and Bull as secretaries "determined that action should be taken.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Applications for the Head Mastership were invited from England and the colonies." Mr. Thomas Jackson, M.A., was appointed.

The opening took place on the 12th February, 1895, of the Prince Albert College, as the new school was named. There were 36 pupils, and the theological students were transferred to this college as a separate department. In February of the next year a girls' college with 38 pupils was opened in the same grounds, a new brick building having been erected. In addition to a good secondary education the school provided Christian training through Bible Classes and a Student Christian Union branch. There was also coaching in athletics, a Literary and Debating Society, and a cadet unit.

To take the story right to its end, in 1908 the school was closed, having existed for only 13 years.

Connexional Secretary, 1893-1902.

The 1892 Conference had agreed that a Connexional Secretary had become necessary. The 1893 Conference endorsed the recommendation of the committee on the General Secretary that such an officer be appointed forthwith.

The members of Conference were clear as to who that man should be. The voting was: W. J. Williams 4, Bull 7, Morley 46. This was the high point towards which Morley's career in New Zealand had been rising. Only 50 years of age, endowed with the gifts of the statesman and the businessman, the preacher and the pastor: tirelessly energetic, patiently methodical, Morley was pre-eminently the man among New Zealand Wesleyans fitted for this arduous position.

He had visited almost every chapel and preaching station twice, he had superintended the leading circuits, and he had held all the chief offices within the connexion. Probably no other active minister had such a comprehensive knowledge of the Connexion. "Morley," said the 'New Zealand Methodist' "was elected by a vote that was almost unanimous and altogether hearty." This "is one of the wisest things the New Zealand Conference has done in giving to us a man possessed of Mr. Morley's statesmanship and executive ability."

But immediately the result of the ballot was announced outraged voices were raised: the Three Kings College committee absolutely refused to release Morley from his position as Principal! The committee on the General Secretary conferred again. Their report stated that Conference should adhere to its resolve to appoint Morley; that he should reside in Christchurch; that he should continue to act as secretary for the Higher Education Committee, and that Mr. Bull act as his assistant in Auckland; and that his salary be £300 per annum. After Conference adopted this report the matter was settled.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

By mid April the Morleys were back in Christchurch. Mrs. Morley was weary after her strenuous work at the college and must have been glad when the business of shifting was completed. For the past ten years her husband had often been away from home, and these absences were not to grow fewer now. But Mrs. Morley made her home a place of cheerful hospitality. "She always kept open house and there were always guests. There was no house which the ministers felt freer to enter or in which they could enjoy more profitable and pleasant conversation." (*Obituary 'N.Z. Methodist'.*)

Over this period of great responsibility Morley developed something of a "tendency to autocracy." (*"A Century of Victorian Methodism", Dr. Benson.*) His tall, robust frame and his resonant voice dominated many a meeting. The younger men stood in awe of him, while at times his peers chafed under his firmly guiding hand. However, all recognised his outstanding ability and conceded the importance of the work he was doing for his church. But not everyone agreed that the Connexional Secretaryship should take a man from circuit work. Repeated attempts were made by increasingly smaller minorities to reduce the office to its former part-time basis. Successive Conferences rebuffed these moves.

Other tasks were also laid upon Morley's shoulders. For six out of the nine years he served as Connexional Secretary, he was Chairman of the Canterbury District.

1894 brought fresh tasks and honours. The General Conference of that year conferred upon him its highest office. Morley received 103 votes out of 140 votes cast to elect the new General President. Morley became the first (and only) member of the N.Z. Conference to receive this high honour. This Conference was a momentous one for Morley in other ways, too. It was agreed to set up a standing committee on Methodist reunion with Morley as chairman, and Annual Conferences were authorised to carry out union projects within the terms of a Plan of Union agreed to by the General Conference. This plan contained several modifications of church polity long agitated for by New Zealand representatives, among them being longer ministerial appointments and the admittance of laymen to stationing committees. Morley was the convener of a New Zealand Federal Council of Ministers which was to promote union with the other Methodist denominations.

The New Zealand Federal Council went to work with a will and approached the United Methodist Free Churches (*U.M.F. Churches emerged in 1851 from the amalgamation of several break-away movements from Wesleyanism over the alleged tyranny of the Conference.*) and the Bible Christian Church (*Founded in 1815 by O'Bryan after his expulsion from his Wesleyan society for unauthorised preaching outside his circuit boundaries.*) during 1894. They found these churches still keen to unite, and representatives from them joined the Federal Council to work out a practicable scheme of union. By a vote of 54 to 11 the Wesleyan Conference of 1895 expressed its willingness to proceed with union.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

On April 1st, 1896, the churches officially and legally became one. Special thanks were tendered to Morley for his ardent advocacy of the cause of union over many years, and for his sterling work as chairman of the Federal Council.

The new denomination was a community of 71,891 attendants upon public worship, including 11,791 full members and 23,450 Sunday School scholars, served by 119 ministers and 531 lay preachers. But Methodist reunion was not complete. "We admit and acknowledge our deep regret," said the Pastoral Address of the 1896 Conference, "that the union now consummated does not include our brethren of the Primitive Methodist Church (*Founded in 1812 by Bourne and Clowes, expelled by the Wesleyans for persisting in using camp meetings as a mode of evangelism.*)". This was a further goal to work towards. Union with the Primitive Methodists "seems exceedingly desirable," commented Morley shortly after the incomplete union was effected.

Of Morley at this period we have a visitor's picture from the pen of an English evangelist, Thomas Cook, who toured New Zealand in 1895. He met Morley at Christchurch. "Under his wise and energetic administration," Cook wrote, "the home missions of the colony have become a great force. Mr. Morley's career has been eminently distinguished. ... To his other qualities must be added that of intense spiritual fervour. His prayers during our mission were remarkable for unction and power; and at the Conference a few weeks later, several penitents came forward to seek salvation after his sermon. By his kindness of manner and brotherly sympathy with our work, Mr. Morley completely won our affection and esteem." (*Day of God's Right Hand*", Thos. Cook, 1896.)

During 1895 it was learned that Mrs. Morley suffered from a heart complaint that could strike her down at any time. Typically, she became even more cheerful, kindly and diligent than before. To her other activities she added a group of young women who worked to help foreign missions.

Morley was called upon to visit Queensland in 1897. As President of the General Conference he took part in the Methodist Jubilee of the colony, and was "accorded a warm welcome, and greatly honoured."

Several months later the General Conference met at Pitt Street, Auckland. Morley's Presidential address included several matters of interest to a later generation. The growth of the Church showed a varying pattern. The Australian and New Zealand churches together had grown since 1894 by 6,847 members, while 30,499 more people worshipped in their congregations. But in Fiji a declining population caused a decrease in "hearers". In New Britain and New Guinea numbers had increased and Tonga showed a 20 increase. "Whether something cannot be done in the way of arresting the decline of native Polynesian tribes, by teaching in the schools or elsewhere the elements of sanitation and the general laws of health," observed Morley, "is a question well worthy of our attention." And on Asia: "I submit to your earnest

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

consideration, whether (God does) not call us to commence a mission among the great Asian populations, which are so near to us."

Two interdenominational movements claimed his attention. Christian Endeavour Societies, he said "enlist our warmest sympathies." The World Student Christian Federation was "another and most hopeful outcome of the past few years. The most vigorous and attractive part of the Union is seen in the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. What mighty spiritual force is in all this we hardly yet know." It is worth noting that he regarded the drawing together of the Free Churches in England as a most hopeful sign of a closer co-operation in evangelism.

The Conference was faced by a thorny problem. The Supernumerary and Ministers' Widows' Fund "powerfully appeals to our sympathies." But, warned Morley, "its stability has within the past few years been seriously menaced" by loss of interest and investments during the economic depression. A day or two later the Conference accepted Morley's motion that the ministers' annual subscriptions be increased and the allowances reduced. Nonetheless, the Fund continued to present problems for several years to come.



Hannah Morley before 1898



Dr. Morley (c. 1899)

Early in July, 1898, William Morley became ill. At 3 a.m. on the 11th of July, Hannah Morley passed away peacefully in her sleep.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

As soon as the loss was known messages of condolence began to flow in from all over New Zealand, including official messages from all the main Protestant Churches and from the Roman Catholic Church. The family, said the 'New Zealand Methodist', has "all the consolation that arises from the life of sainted usefulness that has closed." The whole Methodist church mourned for a woman so "naturally amiable and affectionate." Only 52 years of age, she had for 31 years been Morley's beloved wife and devoted helper, "one of the best and truest helpmates a minister of Christ could have."

It was to the still grief-stricken Morley that the news came in December that the Emory and Henry Methodist College of Virginia had conferred upon him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity, in recognition of the permanent benefits his statesmanship and abilities had given to his church. Morley, a local American Methodist paper said, "had left a most delightful impression on his visit to the 1891 Oecumenical Conference at Washington." He joined only six other men similarly honoured by this College, one of the oldest and most famous Methodist Colleges in the Southern U.S.A.

Morley's labours over many years, his wife's death and his own illness left him weak and unwell for some time. A minute of the Committee on the Connexional Secretaryship to the 1899 Conference reads, "In consequence of domestic affliction and the illness of the Connexional Secretary, your Committee instructed Dr. Morley to abstain from travelling as much as possible."

But Morley could not be idle for a moment. He set about collating information on Methodism in New Zealand with a view to writing a history of its first 80 years. He was in an excellent position to do so. Since 1881 he had been appointed to collect and preserve historical information on the churches, and during his circuit work and connexional travels he "obtained a personal knowledge of almost every congregation." The Rev. H. Bull assisted him to compile this notable volume. It was published in August 1900, apparently as a private venture. It is a truly magnificent production. In this work Morley passed a patriarchal eye over his church, surveying the history and present condition of each circuit, and giving a thumbnail biography of each minister. His comments, though always generous, are frequently shrewd and to the point. Despite the sprinkling of in-accuracies inevitable in such a detailed account, the book has been a source book for every subsequent Methodist historian.

This volume proved to be a kind of parting gift to New Zealand, for within nine months his career was to be given an unexpected turn.

Removal, 1902.

Morley had been on a committee to examine the workings of the Supernumerary and Ministers' Widows' Fund since 1897. The 1901 General Conference, realising the magnitude of the problems involved, appointed Morley as treasurer of the Fund in

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

succession to the Rev. W. L. Blamires (father of the New Zealand trio), as from 16th April 1902.

Acceptance of this position involved a removal from New Zealand to Australia. Morley had no desire to move from the country in which he had seen his family grow up and in which he had spent 38 happy years. Now 60 years of age, he had been involved in heavy responsibilities for 20 years, and was subject to occasional bouts of severe ill-health. But the need of his church claimed his loyalty, and he accepted the Conference's call.

News of his impending removal stirred a furore in New Zealand over the future of the Connexional Secretaryship. Five of the six Synods forwarded to the 1902 Conference recommendations that the office be discontinued. After presenting his final annual report on his activities as Secretary, Morley moved that a successor be nominated and elected. To those who argued that a layman could do the job, Morley's answer was that the office was primarily a pastoral one. The Rev. T. G. Brooke, a future President, led the opposition to Morley's motion. He contended that a layman could do the clerical work, and went on to assert that the church would have benefitted more if Morley had remained in circuit work! In reply, the Rev. J. J. Lewis gave his opinion that the office must continue. "One of the most precious gifts of God to New Zealand Methodism was the gift of Dr. Morley," he said. No layman could be expected to throw up his job to take on so insecure a post. But the Rev. J. G. Chapman felt that the office had been created for the man — a man of unique gifts. Without intending to disparage the Conference, he told them, they would not be able to find another man equal to Morley. The debate continued warmly.

The Rev. H. Bull, whose name had been canvassed as Morley's most likely successor, tried to moderate the secretaryship's most vigorous critics by observing that he doubted if he personally could stand up to either the strain of the office or the severe criticism to which Morley had been subjected from time to time.

At length the issue was put to the vote, and Morley's motion was carried almost unanimously by a vote of 80 to 6. Henry Bull was duly elected Connexional Secretary, a post he filled worthily for nine years.

Now came the time for Conference to make its tributes to Morley. From the Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury and Otago Synods came resolutions regretting Morley's removal and expressing high appreciation of his long, faithful and valuable service, while the Canterbury Synod suggested that an effort be made to secure his transfer to New Zealand. On the motion of the Rev. J. J. Lewis, Conference expressed its deep sense of regret at his loss. Speaker after speaker rose to bear testimony to his fine work and to the assistance he had given his fellow ministers.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

Morley confessed to the Conference that he would have preferred to slip away from New Zealand quietly. Referring to his major work, he said, "If I have sometimes been pertinacious and the brethren have sometimes thought me unduly persistent in urging the claims of the Loan Fund, the fact that I have put my shoulder to the wheel may be pleaded in extenuation." The Conference assured him that that it was ready to receive him back into its ranks whenever he might see his way clear to return.

On March the 7th a farewell "conversazione" was held. At this function the Rev. C. H. Garland, an ex-President, made the pertinent point that he believed that Morley had taught the New Zealand Church to walk alone, and that he had given the New Zealand connexion a high tone. At 9 a.m. Richard John Seddon, the Prime Minister, arrived for a brief appearance and was accorded a tumultuous welcome. Seddon referred to Morley as "energetic, whole-souled, broad-minded, liberal", and spoke of his going as a loss to the whole colony. It would have been interesting to discover Morley's opinion of this wily politician!

When Morley rose to thank the speakers he was received with enthusiastic cheering, bespeaking the affection with which the ordinary church folk regarded their pastor — at large. His parting speech was brief, for he felt keenly the impending departure from the scene of his 38 years of unsparing labour for Christ in this country.

Within a month Morley was on his way to Victoria, which was to be his home for the next 24 years.

CHAPTER SIX

The Australian Ministry

Victoria, 1902-26.

To come to a new country at the age of 60, recently bereaved and intermittently in indifferent health, and to face a tremendously difficult job of work may have daunted many a man. Not so Morley. 1902 inaugurated twenty years of energetic service, leading to retirement at the grand old age of 80. In this period Morley became a veritable Father of the Australian Church, loved by all and venerated for his enormous fund of knowledge about the church and for his practical wisdom.

The Supernumerary Fund engaged his immediate attention. Here is the testimony of Keith Ditterich, present Managing Treasurer of the Fund: "The Fund had been through very difficult times after the land boom and bust of the 1890s, and a special commission was appointed by the General Conference to enquire into the whole nature and investments of the Fund. Dr. Morley was Chairman of the Committee which met at Wesley Church (Melbourne) in 1902, and very quickly grasped the nature of the problems before the committee. His subsequent work as Managing Treasurer gradually put the Fund back on its feet. He was so firmly established in Melbourne by this time that there was, of course, no question of his returning to the New Zealand Conference when it separated from Australian Methodism after the Annual Conference of 1912."

No, there was no question of returning permanently. For by this time home life had been re-established when Morley married Nursing Sister Grace Henderson Webster in March, 1903. Grace Morley had been born in 1861 into a Nelson Presbyterian family. She had trained at the Christchurch Hospital, rising to Senior Sister, and had been one of the leaders of the contingent of nurses who accompanied the New Zealand troops to the Boer War. She contributed a number of articles to the 'Christchurch Press' during her stay in South Africa, where she remained after the Boer War as a member of the South African Constabulary. It was from this country that she came in 1903 to marry Morley. The child of that marriage, Mr. Ian Morley, still resides in Australia.

A monument to Morley's work for education had been raised in New Zealand with the opening of the Prince Albert College in 1895. Probably no one deplored its failure more than Morley. But before this unhappy event had taken place, he had found a congenial cause close at hand. In 1888 the Victoria and Tasmanian Wesleyan Conference had been able to take advantage of the grant of land given to each of the four major denominations some 20 years previously for the provision of University residential colleges. The college opened by the Wesleyans was named Queen's College, and the Rev. E. H. Sugden was the first Principal. Soon after Morley's arrival in Victoria the need for further accommodation was felt, but the college was already

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

several thousand pounds in debt. Morley was made President of Queen's College and he initiated a scheme to provide the extension and to reduce the debt. In 1905 sixteen new rooms were added without any increase in indebtedness. Morley secured the services of Mr. W. Haltam whose energetic canvassing enabled the College eventually to liquidate the debt.



The Rev. Wm. Morley D.D. (c 1916)

Wesley College, one of Melbourne's best known public schools, and the type of educational institution into which Morley would have liked to see Prince Albert College develop, likewise took his interest. He was a member of the College Council for a number of years.

Foreign Missions also received Morley's support. He was a member of the Board of Missions and as such visited Fiji and Tonga.

Meantime, he had been watching events in New Zealand with great interest. The 1910 New Zealand Conference voted 99 to 31 to seek separation from Australia, with a view to consummating the long-awaited union with the Primitive Methodists. At the 1910 General Conference two ageing survivors of the 1881 Conference sat together — the Revs. W. J. Williams, now 62, and W. Morley, now 67. What memories must have stirred within Morley as he listened to the announcement of the vote on separation — 106 for separation with only 13 against! As the time for the union to take place approached Morley's advice and help were freely given.

On February 16, 1913, in Taranaki Street church, Wellington, Morley, as an honoured guest, participated in the celebration of the creation of this new, united Methodist Church. Once again, over the days of rejoicing, he spoke to New Zealand audiences,

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

and once again the New Zealand Church expressed its gratitude to him for his strenuous services over so many years on its behalf.

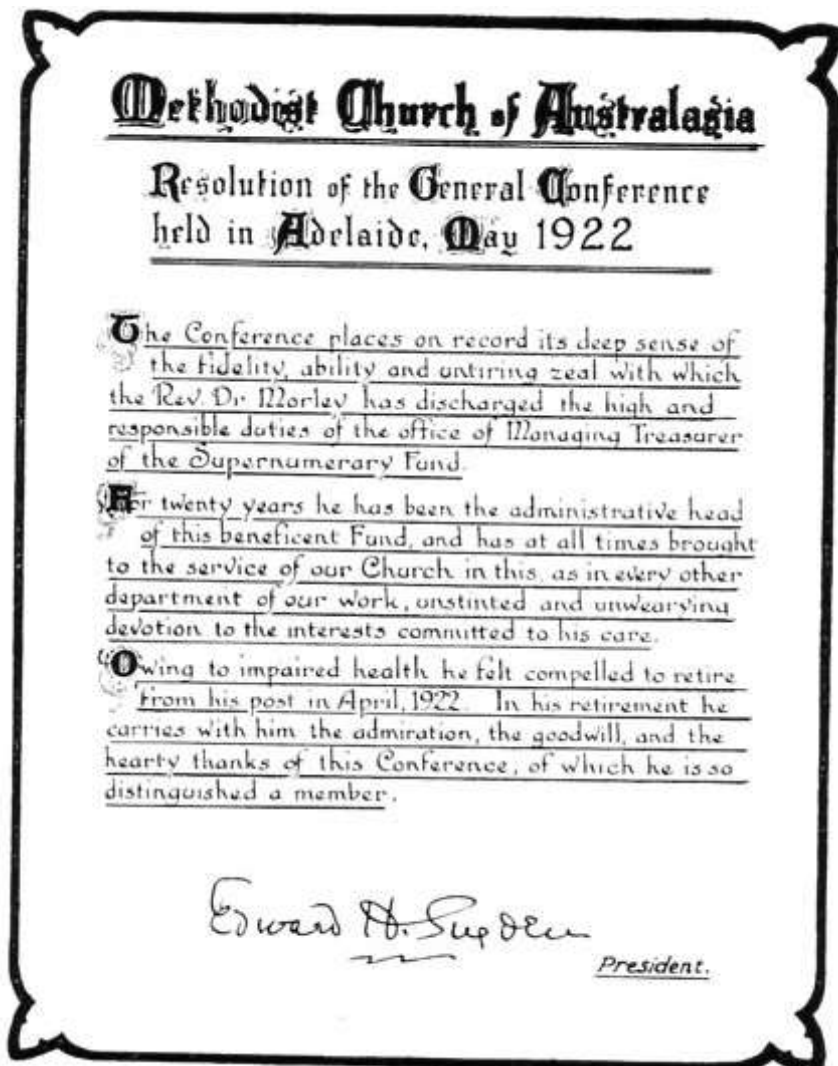
Several years later another, more distant, more embracing union of churches was followed by Morley with great interest — the formation of the United Church of Canada, which emerged in 1925.

In 1922, tired and ill, Morley at last sought the rest his years demanded. For 58 years he had given of himself unsparingly for the extension of his Lord's Kingdom, a term of service rarely equalled in Australasian Methodism. Of his colleagues of that first New Zealand Conference in 1874, all but six had passed away, including Henry Bull, his successor as Connexional Secretary. All these years he had maintained his attendance at Church Conferences, and had continued to preach about once a fortnight.

The Australian Conference of May, 1922, presented him with an illuminated copy of its resolution expressing "its deep sense of the fidelity and untiring zeal with which the Rev. Dr. Morley has discharged the high and responsible duties of the office of Managing Treasurer of the Supernumerary Fund. In his retirement he carries with him the admiration, the goodwill, and the hearty thanks of this Conference, of which he is so distinguished a member."

Gracious words for the gracious old man who was now retired in Kew, Victoria, "A thorough Methodist," wrote Dr. Irving Benson (*Now Sir Clarence Irving Benson.*) of Morley, "steeped in the traditions of his Church, he exulted in its history and its visions. Naturally conservative, he was always adding to his capacity to serve. An early tendency to autocracy mellowed as he grew in age and grace. With a firm grasp of fundamental principles, a tireless attention to details, an unwearied patience in acquiring information, and an intense sympathy with the mission of Methodism, he represented all that is best in the Church he served so long."

His retirement was brief. During 1926, in his 84th year, he became seriously ill. On Monday, May 24, at his residence, in Mountain Grove, Kew, William Morley fell asleep in Christ. His mortal remains were buried in the town of his retirement.



Illuminated Address presented to William Morley

Last tributes.

The mourning church expressed its gratitude to God for William Morley's life and work in these tributes:

**OBITUARY NOTICE, NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE MINUTES, 1927:
REV. WILLIAM MORLEY, D.D.**

Dr. Morley entered the ministry of our New Zealand Church in 1863, and for thirty-nine years served our Methodism in many capacities. During this time he was elected President of the General Conference of Australasia and was twice President of the New Zealand Conference. He laboured in our chief Circuits for twenty-nine years, was Principal of the Theological College in 1892, and on the establishment of the office in 1893 was appointed as the first Connexional Secretary, holding that onerous position until his removal to Australia. He was a statesman in the Kingdom of God, a strong and able preacher, a conspicuously able man of affairs, and a spiritual force in all the work of the Church. In 1902 he was appointed by the General Conference of Australasia as Managing Treasurer of the Australasian Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund, a responsible position in which his abilities as an administrator, financier, and adviser found ample scope during the last years of his ministry. He retired from the position in 1922 and resided in Melbourne as a Supernumerary till his death in May, 1926.

**OBITUARY NOTICE, MINUTES OF THE VICTORIA AND TASMANIA
CONFERENCE, 1927.**

William Morley was born at Orston, Notts, England, on August 14th, 1842. He was called early to serve God, and when he had just passed his twentieth birthday he was sent by the British Wesleyan Conference to New Zealand, where he began his ministry in 1863. He showed such aptitude for administrative work that he was called, after years in the regular work of the ministry, to highly responsible offices. He was twice President of the New Zealand Conference, and in 1894 he was elected President of the General Conference of Australasia. He was transferred to Victoria in the year 1902 to take up the position of Managing Treasurer of the Supernumerary Fund, which office he occupied for twenty years. The interests of the widows and aged Supernumeraries was ever a matter of deep concern to him. He was a strong man — strong in his convictions and in his view-points. He was at the same time a singularly fair man. Like most strong men, he had a very tender heart, and was a true friend to many. His preaching gifts made him acceptable in all our churches. The interests of Foreign Missions and our Educational Institutions (especially Queen's College) were very dear to him. In their interests he laboured with much enthusiasm. His knowledge of Methodism was encyclopedic. He kept himself in touch with all the policies of our Church as affecting the wide world, and he had faith in a great future for Methodism. He was honoured in all churches, interested in every detail of our church work, ever thinking and planning for the Methodism he loved and served. For some time he had been in indifferent health, and he became a Supernumerary

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

in 1922. He kept to the end the faith with which he had comforted others, and which now became his consolation. On May 24th, 1926, in his 84th year, he passed to his reward, leaving behind him a fine record of devotion to God and loyalty to high ideals.

In Durham Street Church, Christchurch, on June 5th, 1935, the Rev. Clarence Eaton unveiled a memorial tablet which was erected by William Morley's family, and which was placed beside another plaque in memory of his first wife, Hannah.

In 1944, Grace Henderson Morley followed her husband to eternal rest.



Grace Henderson Morley



Ian Morley

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

A. The Growth of Methodist Adherency among the N.Z. Population.

(Europeans only.)

Year	Anglican	Presbyterian	Catholic	Methodist
1864	42.47%	24.3%	12.49%	8.04%(Wesleyan 7.26%)
1878	43.5	22.5	14.2	9.18
1881	41.62	23.15	14.12	9.55
1891	40.51	22.62	13.14	10.14 (Wesleyan 8.4)
1901	40.84	22.87	14.23	10.86(Wesleyan 9.54)

(European and Maori)

1956	35.9	22.2	14.3	7.4
1961	34.6	22.3	15.1	7.2

B. The Growth of the Wesleyan Church.

Year	Churches	Ministers & Probationers	Church Members	Attendants on Public Worship
1881	163	75	3,880	37,734
1891	211	77	7,910	52,094
1896	249	97	10,168	63,280

United Methodist Free Churches and Bible Christian Church:

	38	22	1,623	8,611
	287	119	11,791	71,891
1901	288	96	12,494	67,781

The Methodist Church:

1961	451	271	31,674	140,500
1962	451	280	32,073	144,323

SOURCES:

1. Books by William Morley:

The doctrinal and ecclesiastical position of the Methodist Church. A lecture delivered at the N.Z. Wesleyan Conference, 1887.

Australasian Methodism: its needs, position and outlook. An address delivered to the Eighth General Conference, 1897.

The History of Methodism in New Zealand, 1900.

2. Church Newspapers:

The Christian Observer, The N.Z. Wesleyan, The N.Z. Methodist, The Advocate, Outlook.

Minutes of the N.Z. Wesleyan Conferences 1864-1902, and of the Australasian Conferences, 1875-1901.

William Morley by Bernard Gadd B.A.

3. Official Records:

Manukau Circuit Minutes Book 1864-65, and Baptismal Register.

4. Contemporary Publications:

Cook, T.: Day of God's Right Hand, 1896.

Pinfold: Index of circuit appointments, 1896.

5. Personal Recollections:

Dr. H. Ranston, Rev. H. L. Blamires, Rev. J. Haslam.

6. Family Data:

Mr. Tan Morley, Mr. H. M. Denton, Mrs. S. W. Martin, Miss N. Buttle.

7. Church Histories:

Benson, Dr. C. I.: A Century of Victorian Methodism.

Luxton, C. T. J.: John Bell Richardson, Workers Together with Him.

Scholefield, G. H.: Dictionary of N.Z. Biography. (Article by Rev M A. Rugby-Pratt)

Williams, W. J.: Centenary Sketches of N.Z. Methodism, 1922.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

In addition to those mentioned above I tender thanks to the Revs. C. T. J. Luxton, H. L. Fiebig, L. R. M. Gilmore, H. W. Payne, Keith Ditterich, Robert Jackson; to the Turnbull Library, the Auckland Memorial Museum Library, Trinity College Library, the Auckland Public Library and the Pukekohe Public Library; and to the Camp Morley Trust for making this biography possible.