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WILLIAM JELLIE

UNITARIAN, SCHOLAR and EDUCATOR

**A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy**

in

History

at

Massey University

Albany, New Zealand

By

Wayne Arthur Pickard Facer

2012

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
THE REVEREND WILLIAM

JELLIE

1865 to 1963

WHICH HE A SCHOLAR
AND EARLY TUTOR
IN ADULT EDUCATION
BEQUEATHED TO
THE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This thesis considers the life of William Jellie (1865-1963) and in so doing uses it as a prism with which to gain a view of history. It covers a period of ninety-eight years divided between the United Kingdom and New Zealand. His studies for the Unitarian ministry at Manchester College, removed from London to Oxford in his final year, gave him a unique education in late Victorian Britain. A course in sociology, economics and social problems which helped shape his world view. Taught by Philip Wicksteed, a Unitarian minister, economist and Dante scholar, Wicksteed would pass his passion for Dante on to William Jellie and become his friend and mentor for life.

Wicksteed's course dealt with inequality and human suffering and in doing so made it plain that a Unitarian minister was expected to address these issues and not ignore them. Consistent with his views as an ethical socialist, Philip Wicksteed supported a former class mate of William Jellie's, John Trevor, to found the Labour Church movement in Britain in response to the prevailing conditions. William Jellie worked in his first parish for six years in one of the poorest parts of London, experiencing firsthand the suffering and depredation of an unreformed capitalism. The relationship between a theology on the left of the spectrum and the accommodation of the political left becomes an important consideration in this thesis.

Arriving in New Zealand in 1900 to organise the Unitarian cause, William Jellie enjoyed friendships with Sir Robert Stout and Sir George Fowlds. He brought a cultured and intellectual view of liberal religion to colonial life. He founded a church in Auckland and was instrumental in expanding the cause to other centres. Having married in New Zealand, he returned to England just before the outbreak of war in 1914, remaining for the next seven years. There his feelings for his country of birth, Ireland, led him to publicly support the call for independence, a call not accepted by many of his congregants.

The return of peace saw the return of the Jellie family to New Zealand. Now his ministerial work was much more subscribed and William Jellie turned to a new occupation, tutor for the Worker's

Educational Association in Auckland. This in many ways proved to be his forte, he was extremely popular as a teacher and while he concentrated on English literature and Dante courses, he also included political theory. Throughout his life in New Zealand William Jellie undertook a strong defence of secular education and in so doing was aligned with the rationalist movement on this issue.

CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	viii
Introduction	1
PART ONE: The Origins of William Jellie’s Views on Society	14
<i>Chapter 1. Philip Henry Wicksteed: The Making of a Teacher</i>	15
<i>Chapter 2. Sociology, Economics and Social Problems</i>	25
<i>Chapter 3. Entering the Unitarian Ministry in Late 19th Century England</i>	43
<i>Chapter 4. Religious Socialism and Social Change</i>	50
PART TWO: The Twentieth Century Ministries: Prelude to Public Education	68
<i>Chapter 5. In New Zealand: Auckland 1900-1910</i>	69
<i>Chapter 6. In New Zealand: Wellington 1910-1913</i>	101
<i>Chapter 7. Return to England: Southport 1914-1921</i>	120
PART THREE: Exchanging the Pulpit for the Lectern	133
<i>Chapter 8. In New Zealand: Timaru 1923-1925</i>	134
<i>Chapter 9. In Auckland: The Poor Person’s University 1926-1939</i>	144
<i>Chapter 10. The Epilogue and Conclusion</i>	165
Bibliography	179
Appendices	
Appendix 1: A Synopsis of Wicksteed’s Lectures	
Appendix 2: T.H. White Water Colours of the Auckland Unitarian Church and Admiral’s House	
Appendix 3: Office Holders of the first and second Unitarian Congregations and the Auckland Unitarian Church	
Appendix 4: Forward Movement Literary Society Lectures	
Appendix 5: William Jellie’s Public Education Courses	

Appendix 6: Addresses by Rev. James Chapple at Rationalist Association

Sunday Evening Public Meetings

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I have two acknowledgements to make to the University of Auckland: the donation plate in the front of this thesis has been reproduced with permission of Special Collections, University of Auckland Library. Permission was also granted to reproduce the following images:

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White, T.H., Proposed Unitarian Church, Auckland, N.Z. Thomas H. White Collection, WH2, Architecture Archive, University of Auckland Library.

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Abbreviations

Alexander Turnbull Library	ATL
Auckland City Libraries	ACL
Auckland Unitarian Church	AUC
Auckland Unitarian Church Minute Book	AUCMB
Auckland War Memorial Museum and Institute Library	AWMMIL
British & Foreign Unitarian Association	B&FUA
Dictionary of New Zealand Biography	<i>DNZB</i>
Dunedin Public Library	DPL
Harris Manchester College	HMC
Independent Labour Party	ILP
Member of the House of Representatives	MHR
New Zealand Electronic Text Centre	NZETC
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography	<i>ODNB</i>
Special Collections	SC
Student Christian Movement	SCM
Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society	<i>TUHS</i>
University of Auckland	UoA
Workers Educational Association	WEA
Young Men's Christian Association	YMCA