

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford

**EUGENICS AND CHRISTIAN MISSION.
CHARITABLE WELFARE IN
TRANSITION: LONDON AND NEW
YORK, *c.* 1865–1940.**

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BALLIOL COLLEGE
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis it is argued that a full and complete understanding of the eugenics movement may only be gained by examining those who were implicated in its criticisms.

Using the example of three Christian missionary organisations that worked amongst largely poor and immigrant communities in London and New York, it is demonstrated that eugenics was a pervasive ideology outside its 'official' societies.

Moving away from an understanding grounded in ideas of conflict and concession, it will be demonstrated that those whose work was challenged by eugenic claims were able to interpret the ideology according to their existing reformist agendas. Hereditarian ideas did not sound the death knell for reformers, and these organisations demonstrated both the willingness and capacity to shape eugenic ideas within and outside their organisations.

From these examples it is argued there is a need to move beyond definitions of eugenics that limit the movement to a small subset of its methods. Far from being a peripheral aspect to the history of eugenics, it will be seen that these missionary agencies occupied a position at the centre of eugenicists' concerns. As prominent providers of charity, a work charged by eugenicists with unnaturally hindering the natural laws of selection, religious communities were, in part, one of the reasons that eugenics was deemed necessary in the first place.

This picture is confirmed by an examination of two eugenics societies, one on each side of the Atlantic, where the impact of religious sentiment and ideas exerted a dramatic effect upon policies and propaganda work.

There was no one-way flow of ideology from eugenicists towards reformers, but rather a two-way dialogue which created a marked impression on both groups.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis it is argued that a full and complete understanding of the eugenics movement may only be gained by examining those who were implicated in its criticisms. At the heart of eugenicists' fears was the belief that the laws of natural selection were being artificially impeded as advances in healthcare and charitable provision enabled the weak to survive and transmit their defects to posterity. As prominent providers of philanthropy, Christian organisations were thus imputed to hold a significant responsibility for the dysgenic state of society.

Previous studies have recognised the importance of religious groups within the history of eugenics; however, research has frequently created the impression that this was a relationship based upon conflict or concession. Most often religious spokespeople have been identified as examples of those who opposed eugenic ideas, with a small counter current of scholarship identifying individual theologians or ministers of religion who happily embraced the ideology. With samples of religious leaders present on both sides of the eugenic debate, it has previously been difficult to reconstruct a clear picture of the general religious response. It has often been implied that eugenicists represented a secularising force that forced religious believers to either dilute their previous opinions, or wholly oppose the theory of eugenics.

In contrast, this thesis opens with an examination of the influence that religious ideology exerted upon the eugenics movement. To understand this aspect of the relationship between religious communities and eugenics, two societies have been selected that were solely concerned with propagating eugenic ideas amongst the public: the Eugenics Education Society in London and the American Eugenics Society. Through looking at the unpublished minutes of these organisations, their

correspondence, and their published propaganda materials it is demonstrated that religious ideas came to occupy a prominent position within each of these societies. Rather than denying the importance of religious faith, in both cases eugenicists sought to actively garb the movement in religious iconography and language, and there were concerted efforts to avoid conflict with religious believers.

These efforts were so great that in the case of the Eugenics Education Society there were fears that the movement was losing its true identity by being too concerned with the sensibilities of those outside the organisation. In the case of the American Eugenics Society there was an even more strenuous effort to ensure the eugenics movement existed in harmony with religious believers. After regularly issuing what I have termed 'negative definitions' of eugenics, where practices were more often denounced than suggested, they considered abandoning the term 'eugenics' altogether. Given the previous high profile attempts to 'educate' religious communities in what 'genuine' eugenics policy involved, this indicates the considerable force that the opinions of religious believers exerted upon the policies adopted by eugenics organisations.

It is argued that concerns over the external appearance of eugenics, and its palatability, played a large role in what has previously been described as the move from 'mainline' eugenics towards 'reform' eugenics. Where 'mainline' eugenics has been represented as embodying racist and classist ideas, it has been claimed these prejudices were abandoned by 'reform' theorists who placed a greater emphasis on environmental conditions; however a closer examination suggests these ideas were simply disguised. A focus was placed upon ensuring the principle of eugenic improvement was accepted before any specific controversial measures were proposed, and if possible it was hoped the most offensive practices would be carried out by professionals (such as doctors) at a distance from the eugenics organisations themselves. It will be argued that a resolution to this debate may be found in recognising that there was a change in eugenics during this period, but that this change was largely cosmetic.

In chapters three, four, and five, the London City Mission, the New York City Mission, and The Salvation Army, are each examined in turn for their response to the

ideas associated with eugenics. These three Christian missionary organisations offer perfect examples of religious groups whose work, amongst individuals who were believed by eugenicists to be inherently inferior, was at risk of criticism. In the best case their work was considered futile and would result in no success; at worst they were actively aiding the survival of individuals who would transmit flawed characteristics to posterity.

A broad time period has been selected, from *c.* 1865-1930, in order to scrutinise the period from which eugenics was first conceptualised in its modern incarnation (with Francis Galton's 1865 paper 'Hereditary Talent and Character' in *Macmillan's Magazine*) through to the period in which it became institutionalised in the form of the public education societies discussed in the second chapter.

In the case of each of these societies, there is clear evidence of an awareness of contemporary ideas associated with eugenics. The published promotional material of all these organisations reveals a common trend in which these ideas were discussed, interpreted, and employed according to the particular purposes of the message that these organisations had originally sought to present. Only in the case of the London City Mission was there evidence suggestive of a shift in active policy, as fears around the time of the Second Boer War were closely followed by a relaxation of the organisation's previously strict policy regarding temporal relief.

In both the New York City Mission and The Salvation Army there is evidence of direct interaction with eugenically inspired organisations. The New York City Mission worked alongside pioneers in the field of eugenics, and participated in the organisation of a 'Child Welfare Committee' that attracted the attention of eugenicists as far afield as the London based Eugenics Education Society. In addition, the New York City Mission enjoyed dedicated support from the Osborn and Dodge family, previously famous for their high profile in the American eugenics movement.

The Salvation Army, which had previously entertained degenerationist ideas independent of any tangible external association, was later called upon to provide expert testimony in the arena of social purity. This was resultant of its work in the reform of prostitutes and in calls for legislative impediments to vice. In these contexts

The Salvation Army came into close association with individuals who were actively involved in the eugenics movement. In Britain this resulted in William Booth, the founder and autocratic-style leader of The Salvation Army, publicly associating the organisation with a call for eugenic reform owing to fears of racial deterioration.

In examining these organisations alongside each other it is clear that at no stage did 'official' eugenics societies exercise the editorial control over the theory of eugenics that they desired. There is evidence that the missionaries and those they worked with were both aware of theories associated with eugenics, but the conclusions they reached were determined independent of the authority of official eugenics organisations. In the case of the eugenics organisations policy was repeatedly determined with reference to those external to the movement, yet perhaps ironically the widespread attention to eugenic issues that they desired was in many cases already present.

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List of Abbreviations

Societies and People

AES	American Eugenics Society
COS	Charity Organisation Society
EES	Eugenics Education Society
HFO	Henry Fairfield Osborn
LCC	London County Council
LCM	London City Mission
NCPM	National Council of Public Morals
NVA	National Vigilance Association
NYCM	New York City Mission Society

Printed Sources

LCMM	<i>The London City Mission Magazine</i>
NYCMM	<i>The New York City Mission Monthly</i>

Archives

AESP	American Philosophical Society Library, AES papers
SAA	The Salvation Army National Archives and Research Center

Chapter One: Introduction

In this thesis a fresh perspective is offered upon the context in which the eugenics movement developed in Britain and the United States of America. Contemporary public awareness of the eugenics movement is such that political debates, in both Britain and the United States, remain haunted by the spectre of a eugenic past¹ and fears of a eugenic future.² Recent historiography has done a great deal to express the scale and international diversity of eugenics,³ and there have been notable attempts to define the movement through the identification and collation of information on important eugenic texts, ideas and influential individuals.⁴ However, the principle undergirding this thesis is the recognition that a vital component of the history of eugenics must be an examination of the response that came from those who were implicated in the criticisms of eugenicists. Eugenics sought the reorganisation of society along evolutionary lines and centred around two major premises. Firstly, it was believed that human advancement could be achieved through means of intervention in the course of evolution. Secondly, and more importantly for those it

¹ In June 2011 North Carolina made international news as it considered compensation for victims of the state's eugenic sterilisation campaign. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13700490> accessed 9 Sep. 2011.

² In May 2008 the UK government's discussion of 'Amendments to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill' resulted in several MPs raising fears of eugenics, whilst others dismissed this as 'extremist' language not helpful for the debate. For examples, see the arguments of William Cash, Conservative MP for Stone, and David Drew, Labour MP for Stroud, 19 May 2008. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080519/debtext/80519-0007.htm> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080519/debtext/80519-0008.htm> accessed 9 Sep. 2011.

³ An important example of this work is the collection edited by Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, which included a transnational analysis of themes shared by eugenicists, followed by a study of eugenics in separate regions around the world. Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2010).

⁴ Pauline Mazumdar has edited an excellent six-volume collection of primary source texts related to the eugenics movement. Mazumdar (ed.) *The Eugenics Movement: An International Perspective* (6 vols., Routledge, Abingdon, 2007). See also Ruth Clifford Engs, *The Eugenics Movement: An Encyclopedia* (Greenwood Press, Westport, 2005).

criticised, eugenics was believed to be an essential counterbalance to the ill effects of charitable meddling with evolution's law of natural selection.

It is in this second issue of charity that previous studies have missed an important ideological and practical crossroad, as eugenics encroached upon an issue previously dominated by religious groups. Hugh McLeod has claimed 'most' charitable work between 1850 and 1914 had some form of religious basis, and Kathleen Heasman estimated 75 percent of voluntary charitable organisations in the second half of the nineteenth century were evangelical in 'character or control'.⁵ Despite the prominence of religious organisations and individuals in charitable work, and unlike the historiography of German eugenics,⁶ there has been no study of the response of British or American religious charitable organisations to eugenic ideology.

Previous scholarship has not overlooked the impact of religious faith upon the eugenics movement, to the extent that it is rare to find studies that make no mention of the subject; however, the nature of these investigations has varied considerably. Some have used 'religion' as an explanatory tool for understanding the varied levels at which eugenics was accepted in different regions;⁷ others have made direct reference to the religious beliefs of high profile individuals within the eugenics

⁵ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England 1850–1914* (Macmillan Press, Houndmills, 1994), p.22; and Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An appraisal of their social work in the Victorian era* (Geoffrey Bles, London, 1962), pp.14–19. See also Susan Mumm, 'Women and Philanthropic Cultures', in Sue Morgan and Jacqueline deVries (eds.), *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800–1949* (Routledge, Abingdon, 2010), p.54.

⁶ Michael Burleigh, 'Between Enthusiasm, Compliance and Protest: The Churches, Eugenics and the Nazi "Euthanasia" Programme', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Nov. 1994), pp.253-63.

⁷ Edward J. Larson, "'In the Finest Most Womanly Way": Women in the Southern Eugenics Movement', *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2 (1995), p.137.

movement;⁸ or more recently, in-depth analyses have been made of ‘religious leaders’ and their interaction with the eugenics movement.⁹ Religion has, therefore, obtained a high profile within the historiography of eugenics and yet understanding in this area is currently limited to that of the beliefs of a small number of individuals. This raises problems in understanding the extent to which such beliefs were translated into practical action. Randall Hansen and Desmond King made clear that the presence of similar forms of eugenic thought did not always result in expressions of similar eugenic policy.¹⁰ Yet in the case of religion, the opinions of leaders have been researched without a corresponding investigation into the extent to which these were shared or acted upon by members of the community at large. It is easy to imagine a scenario wherein the opinions given in a sermon or theological treatise would be ignored, misunderstood, or disobeyed by the lay community.¹¹ The failure to gauge lay religious responses to eugenics is particularly noticeable given that studies of eugenics within other sectors, most notably those of politics¹² and genetic science,¹³ have recognised the need to go beyond analysing the most prominent figures if there is to be an adequate understanding of broader trends.

⁸ Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1995), p.5, p.11, pp.21–22, and pp.49–51.

⁹ Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).

¹⁰ Randall Hansen and Desmond King, ‘Eugenic Ideas, Political Interests, And Policy Variance: Immigration and Sterilization Policy in Britain and the U.S.’ *World Politics*, 53 (Jan. 2001), 237–63.

¹¹ This is suggested in the records of the American Eugenics Society’s ‘sermon contests’; of forty-one sermons whose authors have been identified only one, that of ‘H. H. Hester’, presented a sustained criticism of eugenics. However, a sermon by Duncan P. Cameron mentioned he had been challenged by a parishioner to ‘let these new ideas go...preach the Gospel’. Cameron responded in his sermon by arguing that if eugenicists were right that three-fourths of the world’s suffering was caused by ‘the wrong people getting married’, then ‘I feel I have never been closer to preaching the fundamental gospel’. We have a record of the minister’s view, but there is no way of knowing if his congregant was satisfied by this argument. Sermons of Duncan P. Cameron and H. H. Hester, 575.06 Am3 American Eugenics Society Papers, American Philosophical Society Library Philadelphia.

¹² Edward J. Larson, “‘In the Finest Most Womanly Way:’”, p.119.

¹³ Daniel J. Kevles, ‘Genetics in the United States and Britain, 1890–1930: A Review with Speculations’, *Isis*, Vol. 71, No. 258 (1980), p.441.

Lyndsay Farrall's otherwise excellent study¹⁴ cautioned against 'representing the thoughts of a whole school by those of one leader'¹⁵ when speaking of eugenicists, yet claimed 'eugenics remained anathema' to '*many* church members [emphasis mine]' with the only substantiating evidence a footnote citing 'C. K. Chesterton [sic]' and his book *Eugenics and Other Evils*.¹⁶ As if to illustrate the confusion which such a methodology is able to produce, G. R. Searle proclaimed exactly the opposite view, stating 'eugenics was perfectly compatible with the Christian faith' evinced by the 'participation of a number of ministers of religion'.¹⁷ In reality this 'number' later transpired to be three.

(A)historical Moral Censure of Eugenics

In this thesis it will be argued that the failure adequately to understand religious interaction with eugenics is part of a wider failure to appreciate the breadth of eugenic thought in this period. Even with historical issues that might be anticipated to have very straightforward definitions, from euthanasia and sterilisation to heart disease, previous studies have explained the difficulties in reconstructing historically sensitive definitions.¹⁸ In the case of eugenics it seems that part of the

¹⁴ Farrall's work was groundbreaking as it was the first attempt at a prosopographical analysis of the English Eugenics movement.

¹⁵ Lyndsay Andrew Farrall, *The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement, 1865–1925* (Garland Publishing, New York, 1985), p.7.

¹⁶ Farrall, *The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement*, p.53.

¹⁷ G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain, 1900–1914* (Noordhoff International Publishing, Leyden, 1976), p.13.

¹⁸ N. D. A. Kemp noted different people adopted strikingly different interpretations of euthanasia, but restricted his study to 'euthanasia' as it would be understood today in terms of 'physician assisted suicide', Kemp, *'Merciful Release': The History of the British Euthanasia Movement* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002), pp.1–8. Mark A. Largent's history of coerced sterilisation opened with caution that 'coercion' could take on a number of different guises, and said this meant his own figure of 63,000 sterilisations in the United States of America was probably 'not even close' to the genuine number performed; Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2008), pp.6–8. Joel D. Howell's study of 'soldier's heart' identified several different names given to various heart conditions, and expressed his doubt that it is possible to reconstruct what this condition constituted.

problem in identifying the full range of eugenics has resulted from a desire to define eugenics as morally abhorrent. Whilst there has been natural interest in the most extreme eugenic measures that involved coercion, this has resulted in a tendency to reduce eugenics to only these features, and the definition of eugenics is reduced to an ahistorical fraction of its proper whole. This trend may be traced back far into the history of eugenics, and connected with a confusion of the *means* of eugenic action with its *goals*. In 1945 C. P. Blacker, then secretary of the British Eugenics Society, sought to highlight this distinction by claiming he could envisage a time in the future when technological advances would enable the Catholic Church to cease its opposition to eugenics.¹⁹ Blacker argued Catholics presented no ‘serious opposition’ to the ‘*theory* of eugenics which holds that future generations will be affected qualitatively by the type of people who have children in this’ but rather suggested it was the ‘*means* [specifically that of contraception] which eugenicists have proposed which excite opposition’.²⁰

Sadly this early attempt to extricate eugenics from association merely with specific actions, as opposed to its wider goals, appears in many cases to have failed. In 1976 Donald MacKenzie felt the need to correct a study he had carried out by adding a postscript to accept that it was ‘in a sense mistaken’ to ‘see the decline in support of the more extreme negative eugenic proposals in the inter-war period as the decline

He instead used it as a ‘window’ through which to examine ‘changing disease definitions’ and medical responses to the perceived problem; Howell, “‘Soldier’s Heart’: The Redefinition of Heart Disease and Speciality Formation in Early Twentieth-Century Britain”, in Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison, and Steve Sturdy (eds.) *War, Medicine and Modernity* (Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1998), p.85.

¹⁹ C. P. Blacker, *Eugenics In Prospect and Retrospect* (Hamish Hamilton Medical Books, 1945), p.30.

²⁰ Blacker, *Eugenics In Prospect and Retrospect*, p.29.

of all aspects of eugenics'.²¹ Further confusion surrounded Mark Haller's claim that two prominent American eugenicists, Popenoe and Johnson, ceased interest in eugenics when they established an 'Institute of Family Relations' in Los Angeles in 1930.²² It is puzzling that Haller failed to see this organisation, which conducted premarital examinations and counselling, as an extension of their earlier eugenic preoccupations; certainly this was at odds with Popenoe and Johnson's own understanding of their work.²³ Even if Haller's underlying definitional assumptions were accepted, his claim that there was a decline of eugenics in the 1930s paralleled by the destruction of scientific support for racism must be questioned in the light of subsequent research.²⁴ Recent studies have demonstrated that, far from enjoying less influence or support, eugenic studies informed by racist conceptions of mankind continued to exert a tangible and potent force in the United States of America at least as recently as 1972.²⁵ Though these aspects of eugenics must not be overlooked, it has been common to consider eugenics by definition as including only immoral and coercive acts. G. R. Searle claimed that British eugenics was 'distracted' by the issues of venereal disease and temperance,²⁶ whereas Sybil Neville-Rolfe (who helped found the eugenics society in Britain) claimed the problem of venereal disease was one of her primary motivations for founding the

²¹ Donald MacKenzie, 'Eugenics in Britain', *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 6 (1976), p.522.

²² Mark Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1963), p.179.

²³ Popenoe responded to a survey conducted by Frederick Osborn and Gladys Schwesinger at the Eugenics Research Association by stating: 'I also include some notes on eugenics organizations abroad. If you are interested only in those that call themselves eugenics societies, then most of these will be out of your field. However, they are all doing actual work in eugenics'. Letter from Paul Popenoe to Eugenics Research Association, 24 Dec. 1930, Eugenics Papers of Frederick H. Osborn and Gladys Schwesinger, Box 5, Eugenics E8, Folder 9; Archives of the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

²⁴ Haller, *Eugenics*, p.181.

²⁵ Paul A. Lombardo and Gregory M. Dorr, 'Eugenics, Medical Education, and the Public Health Service: Another Perspective on the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 80 (2006), pp.291–2.

²⁶ G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain*, p.14.

society.²⁷ It is a peculiar, and recurring, feature of eugenics historiography that contemporary scholars appear to dictate to eugenicists what the terms of their interest ought to have been. More recently Anne Maxwell mistakenly described Julian Huxley as an example of a figure presenting ‘scientific resistance to eugenics’, seemingly conflating racism and eugenics as synonymous, and overlooked his prominent role in the Eugenics Education Society’s propaganda film *Heredity in Man*.²⁸ Given this marginalisation or exclusion of the less extreme manifestations of eugenics in studies which are focused solely upon the movement, it is no surprise to find this theme expressed in works where the focus is less specific. Writing on Francis Galton in *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*, Dabydeen, Gilmore, and Jones, albeit understandably, chose not to focus upon British eugenics alone, but made reference to the sterilisation policies of ‘liberal Sweden’ and ‘the killing of the unfit in Germany’; followed by the claim that:

The radicalisation of eugenics was implicit in its origins: Galton’s emphasis on heredity deflected attention from social and economic change, and his ideas about races justified the separation and subsequent maltreatment of different population groups.²⁹

These definitions of eugenics have had a considerable impact upon the understanding of religious interactions with eugenics. In Edward Larson’s study of women and eugenics, a focus upon ‘negative eugenics’ led him to present the

²⁷ Sybil Neville-Rolfe, *Social Biology and Welfare* (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1949), pp.17–18.

²⁸ Maxwell ceded that Huxley was interested in ‘positive eugenics’, but ‘Heredity in Man’ formed part of a call for eugenic sterilisation as well as an increased birth rate amongst the healthy. This oversight is particularly disappointing given Maxwell’s focus upon photography, which would have made Huxley’s film involvement an ideal subject to investigate. Anne Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect: Photography and Eugenics 1870–1940* (Sussex Academic Press, Brighton, 2008), pp.228–37. Huxley’s involvement with this film production is discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

²⁹ David Dabydeen, John Gilmore and Cecily Jones (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Black British History* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007). It is striking, in a study on ‘Black British History’, that all of the references cited in this section dealt with eugenics in Germany and America.

hostility of Catholic groups towards sterilisation legislation as a wholesale rejection of the eugenics movement.³⁰

At least part of the failure to address the varied components of eugenics seems to stem from a desire to label eugenics as a definitively flawed science. It is difficult to conceive of an alternative explanation for Haller's interpretation of Popenoe and Johnson's later work. Edwin Black wrote of the 'fraudulent science' of eugenics, and how it:

contaminated many otherwise worthy social, medical and educational causes from the birth control movement to the development of psychology to urban sanitation.³¹

Terence Kealey claimed that from 1917 eugenicists understood that their work would never be successful, but that they continued because 'eugenics was a good source of grants and of prestige'.³² The impression in both these accounts is that eugenics was intentionally deceptive and inherently evil. Where accounts of eugenics have sought to emphasise the diversity of the movement, it has been common to balance these observations with examples of those who opposed the ideology, and here the most common examples have been religious.³³

³⁰ Edward J. Larson, "In the Finest Most Womanly Way:", p.137.

³¹ Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Four Walls Eight Windows, New York, 2003), p.xvi and p.xx.

³² Terence Kealey, 'A Black Student's Primer on the History of Eugenics' *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 34 (Winter 2001–2002), p.115.

³³ For examples see: Daylanne K. English, *Unnatural Selections: Eugenics in American Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2004), which cited the author of a foreword to a contemporary edited edition of G. K. Chesterton's *Eugenics and Other Evils*, as saying Chesterton was a rare example of a critic of eugenics, p.178; Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (Humanity Books, New York, 1998) who referred to the papal encyclical of Pope Pius XI, p.11; and David Burton who suggested one of the forces which worked against a social Darwinist and imperialist outlook in Theodore Roosevelt was the 'social gospel of XIXth-century Protestantism', David H. Burton, 'Theodore Roosevelt's Social Darwinism and Views on Imperialism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Jan.–Mar., 1965), p.104.

The Secular Religion of Eugenics?

The most detailed current research into eugenics and religion, by Christine Rosen, focused upon ‘religious leaders’ in the United States of America and concluded:

The evidence yields a clear pattern about who elected to support eugenic-style reforms and who did not. Religious leaders pursued eugenics precisely when they moved away from traditional religious tenets. The liberals and modernists...became the eugenics movement’s most enthusiastic supporters.³⁴

This view that eugenic support from the church was limited to liberal theology was similarly suggested in Jonathan Rose’s comments about the diarist Ruth Slate’s adoption of ‘new theology’:

With an evangelical zeal *freed from the moorings of dogma* [emphasis mine], Ruth plunged into the post-Victorian “sex-question.” She heard lectures on eugenics and women’s diseases and read Auguste Forel’s *Sexual Ethics*.³⁵

In the same way, Charles Rosenberg claimed that the widespread uptake of hereditarian thought amongst nineteenth-century American medical audiences was helped by an increasingly secularised society.³⁶ However, previous studies have provided tantalising examples of cases where these frameworks do not work. Mike Hawkins cited the belief of the nineteenth-century actuary Thomas Rowe Edmonds, that:

The bodies of a coming generation may be rendered superior in health, strength and activity to the bodies of a present generation, by selecting for the purposes of propagation the individuals of both sexes possessing the most healthy, vigorous and active bodies, and not suffering weak and

³⁴ Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, p.184.

³⁵ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2001), pp.215–16.

³⁶ Charles E. Rosenberg, ‘The Bitter Fruit: Heredity, Disease, And Social Thought in Nineteenth Century America’, *Perspectives in American History*, Vol. VIII (1974), pp.207–209 and p.235.

diseased people to transmit their diseases and miseries to posterity.³⁷

However, despite these views that were indistinguishable from those of a eugenicist, Hawkins excluded Edmonds from his definition of ‘Social Darwinist’ as Edmonds retained belief in species formed and ordained by God. It is thus clear that historical figures did not always occupy expected or convenient intellectual positions, but with little archival evidence it is difficult to know whether individuals like Edmonds were an exception or the rule. Rosen’s focus upon religious leaders is typical of the wider body of literature in Darwinian history where studies have cited sources such as Frederick Temple’s Bampton Lectures of 1884 as evidence of the acceptance of a critical approach towards biblical scholarship within Anglicanism,³⁸ yet there is good reason to question how far these fora reflected lay religious belief. Hugh McLeod has challenged the assumption that secularisation advanced as a result of scientific discoveries making religious beliefs more difficult, and instead highlighted:

[the] difficulty of proving that more than a very small proportion of the population knew or cared much about the new scientific developments.³⁹

This viewpoint seems to be confirmed in Jonathan Rose’s quotation of a cultural literacy survey from Sheffield in 1918, where many ‘manual workers’ did not recognise the terms ‘evolution’ or ‘Darwin’.⁴⁰ A focus upon small samples of religious leaders, though interesting, presents a danger of misrepresenting religious communities’ interest in or awareness of scientific thought. There is an added

³⁷ Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945: Nature as model and nature as threat* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997), p.55.

³⁸ Peter Hinchliff, *God and History: Aspects of British Theology, 1875–1914* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992), p.106.

³⁹ McLeod, *Religion and Society in England*, p.5.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, p.194.

danger that these accounts inadvertently reinforce previous suggestions that liberal religious faith was automatically better equipped to adapt to scientific discovery than conservative belief, and that science performed a role of ‘de-mythologizing the universe’. John Durant has characterised these views as linked to the, widely discredited, ‘view that there is a fundamental conflict between scientific knowledge and religious belief’.⁴¹ Individuals such as Edmonds suggest that outside academic circles it was not necessary for two ideas to be consistent for people to adopt them. The need to look beyond religious leaders is even more pressing in the case of eugenics as the ideology was not an abstract scientific theory, but one that made demands of religious reformers and those who might ordinarily have had very little interest in the work of scientists.

Missions and Eugenics: Reframing the Eugenic Landscape

To deepen understanding of the relationship between religion and eugenics this thesis examines three Christian missionary organisations at work between c.1865 and 1940: the London City Mission, the New York City Mission, and The Salvation Army. Their work amongst working-class and immigrant communities in the metropolises of London and New York made those they laboured amongst ripe for eugenic criticism. In seeking financial and spiritual backing from supporters these communities had a vested interest in any claims that heredity, environment, or any other constraint might make their work for spiritual reformation ineffectual. However, rather than viewing eugenics and religion as hermetically sealed cultures, or suggesting religious communities made a one-dimensional response to a

⁴¹ John Durant, ‘Darwinism and Divinity: A Century of Debate’ in John Durant (ed.) *Darwinism and Divinity: Essays on Evolution and Religious Belief* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1985), p.10.

potentially hostile ideology, this thesis also examines two eugenics societies for the impact of religious influences upon their work. Both eugenics societies, the Eugenics Education Society and the American Eugenics Society (based in London and New York respectively), operated with the intention of spreading the message of eugenics throughout society. Examination of the private minutes of these societies, alongside their plans for propaganda work and their published writings, reveals that these societies were far removed from the secularised freedom implied above.

Given the difficulties associated with previous attempts to provide a definition of eugenics, as described above, it is necessary to provide an explanation of the comparative framework that has been used to examine the organisations studied in this thesis. This thesis is intended, in part, to illustrate the weakness of dependence upon hard and fast definitions when seeking to chart the history of the eugenics movement. Eugenicians themselves operated within extremely loose ideological and definitional boundaries, such as that provided by Francis Galton (who coined the term ‘eugenics’ in 1883) in 1907: ‘[Eugenics is] the study of the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally’.⁴² It is this flexible definition of eugenics that guides the chapters that follow; eugenicians, according to Galton, were interested in all manner of issues that had the potential to impact the physical and mental health of future generations. Chapters three, four, and five, which discuss the three missionary societies, provide more specific examples of expressions and ideas that

⁴² Galton cited in Ian Robert Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane: Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada 1880–1940* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2003), p.vi.

featured prominently in eugenicist circles, and these are explained as they arise. However, by identifying the presence of these expressions and ideas in both the works of eugenicists and the writings of the missionary organisations, it is not being suggested that the latter ought to be reinterpreted as eugenics societies. In contrast, this serves to illustrate that this ideological and linguistic framework was common to both eugenicists and the missionary organisations; none of the organisations studied in this thesis exercised a monopoly over these ideas, and they often employed them in pursuit of vastly differing ends. To coin a phrase that eugenicists might appreciate, it is not possible to establish a pedigree for eugenic ideas. However, by establishing the presence of these ideas (several of which are often considered almost as hallmarks of the eugenics movement) outside of official eugenics societies and the writings of eugenics advocates, a new arena for research is uncovered, and a fresh understanding is provided of the context in which the eugenics movement developed.

Whilst this thesis is not intended as an institutional history, some organisational details are necessary in order to understand the influence their ideas may have exerted. Previous research has revealed that the Eugenics Education Society had a peak membership of more than 1,000 around the year 1914, derived almost exclusively from the middle class with a heavy presence of the intellectual, creative and welfare professions.⁴³ The American Eugenics Society had a membership of 1,260 in 1930,⁴⁴ but unfortunately the only analysis of this has been limited to the

⁴³ Lyndsay Andrew Farrall, 'The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement 1865–1925' (Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 1969), pp.212–29.

⁴⁴ Barry Alan Mehler, 'A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921–1940' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988), p.130. My thanks are due to Prof. Mehler for sending me a copy of his thesis.

society's 'board of directors' and 'advisory council'. Whilst this revealed valuable information concerning the stability of leadership in a period previously supposed to have been marked by the abandoning of eugenics by geneticists, the discovery that 97 percent of those on the 'advisory council' feature in standard biographical works cannot have reflected trends in the wider membership. These individuals had been chosen precisely because they were well known.⁴⁵ There is room in both organisations for further research into membership, particularly in terms of their local branches and lesser-known 'rank and file' members⁴⁶, but enough is already known to establish that both organisations enjoyed support from significant numbers of people, many of whom were well known.

In contrast to the three missionary agencies discussed in this thesis only one, The Salvation Army, has been the subject of detailed historical research.⁴⁷ The Salvation Army experienced phenomenal growth from its foundation in London in 1865 to its spread in the United States of America and around the world, making it an ideal organisation to compare with the local mission organisations in London and New York. Previous research has struggled to establish comprehensive details of The Salvation Army membership owing to individuals' moving between different branches, attenders not formally joining the organisation, inconsistent records, loss of records, and the strict access rules of the archives.⁴⁸ However, despite these

⁴⁵ Mehler, 'A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921–1940', pp.129–33.

⁴⁶ Kristina Johansen has completed an excellent study of the local branches of the Eugenics Education Society based in Oxford and Cambridge, but there is need to extend this work to other regions. Johansen, 'Eugenics in Two Edwardian Cities. A Study of the Local Eugenics Societies in Cambridge and Oxford' (M.A. thesis, Oxford Brookes University, 2002).

⁴⁷ This includes biographical information on prominent members, for example in John G. Merritt (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army* (Scarecrow Press, Lanham, 2006).

⁴⁸ On this latter issue, The Salvation Army National Archives and Research Center restricts access to its personnel files to genealogical researchers, and I was required to sign a declaration before

challenges there is broad consensus that The Salvation Army was primarily a working-class movement, with the majority of its membership in Britain and the United States drawn from this class.⁴⁹

While The Salvation Army is more famous than the other missions examined in this thesis, the remaining two merit far greater scholarly attention than they have previously received. The first of these, the London City Mission, was founded in 1835, its constitution stating its purpose as the extension of ‘the knowledge of the Gospel among the inhabitants of London and its vicinity (especially the poor)’.⁵⁰ Despite the size, described below, and the social prominence of the organisation,⁵¹ there is no comprehensive institutional history of the organisation. The mission itself published a study in 2003, but though providing some contextual information the authors conceded it was not an exhaustive account but a selection of ‘stories’ told ‘one at a time’.⁵² Donald Lewis has completed a more detailed study, but his focus was upon the years 1828–1860 and thus he does not cover the period of this thesis.⁵³ Such studies provide useful information, as Lewis and Andrea Duncan have both examined a unique list of the former occupations of missionaries from 1849 to conclude that the vast majority of missionaries was drawn from working-

accessing the papers of the ‘Cherry Tree Home’ in New York, stating that I would not record or publish any ‘personal identifying information’ concerning either children or staff of the home.

⁴⁹ Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001), pp.66–72; Lillian Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads & Lasses: Remaking the Salvation Army in America, 1880–1930* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2001), p.50.

⁵⁰ Constitution of the London City Mission, 1835, cited in Irene Howat and John Nicholls, *Streets Paved With Gold: The Story of the London City Mission* (Christian Focus and London City Mission, Fearn, 2003).

⁵¹ The evangelical reformer Lord Shaftesbury was heavily connected with the organisation: Richard Turnbull, *Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer* (Lion Hudson, Oxford, 2010), pp.131–41.

⁵² Howat and Nicholls, *Streets Paved With Gold*, p.11.

⁵³ Donald M. Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness: The Evangelical Mission to Working-Class London, 1828–1860* (Greenwood Press, New York, 2001), pp.280–2.

class backgrounds.⁵⁴ The brief survey given below suggests this remained true later in the society's history. However, although Lewis and Duncan study years that Ian Bradley has described as the height of evangelicalism, it is the period after this (when Bradley argued evangelicalism became 'more fanatical, more bigoted and more introverted'⁵⁵) that is of natural interest when compared with claims that hereditarian ideas came to discourage reformers as the nineteenth century progressed.

A re-examination of the 1849 list of missionaries' former occupations reveals that out of 214 missionaries only three were formerly ordained ministers of the church, alongside one 'Roman Catholic Priest' whose former training would have been discounted on joining the mission. A further 24 missionaries had previous experience of Christian work, as missionaries, scripture readers, 'lay agents', or colporteurs with other organisations, but the vast majority of missionaries (190) were from employment backgrounds with no religious content.⁵⁶ It appears London City Mission continued to show preference for workers without formal theological training, as in 1884 it was said:

The classes from which the missionaries are selected are akin to those that they are appointed to visit and address. This system is judicious, and far more likely to be effective than any one where the body is composed of men who bear, on the exterior, the marks of a higher position in many aspects of the social scale.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Andrea Duncan, 'The London City Mission: A Study of Lay Evangelicalism, 1835–1870' (M.A. thesis, University of Warwick, 1977), pp.56–7; Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness*, pp.152–6.

⁵⁵ Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (Lion Hudson, Oxford, 1976, 2006), pp.12–13.

⁵⁶ LCMM, Vol. XIV (July 1849), pp.135–6.

⁵⁷ The Right Hon. The Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., 'Introduction', in John Matthias Weylland, *These Fifty Years, Being the Jubilee Volume of the London City Mission* (S. W. Partridge and Co., London, 1884), p.vii.

Further confirmation of this impression of the social composition of the organisation is found in missionaries' published autobiographical accounts. In 1909 'Gipsy Simon Smith' described his life prior to work with London City Mission as part of a poverty-stricken 'gipsy' family. Smith worked for the mission for six years before entering his 1909 position as an independent 'Evangelist' devoted to the 'thousands of gipsies and others whom the Church has failed to reach'. The fact he continued to refer to his time with London City Mission when advertising his new work suggests the mission was considered well known and trustworthy.⁵⁸ In 1923 Walter J. Prentice, 'deputation secretary of the London City Mission', described a similarly impoverished upbringing. His mother was widowed after his father enlisted in the British army in response to the 'Indian Mutiny', and Prentice left school before the age of ten and worked in a factory. As a missionary, he spoke fondly of his marriage to a 'domestic servant' and claimed his humble background was often useful in discussions with those he visited in poor districts.⁵⁹ These accounts suggest a social composition quite different from that found in New York City Mission, as will be described below.

The size of London City Mission, gauged in terms of finances and the number of missionaries it employed, suggests the organisation is worthy of greater historical attention than it has hitherto received. Figure 1.1 indicates that the organisation grew in both these measures in the period after Duncan's and Lewis' studies end. Added to these measures the London City Mission attracted a large volume of contemporary support. The mission's printed works boasted an enormous number of

⁵⁸ Gipsy Simon Smith, *A Gipsy Romance* (The 'Gipsy' Series, Walthamstow, 1909).

⁵⁹ Walter J. Prentice, *My Adventures with The Coalies' Baby* (The Religious Tract Society, London, 1923), pp.4–5, pp.8–9, p.13, and pp.16–17.

subscribers and supporters: a sample of 1885 alone reveals the organisation was assisted by 4,765 subscribers and contributors, and received donations from collections at 146 Sunday schools, church services and other meetings that were held in its aid. Despite the name of the mission, support was received from all across the country by means of regional associations that carried out fundraising for the organisation. In 1885 donations were received from 1,260 regional associations spread across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.⁶⁰ Although the London City Mission operated only in London it is clear its influence extended beyond this region, and its publications were read throughout the country. Figure 1.2 indicates that, rather than depending upon a small number of extremely generous individuals, the society received a greater proportion of smaller gifts in larger numbers. This was again distinct from the situation in New York City Mission as described below.

⁶⁰ LCMM, Vol. L (1885).

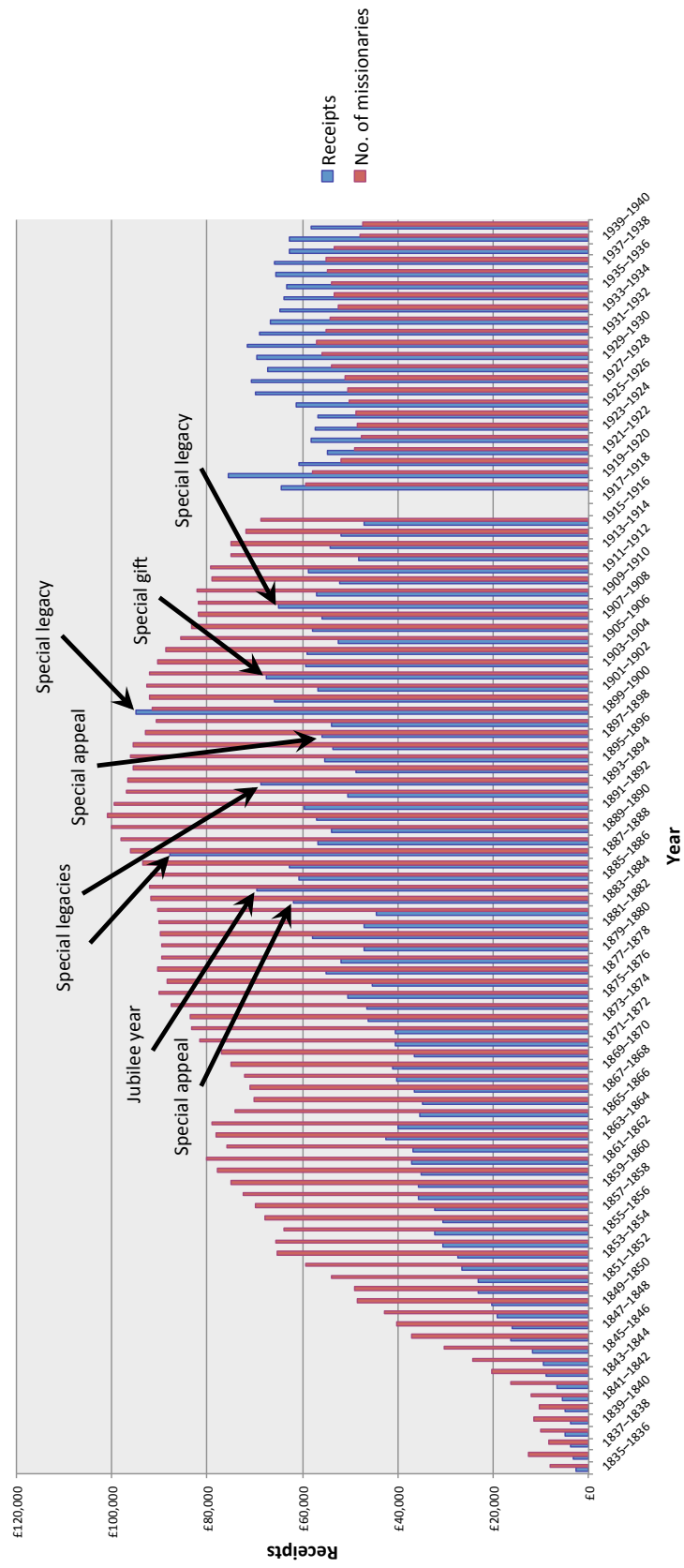


Figure 1.1 Financial Receipts and Number of Missionaries of London City Mission 1835–1940.

London City Mission 1885 – Contributions

	Up to £1	Up to £5	Up to £10	Up to £100	£100 or more	Monthly Total
January	56	60	8	3	1	128
February	135	209	35	17	3	399
March	179	197	23	9	7	415
April	111	167	15	8	0	301
May	39	78	9	9	3	138
June	43	60	5	8	0	116
Half-year Totals	563	771	95	54	14	1497

Figure 1.2 Number of individuals named in 'Contributions', January–June 1885. LCMM, Vol. L (1885).

New York City Mission has suffered a similar neglect in previous historiography. The most recent study was commissioned by the secular contemporary incarnation of the organisation itself, and presented a misleading interpretation of the society's former spiritual and philanthropic work.⁶¹ This and more scholarly accounts of the organisation⁶² are discussed in more detail in chapter three, but there have been no previous attempts to reconstruct the scale and significance of the organisation. New York City Mission initially took the same path as London City Mission and employed missionaries who were not ordained, with tract distribution and domiciliary visitation as their main tasks. However, the New York society was immediately different in its willingness to employ female missionaries.⁶³ Further differences emerged in 1870 as New York City Mission opened 'mission chapels'

⁶¹ Paul Romita, *Images of America: New York City Mission Society* (Arcadia, Portsmouth, 2003).

⁶² Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *Religion and the rise of the American city: the New York City Mission Movement* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1971) and Kenneth D. Miller and Ethel Prince Miller, *The People Are the City: 150 Years of Social and Religious Concern in New York City* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1962).

⁶³ There was a Female Branch of NYCM from as early as 1822, but where this was initially concerned solely with raising finances for the general work of the organisation from 1863 it was decided its work should support the employment of 'missionary women'. NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), p.24.

where ordinances such as ‘the Lord’s Supper’ were held.⁶⁴ This decision arose out of belief that urban demographics had removed wealthy church attenders from the area occupied by the mission’s work, and thus left a dearth of churches in a highly populous area, but London City Mission never established its own churches. The opening of mission chapels had significant implications for the society’s practical organisation and the type of individuals it employed. Whilst in 1865 there were 31 male missionaries and six female assistant missionaries, none of whom was identified as ‘Reverend’,⁶⁵ in 1871 11 of the 25 male missionaries were listed as ordained – a substantial proportion of the 40 missionaries listed in total.⁶⁶ Appendix one illustrates that there was a noticeable decline in the number of male missionaries following the decision to establish mission chapels, reflective of the increasing move towards employing ordained ministers who were necessary for administering ordinances such as communion. The information in appendix one is incomplete, partly due to missing reports, but more often because the society changed the way it presented information from year to year. Whilst the female branch unceasingly reported the number of its missionaries, from 1887 until 1901 the only information available from the men’s branch is found in lists of church services that recorded the names of ministers who worked at mission chapels. It seems likely the low numbers were not considered worth extra emphasis in a list of the society’s work, a useful reminder that the chief purpose of these publications was the promotion of the organisation’s work. To this end, early reports had included numerical comparisons with previous years, but when the number of missionaries began to decline, this information was no longer included, either

⁶⁴ NYCM, *44th Annual Report* (1871), p.21.

⁶⁵ NYCM, *38th Annual Report* (1865), p.8.

⁶⁶ NYCM, *44th Annual Report* (1871), pp.7-8.

because this no longer represented a fair comparison, or perhaps because it was feared this would portray a message of a shrinking organisation that required less financial support than in previous years.⁶⁷ By the time of the 1901 Annual Report there were photographs of eight New York City Mission church missionaries and it was noted that only one of these was not ordained.⁶⁸ By way of contrast in 1901 London City Mission employed over 460 missionaries, none of whom was recorded as ordained.⁶⁹

Figures 1.3 and 1.4 indicate that the type of support offered to New York City Mission also differed from that in London. The surviving financial records depicted in figure 1.3 demonstrate that the finances of the organisation remained level and fairly stable until the 1920s when money from the Russell Sage Foundation more than doubled the society's previous average annual income.⁷⁰ In contrast to figure 1.2, figure 1.4 indicates that New York City Mission was dependent upon far fewer named supporters, but that these each gave much more substantial sums of money to the organisation. In 1867 the organisation listed separate donations that had been made in 'subscriptions to the mission station fund'. Here there were 11 donations of \$5000, one of \$2500, three of \$2000, six of \$1000, one of \$750, seven of \$500, and

⁶⁷ In the case of the women's branch several years featured conflicting statistics concerning the number of their missionaries. It seems a bid to maximise the number of their workers led them to count all individuals who worked for them over the year, rather than the number of missionary positions they supported at any one time. In these instances appendix one includes only those who were named at the time of the report, used to indicate the scale of the organisation's work rather than the turnover of its staff.

⁶⁸ NYCM, *Annual Report* (1901).

⁶⁹ LCM, *Annual Report* (1901), pp.210–30.

⁷⁰ Russell Sage was a financier who had a fortune estimated at between \$63 million and \$100 million at the time of his death in 1906; his widow used this fortune to establish the Russell Sage Foundation, one of the largest philanthropies of the time. George M. Jenks, 'Sage, Russell' *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, Online Feb. 2000) <http://www.anb.org/articles/10/10-01448.html> accessed 14 Sep. 2011.

16 ranging from \$50 to \$271.⁷¹ In addition to these names, annual reports listed large numbers of ‘vice presidents’, ‘directors’, and designated representatives at churches around New York City. In 1885 this led the organisation to inform readers:

It must be borne in mind by those who critically examine the list of churches which have given collections to the City Mission, that the foregoing acknowledgments do not by any means represent all that the churches have actually given to the cause. In this list only those churches are named which have given the society a public collection, while the list of donations contain the names of some members of almost all the Protestant churches in the city.⁷²

⁷¹ NYCM, *40th Annual Report* (1867), p.122.

⁷² NYCM, *58th Annual Report* (1885), p.137.

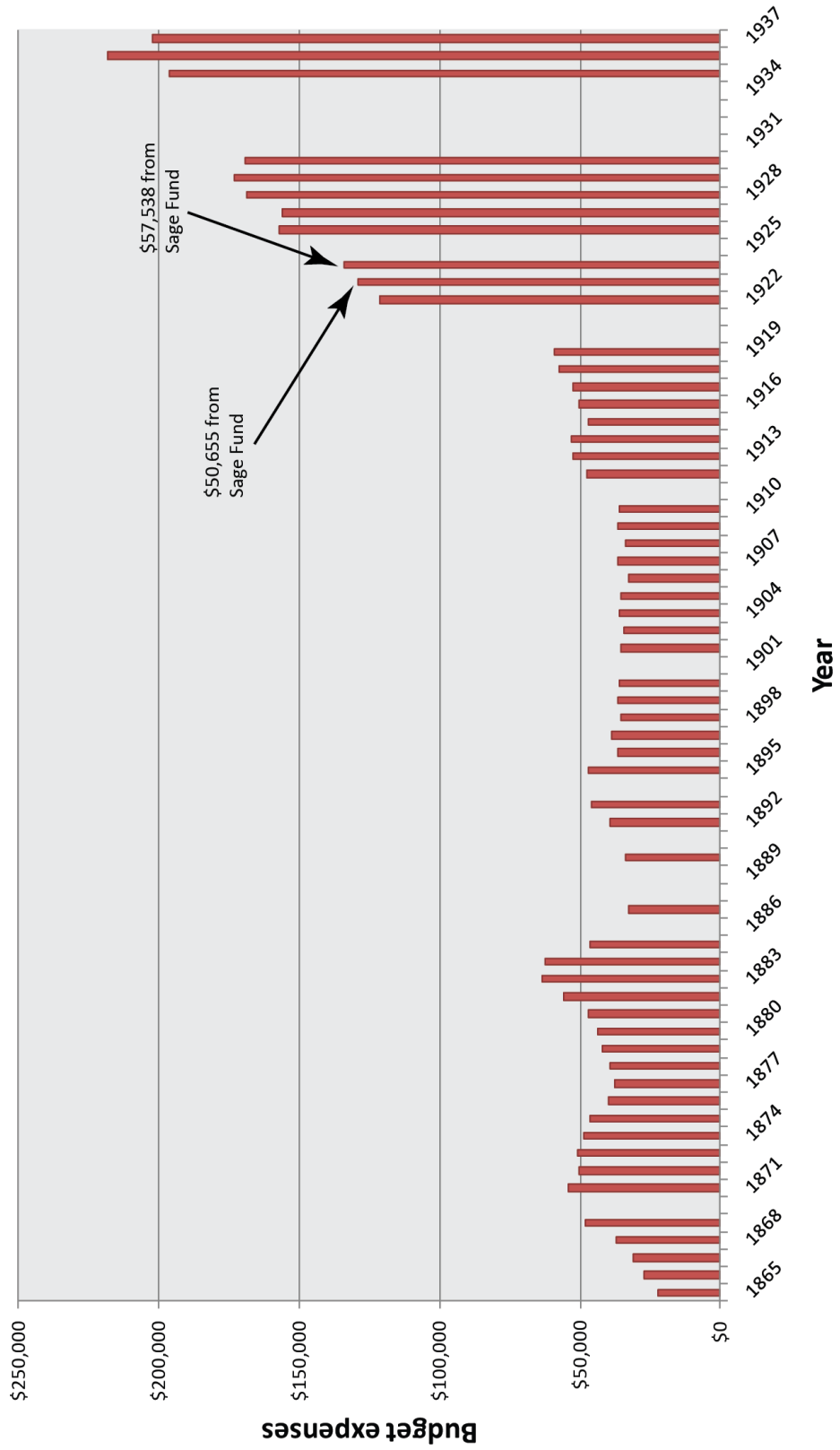


Figure 1.3 Budgeted expenditure of New York City Mission 1865–1937.

New York City Mission – Supporters

	Number of named donors	Contributions from churches	Contributions from NYCM churches
1885	282	7	7
1890	264	44	4
1900	253	26	-
1910	232	9	5
1916	177	9	-

Figure 1.4 Support for New York City Mission as recorded in Annual Reports.

Despite these differences of policy decisions and of the makeup of support, both organisations shared a concern for the same problem of the perceived irreligion of the working class in large cities. Both were well-publicised organisations: New York City Mission appeared 403 times in the *New York Times* between 1865 and 1940, and the London City Mission 920 times in *The Times* of London.⁷³ The chapters that follow will indicate that even in the case of The Salvation Army, which has been the subject of considerable historical research, important interactions with eugenic ideology have previously been overlooked. Examining these groups for their interaction with eugenic theory builds upon a growing historiography around the subject of popular science in periodicals.⁷⁴ By examining these groups, previous ideas about the types of people that were attracted to eugenics can be tested and there is opportunity for a previously unexplored view of

⁷³ This included advertisements of meetings, news concerning anniversaries, and inclusion in wills. Figures from search for “New York City Mission” and “London City Mission” in ‘ProQuest Historical Newspapers 1851–2007’ and ‘The Times Digital Archive 1785–1985’ respectively.

⁷⁴ On this subject see especially the work of ‘SciPer’, Science in the Nineteenth Century Periodical at the Universities of Leeds and Sheffield. Geoffrey Cantor and Sally Shuttleworth (eds.), *Science Serialized: Representations of the Sciences in Nineteenth-Century Periodicals* (The MIT Press, Cambridge, 2004); Cantor *et al*, *Science in the nineteenth-century periodical: reading the magazine of nature* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004). See also <http://www.sciper.leeds.ac.uk/>. On science in the religious press see Aileen Fyfe, *Science and Salvation: Evangelical Popular Science Publishing in Victorian Britain* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004).

the reception of eugenics ‘from below’ amongst those affected by its theories rather than just those who made eugenic pronouncements.⁷⁵

There was a wealth of source material available for this research. As noted in the bibliography, the archive of the New York City Mission contains minute books dating back to the earliest decades of the nineteenth century – yet these materials were left, unsorted and forgotten, amongst annual reports and files from the 1970s. All of the organisations examined in this thesis produced periodicals, and other promotional material, for circulation amongst their existing supporters and others who, it was hoped, might lend support to their work. Every effort has been made to identify the authors responsible for the missionary periodical articles cited in this thesis, but this was not possible in the majority of cases. Articles published in the New York City Mission and the London City Mission publications were heavily anonymised. The editorial procedures which governed these publications are unclear, however the periodicals were professionally produced, appearing at regular monthly intervals in a consistent format, and contained official reports (such as financial records and lists of donors) such that they can be viewed as a highly planned and costly venture undertaken by the organisations. The fact that it was not possible to identify the authors of these publications, neither at the time of publication nor now, creates the strong impression that they presented a coherent institutional view. For the readers of these publications the periodicals represented the primary voice of the missions where public meetings were announced, financial appeals were made, and descriptions of the work of the organisations were given.

⁷⁵ On the concept of medical history from below, see Roy Porter, ‘The Patient’s View: Doing Medical History from below’, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1985), pp.175–98.

Unlike the publications of the eugenics societies, where there was space devoted to correspondence from readers and articles were published by identifiable authors, the voice presented by the missionary publications was singular. The position of the periodicals as mouthpieces of the missionary societies makes them especially valuable as a source for this thesis, as they represented the attempts of these organisations to engage supporters with their work; the contemporary ideas they discussed would have been decided according to beliefs about the issues in which their readers were interested or those that concerned them.

The chapters that follow are divided into the separate organisations. In chapter two the Eugenics Education Society and the American Eugenics Society are examined for their interactions with religious ideology, and the expression of this in their respective campaigns for the promotion of eugenic theory in popular society. Chapters three, four and five examine the missionary interactions with eugenic theory in the London City Mission, the New York City Mission, and The Salvation Army respectively. This work is not intended as a study of formal academic theological discussions nor of scientific research, but rather as an examination of the way five organisations each sought to negotiate the competing needs of their ideologies with beliefs they perceived to be endemic in society. It will be seen that each organisation maintained extremely porous ideological borders and all were adept at adaptation.

Chapter Two: Religious Rhetoric and Debate within the British and American Eugenics Movements

Introduction

Religion has long been recognised as an important facet in the history of eugenics. Whilst the subject has received regular attention in existing historiography, with the differing conclusions described in chapter one, it has been common to examine the issue from the viewpoint of conflict. Similarly, this trend has marked the wider historiography of ‘Social Darwinism’, where the focus of research into religious faith appears to have been upon the question of how far religious communities were changed by scientific ideas. For example, Richard Hofstadter argued ‘Liberal Protestants’ used evolution as an alternative ‘naturalistic Calvinism’,¹ and Paul Crook argued ‘Social Darwinism’ reflected ‘growing secularization, and the development of a scientific method that encouraged the naturalization of value systems.’² In the case of eugenics, Kenneth Ludmerer argued the movement was an ‘outgrowth of the naturalistic climate of the late nineteenth century’, and spoke of the way it was adhered to as a ‘secular religion’.³ When previous studies have examined the involvement of religious leaders in the eugenics movement, they have sought primarily to answer the question of how these leaders adapted their theological views in order to enable them to support eugenics – their influence within the eugenics movement itself has not received the same level of attention.⁴ Where religious figures were involved with eugenics, they have been often

¹ Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Beacon Press, Boston, 1955), p.10.

² Paul Crook, *Darwin's Coat-Tails: Essays on Social Darwinism* (Peter Lang, New York, 2007), p.ix and p.1.

³ Kenneth Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society: A Historical Appraisal* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1972), p.2 and p.17.

⁴ The most detailed study is Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*.

identified as those who abandoned orthodox theology.⁵ The result is that an impression is created of a passive faith, a natural development in the path of secularisation, or what Bertrand Russell would refer to as the ‘emasculatation of the Christian doctrine’.⁶ In contrast to that approach, this chapter will examine the impact that religious beliefs exerted upon two eugenics organisations in Britain and the United States. It will be demonstrated that, far from being a passive or retreating human tradition, religious communities exerted a powerful influence upon the planning of eugenicists, as eugenics organisations expended considerable energy in an attempt to make their campaigns palatable to religious believers. The institutions studied in this chapter will be examined separately, recognising the international distinctions of the eugenics movement,⁷ but they did in fact express remarkably similar concerns regarding religion, even where their strategies for addressing these fears differed.

To examine this issue, two organisations have been selected – the Eugenics Education Society in London and the American Eugenics Society – which were both dedicated to the circulation and application of existing eugenic beliefs rather than work in scientific research. This means that their attempts to engage with religious communities reflected part of a broader desire, the wish to see former social mores modified in favour of eugenics. As previous studies have noted, these organisations may not be considered wholly representative of a movement that also

⁵ See comments of Jonathan Rose regarding the diarist Ruth Slate, described in chapter one above, and in Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, pp.215–16. Christine Rosen presented a similar conclusion as she argued ‘religious leaders pursued eugenics precisely when they moved away from traditional religious tenets’. Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, p.184.

⁶ Louis Greenspan and Stefan Andersson (eds.), *Russell on Religion: Selections from the writings of Bertrand Russell* (Routledge, London, 1999), p.178.

⁷ This approach was most evident in the pioneering work of Mark B. Adams in *The wellborn science: eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1990).

operated outside of eugenics societies,⁸ but they were the most prominent British and American organisations that worked to educate the public in eugenics. The chapters that follow illustrate the wide-reaching social impact of eugenics ideology outside of official eugenics organisations, but the subject of this chapter is the great effort that eugenics societies made to further this message amongst the public.

The Eugenics Education Society

The Eugenics Education Society⁹ was founded in 1907 with the following objectives:

- I. Persistently to set forth the National Importance of Eugenics in order to modify public opinion, and create a sense of responsibility in the respect of bringing all matters pertaining to human parenthood under the domination of Eugenic Ideals.
- II. To spread a knowledge of the Laws of heredity so far as they are surely known, and so far as that knowledge might affect the improvement of the race.
- III. To further Eugenic Teaching, at home, in the schools, and elsewhere.¹⁰

These aims established a clear underlying message: public opinion was to be ‘modified’, but a new sense of ‘responsibility’ regarding parenthood had to be *created* – and one which recognised the overriding importance of eugenics. Whilst the Church was not mentioned in these aims, the desire to form a new moral code naturally brought the society into contact with religion. In the first section it will be seen that, although the Society did not have a separate framework for addressing religious issues, unlike the American Eugenics Society,¹¹ the EES expressed

⁸ Lyndsay Andrew Farrall uses the term ‘movement’ to highlight that the eugenics organisations in his study are not representative of the wider eugenic interest in this period, *The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement*, p.2.

⁹ Eugenics Education Society hereafter referred to as ‘EES’.

¹⁰ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), inside front cover.

¹¹ American Eugenics Society hereafter referred to as ‘AES’.

concern over this subject from its earliest days. The second section will demonstrate that the society's attitude towards religious sensitivities was typical of its cautious approach as it sought to build a movement with broad support across society.

Early Religious Expectations

Previous studies have identified the presence of Christian ministers in the EES, and some have cited this as evidence of the movement's general compatibility with Christian faith.¹² However, despite the number of religious individuals that were listed as members in the Society's minutes,¹³ and the prominence of individuals such as W. R. Inge¹⁴, previous studies have not questioned what impact these interactions had upon the organisation. This omission has resulted in a failure to recognise the deliberate strategy that the EES used to ensure clerical support for its work. It has been common for previous studies to suggest that the new moral code

¹² G. R. Searle identified Dean Inge and 'the famous Congregationalist preacher' Rev. R. J. Campbell's membership as evidence of the compatibility of eugenics with 'Christian faith', though claimed Roman Catholics were 'united in bitter opposition to eugenics from the very start'. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain*, p.13. However, Sharon M. Leon has shown that there were Catholic participants in the American Eugenics Society until the Pope denounced eugenics in December 1930. See Leon "'Hopelessly Entangled in Nordic Presuppositions": Catholic Participation in the American Eugenics Society in the 1920s', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Jan. 2004).

¹³ Christian ministers recorded in EES minutes as joining the society's membership, and the dates of their first inclusion are: 'Rev. H. Bull' (Listed in the 'Education Committee' 25 Nov. 1907); 'Rev. Canon Lyttelton' (4 Mar. 1908); 'Rev. J. Peile' (2 Dec. 1908); the Bishop of Birmingham (6 July 1910); 'Rev. Canon Curzon-Siggers' (in the New Zealand branch, 2 Nov. 1910); 'Rev. Edward Clark' (1 Feb. 1911); 'Rev. F. R. Williams' (1 June 1911); 'The Very Rev. W. Taylor Sumner D.D.' (7 Feb. 1913); Bishop D'Arcy (President of the Belfast branch, 17 June 1914); Bishop Mercer (23 Feb. 1915); 'Miss Newton' (described as 'formerly a Missionary in Turkey', 19 Oct. 1915); 'Rev. G. Burdett Dransfield, Senior Curate at St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge' (7 June 1921); 'Rev. H. Latimer Jackson, D.D.' (3 July 1923); 'Rev. J. C. Pringle' (1 Apr. 1925); 'Rev. Waddington, Chairman of the Board of Guardians of Lutterworth' (6 Jan. 1926). SA/Eug/L.1, SA/Eug/L.2, SA/Eug/L.3, SA/Eug/L.4, SA/Eug/L.6, SA/Eug/L.7, Wellcome Library, London. All records subsequently listed 'SA/Eug' are held at the Wellcome Library, London.

¹⁴ Inge was ordained as a deacon in 1888 and came to speak of the need for Christianity to rest upon personal experience of God and mysticism in the sense of union with God through prayer and meditation. He feared a Church dependent upon the miraculous would suffer scientific and biblical criticism. In 1911 he was made dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and gained a wide readership through ventures such as his weekly column in the *Evening Standard*. Matthew Grimley, 'Inge, William Ralph (1860 – 1954)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, Jan 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34098>, accessed 1 Sep. 2011.

promoted by the EES came at the expense of traditional Christian morals.¹⁵ There can be no doubt that the EES considered morals to be central to its work, as indicated by the objectives cited above and the presence of the ‘Moral Education League’ at its inaugural meeting. Initially it had been hoped to amalgamate these two societies, but it was ultimately decided that they should remain separate; members of the Moral Education League were given freedom to join the EES, or not, according to their own wishes.¹⁶ The moral aspirations of the Society were reflected in one of the early suggestions for its name: ‘The Eugenics Education Society: For the Mental, Moral, & Physical Improvement of the Race’.¹⁷ There were remarkable similarities between this suggestion, one given in the case of the AES, as discussed below, and that taken up by the ‘National Council of Public Morals’, as discussed in chapter five. It is clear that there was a shared understanding that eugenics needed to engage with moral values, yet, in contrast to the suggestion that Christian morals came under attack in these campaigns, it would be wrong to assume that the EES was overtly hostile to Christian ethics. In reality the Society made concerted efforts to imbue its work with traditional Christian imagery, and was cautious not to provoke unnecessary antagonism from religious quarters.

The Society formed sub-committees to organise its work in January 1908, and no provision was made for a committee specifically dedicated to work with Christian communities, as there would be in the AES, but the issue nevertheless featured heavily in its work. The same meeting where sub-committees were formed also

¹⁵ Farrall, *The Origins and Growth of the English Eugenics Movement*, pp.208–9.

¹⁶ The ‘Moral Education League’ was founded in 1898 with a slogan of ‘character is everything’. Pauline Mazumdar describes its members as ‘socially responsible, advanced thinkers of their day’ and ‘progressives’, see Mazumdar, *Eugenics, Human Genetics And Human Failings*, p.7 and pp.24–30.

¹⁷ EES 25 November 1907, SA/Eug/L.1.

approved the invitation of twenty-two individuals to serve as vice-presidents of the society, and there were two bishops amongst this number.¹⁸ Although the bishops were not a large proportion of this group, it is clear that it was hoped that they would have an influence beyond their small number. The next month's meeting approved the invitation of the Bishop of Southwark to speak at the EES 'General Meeting'; when he declined¹⁹ the committee turned to another bishop to fulfil this role. The minutes first recorded the Bishop of Stepney, but this was crossed out later and the Bishop of Ripon written above; whether this indicated that the committee was divided over whom to invite and changed its mind, or that the secretary was simply confused, it seems the organisation prized the position of a bishop more highly than any particular individual.²⁰ The important issue seems to have been to secure any bishop to speak, rather than one in particular.

The same devotion to religious issues was expressed in October 1908, when the Society founded a 'quarterly journal' that it was hoped would 'make the papers read before them available to a larger public' and 'serve as an organ for directing popular thought on Eugenics'.²¹ The very earliest issues of this publication dedicated substantial space to the question of religion, with two lengthy articles in addition to editorial comments on the subject. It is clear that the EES committee, and those they charged with editorial responsibility for the new publication, believed that religion would play an important part in the effort to direct 'popular thought on Eugenics'.

The opening editorial in the first issue of *The Eugenics Review*, published in April

¹⁸ The Bishop of Ripon and Bishop Welldon. EES 14 January 1908, SA/Eug/L.1.

¹⁹ The bishop 'regretted' his inability to speak before the EES, and said he 'sympathised with much of the work of the Society', but said because he was unable to 'investigate it thoroughly' he was 'unable to connect himself with it publicly'. EES 12 February 1908, SA/Eug/L.1.

²⁰ EES 22 February 1908, SA/Eug/L.1.

²¹ EES 7 October 1908, SA/Eug/L.1.

1909, highlighted religion as one of a number of thought systems with which it need not be in conflict:

The EUGENICS REVIEW is not like other reviews. It has a definite plan and purpose, the noblest that can be imagined – the betterment of the Human Race...It owes no allegiance to any political party; it is neither liberal, nor conservative, nor socialist; still it is each of these in turn in the interest of the progress of humanity. Lastly, it conflicts with no theological system, except when such a system forbids enquiry into Nature's methods, or would extinguish the torch of truth which it is the duty of each generation to hand on to the next.²²

Evidently it was assumed that readers would expect eugenics to be in conflict with religion, in contrast to which the editorial stated that the journal would include areas of 'Religion, in so far as it strengthens and sanctifies the sense of Eugenic duty'. Religion was given such a prominent position that it featured alongside only four other subjects that the editorial mentioned the review would cover: 'biology', 'anthropology', 'politics', and 'ethics'. Even in the seemingly unrelated issue of 'heredity and environment', the editorial was clear to state its intention to:

stimulate public opinion in favour of that wholesale desideratum, a sound mind in a sound body, without, however, neglecting the cultivation of the spiritual side of human nature, which is quite as important as its material side.²³

Following this editorial, 'The Rev. W. R. Inge, D.D.' provided a more sustained treatment of the moral and spiritual nature of eugenics in his article 'Some Moral Aspects of Eugenics'.²⁴ Inge opened with a seemingly tautologous argument that defined 'social morality' as seeking 'the good of the human race' before he stated that the eugenics movement had 'no other end in view except the improvement of

²² *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.3.

²³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.3.

²⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), pp.26–36.

the human race'.²⁵ It is clear that Inge intended this to be a watertight demonstration of the morality of eugenics. Yet although Inge was satisfied that the principle of eugenics was moral, he admitted there was a need to agree upon the specific goals for which eugenic tools should be employed. Presumably humorously, though suggestive of a true faith in the potential of eugenics, Inge suggested society needed to question if it wanted 'human mastiffs' for its police or 'human greyhounds' for its postmen.²⁶ One issue which Inge claimed did not require discussion was the general need to replace 'natural selection': 'if nature is not allowed to take her own way of eliminating her failures, rational selection must take its place...Humanitarian legislation, or practice, requires to be supplemented, and its inevitable evil effects counteracted'.²⁷ Though this argument might seem to be a challenge to Christian values of charity, a point which will be seen again later in the chapter, Inge made this statement with direct reference to his position as an ordained member of the Church of England. Inge acknowledged that 'for the majority of people' ethics had 'a religious sanction, or even a religious foundation', and, despite having claimed he would restrict his discussion of religion until after a section on 'certain definite moral problems and duties',²⁸ he continued to refer to religious faith throughout. He complained that there was no public censure of individuals described as 'Class I' when they 'neglected the chief duty which God and his country required of him' and failed to have children.²⁹ When faced with more 'delicate' issues, Inge expressed his desire to 'speak very plainly, as a

²⁵ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.26.

²⁶ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.28.

²⁷ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.29.

²⁸ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.30.

²⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.31.

Christian minister'.³⁰ Firstly he addressed the issue of venereal disease, and condemned as 'false' any 'supposed interests of Christian morality' which left unchallenged any scourge that brought 'degeneration'. In contrast to this 'false' modesty, Inge stated that the aim of Christian ethics was 'the production of "the perfect man"', grounded, in part, in Christ's 'impressive command' in the Sermon on the Mount "'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect'".³¹ Thus, having presented eugenics as the enactment of a Christ-given law, Inge went on to note the Christian tradition of overlooking present suffering in the anticipation of future rewards. Inge provided an extreme example of the way in which this principle had been followed in the past, and he noted that former Christian believers had reasoned that those on a 'mischievous' course were better 'burnt' than allowed to continue their error: 'The maxim, "Do as you would be done by," is not always the harmless, good-natured rule which we generally suppose it to be.'³² Inge concluded from this:

Christian ethics does not (as is often supposed) teach the duty of preserving and multiplying life at all hazards. Once convinced that so-and-so was an undesirable citizen, the Church...lost no time in hurrying him out of the world. No doubt they usually burnt the wrong people, which was very unfortunate; and you must not suppose that I want to see *autos da fe* even of our most degraded specimens; but my point is that there is nothing inconsistent with Christianity in imposing as well as enduring personal sacrifice where the highest welfare of the community is at stake.³³

It is not easy to overlook that Inge's argument required him to clarify that he was not presenting a Christian justification for burning people alive. The bitter irony of this statement, combined with his earlier admission that society still needed to agree

³⁰ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.32.

³¹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.33.

³² *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.34.

³³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.34.

upon which traits should be promoted by eugenics, makes it painfully clear that Inge was no clearer on who would be a wise candidate for Church-imposed sacrifice than those in the past.³⁴ For Inge, however, this was a reason to continue eugenic research, not a caution to cease. Inge considered eugenics to be a healthy addition to Christian values, or even a fulfilment of the true principles of Christianity. He ended his paper with a call for his ‘scientific friends’ to be ‘patient’ with the clergy, but also for them to be ‘quite firm with us in insisting that our common enemy must be met with modern weapons, and not with cross-bows and battle-axes’. To the Church he said:

increasing knowledge has revolutionised our methods of dealing with evil...It is not Christian, it is only barbarous and mediaeval, to say that cure is right, and prevention wrong.³⁵

Inge concluded that, not only was eugenics moral, but that it would be immoral for Christians to ignore the benefits it offered.

As if Inge’s treatment of religion and eugenics was not enough, or perhaps building upon its success, the journal’s third issue included several discussions on the same theme. Firstly, it was claimed that the records of the ‘Wesleyan Methodist Ministry’ revealed an ‘admirable instance of positive eugenics’. In this instance, a religious organisation was highlighted as a useful source of eugenic knowledge, rather than as a hindrance to eugenics. A less positive impression was created in the second example found in the journal, where a review of a discussion in the *Westminster Review* quoted from ‘a working man’ who had criticised the Bishop of Ely’s

³⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.32.

³⁵ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.36.

discussion of ‘racial suicide’. Finally, ‘Rev. J. H. F. Peile’³⁶ authored an article on ‘Eugenics and the Church’.³⁷ Peile was confident that it was not ‘a remarkable thing that a minister of religion should be interested in the problems which this Society has been formed to study’.³⁸ He stated that the lack of clerical support, in spite of this natural crossover of interests, was partly because those with ‘active and open minds’ were exceedingly busy and would need to study eugenics before committing themselves to it publicly. Further complications came because ‘eugenic truth’ had not been presented ‘without offence’, and because ‘popular opinion’ had associated it ‘with things which no Church can possibly touch’. Peile argued that even if the Society were not responsible for these facts, it would gain the ‘credit or discredit’ so long as it did not challenge the ‘popular judgment’.³⁹ This perception that there was a dual problem, caused both by the tactless promotion of eugenic facts and by the circulation of popular misconceptions, was a theme repeated in debates of the AES. Peile argued that the solution was for the EES to ensure the ‘ground is prepared’ for the clergy to support eugenics by spreading information gradually.⁴⁰ Once this was done Peile believed that it would be clear to all, that eugenics merely extended ‘a principle to which the Church is already committed’.⁴¹ The principle that Peile had in mind was that of the ‘therapeutic’ work of the Church, the same issue that Inge had discussed. Peile described the ‘startling paradox’ that:

Philanthropy with the aid of modern science has become one
of the great contributory causes of the condition of

³⁶ Peile must have enjoyed some contemporary fame as he gave the 1907 Bampton Lecture, but he has not been included in previous studies’ samples of religious advocates of the EES. James Hamilton Francis Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel: an enquiry into the apparent failure of Christianity as a general rule of life and conduct, with special reference to the present time Being the Bampton Lectures for the year 1907* (Longmans and co., London, 1907).

³⁷ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.145 and pp.163–73.

³⁸ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.163.

³⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.164–5.

⁴⁰ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.165.

⁴¹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.166.

Cacogenics, the producing of bad and ineffectual citizens, which it is the purpose of the Society to mend, and if possible to end.⁴²

Christianity's natural interest in eugenics, therefore, lay not only in its desire for social improvement, but also in the fact that it was unwittingly contributing to social harm. Peile emphasised that 'cacogenics' was a modern phenomenon, as he argued that 'pagan civilisations' of the past had neither the technology nor the Christian charitable impulse to interfere with nature's selective agency.⁴³ He accepted that it was necessary to treat those who had 'come into the world...heavily handicapped in the race of life', but added to this existing duty the 'even more urgent duty' to ensure:

children of the generations to come shall be born with such equipment of qualities, physical, mental, and moral, as will make it reasonably possible for them to grow up useful and happy citizens.⁴⁴

Peile believed that the Church would be able to play a role in this area once the EES had prepared public opinion, perhaps by providing eugenic instruction in confirmation classes and through its existing role in regulating marriages.⁴⁵ The EES heartily endorsed Peile's message, firstly through its publication in *The Eugenics Review* and then in its decision in 1913 to reprint one thousand additional copies of the paper.⁴⁶

⁴² *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.167. 'Cacogenics' was a term used as the polar opposite of 'eugenics', based upon the Greek term 'kakos' meaning 'bad'. Nathaniel Deutsch, *Inventing America's "Worst" Family: Eugenics, Islam, and the Fall and Rise of the Tribe of Ishmael* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009), p.7.

⁴³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), pp.167–8.

⁴⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.169–70.

⁴⁵ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.170 and p.172.

⁴⁶ EES 15 October 1913, SA/Eug/L.3.

Caution and Diversity in the EES

Peile's belief that there was a natural overlap between Christianity and eugenics does not sit easily with historiographical claims that eugenics was interested in the forceful replacement of traditional ethics. Previous claims for this conflict have looked to the writings of Francis Galton who is said to have shown 'scorn for conventional theological, moral, and scientific views'. Galton has been typified as representative of eugenicists' presentation of 'racial regeneration' in 'fashionably scientific terms' rather than 'traditionally moral ones'.⁴⁷ There can be no doubt that he was controversial in his treatment of religious matters; in 1872 Galton published a statistical denial of the power of prayer, and he spoke of Darwin's work as having dispelled Christianity like a 'nightmare'.⁴⁸ It would be wrong, however, to consider Galton as representative of the wider eugenics movement, and the EES was much more cautious in its approach to religious issues. Montague Crackanhorpe, the first president of the EES, made religiously charged references to Galton as 'Founder' and 'the chief Apostle of Eugenics'⁴⁹, but it is clear that the EES was unwilling to associate itself in public with all of its apostle's ideas. When the EES received permission from Galton to 'publish a collection of his papers in book form', it was decided the book would contain:

- I. Probability, The Foundation of Eugenics.
- II. Eugenics, its Definition, Scope & Aims
- III. Restrictions in Marriage
 - Studies in National Eugenics
 - Eugenics as a Factor in Religion
- IV. The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed etc.
- V. Local Associations for promoting Eugenics.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, p.4, p.10 and p.31.

⁴⁸ D. W. Forrest, *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius* (Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1974), p.111; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, p.32.

⁴⁹ Crackanhorpe in *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Apr. 1909), p.15.

⁵⁰ EES 31 March 1909, SA/Eug/L.1.

Conspicuously absent were Galton's thoughts on prayer, and it was not until 1951, when the EES republished Galton's work, that three of his more controversial works were reinstated into the publication.⁵¹ The paper 'Eugenics as a Factor in Religion', which was included in the 1909 plan, sat in perfect harmony with Peile's ideas. Galton argued that 'eugenics strengthens the sense of social duty' such that it ought to find 'a welcome home in every tolerant religion'.⁵² Eugenics was said to extend 'the function of philanthropy to future generations' and reinforce 'the importance of the marriage covenant by directing serious attention to the probable quality of the future offspring'. Thus far eugenics was portrayed as supplemental to existing values, actually offering to improve them; where it would forbid 'sentimental charity' which was 'harmful to the race', Galton claimed that this would be replaced by 'equivalent' acts of 'personal kindness'. The specific details of these kind acts were not described, but the overall consequences of eugenics were summarised as:

It brings the tie of kinship into prominence and strongly encourages love and interest in family and race. In brief, eugenics is a virile creed, full of hopefulness, and appealing to many of the noblest feelings of our nature.⁵³

It seems that the EES had taken Peile's comments seriously and was keen to minimise any offence to the Church. The minutes of the organisation are littered with references to the public meetings and lectures that had been addressed by its members,⁵⁴ and although Christian audiences were only one part of this work the

⁵¹ Three works that had been included in Galton's original 1883 publication, removed by the EES for its first version of his work, were: 'Objective Efficacy of Prayer', 'Enthusiasm', and 'Possibilities of Theocratic Intervention'. Appendix II, 11 April 1951, SA/Eug/L.11.

⁵² Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics* (The Eugenics Education Society, London, 1909), p.68.

⁵³ Galton, *Essays in Eugenics*, p.70.

⁵⁴ Meetings were listed in minutes until November 1930 when it was decided to form a separate 'sub-committee' to deal with 'the Society's policy in propaganda'. This was named the 'Liaison committee' until May 1936 when it became the 'Propaganda Committee', which remained the committee's name until February 1940 when it was renamed as the 'Education Committee'. This committee recorded all external meetings in a separate register; an analysis of these meetings indicates the EES' willingness to overlook political and religious values in the belief that all groups

EES appears to have given these meetings special attention. In October 1912 the EES reported that 17 meetings were arranged for the coming three months; but the only ones described were ‘two courses of three lectures each, and two large meetings to be addressed by the Dean of St. Paul’s’.⁵⁵ The lecture courses appear to have been singled out in order to explain how the number of seventeen meetings had been reached, but the interest in Inge’s work appears to have centred upon his position in the Church and the number of individuals that had been attracted by his efforts.

One clear reason for this attention, suggested above in the writings of *The Eugenics Review*, was the fear that religious objections to eugenics could present a serious challenge to the EES. The concerns of EES members about this struck at the very heart of the propaganda work of the organisation. Although there were times that financial constraints hampered EES propaganda – for example, when the Society declined a library’s request for free copies of *The Eugenics Review*⁵⁶ – it was much more common for moral and religious concerns to shape the structure of the Society’s work in public. In October 1911 the Society met with ‘Dr. Ploetz’⁵⁷ of the ‘German Society for Race Hygiene’ and agreed to form an ‘International Race

should be informed of eugenics. In 1932 it recorded meetings for secular societies, church groups, Labour Party meetings, and Conservative Clubs. The diversity of these meetings adds a tactical element to the historiographical debate over the political orientation of eugenics, as seen in: Michael Freeden, ‘Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (1979); Greta Jones, ‘Eugenics and Social Policy between the Wars’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1982); and Freeden, ‘Eugenics and Ideology’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1983). EES 12 Nov. 1930, SA/Eug/L.9; EES 12 May 1936, SA/Eug/L.39; EES 12 Feb. 1940, SA/Eug/L.10; SA/Eug/L.38.

⁵⁵ EES 4 October 1912, SA/Eug/L.2.

⁵⁶ EES 1 December 1909, SA/Eug/L.2.

⁵⁷ Alfred Ploetz, along with Wilhelm Schallmayer, has been identified as responsible for the founding of German eugenics. In 1904 Ploetz founded the eugenics journal *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschafts-Biologie*, though it is important to note this publication was primarily concerned with ideas of degeneration rather than völkish ideas of race. See Sheila Faith Weiss, *Race hygiene and national efficiency: the eugenics of Wilhelm Schallmayer* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1987), p.3, p.99 and p.149.

Hygiene Society' to assist with preparations for the 'proposed International Congress of 1912'. Two members of the EES would serve on the council of this organisation, and out of only three principles that were agreed upon as essential to this new work, one established that: 'The Society holds itself aloof from party strife and party differences whether political or religious'. This desire to remain 'aloof' from 'strife' also informed EES policy, and the Society decided that its education efforts should not cover all aspects of the work that the Society conducted in private. The same meeting that discussed the international society also considered 'the general policy of the Society with regard to Venereal Disease'; it was agreed that the subject should not, 'for the present', appear in *The Eugenics Review* but that 'as much unobtrusive work as possible should be undertaken'.⁵⁸ Whilst there were periodic discussions as to whether venereal disease was relevant to eugenics,⁵⁹ and some historians have argued that the subject distracted the EES from other eugenic goals,⁶⁰ at this stage the Society was primarily concerned about the public impact of such discussions. When the EES did question the eugenic nature of venereal disease, concern with public opinion seems to have been paramount; in November 1911 the society unanimously agreed to 'urge the consideration of the subject on the medical bodies' but to refrain from 'definite public action on behalf of the Society'.⁶¹ This principle was repeated in February 1912 as it was agreed:

any recommendation of individual medical men to give definite advice in any way connected with the Society as to the fitness of marriage of individuals would be extremely

⁵⁸ EES 1 June 1911 and 2 October 1911, SA/Eug/L.2.

⁵⁹ The relationship of venereal disease to eugenics was directly questioned by the EES on 1 Nov. 1911, but a survey of the society's minutes reveals the subject continued to feature on a regular basis throughout the period covered in this thesis. SA/Eug/L.2.

⁶⁰ Searle identified 'temperance' and 'venereal disease' amongst a list of subjects representative of 'genuine confusion' over what eugenics really covered, and alleged that some people posed as eugenicists for the sake of promoting other causes. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain*, p.14.

⁶¹ EES 1 November 1911, SA/Eug/L.2.

dangerous. It was, however, recognised that the growing sentiment in favour of such examinations should be cordially encouraged by the Society.⁶²

The danger that was foreseen in medical men giving advice on the fitness of individuals for marriage was not the possibility that this advice would be flawed, but that the Society would be tarnished by association with a measure that was unpopular with the public. The EES was particularly cautious over proposals for marriage reform, and, as seen in Peile's and Galton's papers, was keen to establish that it was not denigrating marriage but rather elevating it by revealing its role as a guardian of the race. It is noteworthy that contentious issues, such as premarital screening for eugenic suitability, were promoted by the EES, but the Society sought to devolve responsibility for this work to medical professionals and others outside the EES. The same tactic was favoured by the AES with respect to sterilisation, as will be seen later in this chapter.

The prospect of the end of the First World War, which led Britain in general to consider the work of reconstruction, had added implications for the EES which believed the war had been a dysgenic force.⁶³ In this context the EES had 'lengthy discussions' about plans for 'the organisation of an educational campaign...on the relation of Eugenics to Social Reconstruction'.⁶⁴ The subject was broad enough to

⁶² EES 14 February 1912, SA/Eug/L.2.

⁶³ Even early in the war, at the height of patriotic fervour, the EES published an article suggesting that modern war was a dysgenic force. In 1921 Henry Fairfield Osborn cited the 'patriotic self-sacrifice' of the war, and the consequent loss of 'centuries of civilization', as reason for the unprecedented importance of the Second International Congress of Eugenics Conference. See *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. VI (Oct. 1914), pp.195–203; and 'Henry Fairfield Osborn, 'Address of Welcome', in *Eugenics, Genetics and the Family: Scientific Papers of the Second International Congress of Eugenics* (2 vols., Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1923) i, p.1. A detailed account of Darwinian debates around war can be found in Paul Crook, *Darwinism, war and history: the debate over the biology of war from the Origin of Species to the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994).

⁶⁴ EES 9 October 1917, SA/Eug/L.4.

include issues such as ‘housing’, ‘divorce’, ‘emigration’, and ‘maternity assistance’;

but it was agreed any backing for legislative action needed to fulfil two criteria:

In the first place official action should only be taken in regard to measures of a directly eugenic character. And secondly that the Council should not attempt to take action as a whole in regard to those reforms which may have only an indirect eugenic bearing, but which must necessarily be the ground for strong differences of opinion between members of the society on religious, political, or moral grounds.⁶⁵

This motion makes clear the dual-edged strategy that was employed by the EES.

There were some areas that had an undeniable bearing on eugenics and were a natural target for the Society, but there were also secondary issues that could indirectly influence eugenics. For example, it was argued that maternity assistance might not in itself improve the ‘quality’ of births, however it might ensure that ‘desirable’ parents had more children. This broad understanding of eugenics meant that the EES expressed willingness to interfere in a number of areas, but only in so far as this would not provoke external hostility to their primary work. It was anticipated that the chief sources of such criticism would come from ‘religious, political, or moral’ beliefs. ‘Divorce’ was discussed as a specific example of a secondary eugenic issue that would attract ‘differences of opinion’ as a result of religious beliefs, which led the EES to pass the neutral resolution:

“That in regard to the reforms connected with marriage laws, the aim of the society should be to increase the sense of parental responsibility, and thus to promote care in selection in marriage”.⁶⁶

Even with this neutral statement, which totally bypassed the subject of divorce, the minutes of the Society record that there was still one ‘dissentient’ and one

⁶⁵ EES 13 November 1917, SA/Eug/L.4.

⁶⁶ EES 13 November 1917, SA/Eug/L.4.

abstention.⁶⁷ With this level of internal discretion it is no surprise to discover that the Society's external work was even more guarded. Thus a 1917 discussion regarding the Society's plans for the 'Baby Week' exhibitions, due to take place 'all over the country', emphasised that: 'diagrams and posters should be prepared illustrating those Eugenic facts which the Committee agreed it was advisable to present to the public'.⁶⁸ The question was not which issues constituted eugenics, but which of those issues were deemed suitable for public consumption. The eugenic education envisaged by the EES, like its policy on eugenic intervention, was highly selective, and guided by concerns about public opinion as much as by questions of eugenic science.

Diversity and Reform in the EES?

The selective educational policy of the EES appears to lend credence to claims that eugenics was a biased and even fraudulent science,⁶⁹ however more recent studies have added cautious qualifications to this idea. Diane Paul has critiqued 'popular' works for depicting eugenics as definitively flawed or evil and has highlighted instead the large and international diversity of the movement⁷⁰. Yet even outside of 'popular' studies there has been a tendency to divide eugenics into two distinct periods of 'mainline' and 'reform'. 'Mainline' eugenics has been defined as that which was marked by race and class bias, whereas the 'reform' eugenics of the 1920s and 1930s is supposed to have moved away from these prejudices.⁷¹ The

⁶⁷ EES 13 November 1917, SA/Eug/L.4.

⁶⁸ EES 17 April 1917, SA/Eug/L.4.

⁶⁹ These aspects of eugenics have been emphasised in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Norton, New York, 1981) and Kenneth Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society*.

⁷⁰ Diane B. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, pp.18–20.

⁷¹ Daniel J. Kevles has been the most prominent advocate of this interpretation, but it has been adopted in studies of both British and American eugenics. The key figures in reform eugenics are

validity of this claim must be assessed separately for eugenics in each nation, but caution must be exercised in all cases to ensure that the development of a more scientifically refined eugenics (or the reduction of obvious prejudices) is not interpreted as an end of eugenics. Without this caution there is a danger that ahistorical or anachronistic value judgments will limit eugenics to a field that would have been alien to those very individuals who participated in the movement itself. As seen above, the EES was eager to embrace a wide range of measures to reach the eugenic ends they desired.⁷² The historian Pauline Mazumdar has provided one of the most nuanced accounts of the changes that took place in the EES during the 1920s and 1930s. Using a case study of Ronald Aylmer Fisher, Mazumdar demonstrates that there was internal pressure for a move away from dependence upon genealogical depictions of basic eugenic principles, towards the use of advanced statistical genetic analyses that were designed to uncover the relative influences of environment and heredity.⁷³ Mazumdar is cautious not to depict this as a fundamental denial of eugenics but as an attempt to justify and explain it in a new way;⁷⁴ similarly she notes that these calls were also met with limited success, as ‘mainline’ eugenicists, such as E. J. Lidbetter, continued to shape the output of the

said to have been Frederick Osborn in the United States and C. P. Blacker in England. See Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, pp.164–75; and Richard Soloway, ‘From Mainline to Reform Eugenics – Leonard Darwin and C P Blacker’, in Robert A. Peel (ed.), *Essays in the History of Eugenics: Proceedings of a Conference Organised by the Galton Institute, London* (The Galton Institute, London, 1997).

⁷² Previous pitfalls of this approach are particularly apparent in the case of the United States as described later in this chapter.

⁷³ Mazumdar, *Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings*, pp.96–130.

⁷⁴ Mazumdar notes that even prominent critics of the EES, such as Lancelot Hogben and John Burdon Sanderson Haldane who attacked the class-bias of the EES and thought its work was premature, agreed that eugenics informed by human genetics could play a role in the future of social policy. Additionally she notes that many of the mathematical models used to attack the EES were derived from the German eugenics movement, demonstrating that eugenics was neither in decline nor scientifically antiquated in this period. *Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings*, pp.189–90.

EES.⁷⁵ Mazumdar's work has revealed an important and previously unknown aspect of the history of eugenics, but it is important to recognise that these strong internal criticisms were also matched by constant fear over external criticism. It will be shown below that religion played a prominent role in these concerns, and that this caused some EES members to bemoan the limiting effect that such fears placed upon the work of the Society. Secondly it will be demonstrated that the EES' policy of discretion with regard to moral and religious factors was coupled with a willingness to co-operate with many external organisations. This contrasts with a recent evaluation which has suggested that the 'reform' period in the EES was characterised by a greater willingness to form 'coalitions...for strategic purposes'.⁷⁶ In reality, it is clear that the distinction between these two periods was much less pronounced for the EES than some accounts might suggest.

It is certainly true that the EES made concerted efforts to co-operate with external organisations during this later period,⁷⁷ but there had been frequent interactions with external organisations throughout the history of the EES.⁷⁸ The level of this co-operation was balanced between two competing concerns: the desire to embrace a

⁷⁵ Mazumdar credits Lidbetter's influence upon the society's 'pauper' study with the creation of a 'Ptolemaic survivor in a Galilean world', *Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings*, p.142.

⁷⁶ Lucy Bland and Lesley A. Hall, 'Eugenics in Britain: The View from the Metropolis', in Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2010), p.216.

⁷⁷ For example a meeting in 1935 agreed that organisations 'whose aims and activities touched upon eugenics' should be invited to appoint delegates to the EES Council to help make it more representative. EES 12 March 1935, SA/Eug/L.10.

⁷⁸ According to EES minutes the society participated with 59 separate external organisations between 1907 and 1935. This number does not include repeat visits, though a number of these relationships extended over a sustained period of time; neither does it include visits to single groups, such as church congregations, nor delegations sent to members of parliament or other eugenics societies. The figure is thus a conservative one and accepts 'co-operation' to cover only meetings where various groups had the opportunity to share ideas, even though propaganda meetings would likely also have presented the opportunity for a fruitful exchange of ideas. Even with this caution the number is sufficiently high to challenge the claim that 'reform' eugenics was distinct for the level of co-operation it was willing to pursue with external organisations. The meetings included in this figure are recorded in appendix two.

wide range of eugenic concerns, and the fear that too great an openness might cause potential supporters to be offended. Ironically the desire to represent a ‘broad church’ of eugenics acted to limit the expression of certain eugenic policies for fear of alienating collaborators. This policy of caution offended eugenicists who desired a more radical expression of eugenic action, and in 1915 ‘Dr. Drysdale’ resigned her membership in protest against the society’s policy on ‘Malthusian propaganda’. Drysdale was a prominent advocate of birth control measures,⁷⁹ which reveals that her complaint was not that the Society was involved in controversial ethical issues but rather that it was too timidly avoiding them. The EES responded to her complaint by stating:

there were many different ways in which the Eugenic problem could be attacked, and that it was possible for various groups of labourers to continue to work, not inharmoniously, in different fields.⁸⁰

The committee did not deny that birth control could be a useful eugenic measure, and it welcomed the work of outsiders in this field; its decision not to address the issue within the EES was a tactical concern related to public image. The fact that the EES accepted a broad understanding of eugenics, despite its own reticence over certain issues, is demonstrated in the Society’s work to compile a bibliography of eugenic literature. Here it was reported:

So far we have only worked at our own Library but before the work is complete we shall have to throw our net wider. And this is where the greatest difficulty is to be anticipated.

⁷⁹ ‘Dr. Drysdale’ was Alice Vickery, one of the first British women to obtain a medical qualification. Vickery’s partner, Charles Robert Drysdale, was a founder of the Malthusian League and their son Charles Vickery Drysdale served as president of this organisation. Vickery was critical of existing sexual mores, and active in the campaign for women’s suffrage and the international birth control movement. Lesley A. Hall, ‘Vickery, Alice (1844–1929)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, May 2010) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39448> accessed 24 August 2011; Susanne Klausen and Alison Bashford, ‘Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism, and Feminism’, in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics*, p.100.

⁸⁰ EES 26 January 1915, SA/Eug/L.4.

The truth is that Eugenics is a synthesis of much old thought and that the connections between our subject and others can only be discovered by personal knowledge.⁸¹

Remarkably this mention of ‘personal knowledge’ did not mean the EES was free from its own internal debates over the scope of eugenics.⁸² In addition to these internal discussions, the EES also received letters with enquiries that reveal diverse interpretations of the issues in which the Society was believed to be interested.⁸³

The diversity of eugenics has implications for discussions of how long eugenics remained a popular ideology. If membership of the EES and other similar organisations is used as the only measure of the popularity of eugenics, the beliefs of eugenicists themselves are ignored. The committee of the EES believed precisely the opposite, and attributed its declining membership during the 1930s to the success of the organisation at promoting eugenics. Firstly it was claimed that the financial security afforded by a bequest from Henry Twitchin meant that some

⁸¹ EES 18 April 1916, SA/Eug/L.4.

⁸² For example on 1 Nov. 1911 there was a debate over whether venereal disease came within the scope of eugenics; on 4 Oct. 1912 it was agreed it would be unwise to grant ‘diplomas’ for the society’s course in eugenics owing to ‘the present undefined state of Eugenics as a science’; on 7 June 1921 a discussion on the issue of ‘sex hygiene teaching’ for children over fourteen years of age failed to reach an agreement; and on 29 Jan. a ‘keen discussion’ over whether to join with the National Council for Industrial Psychology in hosting a kiosk at the British Empire Exhibition ended with the EES Chairman placing the casting vote to reject the proposal. SA/Eug/L.2 and SA/Eug/L.6.

⁸³ The EES was approached by many organisations and individuals as shown above in note 78, but there were further instances where the society was contacted about issues which it ultimately concluded were outside of its sphere of interest, or which did not lead to membership or participation in any external committee. Examples of letters included ‘W. L. Stead’ writing to ask about EES plans to publish ‘an educational handbook in sex teaching for children and adolescents’, 6 Apr. 1910; ‘Dr. Haggart M. L. A.’ asking for information on marriage licenses and whether ‘marriages between white and coloured or native races should be forbidden’, 1 Feb. 1911; the Women’s Social and Political Union asking if there was information on ‘whether a large proportion of women who become prostitutes are of illegitimate birth’, 1 Jun. 1915; a request to protest against ‘a proposed reduction on expenditure in education by the LCC’, 18 Jan. 1916; ‘Mr. Hayward’ regarding his ‘scheme for promoting Civic, Moral and Religious Education’, 16 May 1916; a request from ‘Mrs Halliday MacCartney’ of the ‘Boys Industrial Council’ said not to ‘come sufficiently within the scope of Eugenics’ to warrant action, 17 Oct. 1916; ‘Dr. Dubasch’ on ‘Sanitation and Town Planning’, 9 Apr. 1918; a request to support legislation advocated by the Child Welfare Council deemed outside ‘the scope of the work of this Society’, 9 Apr. 1918; and the ‘Alliance of Honour’ was refused financial support for its ‘film propaganda’, 11 Feb. 1925. SA/Eug/L.2, SA/Eug/L.4, SA/Eug/L.5, SA/Eug/L.7.

supporters felt released from the duty of giving the organisation financial support through membership fees. Secondly it was argued that, where previously the EES had been the only advocate for voluntary sterilisation, its success in establishing a 'Joint Committee on Voluntary Sterilisation' meant that the Society lost the membership of those who had previously joined only in support of this measure.⁸⁴ This has very obvious implications for historians seeking to gauge the scale of support for eugenics by means of examining the subscriptions to eugenics organisations alone. By the EES' own admission, not all of its members prior to the 1930s had been in general agreement with its views on eugenics, with some only joining in support of its stance on sterilisation, and after 1930 there were non-members whose views towards eugenics remained sympathetic. The EES could not, and did not intend to claim a monopoly on eugenic ideas, action, or support.

This breadth, and the consequent need to keep peace with a diverse range of opinion, was criticised again in 1932 by George Pitt-Rivers.⁸⁵ Pitt-Rivers complained that the Society's history of caution had backfired. He suggested that there should be a 'debate between two or more speakers on "Religion and Eugenics"', but the committee responded by saying that this would be more suited to an 'informal and private gathering' than a 'Members' Meeting'. Pitt-Rivers responded to this decision with a memorandum on EES policy, where he explained

⁸⁴ EES, 5 Feb. 1935, SA/Eug/L.10.

⁸⁵ Pitt-Rivers was known for his far right political views and was one of around seven hundred and fifty British such individuals interned by the state in 1940, held until 1942. Outside of his work with the EES he published anti-Semitic and racist political and anthropological texts. David Renton, 'Rivers, George Henry Lane Fox Pitt- (1890–1966)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, May 2005) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75512>, accessed 1 Sep. 2011.

that his suggestion had been prompted by the success of his own visit to a church congregation, and by the:

conviction that two of the principal sources of interest in, as well as some of the organized opposition to, the discussion of eugenical subjects derives from the contacts of eugenics with politics on the one hand and religion on the other.⁸⁶

He accepted that there was no fixed position on eugenics from either politics or religion, but warned that ‘a prior allegiance is seldom exchanged for a secondary allegiance by any force of argument’.⁸⁷ Pitt-Rivers argued that a failure to recognise the fixity of allegiances had resulted in a mistaken policy where ‘partisans of different camps’ made the claim that there was ‘no essential antagonism between the two [eugenics and any allegiances that competed with it for loyalty]’. In contrast to the conciliatory efforts of the EES, Pitt-Rivers claimed that even ‘declarations of uncompromising opposition’ could serve a useful function:

it does not follow that the interest aroused by controversy does not strengthen the side with a strong and logically presented case immeasurably more than compromising and equivocal attempts to conciliate all views or timorous avoidance of any subject or point likely to evoke opposition, which is invariably rewarded with indifference or contempt.⁸⁸

Pitt-Rivers claimed that the EES had already lost ‘far more than it had gained in influential support’ as a result of an unwise strategy of compromise. He made a final, stinging criticism of current EES policy as he argued that controversy, ‘restrained only by a regard for scientific conventions and friendly feeling’, was a symbol of ‘the most healthy, vigorous and influential scientific societies’.⁸⁹ This thinly veiled attack upon the scientific credentials of the EES was followed by a

⁸⁶ George Pitt Rivers, ‘Memorandum on Policy and Other Matters’, SA/Eug/L.9.

⁸⁷ Rivers, ‘Memorandum on Policy and Other Matters’.

⁸⁸ Rivers, ‘Memorandum on Policy and Other Matters’.

⁸⁹ Rivers, ‘Memorandum on Policy and Other Matters’.

series of recommendations for a more ‘vigorous appeal to intelligence and youth’. A central aspect of this proposal was the belief that future policy should be informed only with respect to ‘scientific doubt’, not ‘the laggard state of public opinion’.

The criticisms of Drysdale and Pitt-Rivers straddled the period of ‘mainline’ and ‘reform’ eugenics, and represent both external and internal criticisms of EES policy. In both cases religious and moral concerns were blamed for the Society’s unwillingness to address contentious eugenic issues. This awareness of external religious opposition intensified during the 1920s, in part prompted by the Society’s agitation for sterilisation legislation.

Increased Religious Criticism: the Perceived failure of Concessionary Tactics.

The April 1920 issue of *The Eugenics Review* featured an article by Leonard Darwin,⁹⁰ president of the EES, in response to a criticism of eugenics that had appeared in the January issue of *The Month*.⁹¹ *The Month* article, ‘The Fallacies of Eugenics’, had opened by describing an EES pamphlet as possessing ‘the usual mixture of what is sound and what is, unequivocally, rotten’. One ‘rotten’ aspect was the alleged focus upon purely physical qualities, without any reference to man’s primary purpose of perfecting ‘his spiritual nature’. Despite this flaw, the authors

⁹⁰ Leonard Darwin was the eighth child of Charles Robert Darwin. At the age of eighteen he passed into the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1871. He resigned his military commission in 1890 and went on to serve on the London county council and then as Member of Parliament for Lichfield from 1892 to 1895, before he was elected to the presidency of the EES in 1911. Darwin held this position continuously until 1928, and in 1912 was awarded an honorary degree of doctor of science by the University of Cambridge. A. W. F. Edwards, ‘Darwin, Leonard (1850–1943)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, May 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54078>, accessed 1 Sep. 2011.

⁹¹ *The Month* was published between 1864 and 1939 and featured articles on history, science, philosophy, travel, education as well as fiction. From 1865 the Jesuits of the Farm Street Community in London owned the periodical. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (eds.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (Academia Press, Gent, 2009), p.421.

agreed that the goal of eliminating ‘mental and physical disease’ was ‘very commendable provided that this did not involve measures like ‘artificial sterility’. Ironically, in this case an attempt by the EES to appeal to Christian ideals to gain support for their work appears to have provoked the opposite response. The EES pamphlet had claimed ‘Our duty to posterity is at least as great as our duty to our neighbour’,⁹² a claim that the authors of *The Month* dismissed as too vague to be tenable. Darwin’s response to these criticisms was the epitome of conciliation that Pitt-Rivers would later oppose. Firstly he rejected the claim that the EES valued only physical qualities, and said:

I may say that eugenists place moral qualities first, intellectual second, and physical third in the order of desirability.⁹³

Secondly, he admitted that the society favoured ‘voluntary limitation in the size of families’, but said that the means of achieving this were dependent upon the moral values of couples themselves. Moving away from the contentious issue of birth control, he argued that valuable eugenic results could be achieved whether by ‘abstinence or by other means’. When Darwin addressed the controversial issue of sterilisation he admitted that this might ‘add to the risk of immorality’ through consequence-free promiscuity, but questioned whether in some cases this might not be more ‘humane’ than requiring ‘compulsory detention’. Darwin did not provide his own conclusion on this issue but instead emphasised that the EES had not reached an ‘official opinion’ due to its members’ ‘widely divergent opinions’.⁹⁴

⁹² This phrase was used in the EES pamphlet *Those Who Come After: A Word on Racial Responsibility*, a publication that the society privately acknowledged had not been met with success. Other publications continued to employ allusions to Christianity, however; and the society’s 1926 Christmas appeal, titled *Appeal to Stop Appeals*, spoke of ‘the Blind, the Halt, the Lame, the Poor – always with us’. SA/Eug/J.17; EES 13 Jan. 1920, SA/Eug/L.5.

⁹³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Apr. 1920), p.48.

⁹⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Apr. 1920), pp.48–9.

The same period saw the EES begin to consider Roman Catholic criticism separately from other external critics. In 1921 W. R. Inge authored an article, 'Eugenics and Religion', which recalled that Rev. Peile's work had been commissioned out of fear that 'religious prejudice might hamper the movement'. With the benefit of hindsight, Inge argued that this fear had been unwarranted, as, excepting the Roman Catholic Church, the greatest problem from religious individuals was the 'little interest' that they had shown in eugenics. Inge contrasted this lethargy with examples of the ways in which he believed Christianity was in accordance with eugenics, ranging from its objections to the marriage of cousins (which he described as an example of 'a sanitary rule...put under supernatural sanction') to the argument that Christian concern for the soul could be equated with eugenicists' concern for 'nature' rather than 'nurture'.⁹⁵ Even with this focus on 'nature', Inge accepted that environmental reforms, such as 'abolishing the slums', could receive eugenic sanction if they raised people to 'a position of self-respect' where they stopped 'breeding' so quickly.⁹⁶ Inge said eugenics only wished to:

remind our orthodox and conservative friends that the Sermon on the Mount contains some admirably clear and unmistakable precepts. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, neither can a good tree bring forth evil fruit. Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'⁹⁷

In this argument eugenics was not an innovation, but a reminder of previous biblical wisdom from the highest authority; failure to obey, and thereby the failure to

⁹⁵ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Jan. 1921), pp.257–58 and p.262.

⁹⁶ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Jan. 1921), pp.262–3.

⁹⁷ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Jan. 1921), p.263.

provide reformers with a ‘better material to work upon’, was equivalent to ‘sinning against the light’ and not working to bring ‘the Kingdom of God upon earth’.⁹⁸

The EES continued to counter religious criticism and apathy throughout the 1920s. Beginning in December 1922, the EES liaised with the organisers of a ‘Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship’. This event was intended to ‘bring Christian ideals into the corporate life of the community’.⁹⁹ The EES committee initially hesitated over whether to become involved, but ultimately agreed that it would provide ‘an antidote to the strong clerical anti-scientific pronouncements which are so easy to be obtained’.¹⁰⁰ This desire to counter religious criticism also shaped both the decision, in 1923, to ask Inge to present a paper on ‘The Reconciliation of Christian Precepts and Eugenic Principles’,¹⁰¹ and that in 1925 to encourage ‘Mr. Scopes of Dayton’ that most ‘Ministers of religion in England’ were supportive of evolutionary theory.¹⁰² It seems likely that this also prompted the EES to invite the Bishop of Birmingham, The Right Rev. E. W. Barnes, to speak in support of eugenics in October 1925.¹⁰³ Barnes’ paper, which was reproduced in *The Eugenics Review* for wider circulation, was primarily concerned with the basic principles of eugenics. It seems likely that most members of the EES could have presented the same ideas, but it was evidently considered desirable for a bishop to present these arguments.¹⁰⁴ The paper was even-handed

⁹⁸ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XII (Jan. 1921), p263.

⁹⁹ EES 5 December 1922, SA/Eug/L.6. For information about the ‘Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship’ see: Sue Morgan (eds.), “‘The Word Made Flesh’ Women, Religion and Sexual Cultures”, in Sue Morgan and Jacqueline deVries (eds.), *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures*, p.165

¹⁰⁰ EES 6 February 1923 and 1 May 1923, SA/Eug/L.6.

¹⁰¹ EES 29 May 1923, SA/Eug/L.6.

¹⁰² EES 8 July 1925, SA/Eug/L.7.

¹⁰³ EES 14 October 1925, SA/Eug/L.7.

¹⁰⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XVIII (Apr. 1926), pp.7–14.

and acknowledged that ‘the balance of truth’ rested between environmental and hereditarian concerns, but nevertheless concluded that ‘the mind’ was a characteristic that persisted ‘from generation to generation’.¹⁰⁵ This provided Barnes with reason to suggest the religious significance of eugenics, which he claimed sought to answer the question: ‘How can we secure the survival of the fittest and therefore the survival and development of the fittest types of religious aspiration and understanding.’¹⁰⁶ In this argument eugenics was tied with the future of Christianity; traditional eugenic concerns, such as the ‘prolific’ breeding of the ‘feeble-minded’, acquired added religious implications as these individuals were said to have ‘no capacity of response to religious teaching’:

‘No man is so vile, so degraded,’ says the Protestant evangelist, ‘that we can pronounce *a priori* that his conversion is hopeless.’ ‘Through the sacraments there is salvation for all,’ says the Catholic. Yet an evangelical movement always ends by creating a spiritual aristocracy...The low-grade worshipper gives base metal for gold.¹⁰⁷

Barnes’ paper was republished as part of a commemoration of the centenary of the EES, and these remarks were highlighted as particularly ‘worrisome’ and in conflict with the ‘remarkable’ ministries that ‘Anglo-Catholic priests’ had enjoyed in urban districts.¹⁰⁸ However, as will be seen in the chapters to follow, this analogy was not unique to Bishop Barnes, or out of the reach of Christian groups that worked in slum areas. As Barnes continued his discussion of environmental reform, he adopted a strategy similar to Inge and pointed to a view that he believed would satisfy both environmentalists and hereditarians; society should remove

¹⁰⁵ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XVIII (Apr. 1926), pp.7–8.

¹⁰⁶ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XVIII (Apr. 1926), pp.9.

¹⁰⁷ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XVIII (Apr. 1926), p.11.

¹⁰⁸ Bishop of Birmingham, ‘Some Reflections on Eugenics and Religion’ with an Introduction by Revd Dr John Polkinghorne, in Steve Jones and Milo Keynes (eds.), *Twelve Galton Lectures* (The Galton Institute, London, 2007), p.28 and p.35.

environments in which ‘the feeble-minded, the criminal, and the insane can multiply rapidly’. He ended by framing this work as part of bringing ‘the Kingdom of God on earth’, and said when people realise this ‘their objections to repressive action will vanish’.¹⁰⁹

One such ‘repressive action’ that attracted criticism was EES support for sterilisation legislation. The controversy over this subject was not restricted to outside the EES; when Leonard Darwin discussed sterilisation with Sir Frederick Willis, Darwin twice emphasised that the EES had no fixed opinion, and he claimed that his main object in forming draft legislation was ‘to make my council think!’¹¹⁰ Willis’ notes from the meeting confirm this situation; they record that he had ‘strongly pressed’ Darwin that the most ‘important thing for the Eugenic Society to do was to make up their minds exactly what they wanted to ask for and then get somebody expert in drafting to draft a Bill.’¹¹¹ The delicacy surrounding this issue was made clear when the EES committee discussed sterilisation proposals; Willis’ name was scored out from the minutes and it was emphasised that a progress report on the Sterilisation Bill was ‘confidential’.¹¹² In the midst of these discussions there were hints that religion was feared to be at the root of criticisms of eugenics, and there was a shift towards the more confrontational policy that Pitt-Rivers would come to promote. In May 1927 a ‘debate’ was proposed in the hope that this might ‘attract large audiences’, but the potential for conflict was limited by the agreement

¹⁰⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XVIII (Apr. 1926), p.14.

¹¹⁰ Darwin approached Willis through his niece, and the two first met on 8 Feb. 1927. Letters from Leonard Darwin to his niece ‘Ruth’ and Sir Frederick Willis, dated 28 January and 1 February 1927, MH 51/547, The National Archive, London.

¹¹¹ Sir Frederick Willis, 8 February 1927, MH 51/547.

¹¹² EES 9 February 1927, SA/Eug/L.8.

that ‘Mr. G. K. Chesterton’ would not be invited to take the chair of these events.¹¹³ However, the very fact that he had been considered for such a role represented a major shift from the earlier policy of approaching only those who were known to be sympathetic to eugenics. It was in this period that the EES conducted its first letter-writing campaign to promote its work amongst churches; examples of these letters make it clear that conflict was the guiding stimulus behind this work. One letter opened by stating:

I feel that Eugenics advance is horribly hindered by the ignorance and fear of Christians, and I am very anxious to begin propaganda amongst Church people in the hope of showing them what we are really after and of waking them up to their tremendous responsibility in regard to the future.¹¹⁴

Although during this period the EES discussed the opposing strategies of confrontation versus discretion, its policy decisions remained undeniably shaped by caution. In May 1928 the committee heard that ‘many individual people [in government] were in sympathy’ with sterilisation legislation, but that attempts to introduce a proposal at that time would fail. It was agreed that ‘an introduction which failed might do harm’, so rather than attempt this the committee decided to continue with ‘quiet propaganda work’.¹¹⁵ There was no hint that the EES perceived this policy to be a contradiction in terms; quiet and discreet propaganda had been the Society’s policy from the beginning. The continued prominence of questions from religious quarters, and the escalation of these discussions as sterilisation policy

¹¹³ Even considering Chesterton for such a post was surprising; in 1922 he had published an attack on eugenics that stated ‘the Eugenist doctors ... do not know what they want, except that they want your soul and your body and mind in order to find out’. Chesterton, *Eugenics and Other Evils* (Cassell and Company Ltd., London, 1922), p.80; EES 11 May 1927, SA/Eug/L.8.

¹¹⁴ Letter to Rev. Pat. McCormick, 10 December 1927. EES records include a folder dedicated to similar correspondence including an approach to The Salvation Army, which is discussed in chapter five. SA/Eug/G.25.

¹¹⁵ EES 22 May 1928, SA/Eug/L.8.

was considered, suggest that the committee's decision to work quietly on this subject was influenced by concerns over religious criticism. This was made explicit in March 1930, when the EES committee reminded the editor of *The Eugenics Review* of the need to consider the opinions of 'medical men and clergymen' when publishing book reviews.¹¹⁶ In July 1930, 23 years after the foundation of the EES, the Society formed its first committee dedicated solely to religion – one of seven new committees that were formed to assist the 'Committee for legalising Eugenic Sterilization'.¹¹⁷ Although the EES made a distinction between Roman Catholic and Protestant beliefs, both were considered to pose a threat to sterilisation legislation. Opposition from Roman Catholics was blamed for preventing other organisations from urging support for sterilisation,¹¹⁸ and *The Eugenics Review* was forced to use arguments furnished by the American eugenicist Paul Popenoe in order to defend the EES from criticisms published in *The Catholic Times*. Popenoe, who had been influential in the passage of Californian sterilisation laws, interpreted writings from Thomas Aquinas to conclude: 'he [Aquinas]...would certainly have approved of sterilization of persons for the sake of and by the State'.¹¹⁹ In this period before a papal decree on eugenics, this spiritual precedent was perceived to be a powerful tool in the eugenic armoury. When the Pope did issue a decree in opposition to sterilisation and eugenics, the EES maintained its previous policy of treating religious beliefs with caution:

the Eugenics Society should concentrate on re-butting the
Papal attack on eugenics and avoid unnecessarily

¹¹⁶ EES 12 March 1930, SA/Eug/L.9.

¹¹⁷ The other committees were for: 'politics', 'medicine', 'law', 'finance', 'press' and 'general purposes'. EES 9 July 1930, SA/Eug/L.9.

¹¹⁸ 'Proposals to Put Before Council' 21 November 1929, SA/Eug/L.8.

¹¹⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXI (Jan. 1930), pp.277–9.

antagonising Roman Catholics and Anglo Catholics by attacks on the general aspects of Catholic doctrine.¹²⁰

In the case of Protestant churches, Inge had ensured that there were discussions of eugenics at both the 1910¹²¹ and 1930 Anglican Church Congresses,¹²² but in 1930 a private discussion between EES members disclosed that Rev. J. C. Pringle (an EES committee member) was not expected to attend the 1930 Congress, as: ‘His committee has not yet taken a definite line on sterilization and I should not think, under those circumstances, he could work publicly’.¹²³ The 1930s was evidently a period of some disagreement over the best approach to take with regard to religion; Pitt-Rivers advocated a stance of no compromise, whilst others continued to favour discretion. However, the EES was united in the belief that the question of religion was an important one. In July 1932 the EES committee agreed the need for a meeting on the subject of ‘eugenics and religion’ before any decision was made on who could be approached to address this theme.¹²⁴

American Eugenics Society: The Beginnings

Concerns about the impact of religion upon eugenics were not unique to the EES. An analysis of the papers of the AES demonstrates that religion was a regular preoccupation of the eugenics movement in the United States, and the question of religion featured prominently in concerns about how the ideology could be made palatable. In this section it will be demonstrated that the AES made deliberate attempts to clothe itself in Christian symbolism, and repeatedly attempted to

¹²⁰ EES 11 March 1931, SA/Eug/L.9.

¹²¹ Details of the 1910 Congress were discussed on 5 October 1910, SA/Eug/L.2.

¹²² Speaking of his success in obtaining the eugenics feature at the 1930 Congress Inge bleakly lamented ‘I do not think I can do any more’. Letter from Inge to ‘Mrs Hodson’, 1930, SA/Eug/D.55, Box 35.

¹²³ Letter about the Church Congress, dated 17 July 1930, SA/Eug/D.55, Box 35.

¹²⁴ EES 6 July 1932, SA/Eug/L.9.

incorporate Christian figureheads, ideas and language within its campaign to popularise eugenics. Secondly, it will be argued that concerns about the ‘misrepresentation’ of eugenics by religious communities led the AES to employ what may be termed ‘negative definitions’ of its activities. In these definitions, refutations of matters with which the AES did not wish to be associated came to occupy more space than positive statements of true policy. Alongside this, the AES experienced an unresolved tension between the desire to depict the religious-like aspects of eugenics and the wish to present the movement as scrupulously scientific. Finally, with this context in mind, a resolution will be suggested for the historiographical divide between those who support the concept of ‘reform eugenics’, and those who believe that ‘negative’ elements remained within the American eugenics movement to a much later date. It will be argued that concerns about the misrepresentation of eugenics, and fears of religious criticisms, resulted in a conscious move towards a more softly spoken form of eugenics. It will be argued that, rather than a replacement for previous ideas, this strategy was merely a temporary measure designed to allow popular opinion to be won over, and the new eugenic faith to erase former doubts.

The AES grew out of and replaced the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America,¹²⁵ which had been formed in response to the Second International Congress of Eugenics in 1921.¹²⁶ From its earliest days, there was a strong recognition that religion was an issue which required sensitive handling. Henry

¹²⁵ The Committee handed over its operations to the AES on 30 January 1926, prior to which several members already served in both organisations. American Philosophical Society Library, American Eugenics Society Records [Hereafter ‘AESP’] Box 7, Folder: AES Minutes 1925–1926.

¹²⁶ Two volumes were published following the Congress. *Eugenics, Genetics and the Family* and *Eugenics in Race and State*, both published by Williams and Wilkins in 1923, Baltimore.

Fairfield Osborn,¹²⁷ who had been involved in organising the 1921 Congress,¹²⁸ wrote to Leonard Darwin less than three months after the Congress had ended and remarked:

I have the best possible news for you, namely, the hearty endorsement of the Eugenics Congress by the leading Roman Catholic prelate in America, Archbishop Hayes of the Diocese of New York...On every side there is evidence that the eugenics propaganda has taken a firm root in this country. For the first time people understand what we are driving at and sympathize with the movement.¹²⁹

At this foundational stage in the organised American eugenics movement, the above comment reveals what were to become repeating themes in its history: positive reviews from religious groups were highly desirable and, concomitantly, there was a general concern that eugenics had been misunderstood. Perhaps partly to capitalise on this positive reaction and partly to dispel further misconceptions, HFO suggested that the religious qualities of eugenics should be incorporated in a motto on the letterhead of the organisation; a very similar approach to that considered by the EES. He suggested that the motto should be: ‘To raise American civilization through improving the spiritual, intellectual, moral and physical characters of the American people’.¹³⁰ HFO believed that this idea was so important that, when he was unable to attend AES committee meetings owing to ‘arrears’ in his ‘regular

¹²⁷ The Osborn family was so heavily involved in American eugenics that Allan Chase has spoken of the movement as ‘an Osborn fiefdom’. To avoid confusion with other Osborns, Henry Fairfield Osborn will hereafter be referred to as ‘HFO’. Chase cited in Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society’, p.111.

¹²⁸ HFO had secured the American Museum of Natural History as the venue for the Congress.

¹²⁹ Letter from HFO to Major Leonard Darwin, 5 December 1921, Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers, Archives of the American Museum of Natural History.

¹³⁰ International Commission on Eugenics Ad Interim Committee of the United States of America, 9 June 1922, AESP Box 16.

duties', he reminded the committee of the idea and wrote a letter to urge them to adopt his motto.¹³¹

The Committee did not implement a motto, but this was not a rejection of the importance of incorporating religious values within their work. When the AES sought members for an 'advisory council', which it was hoped would bring prestige to the organisation, clergymen were considered natural targets.¹³² The names of these council members were printed on the organisation's publicity; although a letterhead from 1923 lists only five clergymen out of 99 names,¹³³ the manner in which the clergy was approached indicates that the Society felt obliged to secure their support. There had been a targeted campaign in which the AES committee produced a list of clergymen, ranked in the order that they would be contacted; those further down the list would be approached after the AES had received responses from those they either valued more highly or felt were more likely to respond favourably.¹³⁴ This Advisory Council was not purely symbolic; in 1922 the Committee agreed it would not engage in any educational or propaganda work without first 'giving opportunity to members of the Advisory Council to Object', and they were frequently used as a gauge of opinion before publications were finalised.¹³⁵ Given that the main function of the AES was education and propaganda, this was a severe limitation. Elsewhere in the organisation even higher proportions of Christian representation were secured. Kenneth Ludmerer's analysis

¹³¹ Letter from HFO to Irving Fisher, 14 April 1922, Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers, Archives of the American Museum of Natural History.

¹³² Unpublished Autobiography of Leon Fradley Whitney, p.186, APS (Presented 1973). In June 1923 plans were made to circulate the names of this Council via the journal *Eugenical News* as part of a 'drive for new members'. Minutes of the Eugenics Committee, 16 June 1923, AESP Box 5.

¹³³ Rev. John Cooper, Rev. Harry Fosdick, Rev. Frederick Lynch, Dean Victor C. Vaughan, and Bishop William Lawrence. 'Financial Statement 1923' on headed paper. AESP, Box 5.

¹³⁴ AES 9 June 1922 and 9 August 1922, AESP, Box 5.

¹³⁵ AES 6 September 1922, AESP, Box 5 AES Crackpot – AES Iowa.

of the AES booklet, *What I think About Eugenics*, has shown that, of the 143 people quoted in favour of eugenics, only eight were trained in genetics while there were 19 members of the clergy.¹³⁶

The high number of clergymen that were quoted in *What I think About Eugenics* reflects an organised strategy to ensure clerical support. In February 1923 the committee developed its outreach to groups of particular eugenic significance by organising committees for ‘co-operation’ with ‘Physicians’, ‘Social Workers’ and ‘Clergymen’.¹³⁷ Alongside these committees there were others organised around matters of strategy and policy, for example ‘selective immigration’, ‘research’, ‘exhibits’, ‘biologic geneology [sic]’, ‘crime prevention and legislation’, ‘finance’ and ‘organization’. The Committee on Co-operation with Clergymen, headed by Reverend Henry S. Huntington, entertained ambitious plans to create a committee of 40 members overseen by a ‘small executive committee’; it possessed a large share of the AES budget to further this course. In 1927 the committee was assigned \$4000, compared to budgets of \$100 and \$300 for the Committees on Co-operation with Physicians and Social Workers respectively. This gave Huntington’s committee over 25 percent of the AES budget and placed it second only to the Committee on ‘Popular Education’, which was given \$9000 for its work – a sum that reflected the much broader task undertaken by that committee.¹³⁸ Even committees that were not dedicated to religious work could not avoid this issue, and it is clear that the AES was not alone in assigning priority to this subject. A survey

¹³⁶ Kenneth Ludmerer, *Genetics and American Society*, p.14.

¹³⁷ AES 24 February 1923, AESP Papers, Box 5.

¹³⁸ It would be wrong to claim a simple correlation between the amount spent and the importance vested in each committee, this would unduly minimise subjects such as immigration which were central to AES policy yet low in the budget at this stage, but it does show co-operation with religious groups was considered worthy of significant expenditure. AES 3 January 1927, AESP Papers Box 7.

conducted by the AES ‘Committee on Formal Education’ received 162 replies to its question of which students should be required to take classes in ‘the subjects of genetics and eugenics’. The group that received the most suggestions was ‘theological students’ with 61 votes, followed by ‘teachers’ with 34, and students of psychology and agriculture, who received 12 votes each. Fourteen groups of students were suggested in total, which encouraged the committee that there was a ‘growing tendency to apply genetic and eugenic principles to many and varied phases of life’.¹³⁹

The Committee on Cooperation with Clergymen achieved noteworthy successes in its educational objectives. One of its most enduring and popular decisions was made in 1925 when it was agreed to prepare ‘a booklet containing 100 questions and answers’ in order to ‘clarify the minds of clergymen, too many of whom think that eugenics is birth control and nothing else’.¹⁴⁰ This booklet, designed to dispel the confusion of religious communities regarding the work of eugenics, was later named the *Eugenics Catechism* and featured repeatedly in AES policy.¹⁴¹ Such a policy seems natural given the response that the publication received. Leon Whitney’s autobiography claimed that the AES ‘circulated thousands of these booklets to colleges and to organizations – churches for example – who asked for them’.¹⁴² Today there are 17 folders of letters from individuals and organisations requesting copies of the *Eugenics Catechism*, 343 letters in total. Of the surviving letters, requests came from 42 different states showing an influence spread right

¹³⁹ *Report of the Committee on Formal Education of the American Eugenics Society Inc., 1928*, p.6.

¹⁴⁰ AES 28 March 1925 AESP, Box 5 AES Crackpot – AES Iowa.

¹⁴¹ The *Catechism* was discussed and promoted as a useful tool in discussions in AES Minutes in November 1926, January 1927, April 1931, December 1932, October 1934, January 1935.

¹⁴² Unpublished Autobiography of Leon Fradley Whitney, p.186, APS (Presented 1973).

across the United States.¹⁴³ These requests are enumerated in appendix three. Several different versions were published, and Roswell Johnson suggested that the *Catechism* should be ‘revised frequently’ so that it could be ‘more and more a statement of current policy’.¹⁴⁴

Even outside of its work designed specifically for religious groups, AES propaganda was consistently tinged with religious overtones. One of the most successful outreach strategies of the AES was the ‘fitter family contests’, held at fairs across the nation.¹⁴⁵ The records that survive from a small number of the many fairs that took place suggest that several thousand people voluntarily entered contests to be assessed for their eugenic worth.¹⁴⁶ For the AES this served a dual purpose of research and education; contestants were informed of eugenic family values, and examiners recorded data onto trait cards.¹⁴⁷ Examinations were thorough and covered issues ranging from ‘thriftiness’ and ‘community spirit’ to ‘organic...functional disorders’ such as ‘brain or nerve tumor’.¹⁴⁸ For those passing these tests the accolade of eugenic fitness was bestowed with a medal. The AES deliberately incorporated Christian overtones in this praise, as in October 1925, when Madison Grant was commissioned to ‘search the scriptures for an appropriate

¹⁴³ There was also one letter from Washington DC, a further 12 from Canada, one from the UK, and one which could not be traced.

¹⁴⁴ AES 3 January 1927, AESP Box 7.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Rydell has demonstrated how these fairs tapped into the enormous popularity of world’s fairs and suggests eugenicists were made ‘showmen’ in this context. Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993), p.40.

¹⁴⁶ In 1928 there were requests for 42 fitter family contests. The papers surviving from two 1927 fairs each record over 100 entrants being examined. With these figures combined an estimate of 4,000 participants would not be an unreasonable expectation, a figure which does not include those many who would have been audience to such ‘shows’. AESP, Box 5 and Box 7 AES Folder AES Minutes 1927–1929.

¹⁴⁷ This quality was remarked upon and given as a precedent for the decision to promote ‘music tests in cooperation with music stores’, AES, 29 November 1927, AESP Box 7.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Suggestions for Psychiatric Examiner’, AESP Box 11, Folder AES Printing Orders, 1926–1942 #1.

motto'. The resulting medal testified 'Yea, I have a goodly heritage'.¹⁴⁹ The fact it was decided there should be a biblical motto prior to one being identified indicates that this decision was not merely a convenience but rather the AES perceived it would resonate with their target audience and give additional credence to their judgement.

The Shaky Foundations of Eugenics: 'Negative Definitions' and Olive Branches to the Church

When HFO wrote of the Roman Catholic prelate's support as 'the best possible news', it is likely this reflected his joy that there was an influential religious spokesperson for eugenics. It would also become abundantly clear in the 1920s how harmful religious opposition could be towards the uptake of scientific teachings. The 'Scopes Trial', in which HFO took a keen interest, captured headlines across the nation and the *Eugenics Catechism* appears to reflect popular concern surrounding the evolution controversy, with the added concern that eugenics was being misidentified and misappropriated by other movements.¹⁵⁰ The first question answered in the *Catechism* was, rather sensibly, 'What is eugenics?' Galton's definition was quoted in reply: 'Eugenics is the study of those agencies under social control which may improve or impair the inborn qualities of future generations of man either physically or mentally.' Perhaps more unexpectedly, this was immediately followed by 15 questions as to whether eugenics involved various other issues, all of which were denied. Ten of these received a simple 'no'; the AES

¹⁴⁹ The motto featured on the medal was taken from Psalm xvi. 6: 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' AES 31 Oct. 1925, AESP Box 7.

¹⁵⁰ For an account of Osborn's involvement in the 'Scope's Trial' see Brian Regal, *Henry Fairfield Osborn: Race and the Search for The Origins of Man* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2002), p.160–2. For a more general account see Edward J Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Basic Books, New York, 2006).

did not consider eugenics to be related to ‘sex hygiene’, ‘prenatal culture’, ‘public health’, ‘free love’, ‘trial marriage’, ‘a vice campaign’, ‘government-made marriage’, ‘physical culture’, ‘Spartan infanticide’ or ‘breeding human beings like animals’. The remaining five questions addressed ‘birth-control’, ‘producing genius to order’, ‘making supermen’, ‘scientific love making’, and ‘less love in marriage’; these required more nuanced replies but the general answer was the same, ‘no’, or not in the way they believed most people would think. Of birth control it was said:

Q. Is eugenics birth control?

A. No, not in the sense in which the term is commonly used. The conception of fewer inferiors is eugenic, but such birth control as reduces the conception of superiors is opposed to eugenics.¹⁵¹

This rather equivocal answer was developed later in the *Catechism* where, in contrast to the above position, it was explained: ‘The control of births is the principal means of improving the stock.’ Once various means of birth control had been explained, the matter of religious opinion was explained. The answer was by no means as positive as the AES might have liked:

The Protestant and Jewish Churches have taken no definite position. The Roman Catholic Church tolerates birth control accomplished by marital continence, or the use of the “safe period,” but opposes the use of contraceptives.

As if to combat this mediocre support from religious organisations, the questions that followed were directed at emphasising the noble intentions of eugenics:

Q. What is the most precious thing in the world?

A. The human germ plasm.

Q. How may one’s germ plasm become immortal?

A. Only by perpetuation through children.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ *A Eugenics Catechism* (American Eugenics Society, Inc., 1926–6 Revised), AESP Box 11, Folder: AES Printing Orders, 1926–1942 #4.

¹⁵² *A Eugenics Catechism*.

In the midst of controversial ethical issues, which divided opinion, the AES determined to portray the eugenics movement as one with irreproachable aims. The final four questions in the definition section of the *Catechism* addressed the relationship of Christianity and ethics to this noble eugenic cause. The first, ‘Does eugenics contradict the Bible?’, might have been expected to elicit a straightforward ‘yes’ or ‘no’ given the previous fifteen questions, but the reply was: ‘The Bible has much to say for eugenics. It tells us that men do not gather grapes from thorns and figs from thistles.’ For those left in any doubt, the next answer addressed the question of whether eugenics was antagonistic to the Bible. Unsurprisingly, the answer given was ‘no’; instead it was argued ‘The aim of eugenics is to insure the totality of human welfare in the long run.’ The final two questions in this section were not specifically addressed to Christian readers, but the subject left little room for doubt. Connected to the previous subject of ‘human welfare’, the third question discussed the virtue of charity and whether eugenics meant ‘less sympathy for the unfortunate’. This subject received one of the most detailed answers in the entire *Catechism*.¹⁵³ Rather than being an unkind or cruel system, it was said eugenics would lead to a ‘better understanding of them [the unfortunate]’ and more effort ‘to alleviate their suffering’. The method of this kindness was self-confessedly different, however:

by seeing to it that everything possible is done to have fewer hereditary defectives...fewer unavoidable unfortunates with which to divide a sympathy which should be more fully and effectively expended on the inevitable unfortunates...This is a true kindness both to the victims and to society.

¹⁵³ Only two questions were given more space, one explaining the results of Mendel’s pea experiments and the other describing how the ‘object of eugenics’ could be obtained.

The final instalment of this ‘negative definition’ of question and answers addressed the tense subject of evolution:

Q. Must one who believes in eugenics believe in evolution?
 A. Yes, that evolution is a present and a continuing process. It is not necessary to believe that the original or ancestral man evolved from apes. All admit that there has been an evolution in the differentiation of the races, and from fossil man to modern man. Should we not want more of such evolution?

Whilst this answer is uncompromising in its ‘yes’, the first positive reply of the *Catechism*, it seems that the force had been dampened in line with HFO’s views rejecting simian ancestry.¹⁵⁴ It was not necessary to believe in the unpleasant origins of mankind, only those facts which allowed for his future advancement.

Two Minds: Eugenics as Religion?

This high and noble cause of eugenic advancement was cast in a religious light for two reasons. Firstly, even with appeals to Church approval, the AES was uncompromising in its view that existing schemes to elevate society were doomed to failure. Eugenics was the best and only lasting remedy:

We should endeavor to show that eugenics supplies the most effective and permanent solution of the problems which have been so ineffectually dealt with hitherto by physicians, public health officers, social workers, clergymen and reformers – the problems of combating disease, disability, defectiveness, degeneracy, delinquency, vice and crime.¹⁵⁵

Grouped with other agencies traditionally responsible for combating social problems, members of the clergy were slighted as ineffectual in their work. The

¹⁵⁴ Osborn’s campaign over this issue was strongest in 1926, the year this version of the *Catechism* was published. Gowan Dawson has highlighted the issue of simian ancestry was connected with prominent attacks upon evolution based upon fears of sexual morality, and noted the racial implications in proposals for experiments to see if humans and monkeys could breed. Dawson, *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007), p.6 and p.68; and Brian Regal, *Henry Fairfield Osborn*, p.170.

¹⁵⁵ *The American Eugenics Society 1927–2*, AESP Box 11, AES Printing Orders 1926–1942 #3.

AES hoped that ‘co-operation’ with these groups would convert ‘much hygienic effort now distinctly dysgenic into effective eugenic influences.’¹⁵⁶ Secondly, eugenics was presented in a religious light, owing to its intangible and out-of-reach goals. Three articles in the *Eugenical News* illustrate this. In 1917 Dr. W. A. Dorland, a professor of Gynaecology in Chicago, stated that eugenics was ‘beyond reproach’ in principle, but lamented that it remained ‘visionary’ as a result of its conflict with ‘the law of individual liberty’. Dorland argued that the only people who would forego marriage on account of their personal inadequacies would be those ‘in whom the moral and religious senses are predominant, the stuff of which martyrs are made.’ As these individuals were few and far between, eugenics would fail unless ‘degenerates of all classes’ were sterilised.¹⁵⁷ Conversely, eugenics required that healthy individuals had large families and an article in 1918 described it as a state ‘sin’ that children were not made an economic asset for families.¹⁵⁸ Even with these obstacles of state negligence and personal selfishness overcome, the 1923 *Eugenical News* noted that ‘the ultimate fruits of any eugenic movement will, by the nature of the case, require many generations.’ Such timescales meant that eugenics was compared to ‘the founding and development of Christianity, something to be handed on from age to age.’¹⁵⁹

In contrast to this willing acceptance of religious comparisons, which had enjoyed support at the highest level from Francis Galton,¹⁶⁰ conflicting parties within the

¹⁵⁶ *The American Eugenics Society 1927–2.*

¹⁵⁷ *Eugenical News*, Vol. II, No. 12 (1917), p.95.

¹⁵⁸ *Eugenical News*, Vol III, No. 6 (1918), p.47 and p.48.

¹⁵⁹ *Eugenical News*, Vol. VIII, No. 8 (1923), p.80.

¹⁶⁰ Galton said eugenics ‘must be introduced into the national conscience, like a new religion’ and that it had ‘strong claims to become an orthodox religious tenet of the future’: Francis Galton,

eugenics movement frequently made recourse to the slur that opponents were delving into the realms of religious as opposed to scientific work. Charles Davenport said to the American Breeders' Association that the 'greatest danger' facing eugenics was 'from some impetuous temperament, who, planting a banner of eugenics, rallies a volunteer army of utopians, free lovers, and muddy thinkers to start a holy war for the new religion.'¹⁶¹ HFO made a similar attack upon William Bateson, a matter of weeks after he had written to Darwin to celebrate the religious acceptance of eugenics:

[Bateson] reminds me of the "hard shell" Baptist preachers I used to hear when a boy – one third truth, one third opinion, and one third fiction (formerly theological now scientific). One hundred years ago Bateson would have been a great divine or "obscurantist". Now he is a scientific obscurantist of the first rank without being conscious of it.¹⁶²

The charge in both of these attacks was that there were some for whom the message they wished to preach became more extended than the evidence they possessed to corroborate it. There are certain instances where this appears to have been the explicit policy of the AES. The rules for the 1926 'sermon contest', organised by the AES Committee on Cooperation with Clergymen, described the intention of the organisers to give 'the Church-going people of America a better understanding of the real meaning of eugenics and its relation to the future welfare of our republic and our world'.¹⁶³ However, in spite of this professed aim of a better understanding of eugenics, the scoring of the sermons was divided into three sections: thirty percent for 'scientific quality', thirty percent for 'literary quality', and forty percent

'Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims', in Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics* (The Eugenics Education Society, London, 1909).

¹⁶¹ Charles Benedict Davenport cited in Kevles, *In The Name of Eugenics*, p.53.

¹⁶² Letter from HFO to Morgan, 22 January 1922, Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers, Archives of the American Museum of Natural History.

¹⁶³ *Conditions of the Awards for the Best Sermons on Eugenics*, 1926, AESP Box 11, Folder AES Printing Orders, 1926–1942 #1.

for ‘convincing quality’.¹⁶⁴ Whether this was a patronising concession to the inability of ministers to adequately grasp the science of eugenics or a true depiction of AES priorities, in this instance the accuracy of eugenics was deemed secondary to its presentation. Similar concessions were made in the *Eugenical News* and in 1916 a review of an article that had appeared in the journal *Physical Culture* accepted that such articles were ‘often criticized for lack of scientific accuracy’, but argued that such articles were still valuable as ‘they serve to call the attention of many people to important facts.’¹⁶⁵ The irony of judging inaccurate scientific writing as praiseworthy for disseminating ‘important facts’ seems to have gone unnoticed.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, these indiscretions, it is clear that the AES appreciated the damage that could be done by unfavourable comparisons to religious fanaticism. A 1927 draft of a report by the AES Committee on Formal Education met with criticism for its statement that ‘a teacher of eugenics should not be an enthusiast’. The meaning was understood, that teachers of eugenics should not be so enthusiastic as to forfeit ‘objectivity and soundness’, but it was argued that ‘in a report coming from the Society this statement should either be omitted or properly guarded’.¹⁶⁶ The AES committee was aware of its vulnerability to the charge of bias; its only dilemma concerned the best method to combat this, by denouncing bias or concealing the problem. Ultimately it seems that these concerns were too important or widespread to conceal and published discussions of AES propaganda

¹⁶⁴ *Conditions of the Awards for the Best Sermons on Eugenics*.

¹⁶⁵ *Eugenical News*, Vol. I, No. 2 (1916), p.12.

¹⁶⁶ AES 29 November 1927, AESP Box 7.

efforts acknowledged the need for caution. In 1927 the AES described the various modes of communication that were open to the Society, and said:

The subject should be handled with earnestness and seriousness and the idea of eugenics as a fad or a joke should be combated...Departments of Health should become eugenic agencies. Eugenics should be preached from the pulpit and made the subject of drama, fiction, and art...But it is very important that only well-established facts should be taught and not premature and possibly socially dangerous hypotheses given out as facts.¹⁶⁷

This was not a denial of the religious characteristics or aspirations of eugenics, however, and it was claimed that this was the fulfilment of Galton's religious intentions. Eugenic religion would come about as the action of 'practical eugenics' developed a 'eugenic attitude and habit of mind'.¹⁶⁸ The AES committee's devotion to eugenics was so earnest that when the Society faced opposition it naturally believed it had been misunderstood. In 1928 the AES committee raised concern about 'the bad influence that has gone out from a few scientists who have been knocking eugenics, particularly Pearl and Jennings'.¹⁶⁹ This criticism led the AES to question 'whether any action should be taken about the exploitation and consequent misconception of "eugenics"', but 'the consensus of opinion' was that 'the best way to combat that was through the education of the people'.¹⁷⁰

Concerns over the form of this 'education', and the quality of research upon which it was based, came to feature more heavily within AES policy following the arrival

¹⁶⁷ *The American Eugenics Society 1927-2.*

¹⁶⁸ *The American Eugenics Society 1927-2.*

¹⁶⁹ Herbert Spencer Jennings, a geneticist, naturalist and zoologist, resigned his membership of the AES Advisory Council in 1925 in protest over the society's analysis of immigration data. Raymond Pearl, professor of biometry and vital statistics at Johns Hopkins University, published an article in 1927 in *The American Mercury* criticising eugenics as 'full of emotional appeals to class and race prejudices, solemnly put forth as science'. Mehler, 'A History of the American Eugenics Society', p.381; Pearl cited in Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p.122.

¹⁷⁰ AES 25 January 1928, AESP Box 7.

of Frederick Osborn. In 1933 Frederick Osborn, the nephew of HFO, wrote a confidential ‘Memorandum on the Eugenics Situation in the United States’ for ‘Rockefeller purposes’. Although the memorandum was never used, it provides a useful insight into Frederick Osborn’s opinions on the AES which he claimed had ‘started on a sort of Galtonian propaganda without having enlarged their base of factual and experimental studies’. Much of the blame was apportioned to Leon Whitney, for it was claimed that, though there had been good plans for research, the AES: ‘came to be run almost entirely by Leon Whitney, the paid secretary, who was far more in the way of being a promoter and propagandist than a scientist’.¹⁷¹ There is no doubt that Whitney was aware of these negative evaluations of his work and in June 1931 the Committee had to convince him not to resign from his position as ‘executive secretary’:

The Committee expressed its high appreciation of the services of Mr. Whitney to the Society and was unanimously agreed that no censure whatever be attached to him for anything in connection with the Society.¹⁷²

These discussions, and the work of Frederick Osborn in particular, have been described as representative of ‘reform’ eugenics in the AES. Barry Mehler has criticised this thesis, and objected to the sharp division of eugenics into ‘new’ and ‘old’ periods, noting that American eugenics continued to be influenced by racial issues in the 1930s.¹⁷³ Recent scholarship has added to this criticism and emphasised a continuity in the activities of the movement;¹⁷⁴ however, rather than

¹⁷¹ ‘Memorandum on the Eugenics Situation in the United States’, APS, AES Papers, Box 17.

¹⁷² AES 9 June 1931, AESP Box 7.

¹⁷³ Barry Alan Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society, 1921–1940’, p.21 and p.137.

¹⁷⁴ Largent’s work *Breeding Contempt* has noted ‘compulsory sterilization’ motivated by eugenic ambitions was most active in the 1930s, and Susan Currell and Christina Cogdell (eds.), *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 2006) demonstrates the strong presence of eugenic ideology within American culture in the 1930s.

being forced to choose between these competing interpretations, the theses can be reconciled by recognising that the movement did change in this period but the changes were essentially cosmetic in nature. By examining AES campaigns of the in the 1930s, it becomes clear that changes were made primarily to appease public opinion, and in particular to deflect potential criticisms from religious groups, not so much because of any pressure from scientific developments.

The depression-era of the 1930s brought change to the AES firstly through financial impoverishment. In December 1931 the Board was unanimously agreed that expenses ought to be cut ‘to a point which merely allowed the Society to live’.¹⁷⁵ This climate, whilst paralysing their activities, did not automatically lead to a reduced ambition for eugenic popularisation. Several members of the Committee expressed hope that the financial climate meant ‘the public was getting more and more of a grievance against the defective’ and would ultimately ‘force the public to come to eugenicists for a remedy.’¹⁷⁶ In May 1934 the Society, still under financial pressure, was offered the services of George Reid Andrews as Executive Secretary free of charge for twelve months under the belief that:

the time is distinctly favorable...since men and women are awakening in this time of economic depression to the desirability of smaller families in the impoverished and unemployed group and encouragement of births by the healthy and educated groups.¹⁷⁷

Thus whilst the financial difficulties of the organisation were significant, it is clear these did not automatically impede their ambitions.¹⁷⁸ More significant was the

¹⁷⁵ AES 11 December 1931, AESP Box 7.

¹⁷⁶ AES 4 June 1932, AESP Box 7.

¹⁷⁷ AES 15 May 1934, AESP Box 7.

¹⁷⁸ This stands in contrast to Mark Haller’s claim that economic depression removed blame for social failure away from the genes and made eugenics appear less crucial. Haller, *Eugenics*, p.180.

arrival of Frederick Osborn, who was appointed a member of the AES Board of Directors on 4 May 1935.¹⁷⁹ Leon Whitney blamed Frederick Osborn for the re-organisation of AES activities and the subsequent resignations of nine members, along with an acrimonious conflict between George Reid Andrews and the Society which ended with a \$4,000 settlement in Andrews' favour.¹⁸⁰

One new scheme, which began in 1936, was a series of conferences in association with various 'persons engaged in efforts for social betterment along lines whose connection with eugenics has not been sufficiently realized.' It was hoped that this would impress upon these groups their eugenic importance, and also help 'the gradual development of concrete eugenic policies in the Society's own work'.¹⁸¹ It is, perhaps, quite revealing that the AES committee believed that talking with other agencies would help formulate its own policy; however, if that were not clear enough, the papers presented at these conferences demonstrated a renewed commitment to discretion and the presentation of a 'mild-mannered' form of eugenics. Two conferences, on Education and Propaganda, reveal these trends especially well owing to their specific interest in the dissemination of eugenic theory.

A. E. Wiggam opened the Conference of Publicists in December 1937, and a written record of his thoughts remain as he:

thought it best to write them out, because more and more all
of us who have been engaged in this Eugenics Movement

¹⁷⁹ AES 4 May 1935, AESP Box 7.

¹⁸⁰ Unpublished Autobiography of Leon Fradley Whitney, unnumbered page; and AES, 8 October 1936, AESP Box 7.

¹⁸¹ Report of the Activities of the American Eugenics Society 1936–1937, presented at the 12th Annual Meeting of the AES, 23 September 1937, AESP Box 7.

for many years realize that every word we say even among ourselves should be subjected to the most critical examination.¹⁸²

Ironically this has left Wiggam ultimately open to more examination than would have been the case if he had spoken freely and not left a record of his words; this critic-conscious statement is interesting as it represents the ideas that Wiggam believed were either essential or beyond attack. At the heart of Wiggam's message was a desire to present an infectious commendation of eugenics. He concluded with the admission 'I am fully aware that my brief presentation has been purely evangelistic, emotional and hortatory', yet this was anything but an apology. Rather he spoke of the need for an 'evangelistic' element to eugenics that would ensure it became 'not only our common objective, but also the spiritual ideal and the structural and dynamic object of Society itself'. Eugenics was compared to a 'religion', and praised as possessing the 'loftiest and most inclusive' objectives ever to have 'stirred the creative imaginations of men'. It would provide 'new meanings to life' to replace 'the old universe of fear and superstition' with 'a friendly universe of higher values and richer meanings'. Central to this would be the emergence of scientific:

tolerance that cuts across all class and racial lines, because its sole aim is to discover and develop to its highest in every class and condition of society every phase and form of human worth.¹⁸³

This would certainly appear consistent with the emergence of antiracist 'reform' eugenics, but must not be viewed in isolation from Wiggam's other policy proposals at the Conference. Given the audience of publicists, Wiggam's plan for the promotion of eugenics seems strange; speaking as someone who had 'written more

¹⁸² A. E. Wiggam, 'Conference of Publicists', AESP Box 2.

¹⁸³ A. E. Wiggam, 'Conference of Publicists'.

on this subject than perhaps anyone present', and suffered 'chagrin and regret' as a result, he argued:

perhaps I may appropriately say that in my belief the most effective way to write about eugenics is not to write about eugenics at all.

It might seem that this implied the publicists had wasted a day by attending the conference, and it certainly appears at odds with Wiggam's evangelistic zeal for a world of higher values and meanings. Wiggam's concern, however, was not with the *subject* of eugenics but rather with the word itself. Explaining this, Wiggam cited a recent article in *Harpers* called 'Should Marriage be Subsidized?' In spite of the fact that it did not use the word anywhere in its text, Wiggam argued this made an 'admirable plea for eugenics'.¹⁸⁴ Once again the breadth of eugenics, and eugenicists' perception of the ideology outside 'official' organisations, highlights the need to examine external groups for a full understanding of eugenic thought.

The 'Conference on Education and Eugenics' also raised the possibility of covertly promoting eugenics. The notes circulated in March 1937 'as a help in guidance' said:

One of the most serious problems that now confronts us is the fact that the word "eugenics" has been widely misunderstood. It has been confused with birth control, with sex education, and even with such things as artificial insemination. One of our first problems is to overcome these misapprehensions. Should this be done indirectly by teaching the fundamentals of eugenics without using the name? Or shall the term "eugenics" fight its way into popular favor by repeated statements of what it really means?¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ A. E. Wiggam, 'Conference of Publicists'.

¹⁸⁵ 'Preliminary Notes on the Conference on Eugenic Education' 1937, AESP Box 2.

Essentially, the matter under discussion was whether the term eugenics should be abandoned by a eugenics society. This remarkable policy question has not received attention from previous studies, and it is important to recognise that the context of opposition and misunderstanding that was highlighted was a religious one: ‘closely connected’ to the problem of:

how we can convince our Roman Catholic friends that while there may legitimately be diversity of opinion as to the use of certain methods, there can be no reasonable disagreement as to the basic tenet that the trend of reproduction ought to be altered.¹⁸⁶

Former joy at Catholic support was swiftly replaced by disappointment as all Catholic participants in the AES resigned their membership in response to the 1930 papal encyclical *Casti connubii*.¹⁸⁷ The AES publication *People* analysed the encyclical in April 1931 and expressed great alarm at its judgment that all had the right to marry, or equally the right to remain celibate. A striking visual contrast was presented, one page (figure 2.1) showed a group of nuns looking down at a nun prostrate in penitence, the next (figure 2.2) showed a family group with mother and father lovingly gazing down on their children. The veiled, faceless nuns, almost Ku Klux Klan-like in dress, contrast bleakly with the happy faces of family life.¹⁸⁸ Racial implications aside, the smiling family scene presented an innocuous and joyful aspect of eugenics as if to question who could oppose it – save perhaps for those with personally dubious ethics.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ ‘Preliminary Notes on the Conference on Eugenic Education’.

¹⁸⁷ Sharon M. Leon, “‘Hopelessly Entangled in Nordic Presuppositions’”, p.46.

¹⁸⁸ *People*, April 1934 (The American Eugenics Society), pp.5–7.

¹⁸⁹ The English priest and author Charles Kingsley made similar criticisms of the celibacy characteristic of some Anglo-Catholic clerics, which he blamed for undermining family values and producing ‘die-away effeminacy’. Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2001), p.12.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 2.1 *People* (American Eugenics Society, April 1931) p.6.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 2.2 *People* (American Eugenics Society, April 1931) p.7.

Participants at the conference on education concluded in favour of discreetly advancing eugenics. Professor Henry Noble MacCracken of Vassar College

provided evidence in favour of this policy as he described the ‘extraordinary response’ to a new course on ‘marriage and family’, which had been attended by ‘over 500 students’. He took this as evidence of the subject’s popularity, and said it was more successful than if students were simply ‘told it is their duty to have more children’. MacCracken described this eugenic discretion in intentionally biblical language: ‘If the eugenicist is to save his soul, he must first lose it.’¹⁹⁰ Surreptitiously advancing eugenics lost any taint of deception and instead took on a noble image of self-sacrifice and assumed religious authority in a parallel of Christ’s words: ‘whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.’¹⁹¹ To those aware of this parallel, discretion became associated with the very survival of eugenics.

In all of these discussions, emphasis was placed upon the population problem which eugenics addressed. The Catholic Church was admonished to accept changes in the ‘trends’ of reproduction even if they promoted alternative remedies. MacCracken’s interpretation of the eugenic message was one which told college students to have more children. This undoubtedly owed a great deal to the influence of Frederick Osborn. His notes for a ‘Eugenic Program’ in 1934 suggest his rationale for advocating this policy:

There is strong evidence that eugenics has been seriously discredited by too much theory and not enough real knowledge. Controversy should be avoided. Unverified theories should be kept away from the public. Only the soundest, most technically correct research should be encouraged, until eugenics has won the support of the scientific workers and critical, public-spirited thinkers.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Henry MacCracken, ‘Conference on Education and Eugenics’, 1937, AESP Box 2.

¹⁹¹ Matthew xvi. 25. There are similar quotations in the gospels of Mark and Luke.

¹⁹² ‘Notes for Eugenic Program’, November 1934, AESP Box 17.

For Frederick Osborn the least controversial eugenic subject was that of parenthood.

At a 1936 ‘luncheon of the maternity center at the Waldorf Astoria’ he said:

By choosing quality of the home in which children are reared as the measure for eugenic selection, all racial, social, religious and regional controversy is eliminated. No race and no social class has a monopoly on the quality of the home environment...much social effort is already directed towards improving the type of home in which children are reared, and the easiest way to do this is of course to have as many children as possible born in the best of our present homes.¹⁹³

This was not a surrender to the critics who emphasised the supremacy of environmental conditions, but more a tactical decision that, until scientific theories were more certain, the AES should concentrate on indisputable areas of eugenic action. Addressing the AES annual meeting in May 1938, Frederick Osborn explained how difficult it was for ‘those of us who believe in the importance of eugenics’ to understand why the movement had not made more progress. He claimed that, ‘other than a very limited use of sterilization in some states’, little had been achieved since the word ‘eugenics’ was coined.¹⁹⁴ The ‘old’ eugenics was not criticised for its methods, but for its failure to implement them adequately. Alongside this, Osborn feared that a great deal of opposition was created by the impression that eugenics was a ‘class or racial affair’. His response to this was that:

We must keep ourselves as Caesar’s wife, beyond reproach. And that means the things we do, the people we keep company with, the things we say, and the things other people say about us.

Where this was not the source of opposition, Osborn feared that eugenics had been hampered by confusion over its seeming ‘multiplicity of purposes’. He noted that there were many things, such as birth control, sex hygiene, and sterilisation, that had

¹⁹³ ‘Moral Responsibilities of Parenthood’, 20 May 1936, AESP Box 17.

¹⁹⁴ This ‘limited use’ of sterilisation has recently been estimated at over 63,000 coercively sterilised Americans by the early 1960s. Largent, *Breeding Contempt*, p.1.

been promoted by the eugenics society at various times, but argued that these things by themselves were not eugenics. He claimed that the conferences had been successful in introducing specific groups to the eugenic implications of their work, but stated that the job of the AES was to see the eugenics problem ‘as a whole’. For this reason Osborn suggested that the AES should focus its energy upon a single aim, that of raising the rate of births amongst ‘competent above-the-average people throughout the entire population of the United States.’ He considered that this was the ‘most direct’ way that eugenics could become ‘a great popular noncontroversial and effective movement, with wide public support.’ The emphasis here was upon popularity and ensuring that there would be no opposition. Whilst this was a new direction for the AES, it was not a rejection of old policies and methods – just an admission that at the present they were unable to implement them successfully. To avoid neglecting the former strategies of eugenics, Osborn suggested that controversial measures should be delegated to groups outside of the Society:

While we carry on this campaign...I would have the Society make every possible effort to urge upon scientists their responsibility for research in heredity, and upon the medical profession their responsibility for the practical application of negative eugenics...The public will accept negative eugenics from the doctor in a way it would certainly not accept it from an organized but non-scientific movement. I believe the broad and wide use of sterilization can get acceptance through the medical profession quietly and without controversy.¹⁹⁵

It was not only the measures of negative eugenics that retained support within the AES. Although the society chose to speak less about race, the notion that racial ideas ceased to hold support seems to have developed in the 1960s. In 1966 Frederick Osborn replied to a letter which complained about the ‘Government

¹⁹⁵ ‘American Eugenics Society Annual Meeting 5 May 1938’, AESP Box 17.

forcing school integration' by stating that the thesis of 'anglo-saxon' superiority had been 'thoroughly disproved by the scientific work of the last thirty years'.¹⁹⁶ However, only twelve years prior to this, Frederick Osborn had written a 'Eugenics Credo' in which he criticised social scientists for failing to 'take into account the factor of genetic variation' and for helping to:

maintain popular beliefs that "bad" environments are the cause of all human ills, that all men are "equal", that all races are "the same".¹⁹⁷

Though this 'Credo' did not hold out the superiority of any one race, it was confident that mixture of 'races' was generally harmful; it was certainly not the 'race' free science that Osborn retrospectively claimed.

Conclusion

Both the EES and the AES saw religion as a source of considerable concern. Each society made repeated attempts to appeal to religious communities for support, and great efforts were made to ensure their work was not publicly offensive. The success of this public image management is highly questionable; the societies themselves blamed external advocates of eugenics for tainting their cause, even where they privately agreed with the controversial ideas that triggered opposition. Aside from the moral authority of religious groups, which it was seen could help or hinder eugenics, both societies recognised that traditional Christian philanthropy was an area of natural intersection with their work. Both were keen to dismiss ideas of a callous eugenics ending all kindness, love and charity; they presented their work as the natural fulfilment of charitable impulses, which would end a great deal

¹⁹⁶ Letter from F. C. Schwarz to Frederick Osborn, AESP Box 17.

¹⁹⁷ 'Eugenics Credo', AESP Box 17.

of needless suffering. In this sense, eugenics was presented as a partner to traditional religious values even where it proposed radical new methodologies.

Both eugenics societies also recognised, and at times approved of, their message being disseminated by external organisations – sometimes even without mention of the word ‘eugenics’. The EES believed that its success in promoting public support for voluntary sterilisation had resulted in a decline in its membership, and the AES even considered abandoning the term ‘eugenics’ altogether. This highlights the importance of examining groups and individuals outside of official eugenics organisations in order to gain an understanding of the extent of the impact of eugenics. It also suggests the need to look beyond public statements and membership lists in determining any ‘end’ of eugenics.

In the case of American eugenics, although there may have been a decline in public discussions of race, it does not follow that this was caused by a lessened interest in the subject. Madison Grant, one of the most notorious racists of the American eugenics movement,¹⁹⁸ wrote to HFO in 1930 revealing his intention to write a new book (‘somewhat along the lines of *The Passing of the Great Race*’) on the subject of ‘*The Nordic in America*’. Grant stated, however, that ‘the propaganda element in the other book served its purpose in contributing to immigration restriction, so this next one can be more moderate in tone.’¹⁹⁹ In a perfect mirror image of the AES and EES, Grant reduced his outspoken propaganda precisely because he believed he had

¹⁹⁸ Diane Paul highlights Grant as an example of a eugenicist who was conservative and reactionary even by the standards of his own time. Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, p.17.

¹⁹⁹ Letter from Grant to HFO, 3 July 1930, Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers, Archives of the American Museum of Natural History.

accomplished his aim. In neither case, however, were methods changed because the underlying ideas had been abandoned.

The EES and AES were also not alone in their appreciation of the role that Christian ideology could play in the formation of eugenic support. Popular eugenic texts frequently referred to eugenic or dysgenic principles as the work of God's law,²⁰⁰ many used artwork evocative of religious scenes,²⁰¹ and there was even a eugenics text written specifically for Sunday Schools.²⁰² Marie Stopes advertised her birth control clinics as bringing 'light in our racial darkness', and a pamphlet describing the history of 'The Mothers' Clinic for Birth Control' opened by stating the clinic 'stands for':

“Let knowledge grow from more to more, But more of reverence in us dwell.” Reverence not only for the fruitful mother as such, but for her spirit as the creator of our race...reverence for the Race, that it shall be represented on this earth by the most perfect and God-like individuals that it is in our power to call forth in His image!²⁰³

More disturbingly, despite previous historiographical claims that the Nazi holocaust marked an end of eugenics, and that the holocaust was an unexpected extremity of

²⁰⁰ William M. Goldsmith, *The Laws of Life: Principles of Evolution, Heredity and Eugenics, A Popular Presentation* (Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1922), pp.420–22; and C. S. Whitehead and Charles A. Hoff, *Ethical Sex Relations or The New Eugenics* (John A. Hertel Company, Chicago, 1936), p.56.

²⁰¹ See especially: T. W. Shannon, *Nature's Secret's Revealed: Scientific Knowledge of the Laws of Sex Life and Heredity or Eugenics* (The S.A. Mullikin Company, Marietta, 1914), Frontispiece 'The Guardian Angel'; B. G. Jefferis and J. L. Nichols, *Safe Council or Practical Eugenics* (Thirty-ninth edition, J. L. Nichols and Co., Naperville, 1930), p.60, p.202, and p.360. The eugenic film 'The Black Stork', described by Martin S. Pernick, included a scene of a 'defective' baby's soul being welcomed into the arms of Jesus after a doctor refused to operate for fear of the consequences of if the child lived. Pernick, *The Black Stork: Eugenics and the Death of "Defective" Babies in American Medicine and Motion Pictures Since 1915* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1996), Figure 22.

²⁰² Elliot Rowland Downing, *The Third and Fourth Generation: An Introduction to Heredity* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1918).

²⁰³ Letterhead of Mother's Clinic for Constructive Birth Control, 14 Jul. 1921; and pamphlet 'The Mothers' Clinic for Birth Control, founded by Humphrey Verdon Roe and his wife Marie Carmichael Stopes D.Sc., Ph.D.' Records of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene 3AMS/A/06/01 Box 027, the Women's Library, London.

eugenics which had not been anticipated beforehand, there are examples of biblical authority used to sanction the harshest eugenic ideology. The series *Eugenics Pamphlets*, produced by the ‘Eugenics Society of Northern California’, provides a sobering illustration. Although the *Pamphlets* were not dated, issue number 49 opened by describing the ‘Nazi terror at Carlsbad’, including a photograph of a mass grave, and issue 53 discussed events of 1947.²⁰⁴ It seems certain, therefore, that issue 70 must have appeared after the horrors of the holocaust, and yet figure 2.3 illustrates the Society’s use of a biblical quotation from Christ: “‘Ye are the Salt of the Earth. If the salt hath lost its savour, - it is thence forth good for nothing but to be cast out.’ (The Bible teems with eugenical wisdom.)’ Accompanying this quotation was a disturbing photograph of emaciated ‘Famine Victims in Hindustan’, alongside an explanation that the nation was in near constant famine as it was ‘tragically overpopulated’ and ‘biologically illiterate’. The Society’s interest in this situation was explained because it was said ‘certain Americans...insist...we must rush our...sanitation to increase Hindu life expectancy [sic] until it doubles’.²⁰⁵ The biblical text alongside the allegation of overpopulation appears to have been intended to suggest that this intervention was inadvisable; death was presented as the inevitable and natural outcome. If population policy of this nature seems incomparable to Nazi death ovens, an earlier issue made a comparison of ‘social inadequates’ to ‘weeds’ and again used a biblical quotation to emphasise the principle of eradication: “‘I will say to the reapers: Gather ye together first the tares AND BIND THEM IN BUNDLES TO BURN THEM, But gather the wheat into my barn.’” – St. Matthew XIII, 30.’²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ *Eugenics Pamphlets*, No. 49, p.1; and No. 53, p.19.

²⁰⁵ *Eugenics Pamphlets*, No. 70, p.4.

²⁰⁶ *Eugenics Pamphlets*, No. 45, p.10. Emphasis in the original.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 2.3 *Eugenics Pamphlets*, No. 70, p.4.

Chapter Three: Eugenics and the London City Mission c. 1865–1930

Introduction

Previous historiography would suggest that London City Mission¹ was an unlikely candidate to endorse or engage with eugenic ideas. The organisation was theologically conservative and socially cautious with regard to welfare; its workers were certainly not the social gospel advocates that Rosen suggested were the most likely candidates for eugenic concern.² However, this chapter reveals that neither eugenics societies nor liberal theologians had a monopoly on theories relating to degeneration and eugenics. LCM publications voiced discussions of environmental reform and theories of heredity that would have delighted eugenics propaganda organisations. This is not to suggest that LCM ought to be redefined as a eugenics society, or that its members should be considered eugenicists, but these discussions demonstrate how widely the beliefs associated with eugenicists were spread, and how flexible the interpretations of these ideas could be. More significantly, this chapter will demonstrate that LCM employed discussions of eugenic themes even prior to the formation of the EES in 1907. We must abandon the notion that the EES may be used as a standalone barometer for the popularity of eugenic ideas in Britain.

In order to explore these themes, this chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first section examines LCM discussions about the impact of environmental conditions upon the population of London. The second analyses LCM discussions

¹ 'London City Mission' hereafter referred to as 'LCM'.

² See 'The Secular religion of eugenics?' discussion in chapter one.

about the principle of heredity. It will be seen that this distinction is in a sense artificial, as the debates overlapped in both chronology and content, but the discussion about environment was related to much earlier thoughts concerning the role of charity within Christian missions. This context, and an appreciation of LCM's long-standing policies regarding temporal relief, indicates the huge impact that fears of degeneration came to exert upon the organisation.

LCM and Science: The Published Record

LCM published a large volume of material about its work. The Mission produced a monthly 'magazine' for distribution amongst existing supporters and other potential contributors throughout the period covered in this thesis. This magazine included regular excerpts taken from missionaries' journals, accounts of meetings held in the Mission's honour, and annual statistical reports to provide an overview of the Mission's work. Each missionary was designated to work amongst a specific region of London, or in a particular trade or profession, which ensured a varied range of material from which to pique the interests of readers. The statistics collated by the Mission suggested a colossal effort was undertaken; in 1865 it was reported that 395 missionaries had collectively spent 548,707 hours in 'domiciliary visitation' as part of 2,048,581 separate visits. Other statistics recorded subjects as diverse as the number of tracts and religious papers distributed, 'backsliders restored to Church communion', 'unmarried couples induced to marry', and 'shops closed on the Lord's day'.³ Events outside of the Mission featured only in so far they were considered to have some bearing on the organisation's primary work of evangelism in London. This selective account of contemporary life makes the organisation's

³ LCMM, Vol. XXX (1865), p.114.

discussion of scientific issues, such as the debates around heredity and environment, all the more significant.

Before turning to those issues and ideas relating to eugenics, it is helpful to provide a comparative framework regarding the presence of scientific ideas in LCM publications more generally. Darwin's work provides a particularly useful comparison owing to its contemporary prominence, the detailed historiography available on this subject, and its relation to debates concerning heredity and eugenics. LCM writings could not have given a clearer response to the subject; there were at least ten explicit discussions of Darwin's work, and all were negative. In several instances, 'Darwin' was simply used as a form of descriptive shorthand to indicate agnosticism or atheism,⁴ as was the case in the Society's first reference to Darwin, in 1880. Here a missionary described an encounter with a 'Darwinian' alongside two unfavourable associates, a Roman Catholic and a 'follower of Bradlaugh'.⁵ Charles Bradlaugh founded the National Secular Society in 1866. He was notorious in 1880, as he had been elected MP for Northampton, but was prevented from taking his seat in Parliament because he refused to take a religious oath.⁶ In case these associates were not sufficient to suggest the ideological guilt of Darwin, the account also recorded that this encounter had taken place in a 'public-house'. Three other descriptions of missionary work made the same implication:

⁴ David N. Livingstone identified this approach in the work of the Princeton Theological Seminarian Charles Hodge. Hodge argued that Darwin's use of the term 'natural' was inherently antithetical to 'supernatural' and that consequently Darwinism was just atheism. Livingstone, 'Science, religion, and the reception of Darwinism in Princeton, Belfast, and Edinburgh', in Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse (eds.), *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), pp.10–11.

⁵ LCMM, Vol. XLV (1880), p.179.

⁶ Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels* (University of Manchester Press, Manchester, 1974), p.307; Timothy Larsen, 'Charles Bradlaugh, Militant Unbelief, and the Civil Rights of Atheists', in Caroline Litzenger and Eileen Groth Lyon (eds.), *The Human Tradition in Modern Britain* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, 2006), pp.127–38.

faith in Darwin represented heckling questions, or general evidence of an individual's need for salvation.⁷

The second mention of Darwin came in 1887, well within the period in which Christian theologians had begun to accommodate evolutionary theory,⁸ but LCM appeared to be unmoved in its rejection of Darwin's work. The Mission's magazine gave thanks for the receipt of 300 copies of a tract titled *The Darwin Craze* by Rev. F. O. Morris,⁹ who is known as a trend-setting author of anti-evolutionary rhetoric.¹⁰ Morris' high profile criticism of evolution, which included a debate with 'Darwin's bulldog' T. H. Huxley, meant that it was likely LCM supporters would have known about Morris' views. By giving thanks for this donation, the magazine's authors, and by implication LCM itself, acted to endorse Morris' work; their gratitude for these tracts suggests that similar donations would have been welcome, and that the organisation had every intention of circulating this material.

⁷ LCMM, Vol. LVI (1891), p.234; LCMM, Vol. LXXVII (1912), p.135; and LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.36.

⁸ Peter J. Vorzimmer has shown how Darwin, initially satisfied that he had demonstrated the validity of his theory, became increasingly frustrated by his inability to prove to fellow scientists that the selection process was the sole or principal agent of evolutionary change. Jon H. Roberts has noted that this uncertainty initially led religious respondents to assume that Darwin's work would fail, and thus limit their criticisms to its scientific weaknesses. In the case of American theologians Roberts states that it was only after 1875, when it was realised that the scientific community had endorsed Darwin's work, that attempts were made to address the theological implications. He argues that within 25 years most had reached the conclusion that Christian theology could be modified to accept the theory. James R. Moore has shown that Protestant efforts to accommodate evolution were at a peak in the 1880s in Britain and the United States. Vorzimmer, *Charles Darwin: The Years of Controversy: The Origin of Species and its critics 1859–1882* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1970), p.xviii; Roberts, 'Darwinism, American Protestant thinkers, and the puzzle of motivation', in Numbers and Stenhouse (eds.), *Disseminating Darwinism*, p.145; Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant struggle to come to terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America 1870–1990* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981), p.8.

⁹ LCMM, Vol. LII (1887), p.vii.

¹⁰ David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan, 1987), p.131; Bernard Lightman, *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007), pp.45–7.

LCM articles also attacked Darwinian theory for its perceived bearing upon questions of reform. In 1903, a speaker at the Mission's annual meeting was quoted as having said:

We do not regard the people in Battersea as the late Charles Darwin did the people in Terra del Fuego. When he saw them he turned away in utter despair, and thought them beyond all hope of civilisation. My fear is in the other direction. Some of them, I am sorry to say, are so good – that is, in their own estimation – that they do not feel their need of a Saviour.¹¹

Evidently, in spite of the recent work that has described Darwin's desire to use a scientific understanding of the unity of mankind to subvert injustices like the slave trade,¹² Darwin's description of the 'filthy & greasy' inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego is what supporters of LCM remembered.¹³ Although this argument rejected the perceived despair of Darwin, the decision to make a comparison between Darwin's encounter and LCM's work in Battersea nevertheless served to emphasise the difficulties that LCM missionaries faced and gave this work an exciting and exotic association. Darwin's fear was replaced with another: 'they do not feel their need of a Saviour'.

The message that Darwinian thought presented a challenge to reformers, and that Darwin's work brought despair, possessed longevity within LCM. In 1924, missionaries were reminded that with Christ 'the past can be altered' whereas Darwin's theory 'left to this unfortunate generation...a profound depression'

¹¹ LCMM, Vol. LXVIII (1903), p.120.

¹² Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins* (Allen Lane, London, 2009).

¹³ Darwin's encounter with these people is credited with his later ease in accepting mankind's descent from 'a hairy beast', see James Moore and Adrian Desmond, 'Introduction', in Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Penguin Books Ltd., London, 2004), p.xx.

because of the belief that laws are ‘inexorable...unchallengeable and unchangeable’. Missionaries were exhorted to ‘let the *mere* scientist say what he will...let him preach fatalism if he pleases...let us say, “I heard behind me a great Voice saying, I am Alpha—”’.¹⁴ In 1928, Dr. F. A. Fleming¹⁵ reminded the audience at LCM’s annual meeting that people in slums would not be saved as a result of being told they were ‘improved animals’ or ‘the offspring or descendants of some primeval ape’.¹⁶ It is difficult to know if this was intended as a satirical extrapolation of Darwinian ideas or as criticism of a policy that was genuinely believed to inform contemporary reform efforts, but the tone was clearly intended to be provocative.¹⁷

Darwin also featured in more general discussions of how much credence Christian believers ought to give to science. In 1924, a speaker at LCM’s annual meeting bemoaned what he saw as the tendency ‘in modern preaching’ to ‘exaggerate the importance of scientific opinion’. Whilst he claimed that the ‘general consensus’ of science was favourable to faith, the speaker suggested a value-based division for the

¹⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIX (1924), pp.26–7.

¹⁵ Fleming was president of the Victoria Institute, whose stated aim was the defence of biblical authority, and would later become the first president of the Evolution Protest Movement. David N. Livingstone, *Adam’s Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008), p.203.

¹⁶ LCMM, Vol. XCIII (1928), pp.84–6.

¹⁷ The idea of descent from apes raised provocative questions over sexual morality, as described in chapter two footnote 154, and echoed the infamous remarks of the Bishop of Oxford in his 1860 meeting with T. H. Huxley. Recent research has revised claims that the Bishop depended solely on obscurantist argument and rhetorical questions, but the memory contemporary to LCM’s 1928 meeting was one in which he was famed for the alleged enquiry of whether it was ‘through his grandfather or his grandmother that he [Huxley] claimed descent from a monkey?’ Though genealogically further removed than a grandparent, the above dismissal of evolution seems to employ the same argument. On the Oxford debate see: J. R. Lucas, ‘Wilberforce and Huxley: A Legendary Encounter’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1979); J. Vernon Jensen, ‘Return to the Wilberforce-Huxley Debate’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1988); John Hedley Brooke, ‘The Wilberforce-Huxley Debate: Why Did It Happen?’, *Farmington Papers*, 15 (2001). For accounts contemporary to LCM see: Leonard Huxley, *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* Vol. I (Macmillan and Co., London, 1903), pp.259–72; and H. M. Vernon and K. Dorothea Vernon, *A History of the Oxford Museum* (Oxford, 1909), p.88.

two: ‘Scientists and philosophers...are, so to speak, “second class passengers,” and they must be kept to their own side of the barrier!’ On the questions of ‘Sin’, ‘Redemption’, ‘Justification’, and ‘Eternity’, all of which were central LCM’s work, it was argued that science and philosophy could perhaps uncover a ‘footprint on the land’, but not ‘*Him*’ that was desired by the hungry soul. This argument was justified with reference to Darwin’s claim that ‘My soul is dried up’, and his fear that his work had paralysed ‘that part of my brain on which the highest tastes depend’.¹⁸ This hierarchy of knowledge systems was reinforced in a 1927 article, where an author, identified simply as ‘a Bible-loving Christian’, evaluated the paper given by Sir Arthur Keith before the British Association.¹⁹ Keith had claimed that ‘man’s Evolution from an ape-like being is definite and irrefragable’, but the LCM article placed this claim in contrast to biblical doctrines: creation of man ‘in the image and likeness of God’ versus Darwin’s claim of ‘Man descended from the ape’. Readers were asked to choose: ‘Ape or Angel? Darwinism or Divine revelation?’ For any unsure of the appropriate conclusion, the article finished by observing ‘The Word of the Lord endureth – FOR EVER.’²⁰

There was a consistent message in all of these articles: evolution was untrue and inconsistent with LCM’s work, a part of the general atheism and irreligion that the

¹⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIX (1924), pp.62–3. This likely refers to Darwin’s 1868 letter to Sir J. D. Hooker, which stated his ‘soul’ ‘was too dried up to appreciate it [Handel’s ‘Messiah’] and claimed he was ‘a withered leaf for every subject except Science’. Francis Darwin (ed.), *The Life and letters of Charles Darwin, including an autobiographical chapter* (John Murray, London, 1887) Vol. III, p.92; accessed at <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>. This may not have been intended as a religious remark, as Darwin’s daughter Henrietta recorded that he frequently claimed ‘attending so much to one subject had dried up his soul & how if he had to begin life over again, he wd [sic] never have let the taste for poetry die out as it had done’, Litchfield, Henrietta, ‘Sketches for a biography’ p.3A nd. Available online at <http://darwin-online.org.uk>.

¹⁹ Arthur Keith, *Concerning Man’s Origin: Being the presidential address given at the meeting of the British Association held in Leeds on August 31, 1927, together with recent essays on Darwinian subjects* (G. P. Putnam’s Sons, New York, 1928).

²⁰ LCMM, Vol. XCII (1927), p.156.

Mission sought to refute. Although LCM articles claimed that the theory of evolution was incompatible with the organisation's work, these writings did not convey the impression of a group that felt afraid. Evolution was rejected as both useless and unsubstantiated. In 1930, this criticism was as straightforward as asking readers a rhetorical question about the 'millions of skulls showing man in every stage of his ascent and transition': 'Where are they? Echo answers *where?*'²¹ It is noteworthy that this firm rejection of Darwin's work was not matched in the debates surrounding heredity and environment.

Poverty, Environment and Charity

Gareth Stedman Jones has argued that 'fear' over the 'residuum' marked a turning point in the poverty investigations of the 1880s; he claims that these studies moved from a concern with the morality of individuals towards fear about 'degeneration' brought about by deleterious urban environments.²² Similarly, Elizabeth Hurren has argued that this period marked an end to the traditional belief that poverty revealed 'sin' and moral failing. She argues that new research, combined with the increased franchise from the 1884 Third Reform Act, forced the recognition that pauperism was often involuntary.²³ There certainly was a great interest in poverty during this period; Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree pioneered new methods of social research in poverty studies of London and York respectively,²⁴ and some historians have described the 'journalistic forays' into working class districts (especially in the

²¹ LCMM, Vol. XCV (1930), p.361.

²² Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between classes in Victorian Society* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971), p.v, pp.285–6, and p.313; and Gareth Stedman Jones, *An End to Poverty? A Historical Debate* (Profile Books, London, 2004), p.207.

²³ Elizabeth T. Hurren, *Protesting About Pauperism: Poverty, Politics and Poor Relief in Late-Victorian England, 1870–1900* (The Royal Historical Society, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2007), p.2 and p.72.

²⁴ Carol Dyhouse, 'The Condition of England 1860–1900', in Laurence Lerner (ed.), *The Victorians* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1978), p.73.

period between 1850 and 1888) as indicative of a ‘moral and spiritual crusade’.²⁵ In addition, the 1870 Education Act, which made schooling compulsory until the age of ten, has been credited with exposing childhood poverty to public view.²⁶ However, despite LCM’s involvement with Andrew Mearns’ *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*,²⁷ a work credited with prompting social ventures such as the University Mission Settlements,²⁸ the organisation did not abandon moralised depictions of poverty in this period. Although previous studies have noted that LCM relaxed its views on charity for periods of extreme distress, such as the severe winter of 1860–61,²⁹ its standard policy was established in 1839 when missionaries were expressly forbidden from distributing relief.³⁰ Boyd Hilton argued that evangelicals in this period can be divided into ‘moderates’, who regarded most events as the consequence of human behaviour, and ‘radicals’, who advocated remedial intervention; LCM certainly fell into the category of ‘moderates’ and believed sinful behaviour was responsible for the vast majority of poverty.³¹ It will be demonstrated that this belief enabled LCM to devote considerable amounts of

²⁵ S. Martin Gaskell (ed.), *Slums* (Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1990), p.4.

²⁶ Ellen Ross (ed.), *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860–1920* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2007), p.8.

²⁷ Mearns thanked ‘the Secretary and Agents of the London City Mission’ for the assistance that they had provided him, and argued LCM was a rare example of Christian recognition of the problem facing ‘our great cities’. Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry Into The Condition of The Abject Poor* (James Clarke & Co., London, 1883), p.2 and p.4. The full text of this is available at ‘W. T. Stead Resource Site’ <http://www.attackingthedevil.co.uk/related/outcast.php>, accessed 19 Sep. 2011.

²⁸ Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the Slums: Settlements and Missions in Late Victorian London* (I. B. Taurus and Co. Ltd., London, 2007), pp.xi–xii.

²⁹ Duncan, ‘The London City Mission: A Study of Lay Evangelicalism, 1835–1870’, pp.74–5.

³⁰ LCM minutes of 1839 cited in Lewis, *Lighten Their Darkness*, p.169.

³¹ Kathleen Martin proposed a modification to Hilton’s view, and argued that there was less division between these two ideas as both were in general agreement that the poor were to blame for their own poverty, but Hilton has repeated his view that the two were ‘fundamentally opposed in all aspects of their philosophies’. In either case the point remains that LCM believed environmental intervention without spiritual reformation was doomed to failure. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795–1865* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1988), p.8; Kathleen Callanan Martin, *Hard and Unreal Advice: Mothers, Social Science and the Victorian Poverty Experts* (Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2008), pp.25–6; Boyd Hilton, ‘Evangelical Social Attitudes: A Reply to Ralph Brown’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (2009), p.121.

time to discussions of environmental conditions, whilst at the same time not advocating physical measures of reform. Contrary to the claims of previous studies, which have cited the Mission as a prime example of nineteenth century philanthropy,³² LCM repeatedly emphasised the personal culpability of the poor for their own distress. It was this view that enabled LCM to add its voice to the chorus of those fearful of degeneration.

Despite LCM's continued belief that many of the poor suffered as the result of their own sin, these views were not uncontested. An article in 1868 mentioned LCM's rule that its missionaries were 'most carefully to avoid the giving of temporal relief', but this led to 'many enquiries' from readers and LCM decided to publish a second article in order to defend this policy. It is significant that the second article quoted an address given by Rev. Dr. Guthrie in 1847,³³ a time the Mission had lost one of its missionaries in a public dispute over the same policy.³⁴ The context surrounding Guthrie's address meant this explanation was coloured by a greater sense of empathy than many other arguments employed by LCM. He claimed to know 'the lapsed and wretched classes well', and argued:

I believe if I was as poor as they, and had been as much neglected, I should be as deceitful...I don't look down on the worst of these people with contempt, but with sympathy and pity; believing that in nine cases out of ten – to the shame of our magistrates, and rulers, and others – they are

³² Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England Since 1830* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1987), p.54; and Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006), p.65.

³³ This is most likely Rev. Thomas Guthrie (1803–1873), a preacher and philanthropist who helped found the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. See PG 2633, National Gallery of Scotland - http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/online_az/4:322/result/0/2643?initial=E&artistId=3225&artistName=James%20Edgar&submit=1 accessed 10 February 2011.

³⁴ Alfred Jones, *Town Missions: Their Tendency and Results Disclosed in a Letter to the City of London Mission* (John Mills, London, 1847), p.9.

creatures of the circumstances in which they have been placed.³⁵

Guthrie did not deny the ‘deceit’ of the poor, but claimed that society was responsible for creating 90 percent of these individuals. However, even with this unusual concession to the influence of environment, the article defended the Mission’s anti-interventionist charitable policy on grounds of efficiency. It was argued that it was better to have separate organisations for temporal and spiritual work; combining these efforts risked missionaries being exploited by those they visited, and spiritual salvation was too important to risk by taking such a chance.

It was far more common for LCM articles to describe poverty as a consequence of sin. In direct contrast to Guthrie’s claim, an article in 1884 informed readers that ‘the corrupt nature of man, ever prone to sin...[was] the real cause of nine-tenths of the misery which abounds on every hand’, as ‘drunkenness’ resulted in ‘overcrowding and home discomforts’.³⁶ The organisation was cautious not to offend environmental social reformers, but, again in 1884, LCM cited a ‘favourable review’ of their work that argued:

‘Better homes’ are sorely needed, but without this glorious Gospel, improved dwellings would, in a month’s time, degenerate into ‘rookeries,’ if tenanted by the class with which this narrative is concerned.³⁷

This repeated the argument from 1868 that spiritual and temporal reforms were complementary agencies, but added the qualification that spiritual reform was an essential component in the success of temporal reform. These arguments gained significance in the context of contemporary reform proposals, and the following

³⁵ LCMM, Vol. XXXIII (1868), p.32.

³⁶ LCMM, Vol. XLIX (1884), pp.104–5.

³⁷ LCMM, Vol. XLIX (1884), p.100.

month the LCM's magazine discussed the 'Royal Commission...appointed to make full and accurate investigation into the actual condition of the poor in squalid districts'.³⁸ The article reminded supporters that 'Sowing seeds of Divine Truth, and making known that Gospel...is the most effectual lever for the elevation of mankind'.³⁹ A biological analogy was given in summary; it was argued that philanthropic measures such as improved housing, 'recreation grounds', and sanitary reform could help lessen '*symptoms* of disease', but 'only the Word of God, applied with Divine power by the Holy Spirit can effectually cure the *disease itself*.'⁴⁰ Although this analogy was a logical progression from the article's invocation of biblical metaphors about 'seeds', this discussion came at the same time that eugenicists started to employ biologized descriptions of social problems threatening to harm the national body.⁴¹ This article also appeared at the same time that LCM writings came to attribute new meanings to the word 'degeneration'.

LCM publications had previously used the words 'degeneration' and 'degenerate' to describe institutions or a spiritual state,⁴² but after 1885 these terms were applied to the health and morals of individuals. The first instance of this was in a description of the missionary Thomas Jackson's appointment to 'the worst district among those into which the City had been divided':

Its inhabitants were the most degenerate of the people –
crime even to blood-guiltiness being common among them –

³⁸ LCMM, Vol. XLIX (1884), p.101. Though it was not named, the only Royal Commission related to conditions of the poor recorded in this period was that on 'Housing of the Working Class', *Royal Commissions (Return of all Royal Commissions issued in each year since and including 1874)* (Eyre and Spottiswode, London, 1887), pp.12–13.

³⁹ LCMM, Vol. XLIX (1884), pp.101–2.

⁴⁰ LCMM, Vol. XLIX (1884), p.105.

⁴¹ Frank Dikotter, 'Race Culture: Recent Perspectives on the History of Eugenics', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 2 (1998), pp.467–8.

⁴² LCMM, Vol. XXXI (1866), p.107; LCMM, Vol. XXXVI (1871), p.216; LCMM, Vol. XXXVII (1872), p.121.

while the neighbourhood formed the rendezvous of the desperadoes and hiding criminals of the whole country.⁴³

Although degeneration was confirmed by the presence of serious criminal acts, it seems that this was perceived to be the manifestation of a deeper flaw. The fact that the people in this area were singled out as a special example – ‘the most degenerate’ – implied an extraordinary element to their condition above and beyond the traditional theology of the Fall. The link between spiritual and physical degeneration was made even clearer in 1895, when it was argued that the confined living conditions of the poor resulted in ‘people naturally degenerated in their thoughts and habits’. However, the focus of blame remained upon the poor themselves: a missionary from 1846 was quoted as stating that it was not just bad houses and bad drainage which were ‘destructive of the health of the people’, but also ‘their own neglectful and uncleanly habits’. The sinful and needless aspect of this suffering was emphasised, as it was estimated that these people spent twice as much time in ‘idle gossip’ as they did cleaning their homes.⁴⁴ In 1897, ‘the drinking habits of the people’ were blamed for bringing ‘poverty, want, and misery into thousands of homes’; it was claimed that the result of this ‘misery’ was degeneration:

The wide-spread poverty necessitates over-crowding, and thousands of families still have no more than one room in which to live and sleep, and too often to work, a state of existence which inevitably leads to degeneration of health, and, more or less, to destruction of morals.⁴⁵

The sin of intemperance led to poverty, which resulted in bad environmental conditions and further temptations to sin. The message of LCM publications was that the vicious cycle began with human agency and error, and this view shaped the

⁴³ LCMM, Vol. L (1885), p.233.

⁴⁴ LCMM, Vol. LX (1895), p.221.

⁴⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXII (1897), p.106.

Mission's response towards model housing projects.⁴⁶ In 1898, F. A. Bevan,⁴⁷ Vice Chairman of the LCM Committee, stated that 'unless people themselves are improved you may put them into the best dwellings in the world, and you would find those dwellings degenerate and become just as untidy and wretched as the miserable places from which many of these people have come.'⁴⁸ This belief, where individual moral failings were placed at the heart of environmental problems, situated LCM in ideological harmony with arguments that came to feature in eugenicist circles. In 1912, Leonard Darwin criticised a 'sympathetic' account of South London 'slums' for failing to perceive that 'the unhealthy parent is often driven into the slums because of his innate defects'. Darwin admitted the need for improved surroundings, but said, 'if the conditions of future generations is to be greatly improved...the men and women of tomorrow must be far better endowed with inborn capacity to meet the strains of modern civilised life'.⁴⁹ The EES Christmas appeal for 1926 was even more direct:

It has often been loosely said that mental deficiency is caused by slum conditions. The reverse would be nearer the truth – that the slum-dwellers make the slum, not the slum the slum-dwellers.⁵⁰

Although LCM and the EES pursued different goals, their shared belief that faulty individuals were at the root of slum conditions meant that some of their public statements were remarkably similar.

⁴⁶ Model Housing projects had prominent supporters, including LCM's friend Lord Shaftesbury who founded the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, which erected model buildings in the 1840s. Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Penguin Books, London, 2000), p.329.

⁴⁷ Bevan was the first chairman of the Barclay & Co. bank and gave generously to a number of Christian charities and missions. Leslie Hannah, 'Bevan, Francis Augustus (1840–1919)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46629> accessed 24 Sep. 2011.

⁴⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXIII (1898), p.86.

⁴⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (1912), p.210.

⁵⁰ *Appeal to Stop Appeals* (1926) SA/EUG/J.17 Wellcome Library London.

LCM's Crisis in Environmental Rejection

The events of the Second Boer War, when British military failings raised fears about the degeneration of the race, have been viewed as a key trigger for the formation of the organised eugenics movement in Britain.⁵¹ LCM publications reveal that the Mission was similarly responsive to these contemporary fears, and its discussions of degeneration intensified at the turn of the twentieth century. Unlike eugenics texts, however, LCM writings were primarily concerned with the impact that degeneration might have upon spiritual work. In 1899, LCM's 'Anniversary Meeting' at Exeter Hall⁵² opened with a financial appeal that spoke of the importance of the Mission as a 'van of Christian effort'.⁵³ Rev. Webb-Peploe, Vicar of St. Paul's Onslow Square, recalled the words of Lord Shaftesbury 'that we might have degenerated ten times more than we have done, and been in danger of open revolution if it had not been for the work of the London City Mission'.⁵⁴ This confidence, however, was soon replaced by concerns that the Second Boer War indicated that there had already been a degeneration of the British race. In 1901, the Liberal MP and author of *Quickening of Caliban: A Modern Story of Evolution*,⁵⁵ J. Crompton Rickett, told LCM's annual meeting:

⁵¹ G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899–1914* (The Ashfield Press, London, 1990), p.61; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, p.7.

⁵² Exeter Hall was venue for various meetings, and could seat 4,000 people, but was predominantly associated with evangelicalism until 1907. Sadiya Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2011), p.76; Roger Steer, *Good News for the World* (Monarch Books, Oxford, 2004), p.167.

⁵³ LCMM, Vol. LXIV (1899), p.146.

⁵⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXIV (1899), p.149. Similar claims were made for The Salvation Army, and raise the question of the 'social control' function of religion in nineteenth century Britain. This debate falls outside the scope of this thesis, but an introduction may be found in: Jenifer Hart, 'Religion and Social Control in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in A. P. Donajrodzki, *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Croom Helm, London, 1977).

⁵⁵ This novel featured the discovery of a 'missing link' in Africa. J. Compton Rickett, *The Quickening of Caliban: A Modern Story of Evolution* (Cassell and Company Ltd., London, 1893). Lisa Hopkins, *Giants of the Past: Popular Fictions and the Idea of Evolution* (Associated University Presses, Cranbury, 2004), p.31.

A great deal of force has to be exercised...to keep [a city]...from becoming worse...Nature is ever desiring to go back to a savage state. The great law of reversion to primal conditions is just as true as the law which seems to be working for the survival of the better; and I think there is a vast deal done which we have hardly taken into account of in preventing degeneration from setting in. How very close we are to savagedom!⁵⁶

It is somewhat surprising, considering the position that LCM publications had taken on evolutionary theory, that these views were voiced on the Mission's behalf – and even more so that LCM reprinted them for wider circulation. Rickett justified these comments about 'survival of the better' and the antithetical 'degeneration' by stating that LCM missionaries saw more of 'primitive man' than did 'any other Minister of Faith'. By describing man's capacity for degeneration, Rickett intended to defend LCM against any who would accuse the organisation of limited success. The fact that men were not worse than they presently were, was testimony to the 'great force' that LCM had already expended in blocking the natural course of degeneration. 'Savagedom' did not refer to a spiritual condition alone: instead, Rickett argued that the 'privation' and 'fight' for life in London created:

a tendency, after a generation or two...to revert to the Iberian type of man who is supposed to have inhabited Western Europe and these Islands centuries ago, before the dawn of history – a stunted, dark man, puny in stature, not vigorous in muscle, but agile and keen-witted'.⁵⁷

Rickett framed these comments, and their relation to LCM, within contemporary fears surrounding the Boer War, as he used the Afrikaans word 'Uitlander' (meaning 'outsider') to describe those who did not attend church. Having made this association between 'savage' people in South Africa and the inhabitants of London,

⁵⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXVI (1901), pp.184–5.

⁵⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXVI (1901), p.185.

Rickett praised LCM for its decision not to build churches with ‘sensuous surroundings’ and claimed:

The effort to lift the people to a certain level of worship, instead of having to come down to their condition, does not do...we must not omit to meet the needs of those who will come and listen to a “straight talk,” who will shout a good rousing hymn...but who will not attend what we value so much – decorous public worship.⁵⁸

In Rickett’s opinion, there was a physical type in London that was unsuited to regular church worship; LCM, in providing for the spiritual needs of these people, was presented as a valuable tool in preventing the onset of ‘savagedom’ and ‘degeneration’.

The following year’s annual meeting entertained even more pessimistic ideas about degeneration. T. Cheney Garfit, identified as a long-term supporter and friend of LCM, began by praising the Mission’s work, but then moved to address some of the difficulties it faced.⁵⁹ The first difficulty was the ‘secularisation of Sunday’, which Garfit said reflected a general ‘indifference with regard to spiritual things’.⁶⁰ The second problem, according to Garfit, was that this indifference was difficult to overcome, as ‘over-population’ and ‘crowding’ made it ‘impossible’ to foster spiritual life. He quoted evidence from Sidney Webb, the famous Fabian activist,⁶¹ that 400,000 people in London were subjected to ‘soul-destroying conditions’ in one-roomed houses. Yet, rather than limiting the impact of such conditions to the

⁵⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXVI (1901), pp.185–6.

⁵⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXVII (1902), p.121.

⁶⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXVII (1902), p.121.

⁶¹ Beatrice and Sidney Webb are famed for their involvement in the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, and the production of the Minority Report of this Commission in 1909. This report urged the disbandment of the ‘Nasty Old Poor Law’, with power given instead to committees of county and county borough councils. The report recommended a rescheduling of public works for slack years in the trade cycle, to combat unemployment, where those who remained idle could be dealt with in ‘Detention Colonies’. John Davis, *A History of Britain, 1885–1939* (Macmillan Press Ltd., Houndmills, 1999) pp.98–9.

soul alone, Garfit connected Webb's claim to the revelation 'the other day' which showed that 'two out of three of those willing to bear arms in Manchester districts were virtual invalids'.⁶² Although this discovery received a huge amount of national publicity, with numerous articles in the medical and popular press,⁶³ Garfit claimed that he had raised the subject out of fear that its 'gravity' had not been appreciated, and because he believed the word 'impossible' was not part of LCM's vocabulary.⁶⁴ The result was a strange combination of terror and hope, which no doubt was intended as high praise for the work of LCM. Garfit's paper was followed by an address from Rev. H. J. R. Marston, who likewise related contemporary revelations about physical health to LCM's work. Marston opened with a call for missionaries not to be deceived by 'spurious gospels' that suggested 'soap and water is preferable to the Word of God'; however, having affirmed the fact that physical remedies could not replace spiritual ones, he went on to decry the 'monstrous overcrowding of this great city', which he charged with making 'the preaching of the Gospel as ineffectual as that preaching could be'. Marston feared that without intervention these conditions would result in:

multitudes of boys and girls...[growing] into men and women incapable of hearing and believing the Gospel – into de-humanised deformities, mere caricatures, outrages upon the race to which they nominally belong; creatures who, if you are able to save them at all, you can scarcely imagine that they were originally men and women.⁶⁵

⁶² This was a direct quotation from the journalist Arnold White's 1901 book *Efficiency and Empire*. White has been described as a jingoist with racist predilections and eugenic interests. Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies and Other Young Children: A History of the Infant and Child Welfare Movement in England 1898–1918* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1987), pp.12–13.

⁶³ Richard Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates: The Statistics of Race Deterioration in Edwardian England', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1982) pp.142–3.

⁶⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXVII (1902), p.121.

⁶⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXVII (1902), p.127.

Despite the fact that Marston endorsed LCM's policy of avoiding temporal work, which he dismissed as 'soap and water' remedies, he nevertheless argued that the Government had a duty to intervene and reduce dehumanising environmental conditions that threatened to produce a generation of children beyond the Church's capacity to save.

It is noteworthy that it was during this period, as fears circulated about physical degeneration and its potential to obstruct spiritual work, that LCM revised its policy on temporal relief. After 64 years of steadfast opposition to temporal relief, in 1903 LCM established a separate fund specifically 'for relief of the destitute poor in the districts occupied by the Society'.⁶⁶ This 'special fund' was justified as a result of 'the lack of employment for the working classes (we hear that at one gasworks alone 2,000 fewer hands are employed than was recently the case)' and 'the abnormal poverty in many thousands of homes amongst the poor...this winter'; however, figures 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrate that this policy was not temporary, or limited to a period of extraordinary distress, but came to define the Mission's approach throughout the remainder of the period covered in this thesis. Whilst LCM cited unemployment as the reason for this change, the publications of the organisation continued to discuss the issue of degeneration after 1903, and there can be little doubt that these debates helped lay a foundation for the change to the Mission's policy on relief.

⁶⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXVIII (1903), p.58.

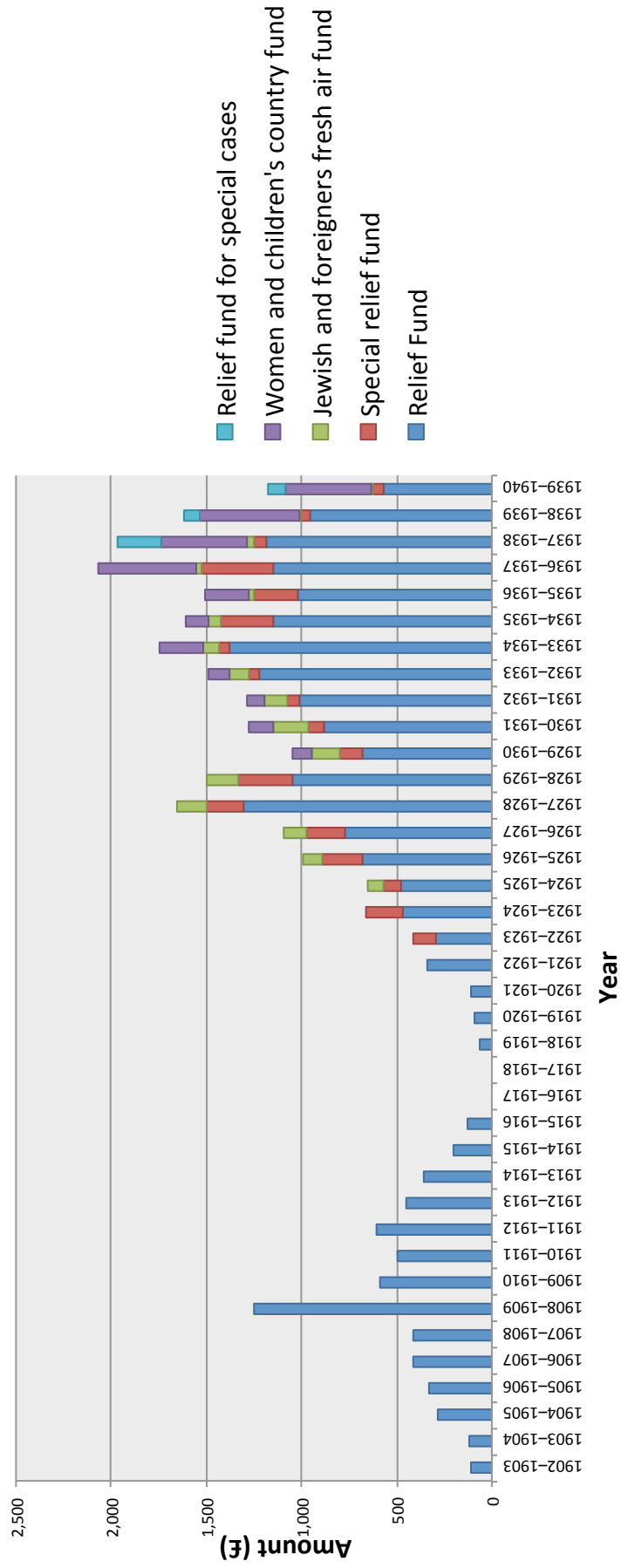


Figure 3.1 Relief Funds of LCM 1903–1940, as recorded in LCM Annual Reports.

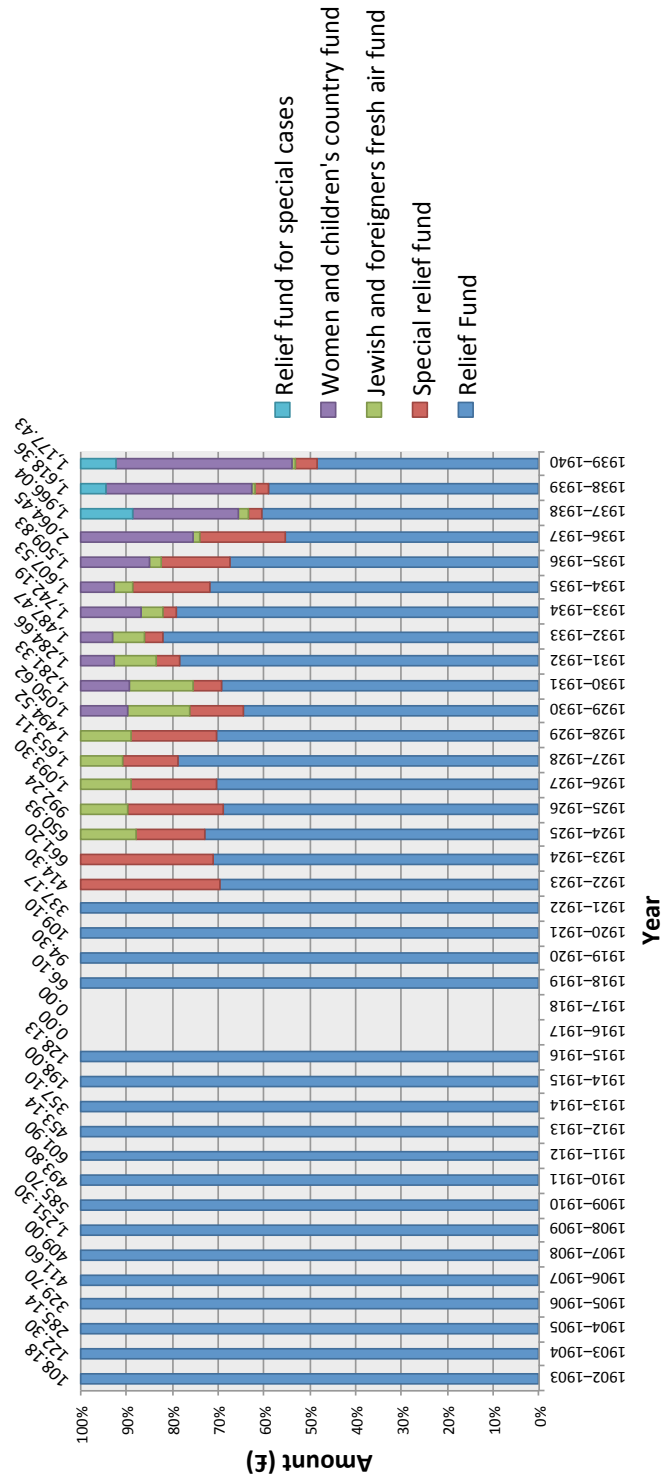


Figure 3.2 Structure of LCM Relief Funds 1903–1940, as presented in LCM Annual Reports.

Spiritual Health and the State of the Nation and Empire

LCM was not alone in its concern over the Boer War revelations. In 1903, the British Government appointed an Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, which was charged with establishing facts about the health of the nation. Although the committee had been deliberately named to avoid the word ‘degeneration’ and its report concluded that there was insufficient knowledge to establish whether or not there had been a physical degeneration of the race, popular discussions of the report continued to speak of ‘degeneration’.⁶⁷ Karl Pearson, one of the expert witnesses called by the committee, was convinced that degeneration had occurred and pursued a career in eugenics to provide statistical evidence of this.⁶⁸ The report of the committee failed to reach a conclusion on degeneration, save for saying that more evidence was necessary, but it made several recommendations for policies to improve the general health of the British population, such as school meals for children. The Liberal Government, which won a majority in 1906, passed a number of reforms based upon these recommendations;⁶⁹ LCM and others like them seemed to have gained the environmental intervention they demanded. However, in this section it will be demonstrated that, despite a new policy on relief, LCM continued to argue that sin was the primary cause of temporal suffering. As a consequence of this, LCM

⁶⁷ Soloway, ‘Counting the Degenerates’, pp.148–51.

⁶⁸ Pearson had worked on a statistical approach to analysing evolution and heredity since 1892. He accepted that there had been a national deterioration, but feared there was insufficient knowledge to legislate against this. In 1903 he received a substantial benefaction from the Worshipful Company of Drapers to support his Biometric Laboratory. Francis Galton endowed a Galton Research Fellowship in National Eugenics in 1904, with Edgar Schuster as its first fellow, but after two years this was merged with Pearson’s laboratory to become the Galton Laboratory for National Eugenics. In 1911 Pearson became the first Galton Professor in Eugenics. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, p.27, pp.33–4 and pp.37–8.

⁶⁹ Soloway, ‘Counting the Degenerates’, pp.150–51.

writings continued to discuss the threat posed by degeneration; environmental reforms on their own were not considered sufficient to resolve the problems of society. LCM retained its claim to be an organisation uniquely qualified to fight the degeneration of the nation.

In 1906, LCM published a book written by James Dunn that described the problems that faced London and the solution that the Mission offered to these challenges. One sin that Dunn highlighted was the tendency for those in London to neglect their observance of the Sabbath. This had been a regular concern for LCM, and the organisation published annual figures that included the number of people who had been ‘induced to attend public worship’, as well as the number of shops that missionaries had successfully encouraged to close ‘on the Lord’s day’.⁷⁰ However, Dunn added a new aspect to this subject by referring to degeneration. In direct opposition to those who argued that ‘Sunday amusements and sports’ were of a ‘refined kind’ that tended to ‘elevate the mind, and strengthen and improve the physique of the people’, Dunn noted that ‘cruel sports’ such as dog fights, cock fights, rat killings, and boxing contests were more common than any other. Regardless of the type of sport, Dunn challenged the suggestion that ‘breaking...the fourth Commandment [regarding the Sabbath]’ was beneficial to mind or body; he claimed that ‘science is proving that by an over-indulgence in these things [Sunday sports], the race is degenerating.’⁷¹ The long-standing work of LCM in combating

⁷⁰ These statistics were often given a prime location on the rear cover of LCM’s monthly publications, and featured throughout the period of this thesis. The level of public concern for the Sabbath may be seen in the 1851 defeat of a motion to open the British Museum on Sundays, by a vote of eight to one in the House of Commons. Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783–1870* (Longman, London, 1983), p.300.

⁷¹ James Dunn, *Modern London: Its Sins and Woes and The Sovereign Remedy* (London City Mission, London, 1906), pp.34–5. Dominic Erdozain’s work on the question of secularisation

the desecration of the Sabbath was thus reinvented as an important component in the fight against national degeneration.

Other LCM publications presented the same message as Dunn, that spiritual laws had an impact upon physical conditions, although the evidence cited in support of this argument was sometimes stretched. In 1906, a paper at a fund-raising meeting cited Dr. Barnardo, famed for his work establishing homes for children,⁷² in support of the view that spiritual reformation was more important than environmental conditions. Rev. George Hanson, of Marylebone Presbyterian Church, quoted Barnardo's description of 'fellows drawn from the vilest human antecedents' with 'ancestry...[running] through records of vice and degradation, of lust and laziness, of drink and crime, till one would think that the very life-blood in them was polluted'. Barnardo was said to have concluded that even with this vile 'ancestry', if these people were taken from their 'evil surroundings' and allowed to 'grow up under Christian influences...their lives will yet run themselves clean and sweet'. This hope was clearly grounded in two requirements – 'Christian influence' and removal from 'evil surroundings' – yet Hanson focused solely on the first aspect and summarised: 'we shall never see the end of it; there is no limit to the power of Christ our Saviour'.⁷³ This was not an accidental misinterpretation of Barnardo's belief, but rather reflected Hanson's prior claim that:

suggests that the success of evangelicals in promoting social values (which encouraged sport and temperance in place of vice) came to replace the previous message of the need for spiritual salvation. Dunn's comment suggests that LCM recognised the threat that sport posed to its work. Erdozain, *The Problem of Pleasure: Sport, Recreation and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2010), p.6.

⁷² Barnardo opened homes in Britain, but also advocated emigration as a solution for destitute children and by 1905 had sent eleven thousand children overseas. Gillian Wagner, 'Barnardo, Thomas John (1845–1905)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, Sep. 2010) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30600> accessed 24 Sep. 2011.

⁷³ LCMM, Vol. LXXI (1906), p.85.

Man's idea of reform is – change the man's environment, and you change the man. Christ's idea is – change the man, and you will change his surroundings. Save the man, and you save all that is round about him.⁷⁴

This interpretation, which placed sin at the centre of environmental problems, was the same view that had shaped the Mission's previous rejection of temporal relief work. In 1908, as the Liberal Government developed its plans for reform, LCM discussions gave a more mixed review of temporal intervention. LCM's treasurer, F. A. Bevan, told those gathered at the Mission's annual meeting that at 73 years old the organisation was 'older than the age at which the Government propose to give pensions to old people'. Bevan avoided making political comments, but pressed upon LCM supporters the importance of praying for the 'great schemes in the air' with regard to 'the housing of the poor, the licensing of the public-houses, the education of the children'.⁷⁵ Bevan reiterated that the Mission's work was primarily spiritual, but stated that 'we believe that we cannot really go about, and do men good spiritually, without at the same time giving some thought and attention to their social wants'. This appeared to echo the claims of Garfit in 1902; however other speakers reminded LCM supporters that sin lay at the root of bad environmental conditions. Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, Vicar of St. James-the-Less in Bethnal Green,⁷⁶ urged upon 'Christian people' the importance of solving 'the greatest problem of all – the housing of the poor'⁷⁷ and noted that a great deal of Christ's work was 'social work', but reminded his audience that:

⁷⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXI (1906), p.83.

⁷⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXIII (1908), pp.103–5.

⁷⁶ Watts-Ditchfield was appointed to this church in 1897, and though the church was in a difficult area (with only 26 Easter communicants in 1897) it grew rapidly under his leadership. The 1903 religious census recorded that 1699 people attended the church, and Watts-Ditchfield was widely known for his 1902 and 1904 campaigns against 'sweated' labour. C. J. Bearman, 'Ditchfield, John Edwin Watts- (1861–1923)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47655> accessed 24 Sep. 2011.

⁷⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXIII (1908), p.106.

This Mission knows upon what foundation social work must rest. You may sweep away the slums and build model dwellings, but unless you change the heart of the dwellers you will soon have slumland again. It was in the Garden of Eden that men fell...It is no use changing the environment unless you change the character.⁷⁸

This argument about the limited impact of environmental reforms, grounded in the account of Eden and the Fall, appeared several times in the published discussions of LCM.⁷⁹ Another article interpreted the Levitical law about homes with mildew (which said that homes should be observed – if problems persisted the house should be destroyed, but if the mildew went away an offering of atonement was to be given and the house recognised as clean again) as evidence of the principle: ‘Cleanse first the Soul, then the environment’.⁸⁰ Even at times when LCM was unusually active in relief work, such as 1909, (see figure 3.1 which shows that this year represented a peak in the relief fund not equalled again until 1929)⁸¹ the organisation’s publications repeatedly emphasised that only spiritual reformation would be lasting. The chairman at the Mission’s 1909 annual meeting said that legislative and municipal work in education, housing and work was ‘excellent’, but ‘only half of what is needed for the regeneration of London’.⁸² Another speaker, Rev. C. Bradshaw Foy, Vicar of St. Mary’s West Kensington, divided reforms for uplifting the ‘working classes’ into ‘the popular’ and ‘the religious’. Speaking about the ‘popular’ philanthropic measures and political reforms, he said:

We have not a word to say against these schemes, but they are schemes of environment, they do not aim at the regeneration of society, but the development of society; they do not put a mighty power in a man’s heart, they do not

⁷⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXIII (1908), p.108.

⁷⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIX (1924), p.95; LCMM, Vol. XC (1925), p.5.

⁸⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1909), p.97.

⁸¹ LCM explained the ‘gigantic’ problem faced in ‘providing for the destitute and the unemployed’ had led it to contribute £1,000 towards the relief fund in 1909. LCMM, Vol. LXXIV (1909), p.21.

⁸² LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1909), p.130.

change the inner thoughts and feelings...If our schemes are really to be of any use they must go to the secret springs of a man's life.⁸³

The spike in relief work during 1909 was accompanied by increased attention to the issue of poverty in the LCM annual report. A section describing the 'condition of the people' claimed that present suffering was probably 'keener' and more 'heart-rending' than at any time before. Alongside the regular problems caused by 'early marriages', 'want of thrift', 'drunkenness', and other self-induced difficulties, it was recognised that there was 'a larger amount of unemployment than usual'. A significant caveat followed this, however, as it was claimed that 'drinking customs' meant that many had no intention of working,⁸⁴ but for genuine sufferers LCM provided 'coal and bread tickets' and other measures that it was said had saved 'multitudes...from physical collapse.'⁸⁵ Regardless of the cause of poverty, LCM accounts retained an emphasis upon spiritual and moral solutions; those fed by one missionary were welcomed to nightly 'Gospel services', where forty men signed 'the temperance pledge' while others professed 'conversion to God'. Another missionary devoted to work amongst the unemployed claimed 'Hundreds of men have heard the Gospel, and many have been led to lead sober lives.'⁸⁶ With sin retained close to the centre of these narratives about poverty, it was again implicated in spiritual and physical degeneration. Directly following this analysis of the 'condition of the people', the report explained that 'over-crowding' was 'one of the natural results of poverty'. Thousands were said to dwell in one roomed apartments

⁸³ LCMM, Vol. LXXIV (1909), p.133.

⁸⁴ This may have just referred to excessive drinking, but it possibly suggests what Lilian Lewis Shiman has identified as a drinking culture based around countryside values that was incompatible with industrial work discipline; Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England* (Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke, 1988), p.2.

⁸⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXIV (1909), pp.143–6.

⁸⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXIV (1909), p.144 and p.146.

where ‘parents and children have to live, sleep, partake of their meals’ and often work. The report questioned readers ‘Can it be wondered at if both health and morals degenerate?’⁸⁷

The 1910 annual report repeated this theme as it described the ‘debasing and demoralising influences’ of common lodging houses, and quoted a missionary’s estimate that 75 percent of those found in these circumstances owed the situation to ‘their own folly’. The primary type of this folly was identified as ‘drink’, which the report said was responsible for ‘dragging and keeping [people] down’; with this cause responsible for poverty, the report argued:

Where no mere social palliative could render effective assistance, there the grace of God, by changing unregenerate human nature, compasses miracles or reclamation and upliftment. Nor are the missionaries content without endeavouring, so far as possible, to deliver these poor creatures from their horrible environment, with its debasing influences.⁸⁸

Elsewhere in 1910, these debasing conditions were described in explicitly degenerationist terms. An article that described families who were dependent on charitable relief quoted from ‘one of the writers in Mr. Mudie-Smith’s “Religious Life”’, who said:

The children are innumerable; the death-rate of infants is high, but a sufficient number survive to ensure the transmission of the rickety type, stunted physique, and fragile or diseased constitution to the generations of the future. The individuals rise or fall, but the class remains, a stagnant pool of low-grade life which is slowly extending its borders, and swelling its multitudes to the menace of its futility.

⁸⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXIV (1909), p.146.

⁸⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXV (1910), pp.135–6.

This bleak quotation, almost suggestive of regret that some children in this ‘class’ survived, was not challenged but rather extended, as the LCM article added a spiritual dimension to the problem:

When to this gloomy and significant statement is added the fact that, as a whole, the working classes, and the poorest stratum of the population, shun or at least neglect, the churches, the necessity of an evangelistic agency like that of this Society, which can get into actual touch with these sections of the community as individuals and families, will be at once recognised.⁸⁹

The eugenic fears in the quotation from Mudie-Smith’s work were very clear; there was a physical ‘type’, represented by a diseased and ‘stunted’ constitution, and the ‘innumerable’ births in this group meant that weak traits were being transmitted to the ‘generations of the future’ – a growing problem, represented by the belief that this class was ‘extending its borders’.⁹⁰ These were precisely the fears that the eugenicist Karl Pearson had described in his 1903 Huxley Lecture to the Anthropological Institute.⁹¹ It is striking that the LCM article, faced with these pessimistic opinions, did not present a more hopeful evaluation. The prospect of a physically weakened future generation, and a present class of diseased and stunted individuals, instead provided the Mission with an opportunity to present the shocking depths that its missionaries were able to reach.

⁸⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXV (1910), pp.61–2.

⁹⁰ Mudie-Smith described his intention that his work would ‘stimulate the Churches to renewed activity by presenting them with accurate facts in place of plausible opinions’. The pessimistic outlook it perceived was suggested by each regional chapter being titled ‘The problem of...’. The quotation LCM used here was taken from Charles F. G. Masterman, ‘The Problem of South London’, in Richard Mudie-Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1904), p.191.

⁹¹ Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, pp.32–3.

This rhetoric about work in the ‘depths’ – a literary genre discussed in greater detail in chapter five⁹² – was even clearer in another article from 1910, when the work of Mudie-Smith was quoted for a second time. LCM’s article, titled ‘In Darkest London’,⁹³ aimed to describe the power of ‘God’s Salvation’ in ‘uplifting and transforming lives and homes sunk in degradation and squalor’. This power was magnified as the article emphasised the great moral and physical degradation that was present in crowded districts:

the light of hope, and purity, and goodness seems to have fled, leaving a darkness which stunts and kills mind, soul and body alike. It is to such a district that we now invite our readers to accompany us.⁹⁴

This titillating invitation for readers to join work in darkest London, where ‘hope’, ‘purity’, and ‘goodness’ appeared to be absent, reflected a standard literary tool of social investigators in this period.⁹⁵ The invitation was followed by a vivid description from Mudie-Smith’s work, about a ‘notorious’ area of St Pancras:⁹⁶

the conditions of existence are disheartening to a degree – ugly, squalid dwellings filled with every unpleasant odour, and densely packed with every kind of people; loafers and casual labourers herding with degraded women...Here dirty men’s dirtier wives keep low lodgings, and maintain a dirty state of chronic intoxication; here the dirty streets are full of dirty and anaemic children...the flowers refuse to bloom; here all things degrade and die – only the evil that men do lives on, and little babes are blessed with early death; *here souls go to hell and no one cares.*⁹⁷

⁹² Examples of this genre include: H. G. Wells, *In the Abyss* (1895); C. F. G. Masterman, *From the Abyss*; and Jack London, *People of the Abyss*. See Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1995), p.231.

⁹³ This title imitated the Salvationist work *In Darkest England*, discussed in detail in chapter five.

⁹⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXV (1910), p.181.

⁹⁵ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004), p.38.

⁹⁶ LCM did not provide a reference for this, but the quotation was taken from Walter R. Warren, ‘The Problem of North London’, in Mudie-Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London*, p.141.

⁹⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXV (1910), p.181, emphasis in the original.

It would be easy to lose count of the references to ‘dirt’ in this passage, but the article highlighted the ‘despairing last clause’ in order to ‘thank God’ that the Mission could be more optimistic and reveal ways that God was making its work in these areas successful.⁹⁸ Once again the filth and squalor was not denied, but rather emphasised for the sake of demonstrating the value of the spiritual work accomplished by LCM.

Strength and War

With the relationship between sin, poverty, and degeneration established, LCM writings also argued that the inverse relationship was true. In 1911, Rev. William Cuff of Shoreditch Tabernacle described his forty years of involvement with LCM, including time as the superintendent of missionaries working in the ‘crowded area of Hoxton’. Cuff said that this work had taught him that pulling down ‘all the slums’ and replacing them with excellent dwellings would achieve no good unless ‘men and women are inwardly changed’. Cuff believed that LCM could help to bring this change, and ended his paper with ‘a plea for a better England’:

It is on this ground that I plead that the London City Mission shall be supported by all Christian people who really care for the future as well as the present of England. A better England is coming. A better England has been coming...ever since London City Mission was started... There will be a better London presently, a better England for the next generation, and when historians write the story they will say that the agents of this Mission carried the light that cannot be put out amongst the people...⁹⁹

This claim that LCM could bring physical benefits to London was repeated regularly in the period prior to the First World War. An article published in the

⁹⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXV (1910), p.182.

⁹⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXVI (1911), pp.164–5.

LCM magazine, ‘Slumdom at its Worst’, quoted Charles Booth, the medical officer for Southwark, describing this area as the place where ‘the scum of South London takes up its abode’. Yet this description was contrasted with the article’s claim that, even there, the Mission had success in winning ‘numerous trophies [conversions]’. The article concluded with the question, ‘what other instrument could raise such characters [the ‘lowest classes’] into newness of life?’¹⁰⁰ This question was answered with the statement: ‘Divine Grace is greater than environment, and that from the lowest strata of humankind gems may be gathered for Immanuel’s crown’.¹⁰¹ These claims took on a renewed significance during the First World War.

The First World War provided a unique opportunity for LCM to promote the temporal influence of its spiritual work. LCM readers were reminded that spiritual reform was a necessary precursor to any permanent environmental changes,¹⁰² but this argument was reinterpreted to address issues of national significance. The 1915 annual report, which spoke of the ‘terrible carnage’ of war, reiterated the Mission’s faith in the ‘supreme importance of house-to-house visitation’ and suggested:

It is quiet, unseen work, which does not attract the gaze, or win the applause of the world at large, but it is all-important if the non-church-going multitudes are to be awakened, saved, and made a source of strength to the nation.¹⁰³

The implications of this statement were clear; existing multitudes of non-church-goers were a source of weakness to the nation, but LCM could resolve that and

¹⁰⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXXVII (1912), p.41.

¹⁰¹ LCMM, Vol. LXXVII (1912), p.43.

¹⁰² For example in 1915 the LCM magazine responded to real and imagined critics of the Mission’s focus upon spiritual rather than temporal reform by arguing ‘spiritual conversion is the shortest way to social reform’ and that in the same way a chimney sweep would wash his face before accepting a flower, the ‘flowers’ of education and universal equality could not reach the fundamental ‘requirements of human nature’. LCMM, Vol. LXXX (1915), p.53, and LCMM, Vol. LXXX (1915), p.112.

¹⁰³ LCMM, Vol. LXXX (1915), p.83–4.

thereby perform a work of great wartime significance. This claim gained even more prominence at the Mission's fundraising campaign in 1916, the 'Mansion House Conversazione', which was given the title 'Work of National Importance'. Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, ex-president of the Wesleyan Conference, repeated the mantra-like claim that spiritual change was necessary before environmental reform and said:

The missionary does not make so much of the environment, though he alters that, and puts it right, but the message he carries first puts the heart right. Sin began in heaven – splendid environment!¹⁰⁴

This message was given a contemporary remodelling, however, as Young argued that German materialism could be blamed for current European hostilities. This message was repeated by Sheriff G. A. Touche M.P.,¹⁰⁵ who argued that:

no nation can endure and be strong unless it has a spiritual basis...The gospel of materialism which has been preached in Germany for so many years is, I am confident, the beginning of the decline and fall of the German Empire...There could be no better public or national work...[than that of LCM] during the crisis through which we are passing.¹⁰⁶

There was a logical foundation to this claim that sin caused poverty, but this argument extended that principle to include the survival of nations and empires. These arguments provided an important justification for the work of LCM at a time when the Mission admitted that wartime financial pressure had forced it to make 'stringent economies'.¹⁰⁷ Part of LCM's fundraising campaign rested on the claim

¹⁰⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.37.

¹⁰⁵ Touche was Conservative MP for North Islington from 1910–1918, when he retired on grounds of ill health. He became alderman of the City of London in 1915, was sheriff in 1915–16, and was Knighted in 1917. John Richard Edwards, 'Touche, Sir George Alexander, first baronet (1861–1935)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Online edition, Jan 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47822>, accessed 26 Feb 2011.

¹⁰⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.38.

¹⁰⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXIX (1914), p.173.

that wartime offered unique opportunities for missionary work, for example amongst soldiers who were believed to be more open to questions of an eternal spiritual nature.¹⁰⁸ However, there were additional claims that the Christian faith could directly aid military campaigns:

It is said that the moral condition of our troops is even more important to our successes on the field than their efficiency in the art of war. We go further by saying that a soldier who combines the practice of prayer with the art of war doubles his value to the State. In this way, more than any other, he contributes to the “righteousness that exalteth a nation.”¹⁰⁹

These claims, about the military significance of the Christian faith, were the most extreme expression of an idea that featured regularly within LCM publications, that spiritual reform was the only foundation for material security. Other claims in this period were less dramatic, but followed the same principle. In 1916, when the Secretary of the United Kingdom Alliance¹¹⁰ complained that wartime drinking restrictions had not caused a marked decrease in the consumption of intoxicants, the LCM magazine reminded its readers of the important role played by ‘the selfishness of the unregenerated heart’.¹¹¹

The end of war was followed by a series of environmental reforms, particularly in the area of housing. In 1919, the Housing and Town Planning Act, or Addison Act, obliged local authorities to survey the housing needs of their districts and submit plans to meet these requirements.¹¹² In 1922, The London County Council, which

¹⁰⁸ For examples see: LCMM, Vol. LXXIX (1914), p.173 and p.194; LCMM, Vol. LXXX (1915), p.1 and p.63; LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.14 and p.136.

¹⁰⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXIX (1914), p.230.

¹¹⁰ This organisation was founded in 1853 with the aim of supporting anti-drink legislation; Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815–1872* (Faber and Faber, London, 1971), p.19.

¹¹¹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.67.

¹¹² Robert Whelan (ed.), *Octavia Hill and the Social Housing Debate: Essays and Letters by Octavia Hill* (IEA Health and Welfare Unit, London, 1998), p.27.

had undertaken a detailed survey of unfit housing in 1911, began to categorise houses according to the urgency in which they needed repair. This information came to form the basis of the Labour government's slum clearance programmes of 1934 and 1937,¹¹³ and new standards for working-class housing conditions were based upon comparisons with new suburban areas.¹¹⁴ All of these trends were examined in LCM publications. In 1918, a missionary reflecting on 'Thirty Years in Bermondsey' was careful not to underestimate 'the value of social reform', but argued that LCM's work of acquainting 'men and women with the message of the Gospel' had the additional benefit of bringing 'temporal betterment' and 'a cleaner environment'. He observed:

when the people of the slums become Christians, they quickly move into respectable quarters. As often as not, however, rooms thus vacated are soon reoccupied by families from other degraded areas.¹¹⁵

This article presented a clear message that no temporal reforms could replace the work of spiritual salvation, and LCM faced an ongoing battle with this task. This observation was made explicit in 1919, when LCM supporters were reminded that 'there is no armistice in the greater war' and 'the old Evangel – faithfully preached, fully believed, and rightly applied – is the One Power by which London can be elevated'.¹¹⁶ The question surrounding contemporary reform efforts was also raised in a section of the LCM magazine entitled 'Voices of Today'. This included a comment from Dr. F. B. Meyer,¹¹⁷ who was involved in the work of the National

¹¹³ Jim Yelling, 'The Metropolitan Slum: London 1918–51', in Gaskell (ed.), *Slums*, p.194.

¹¹⁴ Gaskell (ed.), *Slums*, pp.5–6.

¹¹⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIII (1918), p.101.

¹¹⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), p.1.

¹¹⁷ Meyer was a Baptist Minister who wrote over 70 books in his lifetime, reaching a circulation of 5 million by the time of his death. He pastored a large London congregation and entered into political controversies regarding the religious rights of nonconformists and temperance. Ian Randall has said Meyer's influence made him 'essentially transdenominational', and argues he was 'the most important bridge builder in the evangelical world of his day'. Ian M. Randall, 'Meyer, Frederick

Council of Public Morals (an organisation discussed in detail in chapter five). Meyer, who had published the eugenic text *Religion and Race-Regeneration*,¹¹⁸ was quoted urging ‘The Church’ to retain its ‘leadership in moral and spiritual reconstruction’.¹¹⁹ Physical reconstruction was related to the spiritual state of society, and LCM publications urged supporters of the Mission to continue to finance the irreplaceable work that was carried out by the organisation.

A more extreme explanation of LCM’s role in social reform was provided in a quotation from the journalist and writer G. R. Sims,¹²⁰ whose earlier works *How the Poor Live* and *Horrible London* have been cited as examples of the tendency for reformers to exploit the ‘anxieties of the public’.¹²¹ The LCM magazine quoted Sims’ views on the policy of ‘slum clearance’, which, he argued, could not be considered as an all-sufficient solution to the housing problem. This message resonated with the view that LCM publications had presented on numerous occasions beforehand, but the language that Sims used gave this argument a new force:

They [occupants of a ‘notorious district’] cannot be disposed of in a human refuse destroyer. If they are driven from one area they must find another...and wherever they go they will carry their evil inheritance with them. That is one of the problems of social reconstruction. There is an idle, shiftless,

Brotherton (1847–1929)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, May 2006) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35006> accessed 22 Sep. 2011.

¹¹⁸ Frederick Brotherton Meyer, *Religion and Race-regeneration* (The National Council of Public Morals, London, 1912).

¹¹⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), p.10.

¹²⁰ Sims wrote verse as well as investigations into social conditions, but was also active in the National Sunday League campaigns for museums and galleries to be opened on Sundays. LCM would not have approved of this goal. Philip Waller, ‘Sims, George Robert (1847–1922)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37964> accessed 22 Sep. 2011.

¹²¹ Dyhouse, ‘The Condition of England 1860–1900’, p.76.

criminal, and vicious population to be provided for which, if re-housed in Park-lane would speedily make a slum of it.¹²²

Sims' comments, which evoke what Dan Stone has termed the 'lethal chamber' solution,¹²³ embodied the logical extremity of views that had featured in LCM publications for decades. Individuals were portrayed as the source of their own environmental degradation, meaning that any solution that sought to remedy physical problems without tending to spiritual conditions would fail. The grotesque image of a destructive solution to 'human refuse' is made more shocking by the fact that the previous issue of the LCM magazine had featured an advertisement from the 'Bible Lands Missions Aid Society' which told of 'over one million' having perished from 'massacre, disease or exposure' at the hands of 'Turkish hate and cruelty'.¹²⁴ However, this example of human extermination was preceded by an even earlier reference; an 1876 article on 'mission work among Jews' had acknowledged that 'if the Jews as a nation have been preserved to this day as witnesses for God's truth...it has not been because no attempt has been made by so-called Christians to exterminate them from the face of God's earth'.¹²⁵ The conclusion that the LCM article gave, following the quotation from Sims, was that: 'Dilapidated houses are too often the index of dilapidated lives, hence the reiteration in these pages of the truth that regeneration of individual souls by the Divine Spirit is the basal fact in reconstruction, and the only way to social reform.'¹²⁶

¹²² LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), p.15.

¹²³ Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, race, and eugenics in Edwardian and interwar Britain* (Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2002).

¹²⁴ This figure is close to current estimates, which suggest that one million Armenians died (out of a population of 1.8 million in the Ottoman Empire). Alan Kramer, 'Combatants and Noncombatants: Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2010), p.192; LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), inside back cover.

¹²⁵ LCMM, Vol. XLI (1876), p.18.

¹²⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), p.15.

The belief that a particular type of inferior, unregenerate individual was responsible for slum conditions was repeated at LCM's 1919 Mansion House Conversazione. Sir Andrew Wingate, speaking in place of the LCM secretary who was absent due to illness, quoted another passage from Sims to endorse the view that environmental change was an insufficient reform. He also used the army's category of physical unfitness, the description of 'C3 people', to argue that LCM could be a valuable 'salt' preventing the unfit from returning to slum conditions after the end of the war.¹²⁷ The 'C3' category was understood as a distinct biological group in eugenicist circles, and before the 1922 General Election Marie Stopes asked MPs to sign a declaration that they would 'press the Ministry of Health to give such scientific information...as will curtail the C3 and increase the A1'.¹²⁸ LCM writings did not pass comment on this form of remedy; the solution that LCM publications envisaged was grounded in the rationale that a great deal of poverty was caused by spiritual failings. Although there were occasional examples of individuals who suffered through no fault of their own, where articles rested on solitary examples these almost without fail described people who admitted personal culpability for their suffering.¹²⁹ These descriptions constructed what may be termed a 'geography of sin'. Michael Mason has spoken of an 'environmental bias' regarding sexuality, where members of the working class who worked and lived in close proximity to members of the opposite sex were considered peculiarly susceptible to

¹²⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), pp.58–9.

¹²⁸ Ross McKibbin, 'Introduction', in Marie Stopes, *Married Love* (Edited with an introduction and notes by Ross McKibbin, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004), p.xvi.

¹²⁹ For example the 1919 annual report gave only one example of a slum family, who were quoted promising 'to God they would try lead better lives' following which there was a dramatic change in their circumstances. LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), pp.87–8.

immorality,¹³⁰ but LCM writings presented the very fact of living in a slum as indicative of a sinful lifestyle. Sin caused the need for morally damaging forms of housing rather than *vice versa*. In the writings of both eugenicists and LCM, ‘C3’ individuals represented a social threat, were responsible for their own suffering, and required external intervention in order to be helped.

LCM publications employed an impressive, and somewhat surprising, range of advocates for its theoretical framework concerning reform. The Mission’s Mansion House meeting in 1920 opened with comments from the chair, Sir Alfred W. Yeo J.P. M.P., who had been the Liberal Member of Parliament for Poplar since 1914. Yeo argued:

You may pass Acts of Parliament; you may give the people better wages and shorter hours, you may give them decent houses and increased leisure; you may even close public houses and remove all the evil that you possibly can by statute, but when you have done all that you have not saved a single soul, apart from Jesus Christ. Believe me, the future reconstruction of this country will only succeed and only be lasting in the measure in which it is allied and affiliated with the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³¹

These uncompromising views, from a politician who dismissed the lasting effects of political reform, found a natural home in the LCM magazine. After Yeo’s comments, Rev. Preb. C. J. Procter of Islington spoke of the need for ‘reclaiming and rebuilding of the individual’. Procter presented this in explicitly racial terms as he stated that ‘it is an axiomatic truth that you can only attain the reconstruction of the race by the reconstruction of individuals one by one’.¹³² Unlike Yeo, who only raised political reforms to dismiss their lasting value, Procter admitted that the work

¹³⁰ Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994), pp.139–40.

¹³¹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), pp.54–5.

¹³² LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.55.

of LCM raised ‘many questions of a social and economic sort’. On the most immediate of these questions, that of housing, Procter said:

We admit that it is the home surroundings of our childhood which give us the most abiding impressions – impressions which we retain throughout the whole of our lives. The environment of the child is a tremendous asset or equally a tremendous handicap to the future man or woman.¹³³

Although this argument gave significance to the influence of the environment, this was again presented in terms of sin, as Procter spoke of ‘the wreckage, the flotsam and jetsam cast upon the shore of our civilisation by the angry sea of competition and temptation and sin’. The reference to ‘competition’, charged with Social Darwinist overtones, continued the theme of racial reconstruction, as Procter went on to provide specific examples of moral failing. He began with a lengthy description of conditions experienced in ‘furnished rooms’, places often used for prostitution.¹³⁴ This issue was immediately followed by an example of the impact that immorality could have upon children, thereby uniting the subject under a banner of racial health: ‘In this so-called home a man and woman, often with three or four unwanted children, live.’ The structure and language of this sentence was fitting for Procter’s message; it was not ‘husband’ and ‘wife’, and the children were bracketed away and separated from the word ‘live’. Rather than being an accidental slip, this message was expanded as these children became the focus of the following sentence:

Our heart aches for the little children...Nourished on beer, sleeping on the bare floor, or on a heap of rags, the younger one nursed by a child only a year or two older than itself, it is no wonder the little infant faces look old, and that death

¹³³ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.55.

¹³⁴ A clear example of the conditions expected in these places was given in an article in 1925, see: LCMM, Vol. XC (1925), p.100. Charles Booth was similarly critical of ‘furnished apartments’, see Charles Booth (ed.), *Labour and Life of the People: Volume I: East London* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1889), p.69–70.

often removes these children from this inhospitable world.¹³⁵

The image of death as an almost benevolent force that provided children with a merciful release from temporal suffering, reminiscent of the previous quotations from Mudie-Smith's work, was followed by the stark claim that 'there are whole streets in the metropolis which are not fit for a child to live in'.¹³⁶ In the face of these ghastly conditions, Procter concluded by referring to Yeo's paper: 'We have but one remedy to suggest. It is the remedy which our Chairman has put before us...The bedrock of every scheme of restoration is, after all, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ'.¹³⁷ Racial reconstruction was threatened, and children were dying as a direct consequence of sin; in this presentation, Procter argued that the work of Christian groups like LCM was the only viable remedy.

Mission, Empire, Race and Reform

Fears, widespread in society,¹³⁸ that Britain was suffering decline around the period of the Second Boer War, were clearly reflected in the publications of LCM. However, despite the presence of discussions about racial health, the racial hierarchies that are often associated with eugenics did not accompany these concerns.¹³⁹ The absence of racial prejudice was shown in an 1892 article, which

¹³⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.55.

¹³⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.55.

¹³⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.56.

¹³⁸ Searle has described the 'creed of National Efficiency' as a 'cohering ideology' that embraced people of very different backgrounds, all united under fear of British decline. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency*. Fears of degeneration and decline were also shared by people outside Britain, see: Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848-c.1918* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996); and J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman (eds.), *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1985).

¹³⁹ Only one study has examined this issue with regard to LCM, but its conclusions are deeply flawed as it focused solely upon a missionary dedicated to work amongst Asian seamen, without placing this work in the context of the rest of LCM's work. This resulted in indefensible conclusions, such as the claim that the 'English poor' were erased from view. Study of LCM magazines reveals there was a

described a meeting between a missionary and a Jewish man. Rather than holding any prejudices about Jewish biological inferiority, this missionary told a group of listeners that the Jewish:

moral and ceremonial law...have made a physically strong people, and notwithstanding adversity and persecution, they are to-day the most prosperous, enterprising and healthy people to be found on the four continents.¹⁴⁰

Seeking to illustrate this, the missionary quoted a scripture that came to be favoured in eugenicist circles:

Putting my hand upon the shoulder of a poor, ill-fed typical East-ender, I said [to the Jewish man], ‘I do not wish to stigmatise your servant, but I want to know from you what has made you to differ? I don’t blame him, but wish to show you that he is verification of the truth of the law which declares, “I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.” Be careful, sir,’ I said, ‘that you hand on a sound body and mind to your children’.¹⁴¹

In this instance, if there was a racial hierarchy, working-class British families came at the bottom. Even during the First World War, a time of heightened nationalism, an article on the subject of ‘Patriotism’ reminded readers that this was truly defined as ‘love of the Kingdom of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ’.¹⁴² Similarly, the private memoirs of a missionary, who had worked for 54 years ‘principally amongst the foreign seamen in the docks of London’, complained that the war meant he had

concern that ‘native’ London dwellers risked contaminating visiting members of the British Empire with irreligion to a much greater extent than foreign visitors were feared as a contaminant. Ruth H. Lindeborg, ‘The “Asiatic” and the Boundaries of Victorian Englishness’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1994), see especially p.384, p.388 and p.400.

¹⁴⁰ LCMM, Vol. LVII (1892), pp.6–7. Lara V. Marks has noted that Jewish mothers were praised as good mothers at the very time that there were concerns about the strength of the British nation, but placed this around the time of the Second Boer War. LCM’s comments, therefore, were perhaps earlier than was typical. Marks, *Model Mothers: Jewish Mothers and Maternity Provision in East London, 1870–1939* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994), p.2.

¹⁴¹ LCMM, Vol. LVII (1892), p.7. For examples of eugenicists’ use of this verse, see: *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXI (July 1929), p.147; and *Eugenics: A Journal of Race Betterment*, Vol. I (Dec. 1928), pp.3–5.

¹⁴² LCMM, Vol. LXXX (1915), p.65.

lost contact with many of his ‘old friends’ because ‘foreign ships’ were prevented from reaching London. This, combined with the loss of ‘many old friends by removals or death’, led to a bleak final sentence to the memoir: ‘I am more and more alone.’¹⁴³ This longing for overseas visitors was very much absent in the writings of NYCM, as will be seen in the next chapter.

There must, however, be one significant qualification to this understanding of the issue of ‘race’ in the writings of LCM. This occurred as the Mission sought to present the value of its work in comparison with that of overseas missionary activities. In 1901, C. F. G. Masterman¹⁴⁴ published a collection of essays titled *The Heart of the Empire*, which attacked Liberal leaders for pursuing a policy of overseas expansion at the expense of reforms at home.¹⁴⁵ LCM publications adopted this message with alacrity, for very obvious reasons, and in this context presented a very unfavourable image of the ‘depths’ to which those in London had sunk. There was a clear example of this strategy in 1920, when the Mission confessed that it was seeking the ‘widening [of] our circle of friends and winning [of] new support for the Mission’ in order to improve the financial security of the organisation.¹⁴⁶ In seeking to win this support, the LCM magazine emphasised the significance of the Mission in terms of nothing less than the survival of the nation. An article entitled ‘The Alone Foundation’ reminded readers of the ‘influences at work’ that would either ‘tend to cohesion or disintegration’, and claimed that nothing without a ‘sound’

¹⁴³ Unpublished memoir of George H. Gillman, LCM archive.

¹⁴⁴ Masterman wrote for several newspapers and held positions in parliament from 1906 to 1914, during which time he was heavily involved in domestic reforms. H. C. G. Matthew, ‘Masterman, Charles Frederick Gurney (1874–1927)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, 2011) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34927> accessed 24 Sep. 2011.

¹⁴⁵ Dyhouse, ‘The Condition of England 1860–1900’, p.82.

¹⁴⁶ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.113.

foundation could withstand these forces. This was said to be true for ‘cities, nations and empires’, and the article stated that ‘the only sure foundation’ was found in ‘the Word of God’. Having discussed the ‘virus of Bolshevism’, which was said to have set itself at the extermination of Christianity and ‘already affected a section of our population’, LCM was praised as an organisation through which ‘the Message’ could be presented to ‘the masses’.¹⁴⁷ The stabilising potential of LCM was repeated in an article that took its title from the words of Byron: ‘Behold our Homes and Survey an Empire’. Here, readers were informed that good health depended on no more than 56 people inhabiting one acre, whereas Spitalfields and Bethnal Green had more than 900 people to an acre. The Rector of Spitalfields, evaluating this statistic, was quoted as saying “*if it were not for the City missionaries, the people would be as the heathen.*”¹⁴⁸ The article developed this theme of imperial strength versus heathenism in the claim that:

Hundreds of homes, ruined by drink and cruelty, have been turned into abodes of peace and happiness through the instrumentality of the Mission. Such a contribution to the welfare and stability of the community is beyond all calculation. To quote the memorable words of King George V: -
*“The foundations of national glory are set in the homes of the people, and they will only remain unshaken while the family life of our race and nation is strong, simple, and pure.”*¹⁴⁹

These words of King George V, part of an address given to the Convocation of Canterbury on his accession to the throne,¹⁵⁰ came to feature in eugenics organisations such as the National Council of Public Morals, which used them as its

¹⁴⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.114.

¹⁴⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.123.

¹⁴⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.123.

¹⁵⁰ This part of the accession address was reported in *The New York Times*, 17 Jul. 1910.

‘motto’.¹⁵¹ Contrasted to the stabilising influence of LCM, was the potential for degeneration, as expressed in a 1922 article entitled ‘Heathen at Home’:

Seeing the inside of the life of Spitalfields, one is not quite sure whether the darkness and degradation of heathen lands is worse than the conditions here depicted. Frankly I am inclined to answer the question in the negative. Despite many drawbacks, native life in India, Africa and China, is more moral and hopeful...With no pride in cleanliness, or decent surroundings, the denizens of Spitalfields have mostly become acclimatised to filthy and unwholesome lives. The worst features follow – physical deterioration, social degradation, and moral decay. Think of it – congested areas overrun with moral and physical defectives, dwarfed in intelligence, degenerate wrecks of what a people should be, rather than saints and citizens they might be by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.¹⁵²

This comparison of London with ‘heathen lands’ was favourable to neither party. Those overseas were used as a benchmark of degradation, but people in London were claimed to be even worse – morally and physically defective, and ‘degenerate wrecks’ far from the Christian ideal. This theme was developed at LCM’s ‘Anniversary Meeting’ in 1922, when Sir R. Murray Hyslop J.P. (treasurer of the Congregational Union of England and Wales) claimed that cities were ‘the standard by which countries are judged’ and ‘mark the progress or degeneracy of these countries’.¹⁵³ Hyslop appealed to the contemporary belief that the British Empire acted as ‘a vast civilising agency’, and reminded his audience that as Britain was at the ‘heart’ of the Empire, so London was at the heart of Britain. He pleaded with his listeners: ‘*as Christian men and women, we cannot afford to allow this centre of the Empire to be polluted by vice, corruption, or crime*’. LCM was praised as a valuable

¹⁵¹ The eugenic nature of this organisation was made clear in the publication by Havelock Ellis, *The Problem of Race-Regeneration* (Cassell and Company, London, 1911). The ‘motto’ was displayed on p.72.

¹⁵² LCMM, Vol. LXXXVII (1922), p.47.

¹⁵³ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVII (1922), pp.71–2.

tool in stemming ‘*the tide of this evil*’.¹⁵⁴ The fact that London could act as a force for good in the empire was grounded in the belief that overseas lands needed ‘civilising’, but the need for LCM was justified by the belief that London was vulnerable to precisely the same challenges as the ‘heathen’ overseas.

These arguments meant that even in the face of increasingly active reformist ideologies, seen in references to ‘Labourites’ and ‘Socialistic tendencies’, LCM publications continued to argue that only spiritual reform would bring environmental change.¹⁵⁵ Even in the politically charged period surrounding the 1926 General Strike, LCM writings continued to state that sin was at the root of the vast majority of poverty.¹⁵⁶ The Mission remained impervious to any suggestion that its work could be replaced by environmental reforms. Likewise, the Mission expressed confidence that its spiritual aims could succeed even in the presence of bad environments; in 1928, a missionary stated, with typical confidence, that ‘Grace is greater than environment’.¹⁵⁷ The fact that ‘Grace’ was necessary, however, enabled LCM publications to utilise shocking descriptions of poverty whilst retaining a focus upon the question of spiritual reform. Environmental, biological and spiritual themes were merged with alarming consequences for the future of British society:

The number of suicides is increasing...That inordinate drinking lowers mentality and predisposes to self-destruction is beyond doubt...And what evil traits are transmitted by such to posterity! Many little ones known to me are facing the period of adolescence weakened in body and mind, and morally handicapped, the result of sleepless

¹⁵⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVII (1922), p.72.

¹⁵⁵ LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), p.76; and LCMM, Vol. XCV (1930), p.22.

¹⁵⁶ LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), pp.87–88; and LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), pp.101–2.

¹⁵⁷ LCMM, Vol. XCIII (1928), p.26.

nights, ill-feeding and neglect, while their parents were drinking heavily in local saloons.¹⁵⁸

Heredity

The discussion above revealed that LCM publications displayed a very natural interest in debates concerning environmental reform. This was closely connected to the Mission's theological convictions regarding temporal relief. The following sections reveal that there were parallel discussions surrounding the impact of heredity. These discussions appeared in three broad contexts. Firstly, the issue of heredity fitted neatly into LCM depictions of their work 'in the depths'. Secondly, and closely related to the issue of 'depths', heredity featured in conversion narratives. LCM publications described this subject being raised both by missionaries and by the people that they visited; in this context the discussion centred around the influence of heredity upon sin, and whether heredity presented an obstacle to conversion and reform. Thirdly, the issue of heredity featured in debates surrounding the question of moral responsibility; in several cases this discussion revealed highly gendered concerns, particularly about the role of women in society. These discussions of heredity sometimes presented conflicting or contradictory claims; however, it does not seem that this reflected the development of LCM thought over time, but rather the selective use of the theory to suit different narrative agendas. Rather than science dictating the course of LCM thought, or the Mission acting as a passive recipient of contemporary ideas, there is clear evidence that theories of heredity were received, interpreted, and applied according to the existing needs, beliefs, and practices of LCM missionaries.

¹⁵⁸ LCMM, Vol. XCV (1930), p.22.

‘Hereditry’ was first mentioned in 1914, as part of a missionary’s account of the ‘rougher classes’ in the docks of London. He claimed that many of the ‘men who swarm the quays and wharves’ had become ‘tools of the devil’, having ‘abandoned themselves to drinking, betting, swearing, and impurity’. However, despite the implication that these men had made an active choice (by ‘abandoning themselves’ to sin), the missionary suggested that:

Many are the slaves to customs they did not institute – victims of heredity and environment – who excite one’s pity at a glance.¹⁵⁹

Despite this claim, the missionary assured readers that ‘one message is proclaimed to all’. The message of ‘the Cross’ was central to all teachings; however, it was suggested that ‘the terminology [of this message] may differ with the calibre and outlook of the listener’. Hereditry was said to be one of the issues that the missionary took into consideration when he presented his message:

No cut – and – dried method...will do for the dockers...The teaching must be adapted to their hereditries and capacities, disposition and training. The only safe plan is to bring everything to the touchstone of the Bible...I unfailingly present and make plain the foundation truths of the Gospel, to which a ready hearing is given by men of all grades.¹⁶⁰

This claim presented the missionary as a form of expert, with the experience and professional awareness that was necessary to discern differences in intellectual and hereditary ability. The discussion also indicates an appreciation of contemporary concerns surrounding ‘mental deficiency’. In 1897, these fears had led to the formation of the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded, a body which sought to encourage the formation of small voluntary homes

¹⁵⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXIX (1914), p.217.

¹⁶⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXXIX (1914), pp.217–18.

to look after women and girls.¹⁶¹ The Royal Commission into the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded worked on this subject between 1904 and 1908. This commission had been prompted in large part by prison and poor law institutions that were concerned about the cost of maintaining large numbers of ‘mental defectives’, but it was also influenced by ideas of racial deterioration. For example, in 1899 Mary Dendy argued that it was necessary to segregate the feeble-minded on a permanent basis, in order to reduce crime and prevent these people passing their defects to posterity.¹⁶² Several historians have noted the impact that the 1870 Education Act had upon the question of ‘mental deficiency’; one aspect of this, which may be seen reflected in several LCM discussions, was the fact that ‘mental deficiency’ came to be defined by concerns of sex and sexuality (in terms of promiscuity) rather than the ability of a child to perform the household duties that were expected of its class.¹⁶³ Matthew Thomson made the same claim regarding the passage of the 1913 Mental Deficiency Act, which he claimed owed more to the introduction of universal education than it did to eugenic ideology. The issue of sexuality was central, in Thomson’s view, as legislators responded to fears about the exploitation of vulnerable groups when they were removed from the safety of schools.¹⁶⁴ However, despite the protestations of legislators that the Act was designed for the protection of the feeble-minded rather than a eugenic cause, the EES was keen to emphasise the role that it had played in shaping the Act. The EES

¹⁶¹ Anne Digby, ‘Contexts and Perspectives’, in David Wright and Anne Digby (eds.), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency: Historical Perspectives on people with learning difficulties* (Routledge, London, 1996), p.11.

¹⁶² Mark Jackson, ‘Institutional Provision for the Feeble-Minded in Edwardian England: Sandlebridge and the scientific morality of permanent care’, in Wright and Digby (eds.), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency*, p.161, p.165 and p.169; and Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain*, p.106.

¹⁶³ David Wright, ‘“Childlike in his Innocence”: Lay attitudes to ‘idiots’ and ‘imbeciles’ in Victorian England’, in Wright and Digby (eds.), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency*, pp.119–30.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew Thomson, *The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy, and Social Policy in Britain c.1870–1959* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998), pp.13–16.

was confident that the new powers of compulsory detention would help to prevent the unfit from multiplying.¹⁶⁵ Members of the EES were also closely involved in the Society for the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, which became the Central Association for Mental Welfare after 1913.¹⁶⁶ However, regardless of the extent to which the 1913 Act was shaped by eugenic concerns, the missionary's admission that he used an evangelistic strategy based upon a hereditarian understanding of intellect suggests that this was not considered to be controversial but something that readers would understand and respect.

Heredity 'In the Depths'

The issue of heredity was a natural addition to the language and imagery about LCM work in the 'depths'. In 1922, an article, 'Wrecks and Treasures', quoted the poet Shelley's description of London: 'London... Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more: Yet in its depths what treasures!' Other authors voiced similar views: Jack London described the East End of London as 'a huge man-killing machine', and Havelock Ellis complained that towns were absorbing and 'destroying' country populations.¹⁶⁷ The LCM article developed the quotation from Shelley and described the "“wrecks”...struggling in the vortex of sin and shame’:

Some are victims of cruel circumstance and environment...Others through drink and sensuality have dropped from good positions...A lower stratum is that of the social misfits and mental defectives, products of a dark heredity, and often more sinned against than sinning.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain*, pp.110–1.

¹⁶⁶ Greta Jones, 'Women and eugenics in Britain: The case of Mary Scharlieb, Elizabeth Sloan Chesser, and Stella Browne', *Annals of Science*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (1995) p.483.

¹⁶⁷ Soloway, 'Counting the Degenerates', p.3; and Dyhouse, 'The Condition of England 1860–1900' pp.81–2.

¹⁶⁸ LCMM, Vol. 87 (1922), p.90.

This description appeared to create a division between different categories of ‘wrecks’; this division appears to have centred on the question of moral responsibility. Some were ‘victims’ of random chance, some had chosen sinful lifestyles, and others were ‘mental defectives’, who were described as ‘more sinned against than sinning’. This last category raised the issue of exploitation, as discussed by Thomson, but rather than developing this theme, the article simply affirmed the belief that Christ’s death testified to the ‘incomparable worth of every man and woman’.¹⁶⁹ The ultimate focus of the article was the wonder of Christ’s death; heredity and the descriptions of environmental destruction were merely used as indicators of the power of the Christian message.

Heredity as a Force in Conversion Accounts

LCM published at least six conversion accounts that included some discussion of heredity in their narrative. The nature of these descriptions, as conversion testimonies, precluded the acceptance that heredity was an insurmountable obstacle to reformation, but the influence of heredity was not disregarded. Explanations were often vague, however, and in some cases it is difficult to distinguish whether the ‘heredity’ in question was the learned ‘inheritance’ of vice, or a physical impediment as the result of biological inheritance. There is some comfort that this confusion was likely to have been equally present for contemporary readers of LCM publications; whether intended or not, this blurred discussion of heredity suggested that there was a close association between moral and physical inheritance.

¹⁶⁹ LCMM, Vol. 87 (1922), p.90.

The first discussion of heredity in a conversion account was the case of ‘Old Bob’ in 1916. A missionary explained, ‘without attempting to excuse his sin, it is fair to say that he was a victim of heredity and environment...given free play from his birth, his evil tendencies quickly developed into evil deeds’.¹⁷⁰ Somewhere in this interplay between evil predispositions and their activation through environmental conditions lay the influence of heredity. With these obstacles acknowledged, the account turned into a regular testimony story; the missionary’s ‘straight talk about his [Old Bob’s] soul’ resulted in conversion, following which Old Bob gave up ‘strong drink’ and experienced ‘new life, new health, new friendships, a better home, and a bright outlook through grace’.¹⁷¹ Whatever the obstacles faced, Old Bob’s experience suggested that the gospel message was a holistic remedy; spiritual salvation was followed by improved health, renewed relationships, and a bettered material environment.

‘Drink’ featured in all but one of the conversion accounts that discussed heredity. The testimony where it was omitted included a reference to a ‘passion for gambling’,¹⁷² a sin that was included alongside drinking in two of the other testimonies¹⁷³ and one that was believed to have similar consequences for material wellbeing. Although moral vices featured prominently in most LCM descriptions of environmental degradation, their inclusion in these discussions of heredity reflected a broad interpretation of the areas that could be influenced by inheritance. In three of the testimonies, ‘heredity’ was related to moral or spiritual matters alone. In 1926, a man named ‘Alec’ was reported to have said to a missionary ‘Don’t blame

¹⁷⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.106.

¹⁷¹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXI (1916), p.107.

¹⁷² LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), p.108.

¹⁷³ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.43 and LCMM, Vol. XCIV (1929), pp.112–13.

me...it's bred in the bone. I carry about the curse of a dark heredity'. Readers had already been informed that 'Alec' had a 'passion for gambling', and the missionary appears to have explained this reference to heredity by informing readers that Alec's father had 'lost a fortune through gambling'. The meaning is somewhat blurred as the gambling condition was blamed for Alec's loss of environmental security and material comfort, but no other physical ailments were described. With no other explanation at hand, it seems that Alec was considered to suffer from a hereditary disposition to gambling.¹⁷⁴ Echoing the case of 'Alec', a man named 'Robbie', who was said to have been 'stung by three B's – beer, betting, bad language', 'quoted heredity as an excuse for his wrong-doing' prior to his conversion in 1929.¹⁷⁵ These two examples are striking as they provide evidence of converts having cited heredity as an obstacle to their reform; however, an article in 1927 claimed that the same view could be found amongst critics of the Mission. The article, entitled 'Grace v. Heredity', described a man named 'Dodger', whose parents had both suffered ignoble ends: his mother had 'travelled to a mental hospital by the alcohol route', and his father had died in a Poor Law Institution. Dodger had regularly committed burglary 'as he grew up', suggesting that his pseudonym was based upon Dickens' character in *Oliver Twist*, but after conversion he pursued 'honest employment'. The article evaluated his case as follows:

A magistrate had described him as "a worthless fellow"; another Government official said he couldn't help being as he was, and it was quite impossible for him to alter, but he failed to allow for the regenerating power of God, and later admitted his mistake.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), p.108.

¹⁷⁵ LCMM, Vol. XCIV (1929), pp.112–13.

¹⁷⁶ LCMM, Vol. XCII (1927), p.117.

It is important to note that none of these remarks included direct references to heredity, but the title of the article made it clear that the authors saw this as the reason underlying the pessimism that other people felt about 'Dodger'. The reference to heredity, coupled with the provision of background information about Dodger's family, suggests that the authors of the article accepted that there were rational reasons for concern; however, the final conclusion was that the 'regenerating power of God' was greater than any force of opposition. Again, it is noteworthy that all of the details that were provided in relation to the question of heredity described moral or spiritual characteristics. Even the mental health problems of Dodger's mother were said to be the result of 'drink' rather than an inherent physical weakness.

In quoting beliefs from external agencies and accounts from missionaries, the LCM magazine implicitly accepted that its readers would recognise 'heredity' as a legitimate subject for discussion. The preceding examples have demonstrated that LCM discussions of heredity were not limited to physical conditions alone. In other testimonies the relationship between heredity, morality, and physical conditions was less clear. In 1920, a man named 'Mac' was described as 'physically weak (his father died of consumption)', however, it was also said that he had a 'marked reverence for his sainted mother' who 'died praying aloud for her two boys'.¹⁷⁷ However, despite the fact that Mac had been described as weak due to the health of his father, it was also argued that he had 'wrecked his constitution' through a sinful lifestyle of drinking, gambling and other 'more deadly sins'. It was said that Mac himself believed he was a 'dunner'. It is difficult to reconcile the claims that Mac

¹⁷⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.43.

was born weak, and yet also wrecked his constitution through sin. ‘Heredity’ entered the account in a description of a conversation between ‘Mac’ and a missionary:

“I’m bearing the curse of heredity,” he [Mac] complained, his forbears having fallen upon evil times through strong drink.

Psalms ciii. 14 and cxxxix. 16 were recalled. “He knows the push of heredity. He knows the handicap imposed upon each individual as life’s course is begun...”

At this poor “Mac” was relieved, but not for long. He had sufficient light to know that God would not finally condemn a soul on account of another’s sin. When every allowance was made, he felt the disastrous effects of his own transgressions. He was urged to trust only and fully in the Redeemer’s blood.¹⁷⁸

This description provides an unprecedented insight into the ideological deliberations that took place between missionaries and the people they visited. The article was clearly intended to reaffirm the view that there were no insurmountable obstacles to the gospel; however, it is not entirely clear which part of Mac’s situation was attributed to heredity. Mac was physically weak from birth, but also suffered from a wrecked constitution as a result of sin; however, even these sins were problems that the article identified in the lives of his forbears. It is possible, therefore, that the ‘heredity’ in question was one that encompassed both physical and moral dimensions. The reassurance provided by the missionary seems to cover both the prospect of a natural weakness towards sin and the possibility that Mac had inherited the spiritual baggage of his ancestors. Finally, the conclusion to the article recorded that, after conversion, Mac had enjoyed a ‘double quickening’ with improved health and the ‘consciousness of sins forgiven’.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.43.

¹⁷⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.44.

The article about Mac was strikingly similar to the story recorded in a 1926 article entitled ‘Out of the Depths: A Study in Heredity and Sovereign Grace’. Here the case of a ‘costermonger’ named ‘Tom Sears’ was described; similarly to Mac, he was born physically disadvantaged, in this case ‘a cripple’ before surgical intervention, but again sin and drinking had an impact and he ended up suffering from blindness. As with Mac, the sinful influence of Tom’s father was contrasted with the ‘saintly’ example of his mother – who was said to have prayed on a ‘couch...watered with tears’. The one clear difference between these two accounts was that the improvement to the health of Tom was temporary; the initial improvement was followed by a sudden decline, and it was recorded that Tom had gone ‘to be with the Friend of sinners’. In conclusion, the article reflected upon its title and stated that the ‘root’ of Tom’s conversion had been ‘Sovereign Grace and a mother’s prayers’.¹⁸⁰

Heredity, Gender and Moral Responsibility

Whereas both Mac and Tom Sears were described as having pious mothers and sinful fathers – each parent with a corresponding role in their stories of fall and redemption – other accounts of heredity gave vivid descriptions of women who did not live up to the expectations of their gender. In these cases there were clear parallels to contemporary fears regarding the sexual behaviours of the ‘mentally deficient’, and the question of heredity was given a prominent role in this subject. In 1920, an article gave several examples of women of ‘ill repute’ whose lives had been transformed through the work of LCM. A subsection within this article, entitled ‘low mentality’, included the following claim:

¹⁸⁰ LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), pp.75–6.

A good proportion of unmarried mothers are classed as mentally deficient,” writes another missionary who is constantly handling human wreckage in the haunts of sin and crime. “As often as not their low mentality is traceable to bad heredity, a fruitful soil for every known evil.”¹⁸¹

This statement reflects two contemporary trends in society: firstly the tendency for broad definitions of prostitution, and secondly the perceived link between mental deficiency and sexual impropriety. On the first issue, the inclusion of ‘unmarried mothers’ in an article about women of ‘ill repute’ indicates a continuation of the broad definition of prostitution that characterised Victorian understandings of vice.¹⁸² Secondly, Paula Bartley has argued that it was common for prostitutes (and unmarried mothers) to be classed as feeble-minded;¹⁸³ and in this case the assertion that heredity was a ‘fruitful soil for every known evil’ was followed by the story of a woman named ‘C’. A missionary had met C when her baby was ‘only a few weeks old’; her connection to the issue of women of ‘ill repute’ was suggested by the fact the father was unknown. In this case, the missionary decided upon a course of active temporal intervention and argued that it was necessary to take the baby away from C in order to ‘give her a chance’. The missionary took immediate action and looked after the baby at his own expense for five days, before a place was secured at a ‘Foundling’s Home’. Added to that, the missionary arranged work for C, who was quoted saying:

‘Oh, sir,’ she explained, reviewing her sad past, ‘it’s been an awful struggle, and I’m sorry I went the wrong road; but

¹⁸¹ LCMM, LXXXV (1920), p.53.

¹⁸² Michael Mason argued that contemporary estimates of the number of prostitutes included ‘women who could only be called prostitutes in a very imprecise sense’; and Kellow Chesney suggested that broad definitions of prostitution resulted in a paradox whereby those who sought to reduce sexual immorality inadvertently encouraged it as harsh definitions stigmatised individuals who might otherwise have sought to pursue socially respectable paths. Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality*, p.94; Chesney, *The Victorian Underworld* (Temple Smith, London, 1970), p.315.

¹⁸³ Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: Prevention and Reform in England, 1860–1914* (Routledge, London, 2000), pp.123–6.

what else could one expect whose mother has been eighty times in prison?

There can be no certainty that ‘C’ intended this to indicate a burden of weak heredity; it could very easily have referred to financial insecurity or the absence of sound moral teaching in youth. However, the decision to emphasise this sentence with the use of italics was likely to have caused readers to linger on this aspect of the story. What had led to C’s mother serving so many prison sentences? It cannot be known for certain, but prostitution does not seem out of the question. The emphasis given to this part of the account, particularly after the previous discussion of heredity in relation to unmarried mothers, was likely to have made readers question the spiritual, mental, and moral inheritance that C possessed. The fact that this case involved drastic intervention, with the removal of a child, makes the account all the more significant. Not only was there a general aversion to temporal welfare work within LCM, there was also a specific directive that missionaries were not to spend ‘large portions of time’ on rescue work ‘without special leave from the secretaries’.¹⁸⁴ The justification offered for this intervention – the claim that it was necessary in order to ‘give her a chance’ – may have referred to the obstacle of social stigma, but this still represented an exception to the usual principle that the gospel was able to reform people on its own. The end result, however, was in complete accord with the standard message of LCM publicity; the Mission was presented as an experienced, and successful, reforming agency. The actions of the missionary were given a final biblical justification as he was described as a “Good Samaritan”.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ LCMM, Vol. XIV (1849), p.237.

¹⁸⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXXV (1920), p.53.

The same issues of mental deficiency and heredity emerged in the annual report of 1921. A double dose of imagery about the ‘depths’ was featured in a section titled ‘Life in the Abyss’, which used the oxymoronic subtitle ‘The Pageant of Woe’. Rather than being a matter for public celebration, this pageant was described in the following terms:

Mark the pageant of misery and woe – victims of heredity,
 mental defectives, society misfits, “fallen stars” battered by
 sinful excesses, thieves, cadgers, jailbirds, shameless
 women whose faces bear the marks of moral decay. The
 psychologist watches this procession with mournful interest.
 The sociologist views it in blank despair. City missionaries
 on the other hand know that –
 “Through all the depths of sin and loss,
 Drops the plummet of the Cross;
 Never yet abyss was found
 Deeper than the Cross can sound”
 - which accounts for their optimism and zeal for souls.¹⁸⁶

The only celebration in this account was the view that LCM and the ‘Cross’ were capable of effecting change where others, those derided as ‘new religious cults’, could not. However, the belief that LCM could achieve success in these areas did not deny the complex chain of causation at work in the ‘depths of sin and loss’. Heredity produced ‘victims’, ‘sinful excess’ and the vice of ‘shameless women’ resulted in physical marks that could be identified visually; however, the overriding message was that LCM could achieve results where others gave up hope. The same views were seen in LCM articles that discussed environmental reform. In 1922, a missionary cited the example of a failed housing project in his district, and said such cases would force ‘social reformers’ to abandon their work after ‘a few years’ of experience. This was not a message of total despair, however, but a criticism of misplaced faith; the missionary concluded by stating that: ‘Science pronounces the

¹⁸⁶ LCMM, Vol. 86 (1921), p.87.

people I visit as incurable, but the power of God has newly created not a few after the image of the Master, to Whom be everlasting praise!’¹⁸⁷ Again, this account did not deny the existence of a problem, it just criticised the flawed solutions that were offered by contemporary reformers. The same view was presented at the LCM annual meeting in 1921; several speakers spoke about the problems of national decay, heredity, and environment, but Christ was presented as the solution to all these issues. The Chair of the meeting, Sir William F. A. Archibald, a retired Master of the Supreme Court, quoted a recent article from *The Christian*:

“Here are thousands of men and women out of work, and yet picture palaces and dancing saloons are crowded; a nation sport mad; millions of money spent on drink; and the churches half empty.” “That way lies ruin and decay,” Sir William concluded.¹⁸⁸

Archibald claimed that he did know of any ‘Society so well able’ to ‘check or stop the decline’ as London City Mission. He argued that, ‘as Christians and patriots’, it was the duty of his audience to support the Mission.¹⁸⁹ Immediately following this discussion of ‘ruin and decay’ the Lord Bishop of Truro Dr. Guy Warman, ‘an old and tried friend of the Mission’, said that the value of LCM was that it ‘goes to the root of the matter’. He explained:

I sometimes listen to conversations in reference to heredity and environment, but I still think the one converting power is to be found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁹⁰

Warman justified this belief with an extreme example from the United States, the alleged case of a society ‘founded with the expressed object of making niggers white (!)’¹⁹¹ Though his exclamation suggests that this was intended as a humorous

¹⁸⁷ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVII (1922), p.38.

¹⁸⁸ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVI (1921), p.64.

¹⁸⁹ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVI (1921), p.64.

¹⁹⁰ LCMM, Vol. LXXXVI (1921), p.65.

¹⁹¹ The exclamation mark, in parentheses, was present in the original.

illustration, his observation that this society had been ‘busted up’ before it made any progress was tied to the broader claim that all organisations ‘trying to produce good character by environment’ would come to realise that their work was ‘impossible’. Warman claimed that even good legislation would fail if not ‘backed up by the power of the Gospel of Christ’.¹⁹² It is interesting that Warman’s statement, which he believed denied the force of both environmental and hereditary reforms, only used the example of a failed environmental reform attempt. Perhaps Warman did not know of any schemes for hereditary improvement, or felt less competent to refute these claims. Nevertheless, he was satisfied that Christ, and the work of LCM, could resolve problems that stemmed from either cause.

Although the arguments above excluded heredity and environment from the solution of social ills, other articles made it clear that they were not removed from the cause of these problems. In 1924 an article written by ‘J.N.G.’, probably J. Newcombe Goad – the author of the LCM book *The Gates of the City*,¹⁹³ divided lodging-house dwellers in Whitechapel and Notting Dale into two groups:

On the one hand hopeless degenerates, social misfits, the deformed products of a baleful heredity, broken and battered by misfortune, perhaps more sinned against than sinning. On the other hand are crooks and sharpers, prostitutes and procurers, men and women whose trade is sin, whose triumph is another’s destruction.¹⁹⁴

This seems to totally contradict the earlier claim that hereditary mental deficiency was responsible for ‘a good proportion’ of prostitution. The division that ‘J.N.G.’ made appears to have been between those who were suffering as a consequence of unavoidable natural forces and those who were reaping the reward of sinful choices.

¹⁹² LCMM, Vol. LXXXVI (1921), p.65.

¹⁹³ J. Newcombe Goad, *The Gates of the City* (Morgan & Scott Ltd., London, 1924).

¹⁹⁴ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIX (1924), p.110.

Heredity was clearly accepted as a force capable of influencing behaviour, and the phrase ‘more sinned against than sinning’ (used in the same context in the 1922 article ‘Wrecks and Treasures’) created a sense of involuntary exploitation. Regardless of any exploitation, the article did not excuse the actions of anyone and the same formula was offered as a solution for all people: Christ was the ‘sole inspiration and support’ and only He could ‘change the heart, cleanse the springs of character, and restore lost ideals’.¹⁹⁵

The tangle of sin and heredity was repeated in a 1926 article on ‘Life in the Slums’, which examined the question of ‘human betterment’ directly. It was accepted that ‘labour conditions’ and ‘standards of living’ had improved, but it was claimed that there had been no change in regard to whether men were living ‘better lives’ with ‘sweeter and better homes’. In contrast to the alleged belief of ‘evolutionists’ that ‘man’s upward climb is axiomatic’, the article stated that people remained strangers to God ‘sold under sin’. This reference to a spiritual condition in response to the question of evolutionary progress reveals a belief in the primacy of spiritual health, but it also resonates with the frequent claim that ‘sin’ impacted upon material conditions and physical health. According to this view, there would be no material progress whilst sin remained, and a missionary to a slum area was quoted as stating: ‘little human progress here – only human depravity’. This missionary described the slum dwellers he visited as follows:

All were defectives of a dangerous type, but not all were misfits. They included “fallen stars” of both sexes; men of education who had “touched bottom” through drink and gambling, forgery or impurity; and women beguiled by the

¹⁹⁵ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIX (1924), p.110.

devil, dehumanized almost, in some cases more sinned against than sinning.¹⁹⁶

Although this description did not mention ‘heredity’, much of the language from previous discussions of heredity remained. There were ‘defectives’, “fallen stars”, those who suffered as a result of ‘drink’ and other vices, and a group of women who were said ‘in some cases’ to be ‘more sinned against than sinning’. This article denied the prospect of evolutionary progress, but showed that the reality of a serious challenge to society was close at hand.

The earlier account of ‘C3’ people had suggested that sinful humanity was responsible for poverty. In 1927, this argument was framed with reference to heredity, as the LCM magazine quoted material from a London County Council¹⁹⁷ report on ‘former and present conditions of common lodging-houses’. This report was quoted to defend the view that there was a ‘tremendous need of evangelising this mixed element of the community’, but included the claim that this group ‘shades off at its lowest levels into the destitute, the mentally defective, and the morally depraved’. The LCC report concluded that it was important to provide ‘emergency accommodation of a special character’, but the LCM article focused upon the fact that *‘not more than five per cent. of London’s lodging-house population ever darken the door of church or chapel’*. It was accepted that LCC’s policy of accommodation would be useful, but the article concluded: ‘we are thrown back on the basic problem of the human heart. Change that and the matter of shelter and subsistence is simplified’.¹⁹⁸ In a perfect mirror of the fears from 1902,

¹⁹⁶ LCMM, Vol. XCI (1926), p.185.

¹⁹⁷ ‘London County Council’ hereafter referred to as ‘LCC’.

¹⁹⁸ LCMM, Vol. XCII (1927), pp. 56–7. Italics present in the original.

constitutional problems were cited and environmental solutions were rejected as insufficient where the gospel alone could bring lasting change.

In pursuit of this enduring message, that Christ alone could bring complete reform, discussions of heredity in LCM publications raised a number of contradictions. Throughout the period in which heredity was described in terms of ‘victims’, ‘mental deficiency’, ‘dark heredity’, and ‘evil tendencies’, there were also shorter statements that emphasised that heredity presented no concern for Christian reformers. In 1923, ‘J.N.G’, the same author of the 1924 article which spoke of ‘deformed products of a baleful heredity’, wrote a ‘Fragment of Truth’ stating that:

The law of heredity does not operate in the sphere of grace.
Hezekiah (II. Chron. xxix) was the good son of a bad father
(Ahaz), and the good father of a bad son (Manasseh).¹⁹⁹

Eugenicists might have offered a rather different evaluation of this genealogy, but the LCM magazine repeated its message on this issue in another series of short proverb-like statements titled ‘worth remembering’: ‘the laws of heredity do not operate in the spheres of grace’.²⁰⁰ Even after these statements, however, an article from 1929, entitled ‘The Gate of the World’, accepted that heredity posed a challenge to missionary work in the Port of London:

Doubtless the fruits of repentance and righteousness grow quicker and fuller in some than in others. The secrets of all hearts are known to Him with whom we have to do. He alone understands the difficulties and heredities of men, their dark thoughts and their darker environments...Still the hopefuls referred to [the converts] are, we believe, willing captives of Prince Immanuel, genuinely enlisted in His mighty army...²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ LCMM, Vol. 88 (1923), p.22.

²⁰⁰ LCMM, Vol. XCIII (1928), p.169.

²⁰¹ LCMM, Vol. XCIV (1929), p.145.

No author was given for this article, except the pseudonymous ‘Watchman’, but the title of the piece was similar to that of Goad’s 1924 book *The Gates of the City*. Goad was also listed as ‘Editorial Secretary’ for LCM’s Committee, so whether he authored this piece or not, it seems likely that it would have passed through his critical appraisal²⁰² – and yet these comments seem to have contradicted his earlier certainty that heredity was of no concern to Christian reformers. Whether this represented a turn towards hereditarian despair, a concession to the beliefs of others, or simply reflected the flexible use of scientific ideas within LCM publications, the message is clear: the only stability in LCM discussions of heredity was the belief that the Mission’s gospel work faced considerable challenges – but challenges that could be overcome.

Conclusion

Previous studies would suggest that the theologically conservative LCM would not have been an organisation open to the discussion of eugenic ideas. However, this chapter has demonstrated that ideas of environmental degeneration and hereditarianism were discussed openly, and often accepted, in articles published by the Mission. In addition to employing descriptions from external authorities (some of which touched upon the most extreme eugenic idea – extermination), LCM publications used the experience of missionaries in order to evaluate the claims of its contemporaries in various spheres of reform. Far from shying away from the bleak ideas expressed by some of these groups, LCM articles frequently worsened the claims of its contemporaries and celebrated these as part of its metanarrative of

²⁰² The position of ‘Editorial Secretary’ was listed, amongst the names of other officials, in LCMM from 1920; Goad held this position for the entirety of the period up until 1929. The publication style of the LCMM did not change in 1920, so it is possible that Goad worked in this role even earlier, but the magazine does not provide evidence either way.

salvation. The terrible state of society could serve to demonstrate the great power of the Christian faith, and the benefits of the work carried out by the Mission.

In spite of the continued confidence that Christ was the only lasting solution to social problems, the Mission's decision to relax its policy on temporal relief represented an enormous change. The fact that this decision was taken at the same time that the Mission, and many of its contemporaries, considered the issue of physical degeneration should not be overlooked. It is interesting that the case of 'C', which likewise witnessed the Mission relax its rule on temporal intervention, was accompanied by a discussion regarding the influence of heredity.

LCM publications provide evidence of the wide currency that eugenic ideas possessed in Britain during this period. Their descriptions of missionary work provide unprecedented insight into the negotiations that took place, between reformers and those who would be reformed, over the question of heredity. At times this included examples of individuals who cited heredity as a reason to explain their inability to be reformed – a self-confession of eugenic weakness. There were also examples of missionaries interpreting the comments made by those they visited according to preconceived ideas of heredity and deficiency. All of these discussions were used to emphasise the desperate needs of London, and the importance of missionary work at the heart of the British Empire. It is clear that these thoughts did not sound the death knell for reformist efforts, as previous studies of hereditarian thought have suggested; in contrast they were interpreted as novel and exciting justifications for existing beliefs. This was made clear in 1919, when the LCM magazine quoted Canon Battersby Harford as stating:

“The health and happiness of the next generation of Christian people depend, humanly speaking, upon what we of this generation make of ourselves. Should not this fire us with new purpose to live our lives after the pattern of Christ? This is the law,” says Canon Battersby Harford, “of Christian eugenics.”²⁰³

No interpretation was offered for this comment, and Harford neither praised nor criticised eugenics but adapted its message according to the frame of traditional Christian activity. This was similar to the message that was found elsewhere in LCM publications; however, other articles went further than Harford to claim that the spiritual work of LCM could have a positive impact on the physical conditions of London and its inhabitants. In a sense that was not a separate form of ‘Christian eugenics’, but a claim that the work of LCM represented a Christian contribution to the regular work of eugenicists.

²⁰³ LCMM, Vol. LXXXIV (1919), p.24.

Chapter Four: Eugenics and the New York City Mission c. 1865–1930

Introduction

In this chapter it will be demonstrated that, although both LCM and NYCM adopted parts of the eugenics discourse in their commentaries on missionary work, there were significant differences in the way that this was expressed. A mixture of local, individual, and national variations meant that NYCM differed from LCM in its discussions of science and questions about reform work.

Firstly, a comparison of the two missions' responses to Darwin's theory of evolution reveals significantly different opinions. It will be demonstrated that NYCM articles offered a calmer and quieter response to this subject than that found in LCM publications. This fact will be considered with reference to NYCM's association with the Osborn and Dodge family, which was well known for its scientific work and eugenic interests. Secondly, it will be shown that NYCM embraced a combination of temporal and spiritual missionary endeavours that brought the organisation into contact with numerous external organisations. The third section of the chapter will argue that these connections, along with the Mission's adoption of the principles of scientific charity, had a direct influence on the decision of the organisation to publish discussions of hereditarian and eugenic ideas. In contrast to the claim of previous historiography, that hereditarian and eugenic thought ended the confidence of reformers, the fourth section of this chapter will illustrate that NYCM publications gave a warm welcome to these ideas as part of an effort to highlight the significance of its previous work.

The fifth section will demonstrate that, although NYCM adopted ideas of hereditarianism and environmental degeneration earlier than LCM, these reached their height at a later stage. In 1908–1909 NYCM was involved in a church-led discussion of eugenic themes that attracted international attention from eugenic organisations. The penultimate section examines the way in which eugenic and hereditarian ideas related to NYCM's long-standing interests in what will be termed 'moral' and 'physical culture'. It will be argued that these issues enabled eugenic ideas to find a home at the very centre of NYCM beliefs. The final section will demonstrate that, in contrast to LCM, where interest in 'foreign' populations was limited to unfavourable comparisons for London's degraded inhabitants, issues of race and nationality formed a central component of NYCM's claims to utility. Immigrants were portrayed as complications to missionary work, and Christianity became the source of national strength and stability. This argument led NYCM publications to voice opinions that were consistent with eugenically inspired immigration restrictionists and those who accepted hierarchies of racial worth.

Darwin and the NYCM

As with LCM, an examination of the reception of Darwinian theory within NYCM publications provides a useful insight into the general attitude of the Mission towards scientific ideas. NYCM did not begin publishing a monthly journal until 1887, but unlike those of LCM (which largely consisted of lists and figures) NYCM annual reports contained lengthy articles about its work and are a useful source of information concerning NYCM thought. These publications indicate that LCM and NYCM adopted different positions with regard to the ideas expressed by Darwin. Between 1865 and 1930, NYCM publications referred to 'Darwin' a mere five

times. Not only was this half the number found in LCM articles, but also the tone of these discussions was markedly less hostile than that found in LCM.

The first two references that NYCM publications made to the work of Darwin came at an earlier stage than those in LCM. Both of these were critical of Darwinian theory, but this was at the time in which Darwin's work had still not been accepted in the scientific community.¹ The first case was in 1872 as part of an article, entitled 'Modern Skepticism – How to Reach It', authored by Rev Mark Hopkins LL.D. The fact that this article addressed evolutionary theory under the subject of scepticism demonstrates an immediate similarity to the discussions within LCM publications. However, Hopkins' authorship of this article distinguished its contents from those of LCM. LCM commentators on evolution were either missionaries or ministers of religion; Hopkins was a college professor in moral philosophy, and although he had been licensed to preach by the Berkshire Association of Congregational Ministers, he did not have any formal theological training.² Hopkins encouraged NYCM readers not to be afraid of 'skepticism' and to recognise that it did not necessarily involve 'superior sagacity or strength of mind'. The work of Darwin entered the discussion as Hopkins urged people to learn to 'distinguish between facts and inferences':

When Darwin...observes similarities heretofore unnoticed between man and the lower animals, we may accept the facts without adopting his inference that the progenitor of

¹ Roberts states this acceptance was perceived to have taken place around 1875, after which American theologians began to consider Darwin on theological rather than scientific terms. Roberts, 'Darwinism, American Protestant thinkers, and the puzzle of motivation', p.145.

² Hopkins also gave several lectures before the Lowell Institute. Robert D. Cross, 'Hopkins, Mark', *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000 <http://www.anb.org/articles/08/08-00706.html>, accessed 3 Oct. 2011.

man was a monkey – probably an African monkey – and more remotely a low aquatic animal.³

Although Hopkins did not endorse the work of Darwin, he criticised Christian thinkers who charged ‘men with holding facts and theories incompatible with the Bible and religion, when they are not’.⁴ It was clear that Hopkins rejected Darwin’s conclusions, but his argument depended (at least in its external appearance) upon a philosophical, not theological, criticism. The warning to Christians, that they should not reject ‘facts and theories’ on the grounds of misplaced religious suspicions, appears to have left room for the work of Darwin to be re-evaluated at a later stage.

The second reference to Darwin appeared in 1875, when he was again associated with religious doubt. This article, authored by Rev. T. H. Skinner D.D.,⁵ attacked the 1873 Bampton Lectures, which had stated that ‘nothing is taken for granted’ and ‘no authority...may plead exemption...Christianity must be prepared to prove itself’. Skinner portrayed this as an inversion of the Christian belief that ‘the world is on trial before Christianity’, and dismissed critics of the Church as ‘creatures of a day, who know almost nothing...who can not...keep death from their doors one hour’. Readers were questioned:

³ NYCM, *45th Annual Report* (1872), p.65.

⁴ NYCM, *45th Annual Report* (1872), p.65.

⁵ Skinner had a long history of involvement with NYCM. He appeared in the list of NYCM ‘Vice-Presidents’ from 1836, and his wife was listed as ‘Directress’ of the Mercer-Street Church Auxiliary Association to the Female Branch of NYCM. They were recognised with Life Directorship and Membership respectively in recognition of financial donations they made. Vice Presidents were elected annually and members were responsible (alongside representatives from each auxiliary association and the President, Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary of the Society) for conducting the business of the society. A *New York Times* article about ‘the old Mercer-Street Presbyterian Church’ listed Rev. Thomas H. Skinner D.D. as its first minister and stated he held the position from 11 November 1835 until 17 February 1848. *The New York Times*, March 1, 1875. NYCM, *10th Annual Report* (1836), p.3 and p.112; NYCM, *12th Annual Report* (1838), p.106; NYCM, *15th Annual Report* (1842), p.59; NYCM, *20th Annual Report* (1847), p.3 and p.7; NYCM, *29th Annual Report* (1855), p.51.

Think you the Holy Ghost is disturbed and alarmed because Strauss publishes a book in Berlin or Renan in Paris, or Darwin in London? The least breath of his mouth can convert them or blast them at his pleasure.⁶

Strauss and Renan were both known for their controversial reinterpretations of the Bible, which minimised miraculous elements, so this was not an enviable association for Darwin to be given in a missionary publication.⁷ However, the fact that Skinner criticised Darwin alongside philosophers and theologians appears to have maintained the balance from the article written by Hopkins. Science itself was not the problem, as of course theology could not have been; instead criticism was directed at any suggestion that the Church ought to retreat in fear or seek to prove itself before society. This article was followed by 27 years of silence on the subject of Darwin.

When the next reference to Darwin appeared, in 1902, his work was not the subject of investigation, but one of his ‘beautiful essays’ was used to explain the immigration situation in New York.⁸ The quotation that was used, described the complex chain of causation that prevented the English heartsease plant from growing in the wild near English villages: people owned dogs; dogs scared away cats; mice were able to destroy bumblebee nests; and the heartsease plant was not pollinated. The NYCM article applied this principle to human migration:

⁶ NYCM, 48th Annual Report (1875), pp.40–2.

⁷ David Friedrich Strauss, a German Protestant philosopher and theologian born in 1808, was famous for his work *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, which rejected the supernatural claims of the gospel accounts. Renan published a similarly titled work *Life of Jesus* in 1863, with similar conclusions of the ‘mythical’ making of Christianity. Robert Priest has recently completed a thesis on the origins, significance and popular reception of Renan’s *Life of Jesus*, which he identifies as one of the best-selling and most controversial books in nineteenth century Europe. Robert Daniel Priest, ‘The Production, Reception and Legacy of Ernest Renan’s *Vie de Jésus* 1845–1903’ (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2011).

⁸ NYCM, Vol. XV (Mar. 1902), p.3.

In Russia there is an outbreak, hideous and savage, against the Jew...and an impulse is started whose end is not reached until you strike Rivington Street. The work begun in Russia ends in the Seventeenth Ward.⁹

In this case the writer of the article not only accepted Darwin as an authority on scientific issues, but also promoted the application of his work to human social behaviour. The significance of this argument is increased by the fact that the reference to the work of Darwin appears to have been taken from a section in the *Origin of Species* that was entitled ‘Mutual Checks to Increase’. This mused on the ‘centuries’ of ‘struggle’ and ‘war’ that must have taken place to explain existing patterns of vegetation; the NYCM article consciously extended this principle, and the selective forces of ‘struggle’ and ‘war’, to human populations.¹⁰

Following this praise of the ‘beautiful essays’ of Darwin, and the application of his work to human communities, NYCM publications made one more criticism of ideas associated with Darwin. In 1903 an article entitled ‘Science and Religion’ dismissed the idea that the ‘celebrated book’ by Darwin had invalidated the ‘design in nature’ argument for the existence of God. The article cited the work of ‘Lord Kelvin...undoubtedly the foremost scientific man in Great Britain to-day’; he was said to have ridiculed the concept of the ‘fortuitous concourse of atoms’ as ‘absurd’, and claimed ‘A million of millions of millions of years would not give a beautiful world like ours.’ Darwin himself was not criticised, rather ‘Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer’ were dismissed as having reached ‘false conclusions’. Each of these individuals had achieved fame as interpreter of Darwinian theory. Herbert Spencer,

⁹ NYCM, Vol. XV (Mar. 1902), p.3.

¹⁰ C. R. Darwin, *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life* (John Murray, London, 1859), pp.73–5. Text available online at <http://darwin-online.org.uk>, accessed 3 Oct. 2011.

widely hailed as a prominent ‘Social Darwinist’, was extremely popular in the United States;¹¹ T. H. Huxley was named ‘Darwin’s bulldog’ as a result of his passionate defence of Darwinian theory;¹² and John Tyndall was famous for defending Darwin and promoting scientific naturalism. Tyndall had used the 1874 Presidential Address at the British Association for the Advancement of Science to declare that science would ‘wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory’ and argued that all rival explanations needed to ‘submit to its [science’s] control’.¹³ The NYCM article concluded with confidence, and asserted that the ‘end of the road was never uncertain’:

While man remains an intelligent being and sees in the universe around him a marvellous display of intelligence, nothing can prevent him from believing that, above and beyond all this, there is some supreme intelligence, that we call God.¹⁴

It is clear that, although NYCM articles were prepared to accept the social application of the ideas of Darwin, this did not extend to the area of religion; there remained what may be termed a ‘separate sphere’ of life into which Darwinian thought might not transgress.

The final reference to Darwin appears to have forgotten any of the previous objections to his work. In 1923 *The Voyage of the Beagle* was included in a list of

¹¹ Mike Hawkins has noted Spencer’s works were translated into many languages and at times there were over a million copies in print. Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought*, p.82. James Moore says Spencer was the most popular advocate of ‘Lamarckian evolution’ in America: Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies*, p.9.

¹² On Huxley, see: Adrian Desmond, *Huxley: From Devil’s Disciple to Evolution’s High Priest* (Addison-Wesley, Reading, 1997).

¹³ John Tyndall has been attributed with provoking a debate on the efficacy of prayer in 1872, the same year in which Francis Galton published his ‘Statistical Inquiries into the Efficacy of Prayer’, but Galton had worked on this since at least 1869 when he had a paper on the subject rejected. Forrest, *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius*, p.111. For more on Tyndall see the Tyndall Correspondence Project at York University in Toronto:

<http://www.yorku.ca/tyndall/biography.html> accessed 24 May 2011.

¹⁴ NYCM, Vol. XVI (July 1903), pp.9–10.

‘one hundred worth while books’ that NYCM sought for its ‘Charlton Street Memorial Church’.¹⁵ In this case, the work of Darwin was not only accepted, but also considered sufficiently safe to form part of the educational scheme of a church. It is even more significant that NYCM remained silent on the issue of Darwinian theory at the time that this subject received increasingly vocal opposition from other areas of the religious community. NYCM was silent on the 1925 Scopes Trial, and it is likely that the Mission would have risked the support of the Osborn family (described in the section below, ‘The Rise of Eugenics’, and in appendices four and five) had their response been any different, as Henry Fairfield Osborn played an active role in preparing the case for the defence, and was internationally renowned for his work on evolution.¹⁶

Earth and Heaven: The Scope of NYCM Work

NYCM, like LCM, has suffered a general neglect from historians; the research that has been carried out has resulted in misleading conclusions on the views of the organisation regarding charity. As seen in the previous chapter, attitudes towards charity have an important bearing on questions related to environmental reform and degeneration. In this case this is an especially significant subject, as LCM and NYCM adopted vastly differing policies on the issue of welfare. Kenneth and Ethel Miller, who had worked in the Mission and confessed their love for it, argued that NYCM’s response to charity was an inevitable response to its missionaries having witnessed scenes of poverty as they visited people in New York.¹⁷ However, although there may have been different experiences of poverty in London and New

¹⁵ NYCM, Vol. XLVI (Apr. 1923), p.7.

¹⁶ Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society’, p.409. For a more detailed account of Osborn’s involvement with the Scopes Trial see Regal, *Henry Fairfield Osborn*, pp.160–2.

¹⁷ Miller and Miller, *The People Are the City*, p.ix and p.59.

York, the leaders of LCM were prepared to confess that there were extreme levels of deprivation whilst at the same time not entering into large-scale charitable provision. The existence of poverty was not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee charitable intervention. Another argument, that of Carroll Smith Rosenberg, states that the work of NYCM was initially grounded in a belief in the perfectibility of man, typical of the Second Great Awakening, but that the Society subsequently lost confidence in this spiritual work and instead focused upon ameliorative temporal reform.¹⁸ The separation of spiritual and temporal work that this analysis suggested was made explicit in the most recent study of the organisation, which centred upon a narrative of how the Society came to be ‘one of the city’s leading social service providers’. In pursuit of that subject, the author wrote that ‘in spite of the shift to an institutional church approach, many of the organization’s activities remained as they had before’.¹⁹ In this analysis, the religious work of the organisation was relegated in significance to the observation that it had not obstructed the progress of a supposedly separate aspect of work – charitable relief. This tendency to separate welfare provision from religious expression, or to place religious work in a subservient position to that of charitable activities (a trend criticised by Lillian Taiz with regard to The Salvation Army),²⁰ is not faithful to the history of NYCM. Whilst there were significant organisational changes in the Mission between 1812 and 1870, the suggestion of Rosenberg that its founders would have had difficulty ‘understanding and completely accepting’ the later work seems overstated. One

¹⁸ Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City*, p.186.

¹⁹ Romita, *Images of America*, p.17.

²⁰ Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads and Lasses*, p.4.

founder, William Earl Dodge, remained a supporter until his death in 1883, and his family continued to support the Mission long after this.²¹

The decision of NYCM to establish its own churches during this period cannot but be interpreted as evidence of the continued commitment to religious work within the organisation. Any other interpretation would be flawed; however, alongside, and in harmony with that religious work, NYCM conducted an important range of social welfare activities. The Mission pioneered a visiting nurse service, and employed ten nurses before the City of New York entered this work.²² As shown in Appendix one, the first ‘missionary nurse for the sick poor’ was listed in 1873,²³ but the idea that had prompted this work had much earlier roots. In 1825 the annual report of the Mission suggested that women could have a role in:

distributing the Holy Bible and Religious Tracts; and not only then to teach, but to relieve the sick, the aged, the widow, and the orphan, these seem peculiarly the privileges of Christian females who would be labourers in the gospel without overstepping that modesty which should always distinguish them.²⁴

In this statement, women were shown as capable of performing similar tasks to male missionaries through teaching and distributing tracts, but also as possessing a unique capacity to perform a caring role. This ability was described again in 1865, two years after the ‘Women’s Branch’ of NYCM was given responsibility for the oversight of its own missionaries, at a time of social reconstruction following the Civil War:

²¹ See appendices four and five. Details on W. E. Dodge can be found in Millers, *The People Are the City*, pp.219–20.

²² Miller and Miller, *The People Are the City*, p.105.

²³ NYCM, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (1873), p.8.

²⁴ NYCM, *Third Annual Report of the Female Branch* (1825). Courtesy of the NYCM archive.

a woman of a deeply religious spirit, of good sense and a ready wit, with a kind and motherly way, going about among the poor with a smiling face and a ready hand, will be like a gleam of sunshine in the dark abodes of ignorance and wretchedness; and by her well-directed efforts, aimed by a heart full of sympathy...with the divine blessing, will promote social order, domestic thrift, and household virtue.²⁵

The significance of this work was emphasised in the claim that the ‘purity of the home’ represented the ‘best hopes of the Christian philanthropist’, and would lay ‘broad and deep...foundations of that high national character which every Christian citizen feels bound to promote and defend.’²⁶ This argument, that the work of NYCM offered temporal as well as spiritual benefits, was emphasised in statistical accounts of the activities of the Mission. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the work of nurses included the treatment of serious diseases, the provision of charitable relief in the form of ‘garments’ and money, and explicitly religious tasks such as the distribution of tracts, Gospels, and Bibles.

²⁵ NYCM, *38th Annual Report* (1865), p.17.

²⁶ NYCM, *38th Annual Report* (1865), p.17.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.1 Missionary Statistics. NYCMM, Vol. XLVI (Mar. 1923), p.13.

This acceptance of a work that included both temporal and spiritual elements indicated a clear difference between LCM and NYCM. LCM adopted only a very limited amount of temporal welfare work at a later stage in its history, and this work was always linked to questions of sin; in contrast, NYCM never prohibited temporal welfare work and there are records of this activity at least as early as the 1830s.²⁷ In contrast to the scorn that LCM articles expressed for ‘soap and water’ gospel work, NYCM publications were willing to quote from the prominent Social Gospel

²⁷ Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City*, p.93.

minister Josiah Strong.²⁸ This openness to reformers outside of the Mission was reflected in the minutes of the organisation, which reveal that the organisation worked with a number of external groups on various questions of reform. From 1905 to 1915 the Society was called to work with groups as diverse as a Senate Committee on Taxation, petitioners for the regulation of ‘the sale of patent medicines’, the Bureau of Municipal Research, the Tenement House Committee of the Charity Organisation Society, the ‘General City Mission Council’, and a group combating Tuberculosis and looking for the ‘betterment of health of the people in our tenement districts’.²⁹ This openness to temporal reform, and its difference to the feelings expressed by LCM, presents a valuable opportunity to evaluate the claim of Christine Rosen that it was Christians with liberal theologies and involvement in the Social Gospel movement that were most able to participate in the eugenics movement.

Heredity, Environment and the Push for Rational Reform

The tension between environmental and hereditary influences was perceived to be a cornerstone of eugenic theory. In 1874 Francis Galton coined the phrase ‘nature and nurture’ in response to criticisms of his hereditarian works by the Swiss botanist Alphonse de Candolle.³⁰ The recent study *A Century of Eugenics in America* acknowledged that eugenics took ‘many forms’ and ‘different agendas’, but

²⁸ Strong was a Congregationalist minister and served as general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance for 12 years from 1886. He used this position to promote social reform, and in 1898 created the League for Social Service (later the American Institute for Social Service) to promote social reform. He was described by some as the ‘apogee’ of the Social Gospel movement. Gary Scott Smith ‘Strong, Josiah’ *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000 <http://www.anb.org/articles/05/05-00754.html> accessed 30 Sep. 2011. For an example of a NYCM reference to Strong see: NYCMM, Vol. XIX (Dec. 1907), pp.3–10.

²⁹ Minutes of NYCM: 13 March 1905, 12 March 1906, 12 April 1909, 26 April 1909, 8 December 1913, and 12 April 1915. Courtesy of the New York City Mission Society.

³⁰ Nicholas Wright Gillham, *A Life of Sir Francis Galton: From African Exploration to the Birth of Eugenics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001), p.5.

nevertheless focused almost exclusively upon sterilisation legislation – the centrality of which was suggested in the ‘Century of Eugenics’ being traced to the beginning in 1907 of compulsory sterilisation legislation in Indiana.³¹ One of the contributors to this volume, Elof Carlson, argued that sterilisation laws gained approval because it was believed that charitable measures had failed.³² With eugenics traced to a start date marked by a sterilisation law, the implication was that eugenics gained popularity because charity had lost support. David Ward made a similar argument; he claimed that poverty in cities was usually attributed to poor environmental conditions, but that when individuals appeared unresponsive to environmental reforms there was a shift towards views of hereditary weakness and biological deviance.³³ These interpretations suggest an obvious point of conflict between reformers and eugenicists; however, despite the claim that there has been a historiographical shift from considering eugenics as a scientific theory towards a broader appreciation of its status as a ‘social movement’,³⁴ there have been few attempts to uncover the response of reformers towards eugenics. The main exception to this has been in the field of mental health and psychiatry. Nicole Rafter uncovered important evidence of workers in asylums and reformatories, and those in the discipline of criminal anthropology, who adopted hereditarian ideas. She suggested that this had a significant impact upon public policy between 1875 and 1925. This uptake of hereditarian ideas was again linked to a rejection of reformist confidence, and Rafter provided case study examples of individual asylum workers

³¹ Paul Lombardo, ‘Preface’, in Paul Lombardo (eds.), *A Century of Eugenics in America: From the Indiana Experiment to the Human Genome Era* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2011), p.2.

³² Elof Axel Carlson, ‘The Hoosier Connection: Compulsory Sterilization as Moral Hygiene’, in Lombardo (eds.), *A Century of Eugenics in America*, p.11 and p.14.

³³ David Ward, *Poverty, Ethnicity, And The American City, 1840–1925: Changing conceptions of the slum and the ghetto* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), p.xi and p.4.

³⁴ See: Wendy Kline, ‘Eugenics in the United States’, in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics*, p.512.

who lost faith in remedial intervention and turned instead towards custodial care. However, the framework that Rafter employed was grounded in the belief that religious and biological explanations for ‘innate criminalistic behaviour’ were separate, with science offering a replacement to traditional values, worldviews and beliefs.³⁵ Ian Dowbiggin made a similar attempt to uncover the practical influence of the eugenics movement, and studied the work of the ‘anonymous rank and file’ of psychiatrists. He concluded that the involvement of psychiatrists with eugenics was guided by clinical concern and professional self-interest, rather than the race or class bias that had been suggested by previous historians.³⁶ Other studies have shown less concern for the practical results of the scientific debates surrounding eugenics. Despite his recognition that Social Gospel ministers played an important role in the popularisation of sociology, Hamilton Cravens focused his study of the heredity-environment debate exclusively upon ‘natural scientists and social scientists’.³⁷ The decision taken by Aaron Gillette to focus solely upon the academic debates surrounding eugenics led him to conclude that the ideology was in serious decline by 1929, and ‘effectively destroyed’ over the next ten years.³⁸ The many thousands of individuals who were sterilised as a result of eugenic ideas during the 1930s would no doubt question this conclusion.³⁹ The remainder of this section will explore these themes with regard to NYCM: the interaction this Society had with

³⁵ Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1997), p.2, p.6 and pp.55–6.

³⁶ Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, pp.viii–xi.

³⁷ Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution: American Scientists and the Heredity-Environment Controversy 1900–1914* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1978), p.ix and p.123.

³⁸ Aaron Gillette, *Eugenics and the Nature-Nurture Debate in the Twentieth Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007), p.135.

³⁹ The 1930s witnessed a peak in the number of eugenically motivated sterilisation procedures in the United States of America. Mark Largent provides very useful statistics depicting this trend, in, *Breeding Contempt*, p.77.

eugenic thought, and the question of whether those who endorsed hereditarian ideas were led to abandon their reformist efforts.

NYCM publications raised the issue of heredity much earlier than LCM. The first appearance of this theme was in the annual report of 1877, which described a ‘remarkable’ study about ‘criminal inheritance’ written by ‘Mr. Dugdale’ of the New York Prison Association.⁴⁰ This reference demonstrated a keen awareness of contemporary ideas, as 1877 was the same year that Richard Louis Dugdale published *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity*. *The Jukes* study is especially significant, as this work has been identified as providing a model for the pedigree studies which featured heavily in the eugenics movement.⁴¹ The details the NYCM article related from Dugdale were evidently intended to emphasise the importance of the work of the Mission, with the implication that there would be serious consequences if this work were removed. Dugdale had described ‘Margaret’ as the source of a criminal dynasty that had ‘poured a stream of disease, licentiousness, insanity, pauperism, and crime over the country now for a hundred years’. The NYCM article argued that modern versions of ‘Margaret’ were to be found in the ‘hundreds of little girls in and around this city who yearly come under the care of this Society’.⁴² The article suggested that ‘Margaret’ and the children of contemporary New York inhabited a similar physical environment, and that added to this there was a spiritual likeness between their situations: ‘Like our street children, they [Margaret and her family] never went to school or attended church’. A hint of accusation was raised in the article, with the claim that:

⁴⁰ NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), p.59.

⁴¹ Nichole Hahn Rafter, ‘Introduction’, in Rafter (ed.), *White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies 1877–1919* (Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1988), pp.8-9.

⁴² NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), p.59.

Probably, as most people passed little Margaret...they looked on her as people do now on the little ragged street-sweepers they meet on our streets, either with utter indifference or with hopelessness, as on an irreclaimable vagabond, or with disgust...⁴³

By their indifference, New York citizens were attributed with their own role in the devastating results of the lives of individuals like Margaret. The consequences were enormous; Margaret was said to have grown into 'a wicked womanhood', and 50 percent of her female descendants were described as prostitutes. In the case of her male descendants, it was reported that there had been 'murder or attempts to murder' amongst every generation 'except the sixth, where the children are not older than seven years'. In addition to these grave social problems, Dugdale described health difficulties:

Another appalling feature in this history of criminal inheritance is the disease spread through the county by these vagrant children, and the consequent lunacy, idiocy, epilepsy, and final weakness of body and mind which belongs to inherited pauperism, transmitted to so many human beings.⁴⁴

All of these factors were combined into one economic consequence. Dugdale estimated that the total cost to New York State for 'neglecting one vagrant child and her miserable little sisters', when all their descendants were included, had amounted to \$1,023,600.⁴⁵ The work of NYCM, in providing religious education and welfare for modern day 'Margarets', was thus presented as a sound financial investment.

Previous studies have emphasised the fact that Dugdale was uncertain of the relative importance of heredity and environment, and that his study criticised strict

⁴³ NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), pp.59–60.

⁴⁴ NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), p.60.

⁴⁵ NYCM, *50th Annual Report* (1877), p.60.

hereditarians as ‘extremists’.⁴⁶ Others have suggested that the work of Dugdale was not interpreted as justification for segregation, quarantine or sterilisation until Arthur H. Estabrook of the Eugenics Record Office published *The Jukes in 1915*.⁴⁷ However, NYCM published an argument in favour of the ‘quarantine’ of undesirables much earlier than this, and the argument that was used to support this measure echoed the economic analysis that Dugdale had employed. Only one year after the article about ‘Margaret’, an article published by NYCM argued that:

The almshouses are found to be breeding-places, where paupers and drunkards are raised up yearly to infest the land. Confine them in the large, judiciously-managed workhouses or asylums, where labour is a part of the treatment, and we shall check the stream of desolation and ruin which flows through every town and city. Begin with the inebriate; isolate and quarantine him, make him self-supporting, diminish his power of spreading this disorder and bringing ruin on others...and the wealth of the state is largely increased, the happiness of its citizens enhanced.⁴⁸

This description, full of rhetoric about contagion and reproduction, closely mirrored the animal and insect imagery that was pervasive in eugenic family studies in the United States of America; there were matching developments in Europe, where certain groups were described as parasites that threatened society.⁴⁹ ‘Almshouses’ were ‘breeding-places’, and ‘drunkards’ were blamed for ‘infesting’ the land; the solution was a system of scientific philanthropy based upon notions of the deserving and undeserving poor. ‘Workhouses’ or ‘asylums’ would serve to cure, or at least ‘isolate’, individuals who would otherwise pose a risk of spreading their vice

⁴⁶ Rafter, ‘Introduction’, in Rafter (ed.), *White Trash*, pp.8–9.

⁴⁷ Engs, *The Eugenics Movement*, p.131.

⁴⁸ NYCM, *51st Annual Report* (1878), p.42.

⁴⁹ Rafter, ‘Introduction’, in Rafter (ed.), *White Trash*, p.26; and Paul Julian Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe, 1890–1945* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000), pp.7–9. I was grateful for the opportunity to discuss new work in this field with Martina King who presented a paper ‘Literary representations of medical knowledge: German novels as bacteriological propaganda’ at the Society for the Social History of Medicine’s Annual Conference in 2010.

throughout society. In a claim similar to that found in LCM publications, ‘grogshops’ were blamed for ‘seventy-five per cent. of the pauperism and crime of the city’. This was followed by the calculation, reminiscent of that quoted from Dugdale, that the city spent \$8,100,000 on an annual basis as a result of the ‘liquor trade’. In comparison, the city received only \$300,000 from ‘liquor dealers’ via license fees; the article concluded that this was ‘a wretched economy’. The work of NYCM was placed in direct contrast to these ‘contagion’ zones, as the article highlighted the disparity between the number of churches and ‘grogshops’: ‘one grogshop’ to every 125 people, compared to one church for every 2045 people.⁵⁰

In this case, the support for the idea of ‘workhouses’ and ‘asylums’ was justified by reference to an ‘excellent report by Dr. Wilbur, on hospitals for sick and insane in Great Britain’. It was claimed that this report had said ‘labor’ had been introduced into all charities in Britain, with ‘profit to both the institution and patient’.⁵¹ However, there was a much longer history of NYCM involvement with the issues of organised charity and the avoidance of pauperisation. From 1864 until 1890 the annual reports published by NYCM included a list of charities in New York, preceded by instructions ‘To the Benevolent’ that it was best to refer ‘persons in distress’ to ‘the nearest City Missionary or Poor Visitor’ who would ‘investigate the case’. A further warning was given that it was not uncommon for help to be sought ‘at unreasonable times and hours by professedly homeless, needy persons for immediate relief...generally such persons are imposters, and artfully urge their appeal under circumstances which preclude investigation’.⁵² NYCM stopped

⁵⁰ NYCM, *51st Annual Report* (1878), pp.38–9.

⁵¹ NYCM, *51st Annual Report* (1878), p.42.

⁵² NYCM, *39th Annual Report* (1866), p.109.

publishing these lists in 1890, but only because it was believed that the Charity Organization Society⁵³ had taken over responsibility for this work. The relationship between these two organisations was close, both ideologically and geographically, as they shared the task of promoting responsible charity and worked in the same building from 1891.⁵⁴ The COS, which first entered the United States in 1877 with an office in Buffalo New York, promoted ideas of scientific philanthropy and several of its prominent members were involved in work related to eugenics. Rafter has identified Josephine Shaw Lowell, who founded the COS branch in New York City,⁵⁵ as having founded the first eugenic institution in the United States – the Newark Custodial Asylum in 1878.⁵⁶ Similarly, Oscar McCulloch, who founded the Indianapolis branch of the COS, wrote the eugenic family study *The Tribe of Ishmael*. McCulloch has been identified as one of the individuals whose influence was central to the passage of the first compulsory sterilisation legislation in the world.⁵⁷

Long before NYCM became involved with the COS, the Mission published praise for the ‘Board of United Charities’ and its work promoting ‘greater economy and efficiency’. This work was said to involve ‘the exposure of professional beggars, the prevention of pauperism and crime, and the moral elevation of the worthy,

⁵³ Charity Organization Society hereafter referred to as ‘COS’.

⁵⁴ New York City Mission, the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Children’s Aid Society and the Charity Organization Society moved into the United Charities Building at 105 East 22nd Street. Kenneth T. Jackson (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1995), p.61.

⁵⁵ John P. Bartkowski and Helen A. Regis, *Charitable Choices: religion, race, and poverty in the post welfare era* (New York University Press, New York, 2003), p.40.

⁵⁶ Rafter, *Creating Born Criminals*, pp.35–42.

⁵⁷ On McCulloch’s role in Indiana’s sterilisation legislation see: Carlson, ‘The Hoosier Connection’ pp.15–16; on his role in the COS and the eugenic family study see Deutsch, *Inventing America’s “Worst” Family*, p.40.

industrious poor'.⁵⁸ In contrast to this praise for disciplined charity, the Mission published articles that criticised 'haphazard' and 'indiscriminate' charity – which was said to be 'a fruitful cause of pauperism and crime'. In language that echoed the study quoted from Dugdale, the 1878 annual report claimed that:

this is not the worst evil growing out of promiscuous almsgiving. It tends to create and foster a class of hereditary and professional beggars. In Italy and Spain it is a regular profession, handed down from father to son. There are beggars in Italy whose pedigree is more ancient than that of Victor Emmanuel. Indiscriminate almsgiving is but sowing the seed for a new crop of beggars, and the seed is marvellously fruitful.⁵⁹

This comparison of the American Republic to a foreign monarchical system was itself provocative;⁶⁰ the claim that American charity had reinvented this foreign system to support crime and begging was a damning indictment of American society. Although Italy and Spain did not account for a large number of the immigrants entering the United States in this period,⁶¹ the association of these predominantly Catholic nations with the subject of begging resonated with contemporary perceptions of the undeserving, intemperate Catholic pauper.⁶² The subject was given biological connotations through the use of the loaded words 'promiscuous', 'seed' and 'fruitful'. By implication, the converse situation was also true: the careful charitable work of NYCM was preventing the formation of a foreign and harmful way of life from tainting future generations of Americans.

⁵⁸ NYCM, *51st Annual Report* (1878), pp.19–20. The Board of United Charities met for the first time in February 1875; *The New York Times*, 13 February 1875.

⁵⁹ NYCM, *51st Annual Report* (1878), p.35.

⁶⁰ King Victor Emmanuel II, the first King of a united Italy, died in the year of this report perhaps explaining this reference to his history.

⁶¹ In 1880 there were fewer than twenty thousand Italians living in New York City, the mass increase in Italian immigration did not occur until after 1880. In 1880 there were just over one thousand Spanish immigrants living in New York City. Jackson (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, p.585 and p.605.

⁶² On these prejudices see: Bartkowski and Regis, *Charitable Choices*, p.41. The association of social evils with foreign and 'un-Christian' groups will be examined in detail later in this chapter.

At the same time that NYCM published these views about heredity and rational philanthropy, the Mission also voiced fears about physical degeneration. In 1880, 17 years before the first reference to physical degeneration in an LCM publication, the NYCM annual report stated that ‘probably 75 per cent. of the maladies of the city’ started in tenement houses. The areas that NYCM worked in were said to have a death rate double that of ‘uptown wealthy districts’, with ‘ninety per cent. of the children born in these dens’ dying ‘before reaching youth’:

There is a gradual physical degeneracy. Wasting diseases prevail. Infantile life is nipped in the bud; youth is deformed and loathsome; decrepitude comes at thirty. The slow process of decay is aptly called “Tenement-house Rot.”⁶³

In addition to these physical problems, the NYCM report claimed that there was a consensus among ‘religious teachers and philanthropists’ that ‘it is useless to try and improve the moral condition of the tenement-house class until their physical surroundings are reformed’. This message, one that was denied on a regular basis by LCM publications, was justified by the explanation:

Their intellects are so blunted and their perceptions so perverted by the noxious atmosphere which they breathe, and the all-pervading filth in which they live and move and have their being, that they are not susceptible to moral and religious influences.⁶⁴

This passage made an uncomfortable imitation of the words of St. Paul, who wrote of God ‘For in Him we live and move and have our being...we are his offspring’.⁶⁵ In contrast to the words of Paul, who described people as the products of God’s design, this report described tenement-dwellers as degraded creations of ‘pervading filth’. Although the NYCM did not provide a reference for this passage, the

⁶³ NYCM, *53rd Annual Report* (1880), p.68.

⁶⁴ NYCM, *53rd Annual Report* (1880), p.68.

⁶⁵ Acts xvii. 28.

quotation above was taken from the testimony of Dr Stephen Smith before a joint committee of the New York State Legislature in 1865. Smith had argued for the urgent need for new health laws to address the poor sanitary conditions in New York, and his vivid testimony received front-page coverage in the *New York Times*. His entire testimony was reprinted in 1911 as *The City That Was*.⁶⁶ NYCM included this passage in a section of its annual report entitled ‘Extracts from Missionary Reports’, there was no indication that these words were not their own. Nevertheless, with these physical and spiritual problems established, the report made a final plea for intervention based upon concerns of social cohesion. The article blamed conditions in the tenements for producing ‘a proletaire class’ with ‘no interest in the permanent well-being of the community’ and no ‘deep root in the soil, the mere tools of demagogues and designing men’.⁶⁷ In this context, heredity and degeneration were but part of a wider string of concerns that were intended to demonstrate the difficulties that faced NYCM missionaries in the course of their work.

NYCM publications continued to make use of contemporary affairs in order to promote the Mission as the embodiment of rational and scientific reform; in 1890 this came in the form of a sensational piece of news, the recent execution of ‘the murderer Kemmler’. This case was guaranteed to provoke keen public interest, as it was the first time that the electric chair had been used for a public execution. Interest in the case was even higher as it had been the subject of a legal dispute.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of Smith’s testimony see: Gert H. Brieger, ‘Sanitary Reform in New York City: Stephen Smith and the Passage of the Metropolitan Health Bill’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 40 (1966), pp.407–29. See also, Stephen Smith, *The City That Was* (Allaben, New York, 1911). The same quotation from Smith was cited, without reference to NYCM, in Ward, *Poverty, Ethnicity, And the American City, 1840–1925*, p.30.

⁶⁷ NYCM, 53rd *Annual Report* (1880), p.68.

Thomas Edison, the inventor of the electric chair, hoped to use the case to discredit the electrical current of his competitor by associating it with danger and death. George Westinghouse, the competitor whom Edison sought to discredit, objected that the execution would breach the US Constitution, which protected citizens from ‘cruel and unusual punishment’.⁶⁸ Once these objections had been overturned, the execution itself was marred with controversy, as an error meant that the chair had to be switched on a second time to ensure that Kemmler had died. Eyewitness accounts reported that onlookers screamed and there was a smell of burnt flesh, but various press accounts gave even more sensational descriptions of the body catching fire and flames erupting from the mouth. The NYCM article, therefore, came at a time when newspapers were printing thousands of words about this event under headlines such as ‘The Terrible Death of Kemmler’.⁶⁹ In this environment, the NYCM article argued that Kemmler was ‘a sample product of conditions existing to-day in all large cities’, the result of an upbringing that included ‘no religious training’. Readers were encouraged to think about how much money could have been kept in the State treasury had ‘the influences around that boy’ been different. The article used a medically inspired title, ‘Prevention is Better than Cure’, with further biological imagery in the conclusion that: ‘allowing...such criminals to be bred in our community is a suicidal policy’. Economics returned to the debate, as it was claimed that money spent preventing ‘a boy from becoming a Kemmler is the cheapest investment that we know of’. For any readers who were unable to see the connection, the article stated that NYCM could name people from similar

⁶⁸ Richard Moran, *Executioner's Current: Thomas Edison, George Westinghouse, and the Invention of the Electric Chair* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2002), p.xix.

⁶⁹ Craig Brandon notes that none of the witnesses mentioned flames, yet accounts of Kemmler's case continues to mention it, including that of Moran, see Moran, *Executioner's Current*, p.16. Brandon, *The Electric Chair: An Unnatural American History* (McFarland & Company, Inc., Jefferson, 1999), p.181.

backgrounds whom God had ‘saved through the instrumentality of the City Mission’. NYCM was, therefore, a ‘benefactor not only to the individual, to his friends, and to society, but to the State as well.’⁷⁰

In addition to the high-profile examples of *The Jukes* and Kemmler, NYCM publications cited less well-known studies and supplemented these with evidence from the work of the Mission for the canon of literature on the subject. An article in 1896 cited the work of ‘Prof. Peelman of the University of Bonn’, who was said to have investigated the descendants of a nineteenth-century woman who had been ‘a confirmed drunkard’.⁷¹ The article opened with a biblical foundation for the work conducted by Peelman, as it was stated: ‘every one realises the importance of a godly ancestry, for God’s blessings descend from generation to generation upon those who love Him’.⁷² With this spiritual law established, the article described Peelman’s findings: from this one drunkard and her 709 descendants, there were ‘106...of illegitimate birth; 162...professional beggars; 64...inmates of almshouses; 181 women of evil life; 76...convicted of serious crimes, and 7...condemned for murder’. It was reported that the total cost arising from these individuals was \$1,260,000, which led the article to conclude that ‘it is impossible to exaggerate a

⁷⁰ NYCM, Vol. III (Oct. 1890), pp.242–3.

⁷¹ I have found no references to ‘Prof. Peelman’ in any historical studies of eugenics, nor is there a reference to his work in Samuel J. Holmes, *A Bibliography of Eugenics* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1924), an extensive compilation of over five hundred pages of references, which included a section dedicated to ‘Notorious Families’. Other works referred to the work of ‘Professor Pellmann’ of the University of Bonn, for example *The Annals of Hygiene*, Vol. 11 (1896), pp.559–60, but these were all later than NYCM’s article. I have found one other religious reference to this study, which used the same spelling and phrasing as NYCM. It is possible that this reference, from 1917, was influenced by NYCM: E. E. Shelhamer, *Heart Searching Sermons and Sayings* (Repairer Publishing Company, Atlanta, 1917), pp.123–4. This spoke of a ‘Prof. Peelman [sic] of the University of Bonn’, having ‘recently conducted’ an investigation into six generations of a family descended from ‘a single profligate woman’. The same chapter, titled ‘What it costs to be damned’, also cited genealogies of ‘Jonathan Edwards’ and ‘Max Jukes’, and had a section devoted to ‘decay of health’.

⁷² This is an invocation of biblical passages such as Deuteronomy v. 10 ‘but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.’

story like this, which sets forth in blood-red letters the necessity of missionary work for the lowly and outcast'.⁷³ Immediately following this 'blood-red' analysis of the work of Peelman, the NYCMM made the same argument using evidence from the work of the Mission. Readers were reminded of the 'often told' story of 'Nellie Conroy', a girl who had been found 'bare-headed, bare-footed, [and] half-intoxicated' before being transformed to 'a life of purity and godliness'.⁷⁴ The article used this example to argue that:

Had this woman lived on in her sin, she might have reproduced the story which Prof. Peelman has given to the public...I know perfectly well that our chief motive for working for the salvation of sinners is their own eternal deliverance from sin...but I also know that the welfare of society is at stake, and that each profligate who walks our streets is an actual menace to society and a tremendous tax on the public purse.⁷⁵

Although this example contrasted with that provided by Peelman, as it represented money that had been saved rather than lost, the underlying principle was the same. Organisations, such as NYCM, which worked to reform individuals like Conroy, were responsible for blocking the 'reproduction' of the 'profligate'. The article repeated the importance of work for 'prevention' alongside the need for a 'cure', and the success of NYCM in these areas was presented as reason for support from 'all true Christians and patriots'.⁷⁶

⁷³ NYCMM, Vol. IX (Oct. 1896), pp.246–7.

⁷⁴ This story was first told in an 1887 tract by Henry B. Gibbud of the Florence Night Mission, now available online at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandoclinks/ocm21584301.htm>, accessed 6 June 2011. Chad Heap has identified the story of Nellie Conroy within the context of 'white slavery' fears, and as a rarer example of a woman being exploited by a black man rather than the more common depictions of threats from immigrants arrived from southern and eastern Europe. NYCM made no mention of this racial aspect to the story. Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885–1940* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009), p.127 and p.334.

⁷⁵ NYCMM, Vol. IX (Oct. 1896), p.247.

⁷⁶ NYCMM, Vol. IX (Oct. 1896), p.247.

In all of the above discussions, it was accepted that hereditary laws and environmental degeneration were factors that could exert a harmful impact upon New York society. However, in contrast to the expectations established by previous studies, no concerns were expressed that these issues presented an insurmountable obstacle to reform. In fact, these subjects were employed as parts of arguments that were intended to demonstrate the value of the work of NYCM. These ideas were a natural addition to the claim that NYCM represented ‘scientific’ and efficient charity, and was responsive to contemporary concerns about pauperisation. Discussions about scientific charity, efficiency, and modern preventative methods of reform brought NYCM into direct contact with eugenicists; the Mission shared a platform with these individuals without expressing any concern. This reflects the position adopted by eugenic theorists around the world, as the movement was presented as one of modernisation and efficiency.⁷⁷ Rather than just accepting these contemporary ideas, however, NYCM extended them by using its own examples of reform work and by drawing its own conclusions from the work of others. These themes were discussed in NYCM articles from at least 1877, but it was not until 1896 that questions were asked as to how far the influences of environment and heredity impeded reform work. This issue is the subject of the section below.

Reform and Heredity

The early discussions surrounding ideas of heredity and environmental degeneration were not marked by the concern that these factors could negate the efficacy of the

⁷⁷ Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2010), p.8. Maria Bucur has provided an interesting illustration of the case in interwar Romania, where eugenics synthesised modernisation and tradition. Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 2002), p.4.

work conducted by NYCM. However, in 1896 this issue was given retroactive assessment in an article written by the NYCM pastor John Dooly:

In some instances we recalled the fact that we had questioned whether grace would prevail against heredity and environment, even when they did confess faith in the Gospel; but the years have proved that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and these very cases are the ones who are most useful in God's work.⁷⁸

Although this fear was raised only to be dismissed, demonstrating the extent of the power of the Christian message, it seems likely that this claim would have come as a shock to readers. Dooly claimed that NYCM had previously questioned two central aspects of Christian faith, 'grace' and 'the Gospel'. The fact that these concerns were not mentioned in any previous publications may suggest that they were the private fears of Dooly, or that this represented a private debate within the organisation, that had been deliberately excluded from the public discourse of the Society. The latter seems unlikely; the previous section illustrated that the subject of heredity and degeneration was not hidden or swept under the carpet, but promoted as evidence of the importance of NYCM. Dooly had been appointed as pastor of the NYCM 'Carmel Chapel' in 1885, and in 1896 was appointed to cover a period of absence by the minister at the 'Olivet Memorial Church'. He was an unlikely candidate to express these views due to his personal experience of reform. When the Mission erected its 'Broome Street Tabernacle', which was dedicated in 1885,⁷⁹ Dooly wrote a letter to be placed in the cornerstone. The letter, addressed to 'whomsoever in the future may read', explained how in 1848 he had been a 'poor homeless boy' before a policeman named 'John Dunn' had allowed him to stay at his own home:

⁷⁸ NYCMM, Vol. IX (Aug. 1896), pp.198–9.

⁷⁹ Miller and Miller, *The People Are the City*, p.113.

he [John Dunn] lived on this very corner where this Church now stands. How wonderful is God's leading that He should have called me from the West in 1872 to be a worker for Him in this ward...and labor for poor people.⁸⁰

It is interesting to compare these two recollections from Dooly: in one he celebrated his own reformation and described the power of God in planning for his future service in the reformation of others, in the other he described a view he later came to realise was mistaken – heredity and environment were not the obstacles he had once believed them to be. The two accounts do not sit together very comfortably. Either Dooly did not consider his own experience transferable to others, which would present a strange interpretation of his account of ‘God’s leading’, or more likely his description of a previous fear (that had since been discredited) was intended primarily to pique the interest of readers in the genuine power of Christian work. In either case, the argument presented by Dooly does not conform to the historiography of reformers losing faith and turning towards hereditarian ideas; Dooly lost faith in hereditarianism and concerns about the environment, and returned to the power of the Gospel.

Whatever the intention of the remarks made by Dooly, or their historicity, future writings of NYCM continued to describe heredity and environment as challenges to the work of the Mission. In 1897, an article that described work amongst those living in tenements expressed the hope that this would: ‘help make men and women of education and character, who will prove an honor and blessing to any land, and fit for the kingdom of God’. The article admitted, however, that these hopes were faced with significant obstacles:

⁸⁰ Letter by John Dooly, dated 30th April 1885. Courtesy of the New York City Mission Society.

We contend against ignorance and superstition, heredity and custom, drink and poverty, greed and flaunting vice. The young souls we are reaching are really as imprisoned as was the beautiful spirit of Helen Kellar [sic]. If that deaf and dumb idiot lad in the west could be so trained by human love that he was able to repeat the Shepherd's Psalm and sing hymns, shall we count our obstacles too great and lose heart? For looking at every difficulty we may say, "We are labourers together with God in this work of making men and women."⁸¹

This argument, that NYCM missionaries faced obstacles that were comparable to the 'prison' of deafness and blindness suffered by Helen Keller, emphasised the belief that 'ignorance and superstition', 'heredity and custom', and the other challenges, were severe – but not insurmountable. Although the article appeared to add gender confusion to the situation of Keller, her case enabled the article to express the formula that to be a man or woman it was necessary to participate in Christian worship.⁸² The importance that the article attributed to this aspect of life is evident in the fact that the 'idiot lad' Keller was already famous for far more than reciting a psalm. Amongst other things, she had already published a short story and attended schools alongside students with no disabilities.⁸³

There was a strong story-telling aspect to these articles, similar to that in the discussions found in LCM publications. The main issue was not the relative importance of heredity or environment, but that people had been transformed in spite of their difficulties. In addition to these articles, however, NYCM publications

⁸¹ NYCM, *70th Annual Report* (1897), p.61.

⁸² NYCM's description of Helen Keller using the masculine pronoun may have been a mistake, but it is noteworthy that other articles made similar mistakes. In 1889 a sick child was described variously as 'it', 'she' and 'him', no doubt partially a deliberate attempt to emphasise the 'otherness' of the child with 'very little clothing on and the nails of its hands and feet were like bird's claws'. NYCM, Vol. II (June 1889), pp.184–5.

⁸³ Richard A. Reiman, 'Keller, Helen', *American National Biography Online*, (Feb. 2000) <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-01205.html>, accessed 30 Sep. 2011.

featured discussions that were directed much more clearly towards scientific debates. In 1901 an article commented:

The question is still discussed whether we owe more to heredity or environment in the development of moral qualities. We are among those who suppose that environment, especially in the early years of life, counts for more than heredity.⁸⁴

Once again, neither heredity nor environment was denied; but rather than being the passive subject of scientific thought, in this instance the article provided evidence to support the conclusion that it reached. A report was quoted from St. Faith's House in Tarrytown, an institution for young mothers in New York, which said that 'not one' of the girls under its care had been 'brought up by a good mother',

Nor can this be to any extent accounted for on the plea of heredity; for, as a matter of fact, we find that the girls who have lost their mothers in infancy, and have in consequence been neglected, go just as far wrong as those whose mothers have been really immoral.⁸⁵

This quotation, which is testament to the widespread discussion of these issues amongst reform organisations, was followed by an invitation for supporters of NYCM to consider the results that could be achieved if the environments of children in the city were improved. However, stepping aside from the scientific debate, the article concluded with a standard formula, and argued that whatever forces worked against Christianity, God could overcome them:

At the same time, experience leads to the conclusion that the truest and most lasting reformation can only be accomplished through the supernatural aid of God's Holy Spirit. He can counteract fallen influences, whether derived from heredity or environment, and He alone can do it completely.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (May 1901), p.9.

⁸⁵ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (May 1901), p.9.

⁸⁶ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (May 1901), pp.9–10.

The Rise of Eugenics

In this section it will be demonstrated that, although NYCM began to discuss the issues of heredity and degeneration earlier than LCM, these discussions peaked in New York later than in London. The revelations surrounding the Second Boer War provoked an outpouring of concern in LCM publications that was not matched in New York; however, during 1908 and 1909 NYCM featured a succession of articles related to the question of environment and heredity. It seems that rather than this having followed a broader contemporary trend, it represented a church-led discussion of eugenic issues.

The first of these articles concerned the ‘anti-saloon’ movement, with readers reminded that 38,000,000 citizens currently lived in States with prohibition laws.⁸⁷ It was acknowledged that there were problems enforcing these laws, but the article gave unhesitating support to the prohibition movement on the basis that it would be of ‘an inestimable advantage to the rising generation of any land’. This view was justified with reference to evidence taken from ‘Great Britain’, where it was claimed the ‘whole question of alcohol is coming to the front’. It was reported that ‘over seventy municipal corporations’ in Scotland had ‘issued posters and leaflets setting forth the physical degeneracy engendered by alcoholism’. An example was given of one of these posters about ‘degeneration’, in which citizens were urged to consider a series of statements from ‘the report recently submitted to Parliament of the Committee on Physical Deterioration’. The NYCM article had evidently overlooked the caution that this committee, described in the previous chapter, had taken in order to avoid the word ‘degeneration’. In contrast to the caution of the

⁸⁷ NYCM, Vol. XX (Nov. 1908), p.7.

parliamentary committee, the NYCM article argued that the evidence for ‘degeneration’ was sufficient to warrant legislative action in favour of prohibition. Two examples of the British posters were reproduced for readers to examine in full. The first opened with the claim: ‘The abuse of alcoholic stimulants is a most potent and deadly agent in producing physical deterioration’.⁸⁸ The second concluded: ‘In short, alcoholism is the most terrible enemy to personal health, to family happiness, and to national prosperity.’⁸⁹ These ideas were in perfect harmony with other ideas expressed in NYCM publications, as described in the section ‘Environment, Heredity, Drink and Physical Culture’ below.

A more explicit consideration of eugenic concerns came in ‘the winter of 1908–09’, when a group of men (from various different denominations) was convened to: ‘discuss the problem of the religious training of children and the advisability of holding an exhibit of Sunday-school work, its methods, problems and results’. The rationale behind this meeting was that ‘many homes’ did not provide children with religious education, and, as schools were unable to provide this, there was the risk of a ‘loss in the Christian character of our children and future citizens and parents’. This reference to ‘future parents’ raised the fearful prospect of a perpetuating cycle of irreligion; an idea that, it was claimed, demanded ‘immediate investigation and vigorous action’.⁹⁰ The responsibility for this investigation was given to a ‘General Committee called the New York Child Welfare Committee’, which had a remit to include ‘all the forces affecting children in the city’. The questions posed by this committee included: a consideration of the influences upon children that churches

⁸⁸ NYCMM, Vol. XX (Nov. 1908), p.8.

⁸⁹ NYCMM, Vol. XX (Nov. 1908), pp.9–10.

⁹⁰ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Dec. 1909), pp.4–5.

should encourage, and which they should oppose, the general question ‘what does the city life of our modern civilization mean in its relation to the children who live in the city?’, and finally:

What facts affect the health, earning capacity, training for domestic and parental responsibilities, the recreational life, as well as the character and spiritual development of New York City children? How do these forces react on each other?⁹¹

This General Committee included several members who would become prominent within the American eugenics movement: Cleveland H. Dodge, who helped finance the Second International Congress of Eugenics in 1921, William Church Osborn, a patron of the American Eugenics Society and father of the influential eugenicist Frederick Osborn, and Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, who became the largest single donor to American eugenics through her support of the Eugenics Record Office, which she founded in 1910.⁹² The Osborn and Dodge family had a long and influential involvement in NYCM (detailed in appendices four and five). Although the most significant eugenic exploits of this family were yet to come, when this committee met there had already been significant contacts with individuals involved in eugenics.⁹³ The subjects that the New York Child Welfare Committee addressed included several that lent themselves to eugenic discussion, including ‘laggards’, ‘defectives’ and ‘infant mortality’. More innocuous questions were also discussed, such as ‘work and wages’ and ‘clothes’, but it was intended that all subjects would be ‘reduced to the simplest terms’ and given ‘widespread publicity’ by means of ‘newspapers and magazines...speeches, conferences, and finally by means of a

⁹¹ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Dec. 1909), p.5.

⁹² NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Dec. 1909), pp.5–6. Biographical details concerning the Dodge and Osborn family from Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society’, p.111.

⁹³ Henry Fairfield Osborn had worked with Francis Galton as early as 1880. Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society’, p.410.

unique exhibit'.⁹⁴ The eugenic potential of such an exhibition was recognised as far away as London, where the Committee of the Eugenics Education Society agreed that the 1910 'Child Welfare Exhibit' in New York was an appropriate venue in which to distribute its 'papers and all publications'.⁹⁵

It would be wrong to suggest that the involvement of NYCM in the above committee explains the increased attention that was paid to eugenic subjects in the period around 1908–1909. The inverse relationship could be equally true, with increased interest in eugenic questions leading the Mission to seek out organisations that were involved in these subjects. It is clear that this committee was not the original source of eugenic ideas within NYCM publications, as articles had already discussed these issues before the committee was formed; however, whatever the impact of these meetings, NYCM publications demonstrated considerable interest in questions of degeneration, heredity and environment in this period. It is noteworthy that the Child Welfare Committee, which raised international interest of eugenicists, was a network originally organised by a group of churches.

NYCM articles in this period placed a heavy emphasis upon environmental concerns. Some of these featured a seemingly neo-Lamarckian understanding of the mechanisms of heredity, or a belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Historians have suggested that differences of opinion over the mechanisms of heredity accounted for the alternative routes that were taken by eugenics movements around the world; the 'soft' hereditarianism of neo-Lamarckianism has

⁹⁴ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Dec. 1909), pp.6–8.

⁹⁵ Council Meeting 30 May 1910, SA/EUG/1.2 Wellcome Library London.

been identified in both Catholic groups and liberal Protestant Social Gospel ministers that supported eugenic ideas.⁹⁶ The clearest example of these ideas was in an article published by NYCM in April 1909. The article, written by Mr A. L. Benson,⁹⁷ sought to answer the ‘frequently asked’ question ‘what part does poverty play in the production of criminals?’ Benson claimed that it was rare for men to steal because ‘they are poor’. However, rather than rejecting the importance of environment, Benson traced its influence further back and quoted evidence from a judge who said:

during the years that I was on the Bench I always queried prisoners on this point [poverty] and made voluminous notes from their answers. As a rule, men don’t steal or commit other crimes against property because they are poor. A panic, of course, will turn a certain number of men to crime, but the crime-product of panic, like the crime-product of congestion, does not really come until the second generation. *New York I believe, is now suffering to some extent, so far as crime is concerned, from the panic of 1873.*⁹⁸

It was explained that this time delay resulted from the fact that sustained periods of ‘hard times impair the physical efficiency not only of the existent generation, but of the next one’. Whilst adults would ‘starve along’ as necessary, it was claimed that ‘their successors, born physically deficient and perhaps made more so by their environment, fall naturally into the criminal class.’ Present day conditions and ‘industrial depression’ were said to be ‘creating criminals who will be in action twenty years from now!’ The article questioned its readers ‘*Will you help, through*

⁹⁶ A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone, ‘Eugenics and Genocide’, in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics*, p.195; Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, p.31; Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, p.40. For an overview of the scientific theories and controversies surrounding eugenics and genetics in the period up to the 2003 completion of the Human Genome Project, see: Nils Roll-Hansen, ‘Eugenics And The Science Of Genetics’, in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics*, pp.80–97.

⁹⁷ Benson did not appear anywhere else in NYCM writings and I have been unable to trace his identity.

⁹⁸ NYCM, Vol. XXI (Apr. 1909), pp.18–19.

us, to straighten out the matter now?' and ended with an unreferenced proverbial quotation: 'He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom, and will find a flaw when he may have forgotten (or not known) the cause.'⁹⁹

The same clouding of the relative influences of environment and heredity featured in an article that sought funds for a special Thanksgiving Day appeal. The article, entitled 'Thanksgiving and Thanksliving', encouraged donations with the following example:

It was hard for this woman handicapped by heredity and environment, to *live* her thanks after she had found God, but shall we not stop to think that there are some of us who by thanksgiving may enable this one to continue in her course of *thanksliving*?¹⁰⁰

The ambiguity of the phraseology around 'life', necessary for the pun on 'Thanksgiving', implied that this woman needed special support in order to remain faithful to her conversion, or even to remain alive. Her deserving status was emphasised in that her husband, aged 69, had worked for many years as a 'night hand in car stables' before being forced to stop 'owing to partial paralysis'. His age and disability notwithstanding, it was still claimed that 'He is hoping every day to get strong enough to go to work as day watchman'.¹⁰¹ However, there was some ambiguity in the description of the woman; readers were informed that she had previously been 'addicted to drink' for 'years', and now suffered from 'dropsy' as the result of an operation she had undergone 'last spring'. It is unclear which of these problems was attributed to heredity, and which to environment. Either could have been considered the result of environmental factors, or the result of an

⁹⁹ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Apr. 1909), p.19.

¹⁰⁰ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Nov. 1909), p.13.

¹⁰¹ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Nov. 1909), p.14.

underlying constitutional or moral weakness. No help was provided for readers, but the claim that the woman was ‘handicapped by heredity and environment’ remained central to the appeal for help. The close association between environmental and hereditary influences, and the corresponding question of morality, was a recurring theme. This is explored in the following section.

Environment, Heredity, Drink and Physical Culture

It was not a coincidence that ‘alcohol’ was a recurring theme in NYCM discussions of environment and heredity: from the previous examples, temperance featured in the 1878 discussion of segregation and quarantine, the 1896 example from Prof. Peilmann and Nellie Conroy, the 1897 discussion of ‘Helen Kellar’ [sic], the 1908 reference to the Interdepartmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, and was heavily implicated in the 1909 ‘Thanksgiving’ case. In this section, it will be demonstrated that alcohol formed part of a broader concern for what will be termed ‘physical culture’. NYCM articles used the ideas of heredity and environment to rationalise many of the existing activities that were promoted by the Mission.

Alcohol was a subject of interest to NYCM from a very early stage in its work. The Mission published detailed lists of temperance meetings in every annual report from 1867 until 1893; the meetings continued to feature after this period, but were considered such a staple of the work of the Mission that this was abbreviated to the statement ‘these are held in all our churches’.¹⁰² One of the founding members of

¹⁰² These lists came to feature in the opening pages of the reports, examples can be seen in: NYCM, *40th Annual Report* (1867), pp.154–7; NYCM, *44th Annual Report* (1871), p.9; NYCM, *66th Annual Report* (1893), p.6. A change of format in the annual reports appears to have been behind the decision not to include this information in future editions, as much more condensed reports were published.

NYCM, ‘The Hon. Wm. E. Dodge’, was listed as the President of the National Temperance Society.¹⁰³ NYCM articles consistently presented this issue as one related to physical welfare, and in 1865 the annual report of the Mission quoted evidence from the ‘Prison Association’ to claim that ‘one of the most immediate and powerful [sources of crime] is intemperance’. This assertion was followed by an ‘earnest appeal’:

Let our wise and humane legislators consider the physical, mental, and moral ruin produced by the pest-houses which abound in our city, and they cannot but feel their obligations to erect some barriers against the fearful tide which threatens to corrode and destroy the very basis of our prosperity.¹⁰⁴

It is significant that this early call for the legislative restriction of alcohol, based on concerns of ‘physical, mental, and moral ruin’, was quoted from the Prison Association where Dugdale had completed his research on *The Jukes*.¹⁰⁵ However, rather than just forming the basis for restrictive legislation, NYCM publications cited the moral and physical consequences of alcohol as a spur to activities that were at the heart of the Mission. This was especially clear in descriptions of the rationale behind the formation of ‘mission stations’ and churches.¹⁰⁶ The 1866 annual report explained that drinking venues offered a tempting escape from the difficulties of tenement housing; NYCM, therefore, designed its mission stations as healthful alternatives that promised an ‘abundance of light, air, and sunshine’:

The missionary is forced to see the iniquitous business of rum-selling prospering on every hand...and as he learns

¹⁰³ NYCM, *40th Annual Report* (1867), p.156.

¹⁰⁴ NYCM, *38th Annual Report* (1865), p.21. Similar support for legislative restriction of alcohol appeared regularly in NYCM writings, see for example: NYCM, Vol. II (Apr. 1889), p.130.

¹⁰⁵ Dugdale worked under the guidance of Elisha Harris, who is believed to have been inspired by Francis Galton’s work. Nicole Rafter, *The Criminal Brain: Understanding Biological Theories of Crime* (New York University Press, New York, 2008), p.108 and p.265.

¹⁰⁶ Mission stations started to open in 1852 and continued to operate until the organisation moved towards church building in 1864. Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City*, p.195.

how the labouring man is decoyed and drawn into the attractive saloon and the comfortable bar-room, he seeks to establish at the mission station a free library and reading-room...mutual benefit societies and employment societies may be organized also...debating clubs, literary societies, temperance leagues...and other devices of Christian ingenuity...all calculated to win the people to the mission station, to make them feel at home there, and so give the missionary and his colaborers the best possible chance of bringing the whole persuasive power of Christian influence to bear upon them.¹⁰⁷

The same philosophy guided NYCM churches. The opening of ‘Olivet Chapel’ was attended by the claim that there would be ‘moral and social entertainments through the week’, which were intended to ‘draw the people away from the evil influences of the saloons of frivolity, sensualism, and vice, and save them and their children from destruction’.¹⁰⁸ De Witt Memorial Church referred to the fable of ‘Orpheus’ and ‘the cave of the siren’, in order to explain its belief that ‘Give young men something they like better and you strike at the root of the evil’. These ideas informed the decision of NYCM to support efforts to provide a ‘natatorium’ for people in their area; not only would this be of material gain, but it would prevent ‘lives of drunkenness and crime’.¹⁰⁹ This ambition was fulfilled in 1890, when NYCM joined with ‘The Association for the Improving of the Condition of the Poor’ to establish a ‘bathhouse’ next to its church the Broome Street Tabernacle.¹¹⁰

Intemperance was considered so antithetical to the work of NYCM, that regular contrasts were made between the numbers of churches versus the number of ‘saloons’ in the areas occupied by the Mission. This situation was expressed

¹⁰⁷ NYCM, *39th Annual Report* (1866), p.116.

¹⁰⁸ NYCM, *41st Annual Report* (1868), p.18.

¹⁰⁹ NYCM, *60th Annual Report* (1887), p.27.

¹¹⁰ The Association for the Improving of the Condition of the Poor was established in 1843 by six members of NYCM, see Millers, *The People Are the City*, p.59 and p.138. NYCM, *63rd Annual Report* (1890), p.72.

visually as shown in Figure 4.2 where a small cross, representing Broome Street Tabernacle, was surrounded by a multitude of dots representing ‘saloons’.¹¹¹

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.2 Map of the 14th Ward. NYCMM, Vol. XII (Mar. 1899), p.51.

¹¹¹ See also: NYCMM, Vol. I (Apr. 1888), pp.126–7.

The activities that NYCM provided in order to combat sinful temptations featured highly gendered appeals to morality. The dangers of temptation were traced to childhood, and NYCM organised temperance meetings known as ‘Bands of Hope’ to combat this threat:

Our grand effort is to impress the *children* with the necessity of their beginning early to fight the foe that has made so many of their dwelling places anything but *homes*, and has often transformed father or mother into a fiend. We have many stalwart temperance boys and girls, and believe they are the best temperance workers.¹¹²

Mothers were seen as crucial in the battle against irreligion and drunkenness, which led a NYCM article to claim that ‘if we had more converted, holy mothers, we would have more Christ-like men’. Similar examples were given to those in LCM accounts, where men in lodging houses and other states of sinfulness were influenced by the memory of pious mothers.¹¹³ These ideas encouraged NYCM to provide classes for mothers, alongside its spiritual missionary work, where a woman was instructed in issues such as:

how to wash or dress her child and what food to give it...how to make the home attractive for her husband, sometimes how to iron his shirt. Not simply to read the Bible in one house, present a tract in another...the true missionary will always endeavor to leave behind some real results of her call, though it be but the memory of a loving smile.¹¹⁴

These activities were later formalised into ‘Mothers Unions’, which, according to NYCM, had moved from England to the United States around 1886, justified on the grounds that:

The increase of physical and moral impurity has led to this change of plan in the campaign against evil. The mothers have been sleeping – each dreaming that *her* child was too

¹¹² NYCM, Vol. I (Feb. 1888), p.90.

¹¹³ NYCM, Vol. II (Dec. 1888), p.27.

¹¹⁴ NYCM, Vol. I (Nov. 1887), pp.13–14.

pure and lovely to be corrupted – and while they have slept
the enemy has sowed tares.¹¹⁵

To fight this ‘physical and moral impurity’, Union members were required to sign a pledge agreeing to a set of ‘obligations’: for example, promising to pray for and with their children, to protect them from ‘coarse jests’ and ‘bad words’, to keep them away from ‘saloons’, to ensure children went to bed early and did not ‘keep late hours on the streets’, and never to blame God for ‘trouble our own sin brings on us’. Membership of the Mothers’ Union was marked with a ‘badge of silver’, supplied ‘at trifling cost’.¹¹⁶ These badges were said to have increased interest in Mothers’ Unions, with members wearing them with ‘evident pride and pleasure’; they also reminded mothers of the obligations upon them. The article claimed that following the obligations of the pledge offered significant rewards:

If the old adage ‘Early to Bed, and early to rise will make you healthy, wealthy and wise’ was put into practice by more mothers now-a-days, we would have more rosy cheeks among our little ones, who are now so puny and pale-faced.¹¹⁷

This concern for ‘puny’ and ‘pale faced’ children also featured in NYCM descriptions of its summer ‘Fresh Air Work’. In 1895 the NYCM annual report explained that the ‘struggle’ of tenement life was ‘written plainly on the pinched faces and thin bodies of the children’. Summer was said to be especially troubling:

In July the tenements were like ovens and the listless children crowded the fire-escapes looking like chickens in a coop, while overhead was hung an old bedquilt or table cloth as an awning.¹¹⁸

In this unpleasant parody of rural life, children became animals, and tents of the countryside were exchanged for ‘old’ household linen used as a shelter from the

¹¹⁵ NYCMM, Vol. I (May 1888), p.158.

¹¹⁶ NYCMM, Vol. I (May 1888), pp.158–9.

¹¹⁷ NYCMM, Vol. I (Aug. 1888), pp.235–6.

¹¹⁸ NYCM, *68th Annual Report* (1895), p.105.

heat. In contrast to this, the report provided idyllic descriptions of NYCM Fresh Air Work; children were sent for retreats in the countryside ‘under the trees, seated at low tables, eating oatmeal and milk’. The article claimed that children returned from these visits with ‘rosy cheeks, and seemingly a new hold on life’.¹¹⁹ The report discussed this work for two full pages, before it was said that ‘there is no need to dwell on the beneficent work’ of this scheme; a glance at the photographs of ‘puny, weak, sad looking little Katie’ versus the ‘bright, rosy, plump’ Katie who returned would provide sufficient explanation.¹²⁰ The Mission had first used photographs in its publications in 1892, and in this case they suggested more than just a physical change in Katie. In figure 4.3 Katie is depicted sitting alongside a chair, with a dirty face, bare feet placed on the seat, and her legs crossed in such a way that her knees were revealed. In figure 4.4 Katie is seated on the chair, facing the camera, and has her arms folded in her lap. A large dress conceals her legs, but the camera is also focused upon her face, which has a clearly defined hairstyle, in contrast to figure 4.3 where her hair is hair brushed severely behind her ears. ‘Oatmeal and milk’ had certainly made its mark, but there is also a clear indication of a transformation in propriety. Figure 4.3 suggests Katie is subject to the photo, an object not participating in the gaze of the camera lens, where in figure 4.4 she looks in the direction of the photographer and the back of the chair frames her head in an almost halo-like manner. The photos appear to have been edited,¹²¹ with the addition of shading to Katie’s skin, but readers could be left in no doubt of the message that the article conveyed.

¹¹⁹ NYCM, *68th Annual Report* (1895), pp.106–7.

¹²⁰ NYCM, *68th Annual Report* (1895), p.107.

¹²¹ Barnardo was criticised for editing photographs of children he claimed to have ‘rescued’, but Seth Koven notes this was a more widespread practice than might be understood today; for example Darwin staged photographs to illustrate his work on emotions. Koven, *Slumming*, p.118.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.3 Little Katie, NYCM, 68th Annual Report (1895), p.106 b.

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Figure 4.4 Little Katie, NYCM, 68th Annual Report (1895), p.106 c.

Men were not immune to these gendered presentations of the physical consequences of intemperance and sin. NYCM publications issued regular reminders that the drinking habits of men were ‘robbing their mothers, their wives, and their children of that which belonged to them’.¹²² In 1899 this argument featured in a NYCM ‘circular’, which was distributed to ‘thousands of workingmen’ and reproduced in the magazine of the Mission. The first part of this circular is shown in Figure 4.5:

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.5 Men of the 14th Ward, Look at This. NYCMM, Vol. XII (Mar. 1899), p.49.

The accusatory tone of this circular was heightened as men were told ‘you helped make them [those in the drinks trade] millionaires, while mother needs a new dress, and the children need new shoes, and there hasn’t been a square meal in your house in many a day!’ In addition to these financial losses, an ‘indirect cost’ included:

the destruction of food in brewing and distilling, the wages lost by drinking men, the loss in work not done, the cost of pauperism, crime and lunacy arising from intemperance; and this says nothing of wives’ broken hearts, of children’s tears, of devastated homes, of lost souls.¹²³

These consequences that this circular attributed to ‘three beers a day’, ending with the loss of the soul, represented a high price indeed. Whilst souls or the hearts of

¹²² NYCMM, Vol. II (Oct. 1889), p.247.

¹²³ NYCMM, Vol. XII (Mar. 1899), p.51.

wives could not be given a price tag, it was estimated that the combined direct and indirect costs of alcohol reached a figure of ‘nearly \$2,700,000’ in the ‘14th Ward’ per year. Based on this figure, the circular scoffed ‘Talk of hard times, men out of work, and all that, when that vast sum is worse than thrown into the gutter in this small ward’.¹²⁴ The expectations of gender that this circular conveyed also featured in examples of conversion accounts, where men were described signing temperance pledges, thereby gaining the ability to provide for their families, and making men of themselves.¹²⁵

These presentations of the material impact of sin led to several discussions of the weakened physical conditions of the inhabitants of New York; by attacking these sins, NYCM publications presented the Mission as an organisation that returned health and strength to the city. In 1900 a report from Broome Street Tabernacle argued that ‘down-town’ churches needed to address ‘spiritual needs’, but ‘provide also for the welfare of the bodies and minds of its constituency’. This was presented as the natural work of the Church, and one that was necessary for spiritual awakening:

the teeming populations of our tenement houses are unable of themselves to provide the means necessary for the proper care of their bodies and for the cultivation of their minds. To raise them from this condition, to heal and help their bodies, instruct their minds, make their homes better, put a new spirit in their hearts, new ideals into their minds, to lead them to recognize God as their Father and Jesus Christ as their Savior, to regenerate them – this is the programme of the live down-town church.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ NYCMM, Vol. XII (Mar. 1899), p.53.

¹²⁵ For example see the case of ‘Mr. L.’ in NYCMM, Vol. I (Apr. 1888), pp.139–40; and the reformed inmate of Elmira Reformatory, who overcame an ‘inherited taste’ for liquor, NYCMM, Vol. I (May 1888), p.166.

¹²⁶ NYCM, 73rd *Annual Report* (1900), p.35.

This statement that NYCM needed to complete a work of mental, bodily, and spiritual regeneration was inherently grounded in the perception that the present state of the ‘teeming populations’ in tenements was bad; these individuals needed to be ‘raised’ from their improper conditions. The work of the Mission in these areas began at an early age, and in the case of the ‘Virginia Day Nursery’, it was claimed that it would be impossible to estimate:

how many accidents to life and limb have been prevented, how many cases of sickness the hospitals have been saved, how many lessons in cleanliness and morality and obedience have been inculcated, how many boys and girls have been saved from prisons and reformatories...the Virginia Day Nursery with its brightness and cheer is like a bit of earthly paradise.¹²⁷

These bold claims illustrate a belief in the permanence of lessons learned in childhood; it cannot have been intended otherwise or Figure 4.6, which accompanied the article, would make the conclusions about prison seem a little far-fetched.

¹²⁷ NYCM, *77th Annual Report* (1900), p.82.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.6 Virginia Day Nursery. NYCM, 77th Annual Report (1900), p.82.

In 1908 a NYCM article praised day outings for removing children from the harmful ‘noise and dirt of the home’, which it said ‘weakens the physical and dulls the mental state of the child’.¹²⁸ Another article, about Mothers’ Unions, emphasised the importance of childhood by describing motherhood as a ‘sacred duty’.¹²⁹ Eugenicists, many of whom sought to present the issues of reproduction and posterity in terms of religious responsibility, would have received this message with appreciation.¹³⁰

Eugenic language and ideology received an even closer hearing in 1912, as an article published by NYCM quoted a passage from the *New York Times* entitled ‘To Study Relation of Sickness to Social Conditions’. This article presented disease as

¹²⁸ NYCM, Vol. XX (May 1908), pp.17–18.

¹²⁹ NYCM, Vol. XXII (Mar. 1910), p.16.

¹³⁰ For more on this theme, see chapter two.

the ‘deadliest enemy’ of the nation, a subject worthy of urgent research; the reference to ‘social conditions’ reflected an interest in the relative weights of environment and inborn qualities. One issue that the article singled out for research was that of ‘backward children’ and the number of the ‘feeble-minded’; the article said this was important, because:

The relation between crime and feeble-mindedness is close, we know. But we have not yet in this country made a study of the whole question that is sufficiently detailed and authoritative to carry conviction.¹³¹

The article raised the issue of inborn qualities in a discussion of the alleged difference in death rates between different ‘races’. The authors called for research to discover whether this indicated that some races had a peculiar sensitivity to disease, or whether this could be attributed to their ‘poor’ and ‘unwholesome’ environments.¹³² Right next to this call for a race-based study of disease came praise for what appears to have been eugenics:

Children should be well born. They should have proper parents. That means that women should have a certain amount of protection against physical exhaustion. They have been so protected in other countries...Babies should be nursed by their mothers. But the mother must have enough to eat or she cannot feed the child. In France this point is carefully looked after.¹³³

The phrase ‘well born’ was a direct translation of the Greek words forming the word ‘eugenics’, and appeared regularly in eugenics texts.¹³⁴ The focus that the article placed upon parents, in a discussion of ‘well born’ children, suggests that a

¹³¹ NYCMM, Vol. XXIV (Mar. 1912), pp.15–17.

¹³² NYCMM, Vol. XXIV (Mar. 1912), p.17.

¹³³ NYCMM, Vol. XXIV (Mar. 1912), p.17.

¹³⁴ For examples see: Michael F. Guyer, *Being Well-Born: An Introduction to Eugenics* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1920), p.346; The American Eugenics Society stated ‘The right of children to be well born – physically and mentally – is of unquestioned importance to every parent and to every citizen.’ American Eugenics Society, *Organized Eugenics* (American Eugenics Society Inc., New Haven, 1931), p.1.

hereditary factor was under consideration – even if this was neo-Lamarckian in nature. The eugenic implications of this article were heightened by the mention of French maternal healthcare, which appears to have been recognition of one of the characteristic features of French eugenics or ‘puericulture’.¹³⁵

Although the *New York Times* called for further research into the issues of environment and heredity, NYCM articles readily attributed the conditions they encountered to both factors. In 1913, in response to statistics that suggested rising levels of alcohol consumption, a NYCM article stated:

While our workers are labouring incessantly to reduce to the minimum the evil effects of liquor upon innocent victims, they are also putting forth every effort to free the rising generation from bondage to it. In this struggle the grace of God is matched against heredity and environment.¹³⁶

A second example, an article taken from *The Globe* in 1915, argued that there was a difference between those who were innately disposed towards crime and those who had been directed towards it through environmental conditions:

since the young react more directly upon their environment than the more mature, the increase in juvenile crime means an increase in crime that is preventable by social action. It is not necessary to argue that all criminals are naturally good men who have not had a chance. Many of them are defectives and perverts who would inevitably pursue their morbid bent under any social conditions. But many of them are normal youths, whose instincts have been starved and misdirected by unhealthy living conditions. Offenders of this sort are not natural criminals.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ ‘Puericulture’ placed emphasis upon calls for healthy babies, rather than upon elimination of the unfit, and promoted environmental reforms to protect the health of infants. See William H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity: The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth Century France* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), pp.64–5 and pp.82–3. Sean M. Quinlan has traced these ideas to the period between 1748 and 1790: Quinlan, ‘Inheriting Vice, Acquiring Virtue: Hereditary Disease and Moral Hygiene in Eighteenth Century France’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (2006), pp.649–75.

¹³⁶ NYCM, Vol. XXV (Oct. 1913), pp.9–10.

¹³⁷ NYCM, Vol. XXVII (Dec. 1915), pp.10–11.

This fear that evil environments could misdirect young people was entirely consistent with the rationale behind the programme of social endeavours that NYCM provided; but no challenge was made to the claim that some people were ‘defectives’, ‘perverts’, and ‘natural criminals’. However, this was not interpreted with despair, but as evidence in support of the physical culture work that the Mission conducted. NYCM articles did not necessarily accept that all people were capable of reform, but for those who were, its work represented a sound investment.

The focus that NYCM publications placed upon the environmental conditions surrounding children resulted in claims with striking similarity to those made by advocates of eugenics. In 1921 it was said: ‘You cannot purify the well by painting the pump. Begin with the spring of life in the Sunday school.’¹³⁸ This theme was echoed by several entrants to the AES sermon contest of 1926, such as J. A. Hansen, who claimed that eugenics was ‘the Goddess of Life’ who stood ‘at the spring of physical life’.¹³⁹ Also in 1921, a NYCM article argued that the work of the Mission at the ‘spring’ of childhood could bring mental and physical improvement:

Experience has taught us that gymnasium holds the interest of our young people longer than any other social activity. Gymnasium work is not mere entertainment for the passing hour; these young people are the home makers of the future and we feel that the coming generation will be stronger physically and mentally because of this place of exercise.¹⁴⁰

The reference to ‘home makers’, along with physical and mental strength, closely echoed the call for well-born children in 1912. It is important to note that these connections did not pass unnoticed at the time, and people outside of NYCM recognised the kindred interests that were shared by eugenicists and those who

¹³⁸ NYCM, Vol. XLIV (Nov. 1921), p.6.

¹³⁹ AESP, Box 15 Graham – Hutchins, Folder: Hansen, J. A.

¹⁴⁰ NYCM, Vol. XLIII (Mar. 1921), p.17.

worked in areas of physical reform. In February 1925 NYCM received ‘a communication from the Anti-Saloon League’,¹⁴¹ and in 1930 the AES exchanged several letters with an individual who had declined the invitation to join in membership owing to the presence of ‘many’ ‘Anti-Saloon Leaguers’ he claimed to find represented in the AES ‘letterhead’. Although the AES attempted to claim no official position on prohibition, this prospective member suggested that people were known by the company they kept and the same was true for an organisation. The most that the AES was able to provide was a balanced evaluation of the eugenic significance of prohibition – ‘all that we can say at present is that we don’t know whether or not it is good for the race’, with the observation added that some might say ‘liquor is decidedly beneficial in that it weeds out the weaklings’.¹⁴²

The focus that NYCM articles placed upon work amongst children, ‘the spring of life’, was even more pronounced in discussions about work amongst immigrant groups. The next section will examine these discussions and reveal the way in which articles about the issues of race and immigration came to resonate with messages from supporters of eugenics.

Race, Religion and Nation in NYCM

Immigration to the United States exploded in the years between 1880 and 1919, and of the more than 23 million immigrating to the country, 17 million entered through

¹⁴¹ Minutes of NYCM, 9 February 1925. Courtesy of the New York City Mission Society.

¹⁴² Letters from E. Clemens Horst, APS, AES Papers, Box 15. Marouf Arif Hasian Jr. has noted that many opponents of Prohibition turned to eugenics for this very reason, the idea that alcohol acted as a good ‘fool killer’, see: *The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought* (The University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1996), p.33.

New York City.¹⁴³ The location of NYCM was ripe for response to this huge social change. Historians have identified ‘race’ as a significant feature of the American eugenics movement,¹⁴⁴ and immigration restriction as one of the notable successes of this movement.¹⁴⁵ Recent studies of eugenics have highlighted the importance of the emergence of modern nation states and nationalism, and argued that these factors help to explain the international appeal of eugenics; it will be demonstrated that these issues attained a prominent position in NYCM publications.¹⁴⁶ The following section will illustrate that immigration came to form a central plank of the publicity that was produced by NYCM. In this message, immigration (and by association immigrants) were presented as an obstacle to Christian work – with the result that many eugenic prejudices were accepted without criticism by these publications. Immigration was presented as a challenge to the work of churches, and Christianity was idealised as the glue that held American society together; this argument presented a fusion of race, nation and religion.

NYCM publications paid a lot of attention to the subject of immigration. Between 1864 and 1890, the annual reports of the Mission included an analysis of the last census next to a ‘Directory’ of churches and charities.¹⁴⁷ A considerable amount of space was dedicated to these analyses: in 1887 these subjects took up 37 percent of

¹⁴³ Jackson (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, p.583.

¹⁴⁴ Black, *War Against the Weak*, p.21.

¹⁴⁵ Mehler, ‘A History of the American Eugenics Society’, p.2, and Hansen and King, ‘Eugenic Ideas, Political Interests, And Policy Variance’, pp.237–63.

¹⁴⁶ These ideas have been expressed in Philippa Levine and Alison Bashford, ‘Introduction: Eugenics and the Modern World’, in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Eugenics* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010), p.12, and Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (eds.), *“Blood and Homeland”: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900–1940* (Central European University Press, Budapest, 2007).

¹⁴⁷ Millers, *The People Are the City*, pp.66–7.

the pages in the report.¹⁴⁸ When NYCM stopped listing charities in 1890, its reports continued to publish statistics about migration and immigration. This stopped in 1901, but the reason appears to have been stylistic rather than ideological.¹⁴⁹ The number of pages in the report dropped from 132 in 1900 to 57 in 1901; of the 57 pages in 1901, 31 pages were devoted to photographs or illustrations. In 1900 there had been only seven full-page photographs, compared to 13 pages dedicated to financial reports and 26 pages listing churches and religious statistics in Manhattan.¹⁵⁰ The subject of immigration remained prominent even after the reports moved away from statistical descriptions of the situation – indeed the 1901 report placed it on the front cover, with the image of an immigrant girl whose story featured inside the main report.

¹⁴⁸ NYCM, *60th Annual Report* (1887), pp.96–154 were filled with this subject matter, out of 167 pages total in the report.

¹⁴⁹ Previous reports credited the ‘Press of Albert A. Ochs’, where no publisher was given for the years after 1901, which also adopted colour printing.

¹⁵⁰ NYCM, *73rd Annual Report* (1900) and NYCM, *Annual Report* (1901).

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.7 Armenian Refugee Cover. NYCM, *Annual Report* (1901).

Only two sentences were written about this girl, but the message was one of the usefulness of NYCM work. A second photograph, entitled ‘Armenian Refugee Family’, showed the girl surrounded by her mother, father, and four siblings with the following comment underneath: ‘Driven from Turkey by massacres, now happy and self-supporting, owing to the work of the City Mission.’ A larger version of the cover portrait featured an unpleasant hypothetical scenario: ‘Had this child

remained in Turkey, she might soon have been taken into some Turkish Harem.’¹⁵¹ This positive description of work amongst deserving ‘refugees’ was not found in other accounts of immigrants; the persecution of Christian Armenian communities by Islamic Turkish communities was an exceptional case.¹⁵² It will be seen below that Jewish people fleeing from violence did not receive the same ready welcome, and articles published by NYCM regularly pressed for the restriction of immigration.

The most common representation of immigration in NYCM publications was that it presented a complication to the work of the Church. The year prior to the report on the ‘Armenian Refugee Family’, an article noted that the 1842 population of New York was ‘a little more than 300,000’ but that ‘foreigners...were like angels’ visits, few and far between’. In contrast it was said:

Since that date armies of immigrants from Europe and Asia and Africa have appeared in our city, bringing with them their religion, national habits, virtues and vices. If with all this influx, the Church has held its own in the matter of the proportion of the unchurched masses, it has done well. We have often said that if immigration could be stopped, and the churches of this city were left to reach the residue, a few years would show large inroads on the multitudes of non-church goers.¹⁵³

This argument had been extended even further in the first edition of the NYCMM, which cited immigration as one of the huge changes that the city had undergone in the previous 25 years. Immigration was so high that it was said ‘out of every

¹⁵¹ NYCM, *Annual Report* (1901).

¹⁵² Before the genocide of Armenians in World War I, there had been anti-Armenian and anti-Christian pogroms between 1894 and 1896, a policy tolerated and even encouraged by the Ottoman regime. The Ottoman army was chiefly composed of Muslim conscripts, and this featured in its strategy in the First World War as it attempted to provoke a popular uprising against British rule in Egypt by attacking the Suez Canal. Hamit Bozarslan, ‘The Ottoman Empire’, in Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I*, p.502; and Ulrich Trupener, ‘The Turkish War, 1914–18’, in Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I*, p.97 and p.103.

¹⁵³ NYCMM, Vol. XIII (June 1900), pp.8–9

hundred inhabitants *eighty* are either foreign-born, or of foreign-born parents'. The article concluded, 'Foreign missionary work lies at our very door, with this added emphasis, that unless we Christianize this mass of humanity it will heathenize us.'¹⁵⁴ This 'them or us' mentality featured in the fundraising efforts of the Mission, as seen in this argument from 1888:

One hundred dollars a day. That is what the male branch of our society needs for its work. It could easily spend twice that amount, and not waste a penny...Our field is very large, very hard, and very much deserted. In it there is practically both home and foreign mission work. Italians, Germans, Bohemians, Chinese, Irish, English, Americans are all there in great abundance, and must in some way be reached, if our city is not to become more and more Godless.¹⁵⁵

The problems were not religious alone. In 1888 it was claimed that people of the past could 'earn bread by the sweat of the brow' if necessary, but that this was no longer the case. Immigration was not blamed directly, but the restriction of immigration was presented as one of the possible solutions:

Whatever may be the remedy – whether in restricted emigration, or government provision of employment; or whatever else wise ones may determine is the remedy – let the day of its practical application be forthcoming, or this land will offer to many only freedom to starve.¹⁵⁶

The latter solution – government intervention in employment – was a logical consideration to follow the original problem of the inadequacy of the 'sweat of the brow'; the fact that immigration restriction was considered as a solution indicates that it was part of the problem, even if it was not the only solution. The line between identifying immigration as an obstacle to church work, and calling for its restriction was fine at best. In July 1889 an article published by NYCM spoke of the difficulties that were created by the number of citizens in New York who had been

¹⁵⁴ NYCMM, Vol. I (Nov. 1887), p.7.

¹⁵⁵ NYCMM, Vol. I (Mar. 1888), p.97.

¹⁵⁶ NYCMM, Vol. I (May 1888), pp.160–1.

born abroad, with their ‘habits and prejudices already formed’. This constituted part of an argument for more support and workers, ‘Let no difficulty daunt, but rather stimulate us’.¹⁵⁷ Four months later, another article praised trends in immigration that suggested fewer immigrants were arriving – and expressed the hope that some groups would stop altogether:

Emigration from Europe seems to begin to tend more towards South America...the stream of emigration into South America is rapidly attaining the same proportions as that into North America...Should these figures be an indication that the Italian and other Latin races are to tend more and more away from our shores, we should indeed have much cause for gratitude. Would that it were the same in the case of the Jews, who at present are overcrowding our city, and adding no element of strength to our population.¹⁵⁸

It is unclear to what type of ‘strength’ this referred, both Jews and the ‘Italian and Latin races’ were religiously distinct from the Protestant ideals of NYCM; however, it cannot be overlooked that these remarks were entirely compatible with the racial hierarchies presented by Joseph Gobineau, and the eugenicist Madison Grant.¹⁵⁹ It is significant that this call for fewer ‘Jews’ and immigrants from ‘Latin races’ was made in 1889, three years prior to the date identified by Paul Weindling as the peak of anti-Semitic calls for restricted Jewish immigration.¹⁶⁰ In 1899 an article in the NYCMM reported:

We are still receiving Germans, Scandinavians and Englishmen who make excellent citizens and add greatly to

¹⁵⁷ NYCMM, Vol. II (July 1889), pp.194–5.

¹⁵⁸ NYCMM, Vol. III (Nov. 1889), pp.3–4.

¹⁵⁹ Gobineau is credited as the first to propose a ‘hierarchy of races’. Madison Grant discussed three ‘races’, the Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean; he claimed these were distinct in mental and physical characteristics. He argued Americans were Nordic, and ‘the white man par excellence’. Engs, *The Eugenics Movement*, pp.99–100; and Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (University of Vermont Press, Burlington, 2009), pp.147–8.

¹⁶⁰ Weindling suggests Russian pogroms in 1891 and 1892 triggered increased Jewish migration to the U.S.A. and the discovery of typhus cases in Spring 1892, undergirded by anti-Semitism, led American officials to call for epidemic controls to temporarily cease immigration. Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p.60.

the strength of our nation, but we are also receiving vast numbers of ignorant Roman Catholic Italians, Russian and Polish Jews, who will become a disturbing element in our national life, by coming into disastrous and deadly competition with unskilled American labor.¹⁶¹

Again, a distinction was made between citizens from northwest Europe and the undesirable southern Europeans and Jews. These comments were especially provocative due to contemporary beliefs that labour organisations would not have had influence if it were not for foreign migrants.¹⁶² It is interesting to note that, despite the fact that the Mission employed a Jewish convert (in the hope ‘that he will be blessed in the gathering in of some of God’s ancient people’),¹⁶³ and in spite of an awareness of contemporary prejudices,¹⁶⁴ NYCM publications remained willing to criticise Jewish immigrants in 1899.

The inhumanity of these undesirable immigrants was highlighted in an article that described the condition of ‘foreign quarters’ as both ‘pitiable and sickening’, with ‘sections that resemble ant hills and beehives more than human habitations’. It was claimed that these animalistic conditions were harmful for the whole of society; the ‘dark and unwholesome tenement houses’ of foreigners created an ‘ever increasing army of young criminals’, and the example of foreigners not recognising the Sabbath led ‘American youth...naturally and easily...into Sabbath breaking’. These

¹⁶¹ NYCM, Vol. XII (Dec. 1899), p.243.

¹⁶² This view was expressed by Francis A. Walker, director of the 1870 census. Barbara Miller Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants: A Changing New England Tradition* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956), pp.71–4.

¹⁶³ NYCM, Vol. III (May 1890), p.123. This work was described by the missionary himself in NYCM, *66th Annual Report* (1893), pp.160–8.

¹⁶⁴ In 1892 it was reported that a temperance meeting for youth had included a ‘blackboard exercise’ in which children were asked to guess ‘four kinds bad tenants’ living near the Church. The first child to answer shouted ‘Jews!’ whilst another suggested ‘Italians!’ In fact the speaker identified ‘Drink, Dirt, Debt, Devil’ No doubt this was intended to be a surprise, and the prejudiced responses had been anticipated; the publication of this account makes it clear beyond doubt that the Mission was aware of contemporary antipathy towards Jewish people. NYCM, *65th Annual Report* (1892), p.122.

conditions were said to be serious enough to threaten the very foundation of America:

The foreign quarters of our cities will in the future become formidable storm centres. Here the social dynamite will be collected that may prove destructive to our Republic; unless we can Americanize and Christianize them. It is, therefore, the imperative duty of the Church to study the problem.¹⁶⁵

These comments were part of a larger trend, in which Christian values were portrayed as a form of social glue that held American life together and heralded its success. As early as 1852, the NYCM annual report had spoken of the importance of Christianity in making a ‘united people’ out of immigrants, and threatened that without this ‘they [immigrants] endanger our free institutions – corrupt our public morals, and weaken the fabric of our rising greatness’.¹⁶⁶ In 1899, it was not ‘rising greatness’ that was believed to be under threat, but the Republic itself.

The attitude of NYCM members towards immigration was even more solidified by 1901. In 1888 immigration restriction had been but one option, but in 1901 Rev. W. T. Elsing (NYCM pastor and the companion of Jacob Riis on visits to families of the lower East Side)¹⁶⁷ wrote an extensive article entitled ‘Unrestricted Immigration: its curse and cure’. Whilst the article opened by acknowledging the ‘divine commendation’ given to ‘hospitality’, it qualified this by stating that ‘no man has a moral right to turn his home into a common tramp-house, and give the

¹⁶⁵ NYCM, Vol. XII (Dec. 1899), pp.243–4.

¹⁶⁶ NYCM, *25th Annual Report* (1852), pp.9–10

¹⁶⁷ Millers, *The People Are the City*, p.92. Riis is famous for his journalistic investigations into New York’s ‘slum’ conditions, but there has been some disagreement as to the extent of his empathy for the poor. A recent biography by Janet B. Pascal contrasted Riis’ view that there should be ‘human rights for all’ with the fears of his contemporaries regarding immigration; however, Robert D. Cross notes Riis felt a sense of racial superiority as a Danish American to black Americans and immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Pascal, *Jacob Riis: Reporter and Reformer* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2005), pp.161–2; and Cross, ‘Riis, Jacob August’, *American National Biography Online*, (Feb. 2000) <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-01088.html>, accessed 4 Oct. 2011.

children's place and portion to strangers'. Building upon this premise, Elsing argued that the nation was 'but a larger family' and gave the following review of immigration:

Our nation undoubtedly owes a great deal to immigration: but what was our blessing in the past, has now become our curse. The early arrivals were in large measure intelligent and thrifty people from Western Europe; they were in sympathy with our institutions; they came to a new country where work was abundant and soon became prosperous and contented. During the past few years we have been receiving an inferior class, from Eastern and Southern Europe, and they have been in the main unskilled laborers, of whom we have more than enough already.¹⁶⁸

It seems that Elsing made a separate point of the allegations that they were 'an inferior class, from Eastern and Southern Europe', and the belief that they were 'in the main unskilled laborers'. This implies that there was an underlying racial assumption to his criticism. Whatever the source of his displeasure, Elsing went on to establish three reasons why 'immigration should be greatly restricted'. The first was that steamship companies promoted false optimism such that immigrants were 'often plunged into the most hopeless misery and despair by coming here'.¹⁶⁹ The second was 'for the sake of our American and foreign born citizens', as although he argued that many immigrants suffered disappointment upon arrival, Elsing acknowledged that the majority of immigrants 'benefited by coming here' – but 'at the loss of American citizens'. In this case, evidence was given from 'an industrious and sober man' who said his wages had dropped because 'Russians, Poles and Italians' (a repeat of the earlier demographic) were prepared to live on wages that would provide only 'a piece of bread and an onion' for dinner. Elsing reviewed this evidence as follows:

¹⁶⁸ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1901), p.5.

¹⁶⁹ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1901), p.5.

Some of our politicians make a boast of protecting American workmen by putting a high tariff on foreign products, but it would be far better if they protected them from this cheap alien labor. This is not a case of the survival of the fittest, but one of stolid endurance. The immigrant is not raised to American standards, but they degrade our citizens to a foreign level.¹⁷⁰

The violation of the law of ‘survival of the fittest’, and the reference to ‘degradation’ suggested a degeneration of American life. Elsing added the spectre of revolutionary unrest to this presentation, and compared crushed American citizens to ‘the case of Adullam’.¹⁷¹ The final argument that was offered in favour of immigration restriction was made on ‘moral and religious grounds’, that the current rate of immigration made it ‘impossible to Christianize and Americanize them fast enough’. This argument portrayed Christianity and Americanism as inextricably linked:

In certain portions of our large cities there is absolutely no Christian Sabbath and no Christian sentiment...In the name of Christian religion and popular education we demand that immigration be restricted, so that the school and the church may make some headway in creating an American sentiment and a Christian spirit in the community...Thousands of children are being born every year in America who are compelled to live in the midst of foreign and un-American surroundings.¹⁷²

With these arguments and demands set out, Elsing concluded by suggesting a ‘remedy’; he conceded that it would be unwise and impractical to cease all immigration, but said efforts should be made to screen potential immigrants ‘on the other side of the ocean’. This measure was justified by the claims that 90 percent of paupers in the Almshouse were ‘foreign born’, and that 60,000 immigrants arrived

¹⁷⁰ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1901), pp.7–8.

¹⁷¹ ‘Adullam’ refers to the biblical account found in 1 Sam. XXII.1-2 where David fled from King Saul and hid in ‘the cave of Adullam’ where he was joined by ‘about four hundred men’ – ‘all those who were in distress or in debt’.

¹⁷² NYCMM, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1901), p.8.

in one year ‘who can neither read nor write their own language’. This staggering claim, for which Elsing provided no supporting evidence, suggested that a considerably higher proportion of immigrants were dependent upon care than the figure reached by the eugenically influenced Dillingham Commission report of 1910.¹⁷³ Elsing concluded:

It is necessary for patriotic statesmen, true political economists, wise leaders of labor unions and all loyal citizens to unite in guarding the gates of our country, lest...the fair home of American citizens be turned into a common tramp-house for the refuse of the Old World.¹⁷⁴

It is noteworthy that Elsing, who had opened by making a case for a theology of hospitality and charity, ended with a description of people as ‘refuse’.

In 1903 the NYCMM quoted an article from *The Christian City*, which based its argument on evidence obtained by the ‘Immigration Restriction League’. This organisation was founded by members of Harvard University in 1894, and initially promoted legislation requiring a literacy test for immigrants. This was intended as an indirect method of racial selection, but from the turn of the century the group subscribed more openly to scientific understandings of race. By 1912 the organisation was intent on explicitly eugenic restriction to immigration.¹⁷⁵ The article that NYCMM quoted reflected these interests; it provided information on three groups, ‘South Italians’, ‘Hebrews’, and ‘Syrians’, all framed by the unwritten question of the worth of these immigrants. Particular attention was given to the

¹⁷³ This report claimed 47,048 of the 150,151 people committed to asylums were new immigrants, see: Hansen and King, ‘Eugenic Ideas, Political Interests, and Policy Variance’, p.248.

¹⁷⁴ NYCMM, Vol. XIV (Oct. 1901), p.9.

¹⁷⁵ Solomon’s *Ancestors and Immigrants* remains the standard account of the Immigration Restriction League though it reached the rather naïve conclusion that the Second World War destroyed ‘the easy acceptance of racism all over the globe’, seemingly overlooking segregation in American society. Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*, p.102, pp.117–8, p.127, p.151 and pp.208–9.

claim that immigrants were being ‘coached’, so that they would answer the questions posed by immigration officials in such a way that would undermine calls for literacy tests. A summary of all the evidence was presented in the following statements:

Note. – The large proportion of unskilled laborers.

Note. – The great majority of these immigrants are going to the congested districts in the Eastern States.

Note. – The high percentage of illiteracy, even on the basis of the immigrants’ own statements.

Note. – The small amount of money brought.¹⁷⁶

In 1904 the NYCMM presented a fusion of social and racial factors to illustrate the urgent need of the Mission for more workers. It was claimed that tenements were filled ‘with people from almost every nation under the sun, with language and habits utterly alien to our own’.¹⁷⁷ Despite this crowding, the article reminded readers that ‘more’ were always arriving. ‘At Ellis Island, on an average, about 2,000 land every day in the year, Sundays included’. This unceasing arrival of immigrants, and the violation of the Christian Sabbath, reflected earlier concerns about the ‘alien habits’ of immigrants; the article questioned, ‘How can we change into good Americans these crowds from the lowest classes of Europe? What appalling figures are these!’¹⁷⁸ A racial aspect was added to these concerns, with evidence quoted from ‘Dr. Maxwell, Superintendent of City Schools’ who said:

the immigrant of today does not assimilate as readily as did his Teutonic predecessor. Statistics show that 14 per cent. are illiterate, and that 90 per cent. cannot speak English.¹⁷⁹

Although this argument centred on the question of language, ‘Teutonic’ groups were those favoured by restrictionists like Madison Grant; this category included

¹⁷⁶ NYCMM, Vol. XVI (Oct. 1903), pp.9–11.

¹⁷⁷ NYCMM, Vol. XVI (May 1904), pp.15–16.

¹⁷⁸ NYCMM, Vol. XVI (May 1904), p.16.

¹⁷⁹ NYCMM, Vol. XVI (May 1904), p.17.

non-English northern European nations, which suggests that the reference to the illiteracy of recent immigrants was part of a claim that they were less capable of integration and learning as a result of constitutional, rather than linguistic differences.¹⁸⁰ The NYCMM article evaluated these problems by stating that the work of NYCM was a practical intervention into one of the most significant problems of the age, and helped in a direct ‘hand to hand’ way to ‘reach’ and ‘win’ immigrants for Christ.¹⁸¹

The issue of ‘race’ continued to appear in articles published by NYCM, alongside calls for immigration restriction, and evidence was quoted from increasingly eugenic sources. In 1909 the following table was published, detailing ‘the largest racial elements in immigration since 1903’:¹⁸²

	1903	1905	1907	1908
Southern Italy	196,117	186,390	242,947	103,387
Hebrew	76,203	129,910	149,182	110,547
Polish	82,343	102,437	138,033	68,105
Scandinavian	79,347	62,284	53,425	32,789
German	71,782	82,360	92,936	73,038
Irish	35,366	54,266	38,706	36,427
Slovak	84,907	52,368	42,041	16,170
Northern Italian	37,429	39,930	30,824	24,700
English	28,451	50,865	51,126	49,056
Magyar	27,124	46,030	60,071	24,378
Croatian and Slavonian	32,907	33,104	47,826	20,472
Greek	14,376	12,144	46,283	28,808

This information, however, was criticised for not taking into account the number of children born to immigrant parents:

¹⁸⁰ This idea was similar to the work of the Princeton psychologist Carl Brigham, who argued in 1922 that ‘race’ not ‘language’ was the explanation for different intelligence test results between ‘Alpine’ and ‘Mediterranean’ groups. Black, *War Against the Weak*, p.82.

¹⁸¹ NYCMM, Vol. XVI (May 1904), p.17.

¹⁸² NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Sep. 1909), p.10.

The table...does not allow for the additions to the population made by the children born to these immigrants. The birth-rate of most of these immigrant races of the first generation, and particularly of the least educated ones, is large – much larger than that of the Anglo-Saxon (see Commons's "Races and Immigrants in America," p.203).¹⁸³

The claim that immigrants, and the 'least educated' of these immigrants, had more children than other groups was a clear reference to the eugenicist fear of 'differential fertility'.¹⁸⁴ Any NYCM readers who investigated the work of John Commons, as was recommended, would have uncovered further eugenic statements.¹⁸⁵ Commons argued that American democracy required 'equal opportunities before the law, and equal opportunities of classes and races to use these opportunities', but said the reality was that:

the peasants of Europe, especially of Southern and Eastern Europe, have been reduced to the qualities similar to those of an inferior race that favor despotism and oligarchy rather than democracy. Thus it is that the peasants of Catholic Europe, who constitute the bulk of our immigration of the past thirty years, have become almost a distinct race, drained of those superior qualities which are the foundation of democratic institutions.¹⁸⁶

Many of these ideas (such as the importance of literacy for democracy, and the impact of immigration upon industry) were incorporated into the discussions that were printed in NYCM publications; however, a different nuance was given to the conclusion. It was claimed that 'socially, intellectually, commercially, industrially, politically, these immigrant races become Americanized in the first or second

¹⁸³ NYCM, Vol. XXI (Sep. 1909), p.10.

¹⁸⁴ Klausen and Bashford, 'Fertility Control: Eugenics, Neo-Malthusianism, and Feminism', pp.98–100.

¹⁸⁵ Commons worked in economics and sociology, but lost his university appointment due to his Christian socialist political views. He was appointed by the United States Industrial Commission to complete the commission's report on immigration, which formed the basis for his 1907 work *Races and Immigrants in America*. H. M. Gitelman, 'Commons, John Rogers', *American National Biography Online* (Feb. 2000) <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00116.html>, accessed online 4 Oct. 2011.

¹⁸⁶ John R. Commons, *Races and Immigrants in America* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1907), p.3 and pp.11–12.

generation to an almost unbelievable extent'. However, rather than this being an optimistic conclusion, cause for pessimism was directed elsewhere:

morally and religiously there is much less assimilation. In matters of such far-reaching importance as temperance, Sunday observance, amusements, these races are profoundly modifying our national customs and institutions.¹⁸⁷

With these important matters said to be in danger, the article returned to the question of differential fertility and cited the work of 'the German statistician, Kuczynski'. The work of Kuczynski featured in the *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie*, which was linked to the Racial Hygiene Society in Berlin.¹⁸⁸

The article quoted his conclusions regarding American life: 'this foreign population is all that saves the United States from losing her place among world powers because of the "race suicide" of the native American stock'. 'Race suicide' was a term coined by the sociologist Edward A. Ross in 1901, and popularised by President Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁸⁹ Roosevelt, for example, gave an address to the 'National Congress of Mothers' in 1905, where he reminded listeners that no nation's 'material growth' or 'brilliance of artistic development' would last unless childbearing was such that 'the race shall increase and not decrease'. Those who deliberately avoided having children were considered worthy of 'contempt as hearty as any visited upon the soldier who runs away in battle'.¹⁹⁰ These beliefs came to form a central part of the American eugenics movement. The NYCM article concluded by confirming the claim of Kuczynski, by quoting the opinion of Francis

¹⁸⁷ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Sep. 1909), p.11.

¹⁸⁸ See Paul Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870–1945* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), pp.128–9.

¹⁸⁹ Wendy Kline notes Roosevelt's discussion of 'race suicide' prompted great media interest; for example *Popular Science Monthly* published 16 articles and letters on the subject between 1903 and 1905. Kline, *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001), pp.10–11.

¹⁹⁰ Text of speech, 'On American Motherhood', 13 March 1905, found at <http://www.nationalcenter.org/TRooseveltMotherhood.html> accessed 14 May 2011.

A. Walker that: ‘foreign immigration into this country has, from the time it first assumed large proportions, amounted, not to a re-enforcement of our population, but a replacement of native by foreign stock’.¹⁹¹ This belief presented serious difficulties for an organisation that claimed new immigrants were not adopting the religious values that were necessary for American life. In 1910 an article went as far as to say that there had been fewer problems when immigrants from Britain and northern Europe constituted the bulk of immigration, but as most were now from ‘southern parts of Europe’ ‘Almost inconceivable are the differences between them and us.’¹⁹²

The importance of bridging this gap between ‘them’ and ‘us’ became even more pressing with the outbreak of war in Europe, as America was faced with a population of 92 million that included 32 million first or second generation immigrants with close ties to former countries.¹⁹³ In the year war broke out, an article published by NYCM spoke with gladness of the ability of certain nationalities to be ‘Americanized very rapidly’. In the case of Italians, this was exemplified by a group at one meeting opting for American dessert over Italian food: ‘no spaghetti, but Brown Betty’.¹⁹⁴ Rather than hiding the ‘racial differences’ that were found amongst its groups, publications of NYCM highlighted the work of the Mission in securing loyalty from immigrants wherever they came from. Having listed the names of attenders of one Sunday school, it was said: ‘These names indicate somewhat the racial differences in the members of that class. Coming from

¹⁹¹ NYCMM, Vol. XXI (Sep. 1909), p.11.

¹⁹² NYCMM, Vol. XXII (May 1910), pp.8–9.

¹⁹³ Population figures from George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History* (Brief Sixth Edition, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 2004), p.817.

¹⁹⁴ NYCMM, Vol. XXVI (Apr. 1914), p.16.

different lands as they do, they meet on the common ground of the Gospel of Christ'.¹⁹⁵ In a similar way to descriptions of the influence of the environment, the article claimed that Americanisation was most effective amongst children:

It has been said frequently that the hope of the Church and of the Kingdom is in the little ones. This is true; pre-eminently true of the children of foreigners. We do succeed in getting many foreign adults to our services and in leading them to become disciples of Christ, but even greater is our success with the children.¹⁹⁶

The status of Christianity as an integral part of American life was emphasised in images such as that in Figure 4.8 – a photograph of a summer school for children.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.8 Vacation School at Olivet Church. NYCM, *Annual Report* (1914), p.9.

It was argued that there was a two-way relationship between religion and nationhood. Religion was a national characteristic, but conditions in the nation

¹⁹⁵ NYCMM, Vol. XXVII (May 1915), p.5.

¹⁹⁶ NYCMM, Vol. XXVII (May 1915), p.5.

could also impact upon religious life. In 1914 an article warned that poverty meant that the poor, ‘trying to keep body and soul together’, could manage ‘superstition’ or ‘priestly legalism’ but could not have faith that required ‘independent spiritual action’.¹⁹⁷ The low opinion of Catholicism was indicated in the subsequent call that the article made for ‘Christians’ to ensure that ‘no human being’ would live in ‘conditions which give no access to the saving Gospel of Christ’:

It is a fact that poverty, that condition in which life is a mere struggle to keep alive, benumbs the faculties whose use constitutes religious life, and in times causes them to atrophy. So they have become atrophied in whole nations which have been for generations on the level of bare existence.¹⁹⁸

It was claimed that this theory of national spiritual atrophy was exemplified in China, where ‘four-fifths of the talk of the common people of China is about food – how to get it and how to make it go as far as possible’. China provided a tangible example of what New York might become if there were not adequate social intervention, and readers were questioned whether they would not be ‘materialistic in their circumstances’.¹⁹⁹

As the Bolshevik revolution in Russia triggered the ‘Big Red Scare’, and the 1920s saw the peak of ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’,²⁰⁰ articles published by NYCM continued to stress the capability of the Mission in promoting American culture and religion. A 1918 article, entitled ‘The cultivation of Americanism’, reminded readers that the ‘entrance of America against Germany and Austria-

¹⁹⁷ NYCMM, Vol. XXVI (Mar. 1914), p.8.

¹⁹⁸ NYCMM, Vol. XXVI (Mar. 1914), pp.8–9.

¹⁹⁹ NYCMM, Vol. XXVI (Mar. 1914), pp.8–9.

²⁰⁰ An excellent account of these movements may be found in M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830–1970* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1990), pp.60–95. Heale identified ‘One Hundred Percent Americanism’ as a movement especially active in the period 1920–1929.

Hungary’ meant that ‘the immigration population presented a new problem’. Examples were given of an alleged ‘spy system’, and plots to create ‘anti-American views’, to demonstrate the need for a ‘comprehensive program of education’; ‘Christian America’ was required to find the ‘best educational methods obtainable to teach patriotism’.²⁰¹ The value of immigrants to the nation was grounded in their religious faith; in 1919 it was said of Italians ‘Yes; only a true knowledge of Him [Jesus Christ] can make them desirable American citizens.’²⁰² In May 1920 an article was quoted from *Interchurch World Movement*, which spoke of three ‘enemy armies’ threatening ‘our national existence’: 5.5 million ‘illiterates’ over ten years of age, 58 million people not involved with any church, and 27 million Protestant youth not enrolled in Sunday schools. Against this ‘triple alliance’, patriotic Americans were urged to ‘rush to arms and wage three great campaigns – a “Campaign of Americanization,” a “Campaign of Adult Evangelism,” and a “Campaign for the Spiritual Nurture of Childhood.”’²⁰³ The Wall Street Bomb of September 1920, which killed 38 people, was generally accepted as the work of a disturbed individual rather than the portent of revolution;²⁰⁴ but NYCMM quoted an article which said that ‘80 per cent. of the population are foreign born and their children’, and that the bomb was ‘a startling example of the danger which lurks in a city which is neither American nor Christian’. NYCMM concluded this article by asking readers ‘Will you help us solve this problem?’²⁰⁵ In 1920 the Mission’s Broome Street Tabernacle acknowledged the ‘great call for Americanization...that has spread throughout our land’ and gave a series of ten lectures on the ‘history,

²⁰¹ NYCMM, Vol. XLI (May 1918), pp.6–7.

²⁰² NYCMM, Vol. XLIII (Nov. 1919), p.18.

²⁰³ NYCMM, Vol. XLIII (May 1920), pp.8–9.

²⁰⁴ Tindall and Shi, *America*, p.844.

²⁰⁵ NYCMM, Vol. XLIV (Nov. 1921), pp.10–11.

development and government of the country in which we live’, said to be ‘a wonderful story inspiring love, reverence and loyalty to a wonderful country’.²⁰⁶ Children were central to this vision of Americanisation, as, even with reduced future immigration, there remained a problem of those born of ‘foreign parents’ who were already in the city. Childhood offered a ‘formative period’ in which people could be inculcated with Christian and ‘American ideals’.²⁰⁷ The malleability of youth, an idea that also featured in discussions of environmental conditions, was the logical counterpart to the view that adults posed more challenges. In 1927, an article admitted that it was ‘sometimes very difficult to get the foreign-born adult to understand our view-point’, a significant problem as Protestant faith was presented as essential for ‘democracy’.²⁰⁸

NYCM discussions of ‘race’ and questions of national identity continued even after the passage of the 1924 Reed-Johnson Immigration Act, which implemented a national quotas system for immigration. This Act (influenced by evidence from Harry Laughlin and other eugenicists) limited immigration to a total of 150,000 people annually – a figure that was shared amongst the nationalities that were present in the United States of America in 1890 – each nationality could claim two percent of their 1890 population. This calculation drastically reduced immigration from ‘undesirable’ regions of southern and eastern Europe, whose levels of immigration had been much lower in 1890.²⁰⁹ Many of the arguments that were made in support of this legislation (such as the illiteracy and low intelligence of

²⁰⁶ NYCMM, Vol. XLII (June 1920), p.6.

²⁰⁷ NYCMM, Vol. XLIII (Mar. 1921), pp.3–4; and NYCMM, Vol. XLVII (Nov. 1924), p.3.

²⁰⁸ NYCM, *Annual Report* (1927), p.5 and p.15.

²⁰⁹ For example immigration from Italy was reduced from 42,000 per year to 4,000. Hansen and King, ‘Eugenic Ideas, Political Interests, and Policy Variance’ pp.252–3; and Black, *War Against The Weak*, p.202.

immigrants, and their disproportionate presence in institutions for the poor or diseased) had already found voice in NYCM publications. The prominent position that this issue continued to receive may be seen in the cover of the 1926 and 1927 reports, shown in Figure 4.9.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 4.9 *The World Comes To Live in New York*. NYCM, *Annual Report (1926 and 1927)*, reverse cover.

An enduring question was that of the relative abilities of different ‘races’. In 1922 an article on ‘Race Prejudice’ urged acceptance of the fact that ‘no race is wholly bad and none wholly good – not even the white race’. The dash in the sentence suggests that the idea that the ‘white race’ was not superior was believed to have some shock value. It was noted that there were prejudices in public opinion, as ‘when a white man kills another white we do not indict the whole race nor suggest that it return to Europe whence it came’, but it was often said of ‘Negroes that they should be “shipped back South or to Africa where they belong!”’ The readership of this article was identified as ‘white’, in the statement:

How common it is to feel – even if we do not always express it in words – our white superiority! I am mentioning this not to discuss it, for perhaps there is something to be said on both sides, but to emphasize this fact, that if we are the superior race, then the greater responsibility is ours also...I am not excusing the misdeeds of the Negro people...but I am saying this, that if we had a better white race we would have a better black race. The copy we offer them is none too good.²¹⁰

The author of this piece was Rev. W. Y. Duncan, the director of the work of the Mission in the predominantly African-American area of Harlem;²¹¹ although he claimed to not enter the discussion of racial superiority, the suggestion that there was ‘something to be said on both sides’ was a surprising concession for him to make. The discussion of ‘responsibility’ suggests that the primary purpose of the article was to elicit greater support for the work of the Mission, but the idea of white people offering a ‘copy’ for black Americans was inherently condescending.

²¹⁰ NYCMM, Vol. XLV (Mar. 1922), pp.2–3.

²¹¹ Information on Duncan from Millers, *The People Are the City*, p.153.

A more definite appraisal of the question of racial superiority was given in a 1926 article quoted from *The New York Sun*, on the subject of ‘average intelligence’. This opened with the question of whether ‘American children, as a class, [were] more intelligent than those of other races or nationalities?’ The problem of bias was admitted as it was said that ‘American mothers’ answered in a ‘chorus’ of ‘yes’, but the ‘Children’s Bureau of the United States Department of Labor’ gave a ‘quiet “No.”’ This quiet, negative response was based upon evidence from psychological tests that had been conducted on the children of ‘immigrant families detained at Ellis Island’. This showed only ‘slight’ variations between immigrants and ‘similar studies of unselected groups of American children’.²¹² The fact that even the Children’s Bureau was described as reluctant to admit these findings, presents a critical view of the scientific community and professional public bodies – as well as the science behind the idea of racial hierarchies.²¹³ The NYCMM did not add any of its own comments to this article, but the decision to publish it suggests that this issue was believed to be newsworthy and of interest to supporters of the Mission. However, even after this critical review of racial science, the issue of race continued to feature in descriptions of NYCM work. In 1926, an article about ‘Colored People’ in Harlem estimated that out of a population of 70,000 children, only 10,000 were enrolled in Sunday schools. This situation prompted the question:

The conditions of congestion make normal healthful home life almost impossible for the majority of the people. What a picture these conditions paint of the future! If the coming fathers and mothers are growing up wild and untrained spiritually what in turn will they have to offer their own children?²¹⁴

²¹² NYCMM, Vol. XLIX (Nov. 1926), p.8.

²¹³ For an account of the scientific debates that guided these discussions, see Peter Schrag, *Not Fit for Our Society: Nativism and Immigration* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010).

²¹⁴ NYCM, *Annual Report* (1926), p.16.

The spectre of ‘wild and untrained’ black children propagating a future generation of similarly deprived children was countered by the work of the Mission in training and teaching such groups in a ‘Children’s Church’ and in ‘day religious schools’. The importance of this work, and its need to be extended, was suggested in the claim:

We could use ten additional workers in colored Harlem at once. Twelve to fifteen hundred dollars would take care of the salary of a trained worker for a year. Commensurate with its good done what a small amount! Comparable with the amount spent for dealing with crime how insignificant! Ours is preventive work – it pays big dividends in the end.²¹⁵

Without Christian training, black children were described as ‘wild’ and ‘running the streets’; the comparison with the cost of crime was surely not accidental.

In 1929, the speech given by Herbert Hoover in acceptance of his nomination to the Presidency of the United States of America, prompted the NYCMM to express hope that there would be ‘a new and better day in child welfare when prominent national leaders align themselves squarely with all these forces working for the constructive upbuilding of childhood and youth, as Mr. Herbert Hoover has done.’ The comments that Hoover had made, which provoked this praise, had described the need to ensure that all children were born ‘under sound conditions of health’, with opportunity for education, and free from ‘injurious labor’. Hoover stated that these issues were of great importance, summarised by the declaration that: ‘Racial progress marches upon the feet of healthy and instructed children’.²¹⁶ The ideas expressed by Hoover, so warmly received in this NYCM article, were directly

²¹⁵ NYCM, *Annual Report* (1926), p.19.

²¹⁶ NYCMM, Vol. LII (May 1929), p.9.

influenced by eugenic theory; an active member of the AES chaired the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health.²¹⁷ Regrettably for the Mission, the financial crisis brought on by the Wall Street Crash undermined its hopes for healthful children. In 1932 the NYCMM reported that doctors and nurses had been told that unemployment and poverty meant children were ‘suffering for lack of food’ and that ‘physically, mentally and spiritually these children will have missed something which it was their right, as growing children, to have had’.²¹⁸

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been seen that NYCM publications voiced ideas associated with both eugenics and Christian reform. The Mission gave an immediate response to the publication of the ‘eugenic family studies’ described by Rafter; these were welcomed, and extended by the suggestion that socially dangerous, sinful people should be segregated. Although the organisation was much freer than LCM in terms of temporal welfare, and more open to ideas associated with the Social Gospel movement, the publications of NYCM consistently promoted ideas of scientific charity – supporters were cautioned against any charity that would lead to the pauperisation of ‘imposters’. However, the Mission was not responding to these ideas as part of an external discourse; NYCM was at the vanguard of the scientific charity movement. The work of the Mission in collating information on New York charities, and advising its supporters against the ploys of the deceitful, predated the work of the COS in the United States of America by 13 years. NYCM continued to believe its work in this area was necessary until 1890, when it accepted that the

²¹⁷ Kline, *Building A Better Race*, p.100–1.

²¹⁸ NYCMM, Vol. LV (Nov. 1932), p.2.

COS in New York had taken on the role with sufficient merit to enable the Society to stop this work of public education. The involvement of NYCM in discussions of scientific charity resulted in a natural and harmonious interaction with some of the most prominent eugenicists in New York, including the founder of the first eugenic institution in the United States of America.

In addition to doing its work to promote scientific charity, NYCM was at the vanguard of eugenic investigations in New York. The role of the Mission in organising the Child Welfare Committee between 1908 and 1909, alongside other church organisations and religious leaders in New York, attracted the participation of individuals who would later become key figures in the American eugenics movement, and, also received international attention from the EES in Britain. The themes that this Committee discussed took on a notably eugenic tone, sufficient to persuade the EES that the participants would be receptive readers of its publications. It is noteworthy that this took place prior to the First International Congress of Eugenics, held in London in 1912, and later congresses,²¹⁹ where individuals, connected with the New York Child Welfare Committee, would again be found present. It bears repetition to state again that Christian institutions organised the Committee that enabled this first interaction to take place. Indeed, the decision of the EES to send papers to the Child Welfare Congress was in its very nature a response to the discussion of eugenic ideas outside of its control; an attempt to gain the support of a sympathetic audience, but also an attempt to direct the thoughts of those who were already engaged in discussions it believed were the

²¹⁹ Alison Bashford, 'Internationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and Eugenics', in Bashford and Levine (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, p.156.

responsibility of the EES. This is a far cry from the notion that religious organisations passively responded to eugenic ideas; a fact reflected in the attempt of the publications of NYCM to interpret scientific debates for readers and the willingness to conclude on these debates by employing the experience of the Mission as evidence.

The association of NYCM with prominent individuals in the American eugenics movement also calls into question previous interpretations of eugenicists themselves. Barry Mehler, with good reason, cited his personal correspondence with Allan Chase in which Chase stated that the AES was ‘an Osborn fiefdom’. However, appendices four and five might provoke the question of whether the NYCM might not be considered even more of an Osborn fiefdom. If eugenicists looked at what they might term the ‘Osborn-Dodge pedigree’, they could easily reach the conclusion that support for NYCM was a dominant trait, and support for eugenics a recessive. It would be inaccurate to minimise the importance of the Osborn family within the eugenics movement, but it is clear that their involvement in NYCM was at least as great, if not greater, than that in the eugenics movement. It need not be questioned which of these associations most accurately defined the family; the statements published by NYCM (concerning environmental degeneration, the need for physical culture to replace sinful behaviours that caused bodily harm and its calls for immigration restriction along the lines favoured by eugenicists) made the two associations perfectly compatible.

The work of NYCM amongst communities of immigrant populations and amongst the poor did not reduce its willingness to publish highly critical comments about

these groups. NYCM articles entered fully into the contemporary culture of racial fear, even at the same time that the Mission established religious services for those groups. These facts should not be seen in opposition, but rather each as the product of the other; Christianity was presented as an essential component of American life, which promoted physical, mental, and spiritual strength – irreligion was alien and destructive. Altogether the individuals that were likely to come under the care of NYCM workers were described at various times as: ‘refuse’, an ‘infestation’, ‘defectives’, ‘perverts’, ‘a menace to our civilization’, ‘puny and pale-faced’, ‘backward’ and ‘feeble-minded’, ‘an inferior class’, and ‘wild and untrained’. Conversely the work of the Mission was said to be able to produce ‘social order’, ‘domestic thrift’, ‘household virtue’, ‘happiness of its citizens’, ‘rosy cheeks’, ‘Christ-like men’, and a generation in the future that would be both ‘mentally and physically’ stronger. More than this, many of the positive benefits of the Mission were expressed as binarisms, or by the absence of negative issues: children would not grow weak, become dependent upon alcohol, or become criminals.

Chapter Five: Eugenics in The Salvation Army in Britain and the United States of America

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, The Salvation Army possessed such a high profile that it suffered satire,¹ scorn, and physical attack;² but in spite of this opposition the organisation experienced phenomenal growth. The organisation started as the solitary missionary effort of William and Catherine Booth in east London in 1865, but by 1880 it had grown to include over 172 mission stations and 363 workers (known as ‘officers’). By the end of December 1886 there were 743 ‘corps’ and nearly 2,000 ‘officers’ outside of Britain.³ The social experience that was garnered through their welfare schemes, led to the organisation being called upon for expert testimony in several national investigations. The nature of the problems that were targeted by The Salvation Army, and those raised in these national investigations, was such that the call for eugenic action was not uncommon. The identification of a common enemy, described in shared imagery and language, resulted in shared platforms in campaigns for reform. An examination of the papers of eugenics organisations in Britain and the United States, and the publications of The Salvation Army, reveals the presence of a network of reformers that has previously been unknown. The global presence of The Salvation Army, its widely known reputation, and the extensive historiography that is dedicated to the

¹ Arch R. Wiggins has noted that the organisation provided ‘never-ceasing inspiration’ for those seeking to represent it through poetry, song, novel, play, caricature or cartoon. Wiggins, *The History of The Salvation Army, Volume IV 1886–1904* (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1964), p.324.

² David Nash has drawn attention to the Home Office records concerning the ‘suppression of disturbances and instructions to local authorities re. Salvation Army (1882–88)’. These records describe the arrest of both Salvationists and their attackers following the infamous street work of The Salvation Army. Nash, *Blasphemy in Modern Britain: 1789 to the present* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999), p.279.

³ Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling The Devil’s Kingdom Down*, p.42.

organisation, remove this discourse of eugenics from charges of localism or insignificance. It will be shown that far from being limited to parochial concerns or peripheral figures, the eugenics discourse was found at the very highest levels of this famous organisation.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the scheme proposed in William Booth's *In Darkest England And The Way Out*, published in 1890. It will be demonstrated that, despite the great contemporary attention this work received, and the subsequent historical research dedicated to it, the eugenic significance of the text has been overlooked. Although the title of this work appears to refer only to problems at home, its application in Britain and the United States makes the significance of these eugenic claims even greater. An examination of these facets of *In Darkest England* prompts a revision of existing claims regarding Salvationist philanthropy; this issue is analysed in the second section of the chapter, 'scientific philanthropy'. The sections that follow demonstrate that the eugenic intrigue found in *In Darkest England* was not limited to one text alone. In the third section of the chapter, examples are given of the discourse of eugenics in both British and American Salvationist writings. The existence of eugenic thought in an international organisation, which received heavy attention from the international media, is an important demonstration that the examples found in LCM and NYCM were not unique occurrences. In the final section of this chapter, it will be shown that the prominence of The Salvation Army, and its charitable work, made the organisation ripe for direct lobbying from established eugenics organisations in both Britain and the United States. The timing of this lobbying, after discussions of eugenics had already appeared in publications of The Salvation Army, offers an important insight

into the diffused nature of eugenic thought in this period, and the lack of control that would-be official eugenicists exercised upon its circulation.

The Salvation Army: *In Darkest England And The Way Out*

It is widely believed that The Salvation Army started organised charitable work in the mid-1880s.⁴ This work was developed in October 1890, when William Booth proposed a co-ordinated strategy for reform in the book *In Darkest England And the Way Out*. Whilst there has been some dispute as to the authorship of this text, triggered by Booth's thanks to 'valuable literary help from a friend', there can be no doubt as to the influence of this book upon Salvationist activities.⁵ Whatever the extent of the influence of W. T. Stead on the final text, Booth's name was on the cover, and The Salvation Army pursued the scheme with zeal. Booth argued that the scheme had been prompted by 'the grim necessities of a huge Campaign carried on for many years against the evils which lie at the root of all the miseries of modern life', all of which had been 'attacked in a thousand and one forms by a thousand and one lieutenants'.⁶ The interest of The Salvation Army in social problems was thus not new, but it was intended that a co-ordinated and centralised strategy could address the scale of a problem that individuals could not resolve alone. Existing schemes of Christian philanthropy were described as 'lamentably inadequate',

⁴ Robert Sandall provides a detailed chronology of the social work of The Salvation Army prior to the *In Darkest England* proposals, Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army, Volume III 1883–1953: Social Reform and Welfare Work* (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1955).

⁵ This 'literary friend' was revealed to be W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* who had previously been involved with The Salvation Army in an expose of the alleged practices of child prostitution. Pamela Walker takes one of the most pragmatic stances on the issue and notes simply that Stead denied responsibility for the text, and that the final text 'certainly resembles much else Booth wrote'. Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down*, note 30 p.298.

⁶ General Booth, *In Darkest England And The Way Out* (International Headquarters of The Salvation Army, London, 1890), preface.

compared to ‘the multitudes who struggle and sink in the open-mouthed abyss’.⁷ The first part of the book⁸ focused upon the problems that Booth perceived were affecting society; he claimed to err on the side of caution, but concluded that there were three million people, or one-tenth of the population, in need of rescue.⁹ The description of these problems was heavily saturated in the discourse of degeneration, as will be detailed below, but Booth was keen to emphasise that his book was not intended to be a ‘lamentation of despair’. If ‘there be but heart enough to set about the work in earnest’, there could be reform.¹⁰ This optimism, however, was limited to the possibility of reform – he accepted, and promoted, the idea that there was a grave problem. The problems that Booth described in the first section of the book, were contrasted with an analysis of the inadequate solutions that existing schemes offered.¹¹ The final, and largest, part of the text described the remedy that Booth proposed to address this situation. Booth’s solution revolved around the establishment of three communities that he called ‘colonies’. Each of these was said to be ‘indispensable for the success of the whole’, and each would be ‘governed and disciplined on the principles which have already proved so effective in The Salvation Army.’¹² The first, the ‘City Colony’, would be formed of institutions that acted as ‘Harbours of Refuge’ in the ‘ocean of misery’ that characterised urban life:

These Harbours will gather up the poor destitute creatures, supply their immediate pressing necessities, furnish temporary employment, inspire them with hope for the future, and commence at once a course of regeneration by moral and religious influences.¹³

⁷ Booth, *In Darkest England*, preface.

⁸ Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.1–60.

⁹ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.17, pp.22–3.

¹⁰ Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.15–16.

¹¹ Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.67–81.

¹² Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.91.

¹³ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.92.

This regeneration of character would continue in the second part of the scheme, the ‘Farm Colony’. This work was grounded in the premise that ‘the race from the Country to the City’ had been the cause of much ‘distress’, and that ‘a substantial part of our remedy’ could be found in ‘transferring these same people back to the country, that is back again to “the Garden!”’¹⁴ The final ‘colony’, to the delight of social-imperialists,¹⁵ was a literal ‘over-sea colony’ in the British Empire. This land in South Africa, Canada, Western Australia, and elsewhere was said to offer ‘millions of acres of useful land’, which could be ‘obtained almost for the asking’. It was argued that this land could support ‘our surplus population in health and comfort, were it a thousand times greater than it is’.¹⁶ The entire scheme was summarised in visual form, shown in figure 5.1, at the start of the book: ‘work for all’, and rescue from the sea of misery, drunkenness, prostitution, idiocy and want – all captured under the foundation stone of unrighteousness.

¹⁴ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.92.

¹⁵ Perhaps most notably, W. T. Stead introduced Booth to Arnold White, and informed White ‘we have got the Salvation Army solid not only for Social Reform but also for Imperial Unity. I have written to Rhodes about it and we stand on the eve of great things.’ Stead cited in Victor Bailey, “‘In Darkest England And The Way Out’: The Salvation Army, Social Reform And the Labour Movement, 1885–1910’, *International Review of Social History*, 29 (1984), pp.150–1.

¹⁶ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.93.

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Figure 5.1 In Darkest England, And The Way Out, 1890.

The scheme, and its depiction of poverty, caused a sensation. The Salvation Army opened a farm colony in Britain, at Hadleigh, and three more in the United States.¹⁷ As will be shown later, the organisation's emigration scheme attracted attention from external organisations – including that of the Eugenics Education Society. The book attracted £100,000 in support within four months of publication, sold 115,000 copies by December 1890, and received favourable reviews in large London newspapers.¹⁸ This success, and the scale of the work that the book suggested, has resulted in a substantial historical literature. However, despite discussions of the contemporary ideological influences that shaped the text, none have noted the presence of eugenic-compatible claims. The historian Victor Bailey recorded that the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration spoke about Salvation Army shelters favourably, but he still made no mention of Social Darwinist influences upon the text.¹⁹ Literary studies of works contemporary to *In Darkest England* have been much clearer about the degenerationist influences upon the text,²⁰ but have still not related this to eugenics ideology. Many have placed *In Darkest England* within the wider literary trope of 'the abyss', and have suggested that Booth was influenced by a trend that dated much earlier than Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*.²¹ A more recent study by Troy Boone continued this theme;

¹⁷ The Farm Colonies were widely regarded as failures owing to their cost and the inexperience of colonists as agricultural workers. For those in the United States see Clark C. Spence, *The Salvation Army Farm Colonies* (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1985).

¹⁸ Bailey, "In Darkest England And the Way Out", p.155.

¹⁹ Bailey suggests in particular that it is likely that W. T. Stead called Booth's attention to W. L. Rees' work, which discussed the promise of emigratory schemes, and 'most certainly' introduced him to Arnold White who had experience of colonisation in South Africa. He states that Booth was undoubtedly influenced by the suggestion of Revered Herbert Mills that workhouses should be transformed into Home Colonies for co-operative production. "In Darkest England And the Way Out", pp.150–1, p.161.

²⁰ See in particular: Rebecca Stott, 'The Woman in Black: Race and Gender in *The Secret Agent*', in Andrew Michael Roberts (ed.), *Conrad and Gender* (Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1993), p.47.

²¹ Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1995), p.231. Tim James suggests that the trend began with Henry Mayhew's studies of the 1860s, Tim James, 'The Other "Other" in Heart of Darkness', in Gail Fincham and Myrtle

however, Boone identified Booth's work as part of a middle-class attempt to portray an 'essentialist notion of a juvenile working-class population'. This presentation unfairly minimises the extent to which working-class members of The Salvation Army were responsible for orchestrating and implementing the work of the organisation.²² Most strikingly – despite frequent comparisons of *In Darkest England* with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*,²³ a text that is famous for its reference to the idea extermination²⁴ – no studies have moved from an appreciation of the degenerationist imagery that Booth used, to note the more sinister Social Darwinian idea of extermination that he discussed.

The degenerationist ideas within *In Darkest England* are hard to deny. The very title of the work, which capitalised on the success of Stanley's *In Darkest Africa*, reflected an extended analogy that ran throughout the text: 'As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England?'²⁵ This 'darkness' had a twofold meaning, both the density of the forest blocking light and the spiritual condition of ignorance. Additionally, in spite of claims (made by historians and Booth's contemporary critics) that The Salvation Army would help all who came to it,

Cooper (eds.), *Under Postcolonial Eyes: Joseph Conrad After Empire* (University of Cape Town Press, Rondebosch, 1996), p.112.

²² Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire* (Routledge, New York, 2005), p.17, p.91. Boone justified this class depiction of The Salvation Army, weakly, on the basis that Booth preserved for his own childhood a level of privacy not afforded to those he intended to rescue – an act of 'surveillance' mistakenly associated with the Contagious Diseases Acts, which The Salvation Army vigorously opposed as detailed later in this chapter; see Boone p.94 and note 25 pp.189–90.

²³ Booth's work is the only example of the 'darkest' genre identified in the edited version of Conrad's work in Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Edited with an introduction and notes by Cedric Watts, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008), p.105 and p.202.

²⁴ Sven Lindqvist, "*Exterminate all the brutes*" (Translated from the Swedish by Joan Tate, Granta, London, 2002). Sally Ledger discussed Conrad's phrase 'exterminate all the brutes' and mentioned Booth's *In Darkest England*, but did not join these two issues together, see Ledger, 'In Darkest England: The Terror of Degeneration in Fin-de-Siècle Britain', *Literature and History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1995), pp.77–8.

²⁵ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.11.

Booth was open about his belief that some people were incapable of reform. He claimed that there were some for whom ‘nothing can be done’; these people, described as the ‘incurably diseased in morals and in body’, were said to possess no option save for ‘the beneficently stern restraints of an asylum or gaol’. The only qualification that Booth added to this stark observation was that the number of these people was much lower than most commentators believed. Booth did not reject the principle that some were helpless, but hoped there were more for whom he could be of assistance than others feared.²⁶ It was implied that there was a biological aspect to this problem, as expressed in fears of the continued growth of the ‘submerged tenth’:

Their vicious habits and destitute circumstances make it certain that, without some kind of extraordinary help, they must hunger and sin, and sin and hunger, until, having multiplied their kind, and filled up the measure of their miseries, the gaunt figures of death will close upon them and terminate their wretchedness.²⁷

The idea that some people would continue to ‘sin’ and ‘hunger’ until they were helped, was a logical feature in a call for action; however, the claim that these individuals were reproducing themselves invoked a biological element to this suffering. Certainly, the notion of reproduction added to the sense of despair in this cycle of ‘sin and hunger’, there was no suggestion that the next generation might have better luck, only the expectation of a continued cycle of suffering. Similar to the discussion of the ‘rickety-type’ in the publications of LCM, the phrase ‘multiplication of their kind’ suggested not only a stable replacement of this ‘type’ but rather an increasingly large threat. Supporters of the eugenics movement identified this situation as the problem of differential fertility; one proponent of this

²⁶ Booth, *In Darkest England*, preface and p.22.

²⁷ Booth, *In Darkest England*, preface.

theory was James Marchant, with whom The Salvation Army came to have a heavy involvement.²⁸

The issue of environmental degeneration was also suggested by the nature of the solution that Booth offered, through rural retreats and emigration. Booth accepted there was no consensus of opinion regarding whether adults could be reformed, but said it was ‘universally admitted that there is hope for the children’. In contrast to this optimism, Booth claimed:

unfortunately the demoralising circumstances of the children are not being improved – are, indeed, rather, in many respects, being made worse. The deterioration of our population in large towns is one of the most undisputed facts of social economics. The country is the breeding ground of healthy citizens. But for the constant influx of Countrydom, Cockneydom would long ere this have perished.²⁹

More foreboding yet was his claim that the country population, credited with the physical salvation of ‘Cockneydom’, was decreasing: ‘every year there are more town-bred children and fewer cousins in the country’. Booth pictured the future of the nation being shaped as ‘tea and slops and beer take the place of milk, and the bone and sinew of the next generation are sapped from the cradle’.³⁰

The biological elements of this degeneration narrative were more complex than the environmental ones, and were at times seemingly contradictory, but they presented the starkest incarnations of Social Darwinism within the text. Booth’s opening remarks, that there were some for whom nothing could be done, were expanded in a

²⁸ The Salvation Army’s relationship with Marchant is discussed later in this chapter. On Marchant’s views regarding differential fertility see Marchant, *Birth-Rate and Empire* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1917), p.ix.

²⁹ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.62.

³⁰ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.62.

later section about ‘Asylums for Moral Lunatics’. In this section, Booth admitted that ‘one problem...yet to be faced’ was that:

no amount of hopefulness can make us blink the fact that when all has been done and every chance has been offered, when you have forgiven your brother not only seven times but seventy times seven...only to see him relapse and again relapse until you have no strength left to pull him out once more, there will still remain a residuum of men and women who have, whether from heredity or custom, or hopeless demoralisation, become reprobates.³¹

At this stage it was admitted, ‘sorrowfully’, that there was no course of action save for admitting that the individual had become a ‘lunatic, morally demented’, and ‘incapable of self-government’. For these individuals, the only appropriate action was their ‘permanent seclusion’ in a ‘penal settlement’; the eugenic implications for failure to do so were made clear:

It is a crime against the race to allow those who are so inveterately depraved the freedom to wander abroad, infect their fellows, prey upon Society, and to multiply their kind...Between them and the wide world there should be reared an impassable barrier, which once passed should be recrossed no more for ever. Such a course must be wiser than allowing them to go in and out among their fellows, carrying with them the contagion of moral leprosy, and multiplying a progeny doomed before its birth to inherit the vices and diseased cravings of their unhappy parents.³²

Gone was any of the previous ambiguity about the nature of ‘multiplication’; here, a hereditary weakness transmitted to children represented a ‘crime against the race’ that was sufficient to justify the isolation of those liable to commit such an offence. Strangely, this clarity was not present elsewhere in the text. A section that described a plan to help those at risk ‘on the verge of the abyss’, made clear reference to the issues of survival and heredity:

³¹ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.204.

³² Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.204–5.

I am labouring under no delusions as to the possibility of inaugurating the Millennium by any social specific. In the struggle of life the weakest will go to the wall, and there are so many weak. The fittest, in tooth and claw, will survive. All that we can do is to soften the lot of the unfit and make their suffering less horrible than it is at present. No amount of assistance will give a jellyfish a backbone. No outside propping will make some men stand erect.³³

The implication was clear – some people were physically incapable, or deficient of the abilities that were necessary to support themselves. This argument was explained in hereditarian terms:

How can we marvel if, after leaving generation after generation to grow up uneducated and underfed, there should be developed a heredity of incapacity, and that thousands of dull-witted people should be born into the world, disinherited before their birth of their share in the average intelligence of mankind?³⁴

The fact that this problem dated prior to birth was made clear, as the following section discussed the treatment of the ‘disabled’, ‘aged’, or ‘unskilled’, all problems that represented acquired incapacities. Two pages later, however, Booth presented quite a different understanding of heredity. Describing the difficulties of ‘dealing with drunkards and harlots’ as ‘almost insurmountable’, Booth said:

Were it not that I utterly repudiate as a fundamental denial of the essential principle of the Christian religion the popular pseudo-scientific doctrine that any man or woman is past saving by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, I would sometimes be disposed to despair when contemplating these victims of the Devil. The doctrine of Heredity and the suggestion of Irresponsibility come perilously near re-establishing, on scientific bases, the awful dogma of Reprobation which has cast so terrible a shadow over the Christian Church.

The rejection of the ‘dogma of Reprobation’, or the concept that some people are predestined to damnation, is striking because Booth used this exact phrase in

³³ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.44.

³⁴ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.44.

relation to ‘moral lunatics’. In this case, the idea seems to have been rejected out of fear that it would result in ‘irresponsibility’ and individuals’ disavowing control over their own actions.³⁵ Here, the notion of personal responsibility for suffering appears to have been a non-negotiable aspect of Booth’s thinking. Heredity was not rejected for any supposed scientific failing, but only in so far as it made individuals feel hopeless. Presumably the true ‘moral lunatics’ would have been insensible to such concerns by the nature of their ailment. More pressing than these concerns, Booth explicitly rejected a genocidal form of Social Darwinism. Speaking of ‘the vicious’, he said:

If they are to be rescued there must be something more done for them than at present is attempted, unless, of course, we decide definitely to allow the iron laws of nature to work themselves out in their destruction. In that case it might be more merciful to facilitate the slow workings of natural law. There is no need of establishing a lethal chamber for drunkards like that into which the lost dogs of London are driven...The State would only need to go a little further than it goes at present in the way of supplying the poison to the community...I can imagine a cynical millionaire of the scientific philanthropic school making a clearance of all the drunkards in a district by the simple expedient of an unlimited allowance of alcohol. But that for us is out of the question.³⁶

This likening of scientific philanthropy to a form of extermination inspired by animal control techniques is important evidence of the idea established in chapter one, that the issues of eugenics and charity were perceived to be inextricably linked in this period. This vivid description, and its clear rebuttal of the idea of scientific philanthropy, might be expected to have clear implications for the interaction of the organisation with the eugenics movement. It will be seen later that this was not necessarily the case. Booth’s comments also offer an important insight into the

³⁵ Booth, *In Darkest England*, p.47.

³⁶ Booth, *In Darkest England*, pp.49–50.

history of the eugenics movement more generally; their appearance in 1890 is particularly significant due to the involvement that The Salvation Army would later come to have with the National Council of Public Morals. Alan Hunt has argued that this Society was an example of the fact that ‘turn-of-the-century eugenics had a much more benign face than the late twentieth century allows, because eugenics came to be seen as harbouring the germs of genocide and totalitarianism’. However, Booth’s comments demonstrate that the most gruesome implications of eugenics had been perceived much earlier than the Nazi holocaust.³⁷ This recognition makes the fact that The Salvation Army became involved with eugenics organisations, as discussed below, far more significant.

Booth’s awareness of the ‘lethal chamber’ ideology, and his decision to reject it, is made even more interesting by the fact that one of his critics accused him of endorsing these very same ideas. The high profile of Booth’s scheme has resulted in an extensive review of the reception it received. Aside from its success in terms of financial receipts and book sales, it has been acknowledged that the ‘wave of praise’ was followed by considerable criticism – most notably in the newspaper correspondence of Thomas Huxley.³⁸ The impact of these criticisms has been largely dismissed. Roy Hattersley noted that wealthy patrons were not prevented from offering support to the scheme, and Arch Wiggins spoke gloatingly of his disappointment that Huxley was not alive to see Booth awarded an honorary

³⁷ The fact that eugenicists conceived of extermination before the Nazis is shown clearly in Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman*.

³⁸ Robert Sandall summarised Huxley’s criticisms as revolving around the claims the scheme was ‘socialism in disguise’, inspired by ‘religious motives’ and presented the Salvationist approach as the only adequate solution. Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army, Volume III*, pp.82–3. Victor Bailey offers a valuable description of the reviews given to *In Darkest England*, see Bailey, “In Darkest England And the Way Out”, pp.155–8.

doctorate by the University of Oxford.³⁹ None, however, have commented on the charge made by one of Booth's critics that his scheme treated the poor as a form of inferior being – a criticism that was made more provocative by the subject of extermination, the very same issue that *In Darkest England* had felt necessary to reject. The review, written in 1893 under the pseudonymous name 'Elihu', accused Booth of devising his solution for the 'submerged tenth' based on the assumption that they were 'a species of inferior animal'.⁴⁰ Whilst the historian Victor Bailey discussed this review, and identified its author as the socialist pamphleteer Samuel Washington, his focus was upon the economic criticisms presented by 'Elihu' and made no mention of the more provocative attack he presented.⁴¹ Economics did form the central part of Elihu's critique; he complained that rather than treating the 'submerged tenth' as though they were the source of the problem, it would be more accurate to condemn the 'artificial and unnecessary system of competition' that was created by capitalism.⁴² Inside this economic argument, however, Elihu made a much harsher assessment of the values that he believed inspired Booth's work. Firstly, he attacked the rational integrity of a system that he perceived to be designed to help only those already suffering in poverty, rather than addressing the systems responsible for creating poverty:

Very elaborate and complete and all that, but, in the name of all that is sacred and profane, why not stop the leak? Why must the manufacture of this human sewage be allowed to continue, and all our energies be directed to the construction and working of a pump for removing it?⁴³

³⁹ Roy Hattersley, *Blood and Fire: William and Catherine Booth and Their Salvation Army* (Abacus, London, 2009), p.384; Arch R. Wiggins, *The History of The Salvation Army: Volume V 1904–1914* (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., London, 1968), p.232.

⁴⁰ Elihu, *Is General Booth's Darkest England Scheme A Failure: A Word of Protest and Advice* (Abel Heywood and Son, Manchester, 1893), p.13.

⁴¹ Bailey, "In Darkest England And the Way Out", p.157.

⁴² Elihu, *Is General Booth's Darkest England Scheme A Failure*, p.22.

⁴³ Elihu, *Is General Booth's Darkest England Scheme A Failure*, p.15.

It seems unlikely that Elihu, who identified the poor as blameless victims of a capitalist society, intended to describe the poor as sewage. Rather this was a critical reflection upon Booth's claim to be able to convert the 'waste labour' of England, 'a perfect quagmire of Human Sludge', into an effective labour force for the British Empire. There were contemporary parallels for this type of imagery; Troy Boone has noted that the M.P. Samuel Smith suggested that 'our vast colonial empire' should be used as a 'wonderful safety valve' to clear the slums, rather than allowing people to accumulate in a situation that he compared to sewage stuck in the Thames.⁴⁴ Elihu suggested that the logical outworking of Booth's view would be a solution for the 'submerged tenth' that focused upon 'destroying them' rather than dispersing them:

I would recommend you to devise some scheme by which John Jones and his fellows may be quietly and painlessly put out of existence. You would require to go about it in a judicious manner so as not to create an offensive nuisance, and your scheme must avoid throwing the expense of their burial upon the authorities, or it would be objected to upon financial grounds. You might get over the difficulty, perhaps, by getting them to bury one another; this would find employment for a short time for a number of them.⁴⁵

Although this attack was satirical, and may have been inspired by the earlier writings of Jonathan Swift regarding Ireland,⁴⁶ it is remarkable that both Booth and one of his critics raised the idea of schemes designed to destroy groups of people based upon Social Darwinist beliefs. The fact that the discussion of this idea took

⁴⁴ Troy Boone compares Smith's comments with those of Booth, but does not mention Elihu. See Boone, *Youth of Darkest England*, p.90.

⁴⁵ Elihu, *Is General Booth's Darkest England Scheme A Failure*, p.18.

⁴⁶ Patrick Brantlinger cites several examples of Swift's writings as being 'haunted' by the idea that England's real policy towards Ireland was one focused upon depopulation. In the case of *A Modest Proposal* (1729) it was recommended that the Irish evade poverty by butchering, marketing and eating their own children. Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings: Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800–1930* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2003), pp.96–8.

place in debates around Salvationist charitable policy makes an examination of this aspect of the organisation's work essential. This is undertaken in the section below.

Charity Organisation, Social Darwinism and The Salvation Army

With The Salvation Army placed on both sides of the argument about Social Darwinism and its charitable pursuits, one by William Booth and the other by a critic, there is need to examine the Salvationist position regarding scientific charity in more detail. The currently received opinion is clear; for Salvationists Booth has been described as 'a spiritual giant led by God, who succeeded in awakening the conscience of Britain to the needs of people hitherto ignored.'⁴⁷ In this argument, Booth was not only inspired by God, but he also worked in a field that had previously been untended – this provided two claims for the uniqueness of the work that Booth conducted. Other studies have not made the same claim regarding the divine inspiration of The Salvation Army, but have agreed that it was distinct from the charity organisation movement. Pamela Walker argued that Salvationists were different from the COS because of their belief that even the 'most unregenerate' could be changed by the activity of the Holy Spirit – no one was beyond reform.⁴⁸ Lillian Taiz repeated this view, with the added claim that Booth rejected the central tenet of the scientific charity movement by refusing to help only the 'deserving'.⁴⁹ There is good evidence for conflict between the COS and The Salvation Army. Robert Humphreys' history of the COS noted that The Salvation Army was dismissed as 'anathema' by advocates of organised charity, as it was believed to be

⁴⁷ George Thomas, 'Foreword', in Frederick Coufts, *Bread for my neighbour: An appreciation of the social action and influence of William Booth* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1978), p.4. Coufts sustained this claim for the uniqueness of Booth's ideas throughout his study, see especially Coufts, *Bread for my neighbour*, p.20 and pp.63–4.

⁴⁸ Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down*, p.239.

⁴⁹ Taiz, *Hallelujah Lads and Lasses*, p.107.

‘hopelessly sentimental’.⁵⁰ In reply to criticism from the COS, William Booth repeated his rejection of Social Darwinism: ‘It [the COS] believes in the survival of the fit...The Salvation Army believes in the *salvation of the unfit*.’⁵¹ However, none of the existing historiography explains this conflict in the light of Booth’s claim in *In Darkest England* that there were some for whom ‘nothing can be done’ – people who could only be helped by ‘gaol’ or an ‘asylum’.⁵² The Salvationist historian Edward McKinley came the closest to reconciling this tension, with his argument that the organisation shared the ‘almost universal’ nineteenth-century belief in the categories of ‘worthy’ and ‘unworthy’ poor, but that this did not result in their refusing to help anyone. The Salvation Army could use its shops and woodyards to provide work for those seeking charity; it was hoped that this would recoup the costs of support, and prevent recipients from becoming demoralised through free charity.⁵³ Sadly McKinley’s analysis has not been incorporated into subsequent studies, even though there is substantial evidence in its favour in both the public and private statements of The Salvation Army.

One such example is found in a letter, dated 8 May 1887, from Florence E. Booth to Charles Hoe.⁵⁴ This described a meeting to which Booth had been invited, for the purpose of discussing the problem of ‘badly conducted women’ who moved from one charitable organisation to another. This was the classic fear of pauperisation and the exploitation of well-meaning philanthropists. Booth, in keeping with criticisms

⁵⁰ Robert Humphreys, *Sin, Organized Charity and the Poor Law in Victorian England* (St Martin’s Press, New York, 1995), p.62.

⁵¹ William Booth cited in Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army, Volume III*, p.84.

⁵² Booth, *In Darkest England*, preface.

⁵³ Edward H. McKinley, *Marching to Glory: The History of The Salvation Army in The United States of America, 1880–1980* (Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1980), pp.88–9.

⁵⁴ Florence Booth was William and Catherine Booth’s daughter-in-law, often referred to as ‘Mrs. Bramwell Booth’.

of The Salvation Army, was unwilling to accept any solution that involved refusing to help anyone who had previously been admitted elsewhere, but suggested:

Some test can be given those about whom there is a doubt such as the workhouse for a week or fortnight – and then we have reason to feel there is the true repentance they shd [sic] be given a chance. It wd [sic] be much better if those we feel certain are imposters were dismissed the Homes without waiting...for they often behave well outwardly to get clothes etc.⁵⁵

Nothing in this suggestion would have alienated supporters of the COS – it seamlessly incorporated Poor Law distinctions of the deserving and undeserving poor, and essentially presented The Salvation Army as the inheritor of the mantle of the workhouse. It is possible that some of the confusion surrounding this issue stems from sensationalised accounts of Salvationist history, combined with a mythologised memory of events. A 1940 account of the organisation's 'social service program', written by Lt-Commissioner Donald McMillan, described a conversation between William Booth and his son Bramwell that recurs frequently in Salvationist historiography. According to this story, William did not realise until 1888 that there were homeless men sleeping under bridges; once he knew of this situation, he questioned Bramwell if he was aware of the problem:

‘Yes, General, didn’t you know?’ Bramwell replied.
 ‘You knew that, and you haven’t done anything?’ the General demanded.
 His son started to explain that the Army could not undertake to do everything that needed to be done in the world, that one must be careful about the dangers of indiscriminate charity.
 ‘Oh, I don’t care about that stuff,’ the General cut him short.
 ‘Do something, Bramwell, *do* something!’⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Florence Booth gave this information to Hoe as she was unable to attend the meeting and wished for him to represent The Salvation Army's views on her behalf. Letter from Florence E. Booth to Charles Hoe, dated 8 May 1887, Folder, Social Services: Rescue Work. Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, London. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁶ Lt-Commissioner Donald McMillan, 'The Salvation Army: An Historical Interpretation of Its Social Service Program' (1940), p.17. Slum Work Folder, SAA.

This enthusiastic, and perhaps flippant, conversation from William was in accordance neither with the remarks of Florence Booth nor with other statements that were to appear in Salvationist publications. It is possible that a post depression-era understanding of poverty may have influenced McMillan's review, but there were continued examples of support for 'organised charity' even at this time. In 1892, *The War Cry* (billed as the 'Official Gazette of The Salvation Army in America') gave a description of an officer's visit to a Salvationist 'Food and Shelter Depot'; this account conveyed a position that was very different to that depicted in McMillan's work. Staff-Captain William H. Cox, who made the visit to the depot, increased the intrigue of his article by carrying out his investigation in disguise, aping one in need of assistance. He reported that the following conversation had taken place in response to his plea for 'a night's lodge':

'Seven cents, sir!'

'Suppose I haven't got seven cents in the whole wide world; you surely wouldn't turn a man away on a night like this?'

After quite a neat little speech from the staff-captain in the evils of indiscriminate charity it was finally decided that I should remain one night in a Shelter bunk, in consideration of which I should saw and chop a certain number of cords of wood on the following Monday morning.⁵⁷

Whether one accepts the genuine success of Cox's charade or not, it is clear either that The Salvation Army Depot was actively using labour tests for those seeking its help, or that this was the message they wanted people to believe. They were certainly not prepared to dismiss fears of 'indiscriminate charity'. Similar ideas were expressed in the first annual report of the 'Ridgewood Day Nursery', an institution in New York City designed to enable siblings or widowed mothers of young children to attend school or work whilst the nursery cared for the young. In

⁵⁷ *War Cry*, New York, 6 February 1892, p.4.

anticipation of accusations about pauperisation, the report highlighted that the Nursery charged ‘the nominal sum of five cents’ for its work. In response to any who spoke of ‘the inadvisability...even the danger of charitable work’, the report provided examples of the needy cases which placed children under its care. If that were not enough, the report shifted the burden of proof on this issue to its opponents, with the statement:

the Association will gladly investigate any case believed to be unworthy, if furnished with the name and residence. Assertions of imposition not substantiated, help no one, and may work harm.⁵⁸

The use of evidence from individual case histories, and the challenge to critics to provide contradictory evidence was not a rejection of the principle of scientific charity, but rather a claim to have obeyed its rules appropriately. These were not isolated examples, and the same ideas were found in British publications.⁵⁹

Neither were these concerns representative of a brief transitory period in Salvationist history. The Salvation Army suffered various accusations of impropriety in its organisational affairs: there were accusations that charitable funds were being misappropriated for religious work, that William Booth was liable to siphon funds for his own wealth, and that results statistics were invented.⁶⁰ All of this was likely to have contributed towards a desire for the organisation to present itself as a cautious, reliable institution capable of careful record management. In 1921, a pamphlet celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Salvationist ‘Industrial

⁵⁸ The Ridgewood Day Nursery, First Annual Report 1905–1906. SAA.

⁵⁹ For examples see *All the World* Vol. XXI, No. 1, 1900, p.14, and *All the World* Vol. XXVI, No. 4, 1905, p.295 (Salvation Army Bookstores, London, 1900 and 1905).

⁶⁰ It seems that The Salvation Army was aware of these criticisms, indicated by the presence of a publication containing all of these criticisms in their archive, see: Edwin D. Solenberger (General Manager of the Associated Charities, Minneapolis), *The Social Relief Work of The Salvation Army* (Byron and Willard Co., Minneapolis, 1906) General Information (Social Services) Folder, SAA.

Home[s] and Social Center[s]' described 'Intelligent Charity' as 'Love in Motion'. The role of The Salvation Army in this type of charity was suggested in an accompanying account of 'Nickel-Jack', a man said to have been transformed from a deceptive street-beggar to a man 'physically and spiritually' back 'on his feet'. 'Nickel-Jack' was the name earned by his previous sin of begging the sum of a nickel under the pretence of needing the fare for transport, an abuse of charity that was corrected by the work of The Salvation Army. For any who wished to know more, the authors of the pamphlet said that the real name of 'Nickel-Jack' could be made available; this emphasised both that the story was based in a real case, and that The Salvation Army was able to withstand investigation.⁶¹ However, this concern about records was not just an issue of public image. A 'Memorandum of Instructions: Family and Transient Relief Records' from the 1930s gave detailed instructions on how to maintain records, alongside examples of completed standardised forms. Several benefits were anticipated from these records. It was believed that 'complete records' would enable 'officers to do more careful planning for families with a view to solving their social, physical, and spiritual problems'. This desire for 'complete' records prompted the request for information on 'physical or mental defects', alongside other identifying information such as 'race', 'nationality', and 'religion'. Concerns about imposters were indicated in the rule that information should be 'registered through Confidential Exchange or its equivalent to prevent duplication of this work with other agencies'. Not only that, but 'all transient men should be put through a "work test" (woodyard or something

⁶¹ 'The Evolution of An Idea and A Pushcart! The Story of an Industry Which Remakes Men and Materials.' Adult Rehab Centers, SAA.

similar) before being given meals, beds or other relief.⁶² However, despite this very clear support for the principles of organised charity (expressed through an internal Memorandum), there were public statements in this period that contradicted this message. In 1935 The Salvation Army published an appeal given on behalf of its work by General Hugh S. Johnson, who had been the chief administrator of President Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration.⁶³ Johnson spoke about the importance of retaining 'humanity' in systems of 'organized welfare', and went so far as to say:

There is no such thing as scientific charity – not “though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.” And I can think of only a few things more terrible than scientific relief, the dread of which keeps many people suffering severely rather than to ask for help.⁶⁴

Johnson stated that The Salvation Army was a fitting example of an organisation that combined humanity with organisational efficiency. He claimed that ‘I have never heard a soul complain of sniffiness in The Salvation Army’, a view which was met with pleasure by the Commissioner of the Eastern Territory who ordered Johnson's appeal to be printed so that it could be circulated ‘over a wider field.’⁶⁵ However, Johnson's assessment differs from that of the historian Edward McKinley. McKinley suggested that, despite the scale and success of Salvationist work during the depression era, these efforts did not gain the organisation the same public adoration as their work during the First World War; he argued that this was

⁶² Memorandum of Instructions: Family and Transient Relief Records. General Information (Social Services) Folder, SAA.

⁶³ Information on Johnson from <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/new-deal-labor.html>, accessed 11 July 2011. Johnson's autobiography *The Blue Eagle from egg to earth*, published in 1935, may be read online at <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=6545833>, accessed 11 July 2011.

⁶⁴ General Hugh S. Johnson, *An Opportunity to Repay* (Salvation Army Print, New York, 1935) SAA. Johnson quoted 1 Corinthians xiii. 3 ‘And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, if profiteth me nothing.’

⁶⁵ ‘Note’ in General Hugh S. Johnson, *An Opportunity to Repay*.

because the recipients of this charity were unaccustomed to needing help and resented having to ask for it.⁶⁶

The claim by Salvationists, their critics, and historians, that The Salvation Army was ideologically incompatible with groups such as the COS is overdue revision. Conflict between these two groups was clearly not indicative of contradictory understandings of poverty. Organised, scientific charity was rejected by The Salvation Army in one breath and embraced in the next, despite claims that the theory was akin to Social Darwinism or active extermination campaigns. With this view in mind, it should come as less of a surprise that the criticism of hereditary laws in *In Darkest England* was not matched consistently elsewhere in Salvationist publications. This is the focus of the next section.

Heredity and Eugenics in Local Cases of Salvationist Work

Although previous studies have examined the imagery of ‘depths’ and the degenerationist ideas in Booth’s *In Darkest England And The Way Out*, it is important to recognise that this style of writing also permeated lesser works of Salvationist literature in both Britain and the United States of America. These ideas were promoted at the very top of the organisation, but they also took firm root at the local level. This section will highlight the discussions of hereditarian thought that took place in Salvationist publications, and outline the direct involvement that The Salvation Army came to have with organised eugenics movements in Britain and

⁶⁶ McKinley, *Marching to Glory*, p.164. This view, that a different demographic was in receipt of depression-era charity, was expressed in contemporary Salvationist appeals, for example ‘Hunger Knows No Holiday’ (1932) which opened with a sketch of people claiming bread from The Salvation Army Welfare Service under a title ‘I’ve never had to ask for food before, I don’t quite know how to begin.’

the United States of America. The extensive nature of these discussions acts as a useful balance to Pamela Walker's study of the Salvationist Constance Maynard. Walker identified the presence of eugenic ideas in the reflections of Maynard on her failed adoption of Effie Anthon, but portrayed this as evidence of Maynard's status as an 'educated woman' who was able to keep herself apprised of medical developments.⁶⁷ However, far from being the exclusive preserve of a single educated woman, the writings of The Salvation Army in Britain and the United States of America reveal that Maynard was not alone in her eugenic concerns.

Two accounts from the 'Cherry-Tree Home for Children' in the 1890s make this point very clear. The homes, run in New York City 'under the direction of Consul Mrs. Booth-Tucker and the Supervision of Mrs. Colonel Higgins', described the unquestionable need that was 'literally crying' out from 'the waif and stray children of any great American metropolis'. This description, which spoke of children in terms more commonly associated with lost household pets,⁶⁸ was followed by an account of the important position of children in the world:

To a far greater extent than many people *realize*, however well they may understand the fact theoretically, is the religious, political and sociological future of the next generation – even the next century – dependent upon the children now growing up in the overcrowded, congested districts of our great cities.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Pamela J. Walker, 'Adoption and Victorian Culture', *History of the Family*, 11 (2006), pp.211–21.

⁶⁸ This language was not unique to The Salvation Army, and the Church of England operated similarly named institutions in England, as listed in *The Charities Register and Digest* (With an introduction by C. S. Loch, Longman's and Green and Charity Organisation Society, London, 1890), pp.320–22.

⁶⁹ *God's Children: The Story of a Day at the Cherry-Tree Home*. Vertical File Collection, Subject Files, Slum Work. SAA. No date is given for the publication, but it was adapted from 'the May Conqueror', a Salvationist periodical which was replaced by *Harbor Lights* in 1898.

The importance of children as representatives of the future century was contrasted to the failure of contemporary society to protect these children from the crowding of cities. This was followed by an account of the good work that was being accomplished by the Home, before the pamphlet closed with an appeal to readers who feared that their contribution of ‘fifty cents’ a month would not be worthwhile:

Friends, it is worth while...for the purpose of bringing some of His neglected little ones out of literal and moral darkness into the wonderful light of that Christianity which stands out pre-eminent among all the religions of the world as the one which does the most to produce happy, normal child-life wherever its influence is felt.⁷⁰

The ‘next generation’ had been described as ‘crying out’ for relief, and the Christian faith was presented as bringing ‘happy, normal child-life’; the work of the Home thus became an important tool in shaping the future of America. The second pamphlet placed this work in explicitly hereditarian terms. This gave the example of ‘two little dark Italian children’, ‘Katie and Georgie’, in evidence of the value of the work conducted by the Home. Georgie was described as ‘a fascinating study in the conflicting tendencies of heredity and environment’; however, in this case it seems that ‘heredity’ simply represented a prejudiced stereotype of national tendencies, and ‘environment’ the love and care offered by the Home. With this framework, the balance of power between the forces of environment and heredity reached a fairly predictable conclusion:

One evening he was punished for being naughty...he was heard to say in a passionate undertone, “I don’t like Sister Johanna at all. I’d like to kill her!” It was the hot blood of his father’s country coming to the surface. However, he was still awake when Sister Johanna went back an hour later...as she took him in her arms and kissed him, he half opened his eyes and said, “I do love you – and I am sorry, I was very

⁷⁰ *God’s Children*. SAA.

naughty.”...It was the first time little Georgie...had been willing to say he was sorry.⁷¹

The conclusion was not the despairing hereditarianism found in Maynard’s description of her adoption history, but the influence of heredity was not denied. Heredity, whatever the form that it took in this account, was only overcome after extensive, and specialised, environmental re-education.

The London based publication *All the World* presented similar articles in the early 1900s, and granted power to the force of heredity. In 1900 it was explained:

The occasional boy who rises from the gutter to affluence is sure to have a respectable parentage behind him. The sons of bad men and women have no ambitious prompting of the blood towards respectability...Yet the divine spark of good flickers in their warped natures. Oh for an infinite patience to fan it into flame!⁷²

The reassurance that even those with no natural advantages of blood possessed a ‘divine spark’ that could be fanned into flame, did not alter the belief that such change came much more easily for some. It was in the interests of The Salvation Army to highlight the difficulties that it faced in its work, but it was also claimed that Salvationists themselves benefited future generations as a result of these laws:

Unknown to the public, and itself half unconscious of this collateral part of its work, the Salvation Army is moulding a portion of the coming century in a matrix of high thinking and living. A wise and simple code of laws furnishes the most ignorant of Salvationists with a knowledge of how to rear, train, and instruct children. As a result, in every part of the world there are growing up Salvationist boys and girls with healthy bodies, sound minds, and good souls – their heritage from non-smoking, teetotal officer and soldier parents.⁷³

⁷¹ *Little Brothers and Sisters: A Short Sketch of The Salvation Army’s Cherry-Tree Home for Children*, pp.9–10. Vertical File Collection, Subject Files, Slum Work. SAA. No date is given for the publication, but the financial records given end in March 1898.

⁷² *All the World* (1900), p.30.

⁷³ *All the World* (1900), pp.30–1.

Evidently the benefits of Salvationism were not limited to the Cherry-Tree Home in New York. The next generation and century was being formed in present-day children, and the conditions encouraged by The Salvation Army resulted in ‘healthy bodies, sound minds, and good souls’. The evil influences of heredity were not denied either. An article from 1904, about ‘Crime and Criminals’, expressed very similar views to those found in the opening of *In Darkest England*; it was conceded that there was ‘a criminal class – a class with strong predilections and instincts towards crime in one form or another’, but also feared that this belief was responsible ‘for the manufacture of a large number of criminals’.⁷⁴ The consensus of these articles was that heredity was influential, but in only a limited number of cases – and this could sometimes be overcome by Salvationist reform.

In addition to these accounts, there were other discussions that, although less explicit in their terms, used language and imagery to express ideas that were comparable with those of eugenicists. Remarkably, despite the Salvationist reputation for ‘sentimentality’, an 1897 article made the now familiar comparison of children to ‘parasites’. This article, entitled ‘The Need and The Remedy: An informal discussion of the problem presented by the ever-increasing misery of child-life in our great American cities’, was not overflowing with patriotic zeal. The use of the word ‘great’ in the title was not intended to describe merit, but rather scale. Although children had not played a role in the current state of America, it was said:

⁷⁴ *All the World*, 1904. Folder, Social Services, Prisoners (work among), d: periodicals. Salvation Army International Heritage Centre.

they will be of the most vital import...to the America of the coming generation...if we would have men and women fit citizens of the United States we must see to it that the children of the present day are properly trained.⁷⁵

With such an important position attributed to children, who were described as the most hopeful subjects of the 'vast social problem', the lack of optimism is striking. It was observed that in New York City:

two hundred thousand children under seven years of age live in the tenement-house districts and slumdom of the metropolis, and that this number constitutes eighty per cent. of the entire childhood under that age of the whole city...a very dismal outlook.⁷⁶

Obviously these conditions were a far cry from the hopeful environments that it was stated were found in Salvationist homes; it was claimed that there were serious consequences as a result of this situation. The article argued that these conditions affected 'the most plastic period of childhood', which led to the argument that it was little wonder that: 'penal institutions...are taxed to the utmost', or that there were 'sixty-five thousand homeless men in the city' and 'thirty-thousand fallen women'. This situation was given financial implications by use of the word 'taxed', before the article went on to describe the three broad categories of children it was equipped to help: children of the 'sweater' who were employed at an early age so as to help keep 'the wolf from the door', children of the 'bum' who were given inappropriate freedom whilst their parents dwelt in drinking places, and finally children who were orphaned or homeless. This final group was said to survive by 'begging or stealing'. The article claimed that there were distinct treatments for each category, yet perhaps surprisingly it was the final group which was singled out for the harshest evaluation: '[they] by the action of nature's law graduate into

⁷⁵ 'The Need And The Remedy' May 1897. Vertical File Collection, Subject Files, Slum Work. SAA.

⁷⁶ 'The Need And The Remedy'.

thieves, tramps and like creatures – parasites, preying upon society’. This was not the type of sentimentalist language one might expect to be reserved for orphaned children, but it was not the only instance of such rhetoric being used by publications of The Salvation Army. Similar biological imagery was also used in an article from 1899, which spoke of cities as ‘poisonous cesspools of iniquity’ that created ‘germs floating abroad’. The influence of these places, and of the sinners living in them, was held at least partly responsible for prostitution, and for the ‘army’ of illegitimate children, ‘pauperism’, and ‘increasing re-commitments to jail’.⁷⁷ These ideas, not themselves explicitly eugenic, contributed to and participated in a discourse which was common to eugenicists and reformers alike. Those in poverty represented a growing danger, and they threatened to infect the national body if they were not treated appropriately.

Another aspect of Salvationist rhetoric about the ‘depths’, the image of their efforts as akin to gardening, represented an important crossover with eugenic thought. One example, a 1903 booklet entitled ‘Love’s Laborings in Sorrow’s Soil’, used an extended analogy of Salvationist ‘Slum Work’ as a form of ‘digging...in the heretofore difficult, if not sterile soil [of a farm]’. In this case, the labourers were described as working to ‘restore the infinite spiritual wealth that lies buried beneath the surface of modern society’. This description was accompanied by numerous illustrations and descriptions inspired by garden-themed messages: ‘Sheltering the Buds’ for an image of a woman cradling a baby whilst a young child stood at her side, and ‘Propping the Torn Vine’ for an image of a ‘slum officer’ helping a

⁷⁷ *All the World* (Salvation Army Bookstores, London, 1889), p.53.

‘deceived’ unwedded mother.⁷⁸ This garden imagery was not unique to The Salvation Army, as shown in figure 5.2, a picture that described a girl helped by the ‘Fresh Air’ work of NYCM as a ‘lily’ having emerged from ‘the mud’. Other parts of this imagery about the ‘depths’ closely mirrored depictions of overseas missionary endeavours, as seen in figures 5.3 and 5.4. In both of these images, one set in a saloon the other in an African forest, a missionary is seen alongside a heavenly being, and faced with the ignorance and desperation of damaged unchristian lives.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *Love’s Laborings in Sorrow’s Soil* (c. 1903) Vertical File Collection, Subject Files, Slum Work. SAA.

⁷⁹ I am grateful to Dr. Ryan Johnson for having drawn my attention to the image in figure six, in his paper at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Oxford. See, Johnson, ‘Tabloid Brand Medicine Chests: Selling Health and Hygiene for the British Tropical Colonies’, *Science as Culture*, Vol. 17 (2008), p.260.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the New York Public Library.]

Figure 5.2 *Out of the Mud the Lily Grows. NYCM Annual Report (1901).*

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the Salvation Army National Archives and Research Centre, Virginia, USA.]

Figure 5.3 Love's Laborings in Sorrow's Soil. 'Still Angels Open Wide The Door That Leads To Hope And Heaven. To Us As To The Men Of Yore A Prince of Peace is Given'.



Figure 5.4 A medical missionary attending to a sick African. Oil painting by Harold Copping, 1930. Wellcome Library, London. © Wellcome Library, CC BY 4.0.

In addition to the widespread use of ‘garden imagery’ in the presentation of depth-reaching missionary endeavours, there was an added parallel with eugenics groups. Patrick Brantlinger has noted that gardening metaphors were used as justification for overseas colonisation, and suggests that in the case of T. H. Huxley’s 1890 work

Evolution and Ethics this was used as justification for genocide.⁸⁰ Huxley's representation of colonialism as akin to weeding a garden is especially significant, as he had made vocal criticisms of Booth's *In Darkest England* scheme, which was itself dependent upon the idea of colonies. It is likely, therefore, that the authors of *Love's Labor in Sorrow's Soil* knew of Huxley's use of gardening imagery. In addition to these colonial and genocidal connotations, eugenicists used plant and animal imagery as part of their efforts to educate the public in laws of heredity. Figures 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 show display boards that the Eugenics Education Society used at fairs in the 1930s. These followed a clear progression from plant family trees, to animal, and finally to human families. The same technique was used in the eugenics film 'Heredity in Man', which opened with animals, and then moved to positive human hereditary traits before providing examples of negative cases of heredity.⁸¹ In the case of eugenicists, there is evidence that this reflected an infantilised view of the people they sought to educate. This is seen in a parallel between these works and the EES's self-criticism of one of its pamphlets on 'Sex Instruction for Children' because 'the preliminary education by way of flowers and animals had been left out; also that the introduction was too long and would not be read through by working-class women'.⁸²

⁸⁰ Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*, pp.11–12. Huxley spoke of colonisers and 'native savages' as in a 'struggle for existence', and said if colonisers acted with energy and intelligence they would be successful; but if 'slothful, stupid, and careless' they would be 'destroyed' or would themselves pass into the 'feral state'. Crucially for Brantlinger's argument, these claims were made with reference to Tasmania after the supposed total elimination of aboriginals had taken place in 1876. Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (1st World Library, Fairfield, 2002), p.15 and p.29–30.

⁸¹ *Heredity in Man*. Eugenics Education Society Film, SA/Eug/G.51, Wellcome Library, London.

⁸² Meeting of the Liaison Committee, 12 May 1936, SA/EUG/L.39. Wellcome Library, London.

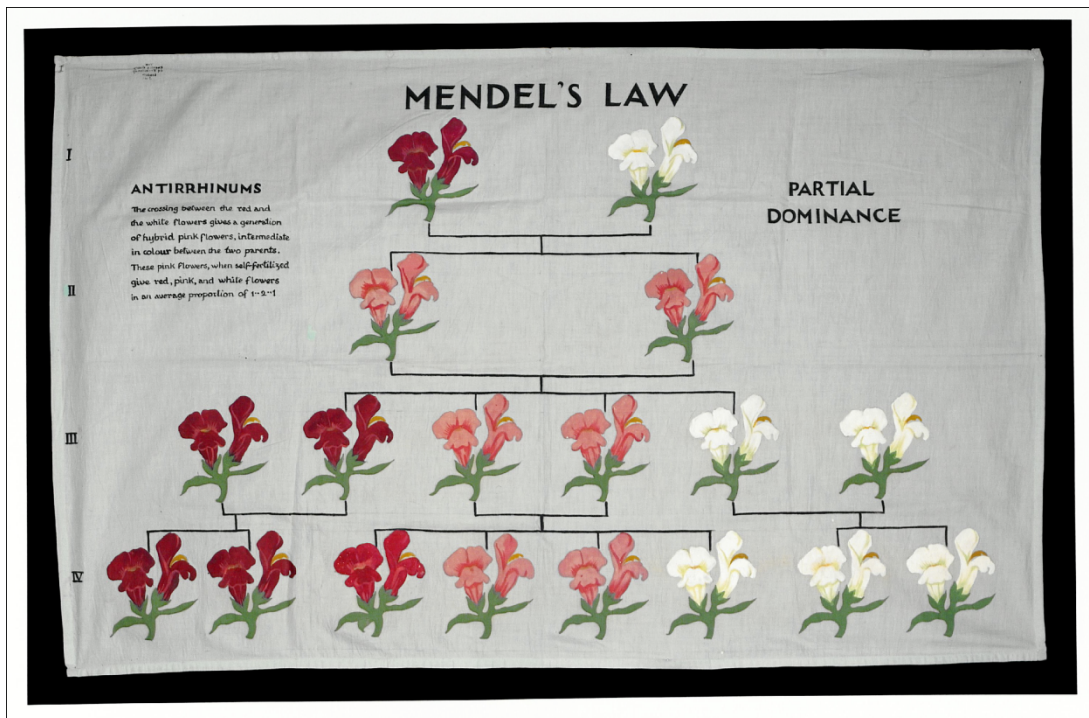


Figure 5.5 Mendel's Law. Sa/Eug/G.35/2, Wellcome Library, London. © The Galton Institute, CC BY 4.0

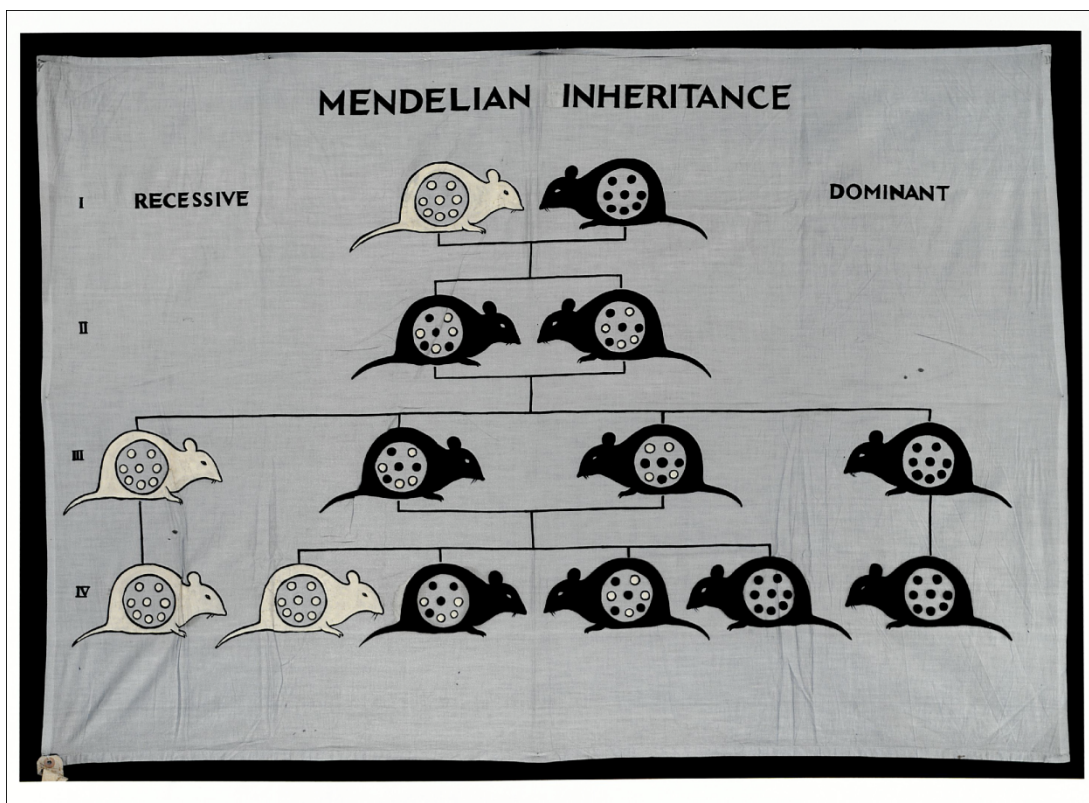


Figure 5.6 Mendelian Inheritance. Sa/Eug/G.35/16, Wellcome Library, London. © The Galton Institute, CC BY 4.0

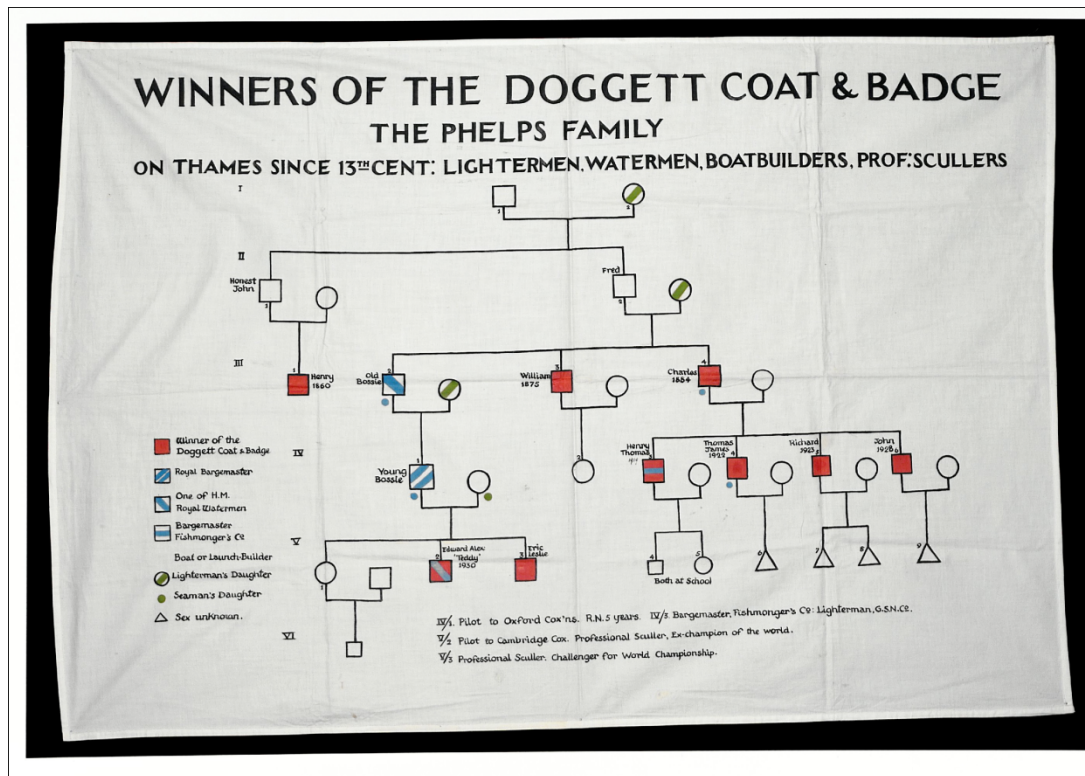


Figure 5.7 The Phelps Family. Sa/Eug/G.34/7, The Wellcome Library, London. © The Galton Institute, CC BY 4.0

Schemes for promoting sexual purity, hygiene, and education, resulted in a direct association between The Salvation Army and an organisation that promoted eugenic measures. This association was showcased in the April 1911 edition of *Eugenics Review*, which carried an advertisement for a new periodical entitled *Prevention: A Quarterly Journal devoted to Public Morals*. This publication, produced by the ‘National Council of Public Morals’,⁸³ continued to advertise in *Eugenics Review*, and its contents demonstrate that it was well suited to an audience of eugenicists.⁸⁴ The NCPM was largely the product of the labours of James Marchant, and can be traced to a foundation date near September 1907, courtesy of a conflict between Marchant and his previous employer – the National Vigilance Association.⁸⁵ The NVA disputed a claim that Marchant made, to be the ‘founder and director’ of a

⁸³ National Council of Public Morals hereafter referred to as ‘NCPM’.

⁸⁴ *The Eugenics Review*: April 1911, p.iv; July 1911, p.iv; October 1911, p.iii; April 1912, p.iv; January 1913, p.v.

⁸⁵ National Vigilance Association hereafter, ‘NVA’.

National Purity Crusade, a work that was very similar to the one which they had hired him to perform in September 1902.⁸⁶ The NVA was sufficiently concerned that its work would be confused with Marchant's new one, that the committee placed a notice in *Truth*, a publication described as a public resource with 'a thousand useful warnings against financial roguery, bogus philanthropy, medical quackery, fraudulent advertising, and all forms of imposture and dishonesty'.⁸⁷ The NVA was satisfied that its actions had resulted in Marchant's changing his organisation's name from the 'National Purity Crusade' to the 'National Social Purity Crusade'.⁸⁸ Marchant, however, proceeded unhindered under the new name, and advertisements appeared in the national press that described 'the forward movement of the National Social Purity Crusade'. Notable figures such as the Bishops of Durham, Truro, and Barking commended 'the crusade and its director, the Rev. James Marchant' to all who realised the 'gravity' of the subject.⁸⁹ The participation of these individuals suggests that the impact of the criticism from the NVA was somewhat limited, an idea that is given further weight by the participation of The Salvation Army in Marchant's campaign, despite their previous involvement with the NVA.⁹⁰ Although the NVA claimed victory when Marchant renamed his organisation, he did so again in December 1910 when it became the NCPM; it is possible that he was only loosely attached to the name of this

⁸⁶ NVA Minutes 27 May 1902. Records of the National Vigilance Association, 4NVA/1/1/03, Box FL194, Executive Minutes 8.11.1899–27.9.1904. The Women's Library, London.

⁸⁷ Marchant evidently had a poor reputation as when the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene discussed working with him, committee members were reminded 'we must consider the ideas and not the person'. NVA Minutes 24 September 1907. 4NVA/1/1/03, Box FL194, Executive Minutes 8.11.1899–27.9.1904; *Truth: 1877 to 1913. The Story of a Great Journal* (London, 1913), p.17; 3AMS/A/06/04 Aims and Objectives 1929–1958, The Women's Library, London.

⁸⁸ NVA Minutes 28 April 1908. 4NVA/1/1/03, Box FL194, Executive Minutes 8.11.1899–27.9.1904.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 4 April 1908, p.9.

⁹⁰ For Salvation Army involvement in the NVA see minutes from 27 May 1902 and 24 June 1902: 4NVA/1/1/03 FL194 Executive Minutes 8.11.1899 to 27.9.1904.

organisation.⁹¹ Marchant's aim for the organisation was 'to represent, further, aid and assist in the promotion of Public Morals', a task he considered to include: 'the formation, establishment, maintenance and control of Hostels, Lodging Houses, or similar accommodation for women and girls within the British Dominions'.⁹² The experience of The Salvation Army with regard to this type of work, dating from 1883, made it an ideal partner in this campaign.⁹³

However, the eugenic aspect of the NCPM was evident from the very beginning. The NVA included at least one committee member, 'Mr Coote', who was simultaneously involved with the foundation of the Eugenics Education Society.⁹⁴ The centrality of eugenics to Marchant's organisation was shown in its 1908–1909 annual report, which said that the Society was to work along 'educational lines' and seek 'the support of all sections of the religious community'. Part of this educational work included lectures provided by C. W. Saleeby on 'education for parenthood', a subject on which he wrote a number of eugenics books.⁹⁵ By the time of Saleeby's death in 1940, eugenics was said to be the subject for which he

⁹¹ The change of name was announced in *The Manchester Guardian*, 22 December 1910, p.8.

⁹² These aims were described in Marchant's application to have NCPM incorporated by the Board of Trade. His application, initially dated 25 October 1910, extended over several months before it was finally abandoned but includes two early annual reports unavailable elsewhere. BT 58/37/COS/4412 National Council of Public Morals Application for Licence to be Registered with Limited Liability without the word limited. National Archives, London.

⁹³ Robert Sandall lists the first Salvationist 'rescue home' as having opened in Glasgow in 1883, though Roy Hattersley has recorded Catherine Booth's involvement in 'midnight mission' work even before this. Robert Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army, Volume III*, p.11; Roy Hattersley, *Blood and Fire*, p.148.

⁹⁴ Mr Coote features in NVA minutes throughout the period from 1902 to 1908, and attended the Provisional Council of the Eugenics Education Society on 25 November 1907. See Executive minutes of the NVA 8.11.1899 to 27.9.1904 and 27.9.1904 to 28.9.1909, 4NVA/1/1/03 FL194 the Women's Library, London and SA/Eug/L.1. Wellcome Library, London.

⁹⁵ *The Forward Movement of the National Social Purity Crusade, 1908–1909*. BT 58/37/COS/4412 the National Archives, London. Examples of Saleeby's works include, *Parenthood and Race Culture: An Outline of Eugenics* (Cassell and Company, London, 1909) and *Alcohol and Parenthood* (London, 1911).

was best known,⁹⁶ yet his 1914 work *The Progress of Eugenics* acknowledged the ‘invaluable help’ he had been given in ‘eugenic propaganda’ by the NCPM.⁹⁷ The NCPM was thus credited with having prompted the fame of a prominent eugenicist, and his work for them undoubtedly raised the profile of the subject within the organisation. At the time of The Salvation Army’s involvement with the NCPM there was an established eugenic element to the organisation, yet none of the previous historical studies of either organisation have mentioned or questioned this link. The work of the NCPM has been typified as indicative of the move towards greater state regulation, and was said to have provided a forum for ‘public figures concerned with questions of national degeneration’.⁹⁸ ‘National fear’ and racial concerns inspired by eugenics have been described as key to the acceptance of state regulation, where previous attempts, such as those seen in the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s, had been fiercely opposed.⁹⁹ Judith Walkowitz has identified one such regulatory measure as the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the age of sexual consent. Walkowitz described this as evidence of a shift away from previous attempts to morally reform prostitutes, and claimed that new attempts focused on ‘preventive approaches’ such as educating the young in ‘sexual repression’.¹⁰⁰ Alan Hunt has made similar claims, and suggested that the adoption of eugenic ideas within feminist and purity movements was part of the secularisation of moral discourses. He claimed that this trend was prompted by the

⁹⁶ Outside of his position with the NCPM Saleeby was also appointed as lecturer in eugenics to the Royal Institution from 1907. Obituary found in *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 December, 1940, p.2.

⁹⁷ Caleb Williams Saleeby, *The Progress of Eugenics* (Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1914), preface.

⁹⁸ Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Regulation* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), pp.179–80; Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1977), p.106 and p.108.

⁹⁹ Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance*, p.4, pp.140–1, p.175, and Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class and the state* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980), pp.254–5.

¹⁰⁰ Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p.246, pp.248–9.

fact that appeals to God's law and God's wrath were less persuasive amongst what he termed the 'rapidly secularising working classes and the middle class'.¹⁰¹ Both of these arguments make it difficult to understand the presence of The Salvation Army within such circles. Perhaps this is partly the reason why their involvement in the NCPM has not been discussed previously. In contrast to the claims that this was a secularised movement inspired by the acceptance that reform efforts had failed, The Salvation Army (which would not have accepted either of these positions) campaigned furiously for both the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the adoption of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. For an organisation that was dedicated to spiritual renewal to have played a role in both these legislative battles, it seems that the motivation, at least for some, cannot have been an acceptance of secularisation. The zeal with which The Salvation Army pursued the Criminal Law Amendment Bill resulted in one of the most infamous actions in the history of the organisation. An attempt to expose the inadequacy of existing laws for the protection of young girls, resulted in Bramwell Booth's and W. T. Stead's recruiting a reformed brothel-keeper to procure an underage girl as if for work in a brothel. The resulting story sold more than one million copies when published by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but also resulted in Booth's and Stead's being prosecuted by the child's father. Booth was exonerated, but Stead received a custodial prison sentence.¹⁰² This event perhaps shed some light on the apparent conflict between support for legislative impediments to sin and efforts for the reformation of individuals; The Salvation Army sought to attack vice by whatever means were possible. In addition, much of the interaction of The Salvation Army with the

¹⁰¹ Hunt, *Governing Morals*, p.181.

¹⁰² A full account of these events is found in Roy Hattersley, *Blood and Fire*, pp.304–24.

NCPM highlighted the need for legal protection of the innocent and vulnerable; to protect those who had been unharmed, whilst also seeking to reform those who had already been led astray, was evidently not ideologically incompatible.

It is clear that the NCPM was not fixed upon legislative methods alone, and the work of The Salvation Army with this organisation appears to have been no more secularised than the Army's preaching rallies. The NCPM used legislative and educational methods in parallel, as seen in the organisation's employment of Saleeby to further 'education for parenthood' at the same time as its campaign for raising the 'age of protection' (the age of sexual consent).¹⁰³ Despite its efforts to change the laws governing sexual morality, the organisation saw no contradiction in stating that it sought to undermine vice 'through religious, moral, educational, and social influences, rather than by legislative enactments and detective search'.¹⁰⁴ Legislative reform was just one part of the 'crusade' against vice and impurity; religious and secular thinkers were united over concerns about the effects of vice, and the uptake of 'national fears' was by no means restricted to secular groups alone. The annual report of the NCPM called for:

a crusade against ignorance, a campaign for education, moral, social, and physical, conducted by ministers, educationists, physicians, and social reformers through the Church, the home, the school, the platform, and the Press.¹⁰⁵

The 'moral, social, and physical' elements of this crusade were united most clearly in the issue of venereal disease. The annual report described a chain of causation whereby the ignorance that was created by a 'complicity of silence' over sexual

¹⁰³ These efforts included lobbying both Houses of Parliament, with draft proposals for reforms sent to all members, alongside social workers both inside and outside of churches.

¹⁰⁴ *The National Social Purity Crusade 1909–1910*, pp.3–4. BT 58/37/COS/4412, The National Archives, London.

¹⁰⁵ *The National Social Purity Crusade 1909–1910*, p.1.

matters meant that children grew to ‘full age, unwarned as to the dangers which beset them in the exercise of their highest functions, with the result too often of danger to themselves and of incalculable loss to the race’. This report discussed venereal disease using the euphemistic moralism ‘retributions of nature’, and said that these natural warnings were not allowed to take effect due to the silence that stemmed from misplaced modesty. These ailments were said to have reached ‘serious prevalence’, but knowledge of them was wrongly ‘kept from...those most deeply concerned’. Another problem, which paralleled the above issue of interference with natural principles and laws, was the:

lowering of the true position of womanhood, in the debasing of the manly ideals of youth, in perverting what should be healthy racial instincts into channels of degrading self-indulgence.

One of the most obvious expressions of both these problems was ‘the existence of that pitiable sisterhood of the streets’, which undermined the intentions of nature for both sexes.¹⁰⁶ The report of the NCPM promoted a solution that was grounded in both legislation and education, as it argued that the proper ‘education’ of youth included the restriction of literature and other outlets that misinformed them and dampened natural instincts and laws. The rationale that appears to have guided the argument in the report was that there was need for artificial intervention to correct the imbalance that resulted from the obstruction of natural laws. This was precisely the style of thinking which operated in eugenicist circles regarding charity; eugenics was necessary to overcome the obstacles that had been placed in the way of natural checks and balances. In both cases modern life was considered to act to the detriment of healthy human existence.

¹⁰⁶ *The National Social Purity Crusade 1909–1910*, p.2.

The involvement of The Salvation Army in the work of the NCPM can be traced to an early stage. The creation of the periodical *Prevention* had been prompted by the NCPM's 1910 event 'The Public Morals Conference', at which The Salvation Army was represented by Bramwell Booth and his wife Florence Booth.¹⁰⁷ Delegates at this conference passed three resolutions. Firstly, it was agreed that a deputation should be sent to the Home Secretary to urge him to 'introduce further measures of control over the production and circulation of indecent books and papers'. Secondly, it was agreed to lobby for an increase in the age of consent to 'at least eighteen'. Finally, it was agreed to ensure that there were sufficient 'safe lodgings for respectable girls'.¹⁰⁸ All of these measures were likely to have met with approval from The Salvation Army, but a notable number of contributors moved from these issues to discuss themes of degeneration and eugenics. The Chairman of the conference, the Venerable Archdeacon Sinclair, noted the topical nature of this meeting:

it was only last Friday that, in reply to the address of the Convocation of York, His Majesty King George...said, in words which should be inscribed in every household: "The foundations of national glory are set in the homes of the people. They will only remain unshaken while the family life of our nation is strong, simple, and pure."¹⁰⁹

A Jewish contributor claimed that his 'race and religion' had been reliant upon 'pure morality' for thousands of years, and described this as the 'indispensable bulwark of the world's progress, nay, of its very existence'.¹¹⁰ Christian

¹⁰⁷ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Oct. 1910), p.11.

¹⁰⁸ *The Nation's Morals: Being the Proceedings of the Public Morals Conference held in London on the 14th and 15th July, 1910* (Cassell and Co., London, 1910), p.xi.

¹⁰⁹ *The Nations Morals*, p.5. This quotation from the King was referred to in two subsequent papers at the conference, that of Father Bernard Vaughan and of Canon H. D. Rawnsley, p.111 and p.158.

¹¹⁰ *The Nation's Morals*, p.8.

contributors made the same claim, as Rev. F. B. Meyer cited the biblical doctrine that it was ‘righteousness that exalteth a nation’,¹¹¹ and Emilie D. Martin argued that:

The Divine law of purity, given amid the thunders of Sinai and enforced by the teachings of Christianity, was founded upon the necessities of man’s physical, mental and moral constitution. Obedience to that law brings peace and prosperity to communities and nations. Violations of that law brings reproach, shame, weakness, disintegration...¹¹²

Several contributors cited the precedent of the fall of classical civilisations to underline their concerns. The Lord Bishop of Ripon claimed that ‘a high standard of public morals is not only a national duty, but a national safeguard’, and said that ‘the history of the past shows us that national decline is always preceded by a slackening of moral obligations and by a lowering of national ideals’.¹¹³ Rev. A. R. Buckland of the Religious Tract Society spoke of the ‘national peril’ that he feared would result from marriages that were ‘never meant to be fruitful’, because couples were ‘looking too much to personal comfort’ and ‘untrammelled’ lives. Buckland added the testimony of history to his account, as he stated that the vices he had described were ‘always associated with the period of a nation’s decay’.¹¹⁴ Rev. Principal Alfred Garvie claimed that ‘no sin has been so fatal to successive generations as sensual indulgence’. He added a eugenic component to this message, in calling for education to emphasise the need to protect the nation and the ‘right to be well born’.¹¹⁵ With all these statements, voiced right up to the level of the chairman of the conference, it seems unlikely that any attenders failed to hear about the issues of eugenics and degeneration.

¹¹¹ *The Nation’s Morals*, pp.9–10.

¹¹² *The Nation’s Morals*, p.172.

¹¹³ *The Nation’s Morals*, p.55.

¹¹⁴ *The Nation’s Morals*, pp.108–9.

¹¹⁵ *The Nation’s Morals*, p.103.

Florence and Bramwell Booth presented papers in a part of the conference that addressed the issues of ‘Social Hygiene and the Law’.¹¹⁶ Florence Booth, identified as ‘Mrs Bramwell Booth’, preceded her husband with a paper entitled ‘Principles of Purity Work and Methods of its Extension’. The paper focused upon suggestions for reforms that would help to prevent ‘vice’. The first issue that was discussed was that of ‘public elementary schools’, where Booth argued that the ‘pupil teacher system’ resulted in children thrown into ‘care of those who are little older than themselves’. Booth believed that this system gave vice a head start, and stated:

I am afraid there is also need for greater attention to the guarding of children from one another than has yet been given to the matter. That “one sinner destroyeth much good”...is never more true than in the playground of a school.¹¹⁷

Whilst the good ‘influence and instruction’ of a mother were considered to constitute the most effective protection from vice, the fact that ‘alas! so many of the children have neither’ forced Booth to conclude that schools should impart ‘information of a practically protective nature to both boys and girls’. Outside of this work in schools, Booth called for increased regulation in protecting workers from the danger of vice. She argued that ‘large establishments’ should be required to employ ‘forewomen instead of or in addition to foremen’. Booth argued that this was merely an extension of a principle that already existed; the government already forced employers to regulate light, air space, fire safety, and machinery safety – it was only ‘a step farther’ to ensure they took responsibility for ‘the moral atmosphere in which their workpeople labour’.¹¹⁸ Schools and workplaces were not

¹¹⁶ *The Nation's Morals*, p.203.

¹¹⁷ *The Nation's Morals*, pp.221–2.

¹¹⁸ *The Nation's Morals*, p.222.

the only places deemed worthy of regulation, however, and Booth's paper ended with a plea for review of the fact that:

There seems at present to be practically no restraint placed upon language and conduct in the streets, which are of the most nauseously shameful character, and which must be listened to or seen by boys and girls who are compelled to pass to and fro. Surely it must be as important to keep the highways free from open indecency as to lay the dust with a watering cart! I have not the slightest doubt that thousands of both sexes obtain their first lesson in evil from what they see and hear in the public thoroughfares.¹¹⁹

This employed the same logic, grounded in an analogy with public health reforms, which had been used to call for intervention into the moral regulation of schools and workplaces.¹²⁰ All the provisions called for the moral protection of the helpless and innocent as though this were another form of health legislation. Booth expressed concern that her decision to address these specific issues might be interpreted as a belief that they were more serious than other sins; however, she justified her treatment of these subjects with the claim that these sins were distinct from others in terms of their consequences. In particular, she blamed society for establishing 'barriers in the way of her [‘women fallen into evil ways’] recovery which seriously handicap all workers on her behalf'. Booth was keen to emphasise that in spite of her suggestions for legislative reforms, The Salvation Army continued to believe first and foremost in spiritual solutions. She urged those 'working in this sphere of benevolence' to recognise that:

we shall make but little progress until it has been recognized...that the lapse in morals is a moral lapse, and

¹¹⁹ *The Nation's Morals*, p.223.

¹²⁰ Dorothy Porter has examined the relationship between the British public health profession and the eugenics movement, concluding that they largely acted in opposition to one another. This argument that Booth employed may suggest that (outside of the professional sphere) there was a more fluid interaction between calls for public health regulation and eugenic visions. Dorothy Porter, "‘Enemies of the Race’: Biologism, Environmentalism, and Public Health in Edwardian England", *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1991), pp.159–78.

can only be really rectified, therefore, by means of moral influences. You can no more heal a moral disorder by physical remedies than you can cure smallpox by reciting the Ten Commandments!...the true remedy for sin is the Salvation of Jesus Christ, and...the speediest road to restoration...is the road to the Cross of Christ.¹²¹

Booth's twofold approach, which heralded Christ as the ultimate solution whilst also promoting earthly protections for the innocent and vulnerable, was repeated in the papers of other speakers. William Canon Berry argued for the need of a 'league of parents and teachers', to exercise vigilance over the 'deadly plague' of immoral literature that threatened 'youthful minds'; however, he also argued that the ultimate solution was found in the statement: 'cleanse the heart, and literature will be clean. Now who can cleanse the heart except the Divine Inspirer of all good books?'¹²² Mrs Sidney Webb¹²³ emphasised the 'social and economic causes of vice', but she was nevertheless cautious to record her belief that 'spiritual influences' and economic causes could operate alongside one another.¹²⁴ J. Ramsay Macdonald, MP for Leicester and future Prime Minister, affirmed this view and argued that 'moral and spiritual forces' could combine with 'economic conditions'. The only exception that he envisaged to this principle was the 'white slave traffic', where he said women did not need to be kept poor so long as they were encouraged to believe that 'they are lost for ever, that society has cast them out, and that there is not a respectable door open for them to enter.'¹²⁵ In this case it seemed morals, or moral judgment, acted against reform. The Salvation Army found a natural home amongst

¹²¹ *The Nation's Morals*, pp.220–1.

¹²² *The Nation's Morals*, p.130.

¹²³ See discussion on Beatrice and Sidney Webb in chapter three, 'LCM's Crisis in Environmental Rejection'.

¹²⁴ *The Nation's Morals*, p.206.

¹²⁵ *The Nation's Morals*, pp.214–15.

the advocates of these ideas. Florence Booth ended her paper with assurance of her prayer that ‘this Congress may prove a great blessing to the world’.¹²⁶

Bramwell Booth repeated his wife’s call for legislative reform, but employed a rather more provocative tone. He argued:

it is high time that liberty was infringed. Civil freedom itself can only be preserved by certain limitations of that freedom. Freedom to destroy, and liberty to do the devil’s work, ought to be circumscribed both in this country and elsewhere.¹²⁷

This use of forceful rhetoric was typical of the Booths, and provoked criticism in other instances. Benjamin Wills Newton said of William Booth: ‘The strength of Michael and the holy angels is required to expel Satan from heaven, but Mr Booth thinks that the strength of *his* army is sufficient to drive him from the earth’.¹²⁸ This militant call from Bramwell, however, was not out of keeping with the other members of this ‘crusade’. Bramwell’s recourse to the use temporal law did not indicate a dismissal of spiritual forces, as demonstrated in his suggestion that vice was the work of the devil, but he continued to see a role for legislation:

I am very far from thinking that law alone can be a sufficient preventative of vice...It is public opinion and public discourse rather than Acts of Parliament which are needed. But they may help one another.¹²⁹

Most of the reforms that Bramwell suggested were relatively tame in comparison to his rhetoric. He argued that there should be women magistrates, mixed juries in

¹²⁶ *The Nation’s Morals*, p.225.

¹²⁷ *The Nation’s Morals*, pp.226–7.

¹²⁸ Benjamin Wills Newton, *Address Respecting the Methods of The Salvation Army* (Houlston and Sons, London, 1882), p.16. Newton was a leader of the Plymouth Brethren and prolific author on religious themes, with more than seventy separate items listed in the British Library Catalogue. Timothy C. F. Stunt, ‘Newton, Benjamin Wills (1807–1899)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004, online edition, May 2010).

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37808> accessed 2 August 2011.

¹²⁹ *The Nation’s Morals*, p.226.

cases dealing with the ‘ill-treatment of illegitimate children’, women police, and women supervisors in the prison system.¹³⁰ Bramwell’s primary focus, like that of his wife, appears to have been upon ensuring that women were placed on an equal footing with men when faced with the law. However, he also made proposals for legislative reform that would infringe the liberty of certain groups. Firstly, he spoke of his desire that the age of consent for women should be raised to the age of eighteen. Bramwell argued that, based upon his experience of working with W. T. Stead on the passage of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, any fears over the potential difficulties that might arise from this reform would prove to be illusory. He called for ‘damages against any man who destroyed a woman under eighteen’ and an increased period in which women could seek ‘support of illegitimate children’: Courts should be given power to enforce such payments.¹³¹

Bramwell Booth made a more drastic call for the infringement of liberties in his discussion of the ‘protection of feeble-minded women and girls’. He argued that this issue was ‘of the highest importance for the well-being of the community’. Bramwell preferred ‘the simple provision of making such women wards of Court, and County Court judges their guardians’, but he said that failing he would be ‘grateful to see the more complex and costly scheme of the Royal Commission adopted’. This argument is significant, as the 1904 to 1908 Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded included recommendations that were endorsed by eugenicists. The historian Anne Digby has argued that the call of the commission for life-long care for the ‘feeble-minded’ (which would effectively

¹³⁰ *The Nation’s Morals*, pp.227–9.

¹³¹ *The Nation’s Morals*, pp.229–30.

remove opportunities for childbearing) was the result of the influence of the American model of large state institutions.¹³² The EES was among those delighted by the recommendations of this commission, and the *Eugenics Review* of October 1909 quoted a review of its findings, which noted:

The Royal Commission...arrived at the conclusion that feeble-mindedness is largely inherited; that prevention of mentally defective persons from becoming parents would tend to diminish the numbers of such persons in the population; and that, consequently, there are the strongest grounds for placing mental defectives of each sex in institutions where they will be detained...¹³³

The EES sent an 'influential deputation' to lobby the Home Secretary for implementation of the commission's findings, campaigning on the grounds that:

In point of fact it is impossible to name any reform which would more directly serve the interests both of Life and of Mammon than this proposed segregation, the expenditure upon which would save incalculable sums of money, now lavished upon crime, pauperism, unemployment, and so forth.¹³⁴

Booth made a similar reference to cost, and, having first claimed that the Royal Commission would be more expensive than Salvationist reform, came out in favour of a segregationist approach during his discussion of finances. He justified this position by citing the experience of Salvation Army 'social workers', which he claimed demonstrated that 'many of these unfortunate members of the community could, under suitable conditions, be made very happy, and enabled to contribute a large part of the cost of their own support'.¹³⁵ The 'suitable conditions' that Booth imagined were clearly those of sheltered living, on terms analogous to the accommodation provided for homeless men by The Salvation Army. The difference

¹³² Anne Digby, 'Contexts and Perspectives', in Wright and Digby (eds.), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency*, p.11.

¹³³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.144.

¹³⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. I (Oct. 1909), p.142.

¹³⁵ *The Nation's Morals*, p.231.

between Booth's proposal and that of the Royal Commission seems to have been one only of control: the question of who was responsible for this accommodation, The Salvation Army or the state. Booth was not alone in his concern for the 'feeble-minded', however, and other participants in the 'social hygiene' section of the conference identified the issue for special attention. Mrs Sidney Webb claimed that 'no end of prostitution is due to lack of proper custody and care of the feeble-minded', and argued for an extension of legislative powers for their protection. In addition, Webb highlighted the inability of the Poor Law to deal with such cases until individuals were already destitute. She proposed that responsibility for such cases should be transferred to the 'Education, Public Health and Lunacy Authorities'.¹³⁶

The Booths' papers were clearly well suited to the conference, and yet others went much further into the realms of eugenics in their recommendations. James Marchant joined the Booths in arguing for an increase in the age of consent, but added to this the suggestion that 'the good and the bad should not be wedded'. He argued that this should be ensured by the presentation of health certificates before marriage.¹³⁷ C. W. Saleeby, who quoted from his book on eugenics, argued in favour of the pursuit of 'preventive eugenics'. He stated that the need for 'quality of parenthood' was much more pressing than the need for 'quantity'. With the Booths present in this ideological environment, it was not long before they, and thereby The Salvation Army, made statements in favour of eugenic action. In April 1911 *Prevention* gave details of a conference organised by the NCPM in Scotland; the report from this

¹³⁶ *The Nation's Morals*, p.211 and p.219.

¹³⁷ Marchant's call for a raise to the age of consent was based in part on evidence from Mrs. Booth's officers which indicated a high proportion of the 'fallen' first entered vice under the age of eighteen. *The Nation's Morals*, p.253 and p.259.

conference revealed that the theme of eugenics featured very clearly.¹³⁸ T. S. Clouston presented a paper on ‘Morals and Heredity’, which spoke of the important role that would be played by ‘the modern science of eugenics’ once ‘knowledge is increased and public opinion better informed’. Misleadingly, and perhaps intentionally so, the editors of the journal placed a photograph of Florence Booth indented into the text of Clouston’s article.¹³⁹ Mrs. Booth’s own paper incorporated a photograph of a worker in The Salvation Army, clearly pertinent to the subject of her article; the decision to use Booth’s image within the paper written by Clouston appears to identify her with his ideas. Clouston argued that morals were reliant upon ‘three conditions’: ‘the sense of right and wrong’, ‘the power to avoid the one and avoid the other’, and the presence of ‘inclination, diseased craving, or temptation’ that needed to be controlled. He said that all people had the third condition in common, but that:

The three largely depend on hereditary influences, as well as on education and example, in regard to their strength or weakness.¹⁴⁰

Eugenics, therefore, featured as part of a wider call for morality to be studied according to ‘modern science’, in addition to the disciplines of ‘mind and religion’. Although Clouston called for an ‘increased knowledge’ of eugenic laws, he suggested:

It is a well-recognised fact that it is a very difficult matter to develop conscience in the children of savages, of gipsies, and habitual criminals. Their lack of power of control over desires and cravings is also a well-known fact... The highest qualities and degrees of morals are rarely met with except in the best examples of the men and women of the most evolved races.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.41.

¹³⁹ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.64.

¹⁴⁰ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.63.

¹⁴¹ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.63.

The consequences of this lack of control were framed in the familiar guise of a ‘great risk’ to the ‘nation’, which had previously resulted in the downfall of the ‘nations of antiquity’. In order to prevent this fate befalling Britain, Clouston said:

A higher ideal of physiological and moral life must be created and held up to our youth of both sexes. The bad effects of lack of control should be so instilled into every boy and girl that it becomes a part of their mental life...So far as hereditary and uneducable lack of control exists it should mean segregation for its unfortunate victims for the sake of society.¹⁴²

It should not be a surprise, given these beliefs, that Clouston was named in the *Eugenics Review* of January 1914 as the convener of a committee to form a branch of the EES in Edinburgh.¹⁴³ More surprising, due to previous historiography, is the discovery that The Salvation Army shared a platform with advocates of these ideas, apparently with neither side considering this out of place.

Florence Booth had been associated with Clouston’s ideas by her attendance at the same conference, and by the use of her portrait in the midst of his paper; however, her own paper also edged closer towards eugenic ideas. Booth’s paper addressed the subject of ‘Women and the Law’, based upon her experience of 27 years of work for ‘needy and friendless women and children’. She said that this experience had provided ‘terrible evidence of moral and physical devastation among women and children’. It was this vision of ‘devastation’ that, according to Booth, had prompted

¹⁴² *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.64.

¹⁴³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. V (Jan. 1914), p.384. Clouston was an asylum physician who was the first to occupy the post of lecturer in mental disease at the University of Edinburgh. He used his annual asylum reports to speak directly to the general population via the national press. Allan Beveridge, ‘Clouston, Sir Thomas Smith (1840–1915)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edition, October 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/38634> accessed 14 August 2011.

her to speak publicly on the issue.¹⁴⁴ Whilst she did not claim special knowledge of the law, Booth claimed the right to speak on the subject because: the ‘laws of nations are of no force when in opposition to the moral law’. Booth argued that an imbalance in the law had the power to undermine the ‘standard of morality’, especially where ‘A code of laws...attached punishment to one set of wrongs but none to others’, and thus appeared to offer sanction to immorality.¹⁴⁵ From this premise, Booth went on to outline details of specific deficiencies in existing laws with regard to women and children. She ended her paper with the conclusion that:

Yes! our laws must be modelled upon God’s law, and only in so far as this is so can they add to the prosperity of our nation.¹⁴⁶

It would have been painfully apparent to other participants that the inverse was, by implication, equally true; violation of God’s laws resulted in poverty to the nation. Booth had thus added her voice to those discussing the very fate of the nation.

The following issue of *Prevention* gave the message of eugenics an even more prominent position, as it published a ‘Manifesto on Public Morals’. This Manifesto had 72 signatories, including General William Booth and Florence Booth of The Salvation Army; its opening statement suggested that it had been heavily influenced by eugenic ideas:

We, the undersigned, desire to express our alarm at the low and degrading views of the racial instinct which are becoming widely circulated at the present time, not only because they offend against the highest ideals of Morality and Religion, but also because they therefore imperil our very life as a nation.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.61.

¹⁴⁵ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), p.61.

¹⁴⁶ *Prevention*, Vol. I (Apr. 1911), pp.62–3.

¹⁴⁷ *Prevention*, Vol. I (July 1911), p.74.

The Booths hereby officially added their names, and that of The Salvation Army, to the ranks of those fearful about the racial peril of the nation. Four statements expanded on the concerns of the signatories: ‘the declining birth-rate’, ‘the circulation of pernicious literature’, ‘the moral education of the young’ and ‘the Nation and the Feeble-minded’. The first two of these issues were not accompanied by any discussion of potential consequences; the problems were simply outlined as seen. The birth-rate was said to be decreasing owing to ‘old and new’ methods of evading ‘the great obligations of parenthood’, and the circulation of corrupt literature was believed to have reached a level ‘without parallel in the past’, but the signatories believed the evil could still be ‘controlled’. The final two issues touched upon palpably eugenic themes. On the ‘moral education of the young’, it was said to be ‘imperative’ that young people were ‘taught to entertain high conceptions of marriage, as involving duties to the future of the nation and the race’. The last statement, on ‘The Nation and the Feeble-minded’, was even clearer:

Certain laws of heredity and development, no less natural or divine than other laws which are universally acknowledged, must also receive due recognition, and govern our national policy. A high proportion of immorality and inebriety is due to neglect of the incurably defective-minded, whose progeny, lamentably numerous under present conditions, too frequently resemble their parents... These cases must receive permanent care apart from the community, that they and posterity may be protected.¹⁴⁸

The call for heredity to govern ‘national policy’, and for segregation of the ‘defective-minded’ for the sake of posterity, was an undeniably eugenic ideology. Following this, however, a final argument presented all four statements as part of a eugenic whole:

¹⁴⁸ *Prevention*, July 1911, p.74.

We believe that only along these lines – by raising the ideals of marriage, by education for parenthood, and by intervening to prevent degeneracy – can we cope with the demoralisation which is sapping the foundation of national well-being. We earnestly commend these suggestions, therefore, to all who love the good cause and desire to maintain through the coming time our national traditions of marriage and the home.¹⁴⁹

This was not the last example of eugenic ideas appearing in the NCPM or *Prevention*, and the Booths continued to feature in both. The first four editions of *Prevention* featured a photograph of Mrs. Booth on the front cover alongside those of eleven other people held to support NCPM. Although this stopped in the fifth edition of the journal, that of January 1912, ‘Mrs Bramwell Booth’ was still listed among the ‘vice-presidents’ of the organisation, and the July-September 1912 edition of *Prevention* featured a lead-article authored by ‘Mr. Bramwell Booth’ on ‘The Soul of W. T. Stead’.¹⁵⁰ The publication was renamed *Prevention: A Quarterly Journal Devoted to Race Regeneration, Spiritual, Moral, Physical* in the July-September 1912 issue, after which photographs of the Booths reappeared on the cover of the journal.¹⁵¹ It appears that *Prevention* ceased to be published after the January–March 1915 issue, but James Marchant (and the NCPM) continued his work. The final edition of *Prevention* noted that the NCPM’s ‘Birth Rate Commission’ had ‘resumed its labours’, a work that it said was ‘even more vital since the outbreak of the European War’.¹⁵² The historian Richard Soloway has identified this as the most important of the unofficial investigations into the

¹⁴⁹ *Prevention*, Vol. I (July 1911), pp.74–5.

¹⁵⁰ *Prevention*, Vol. II (July–Sep. 1912), pp.153–4.

¹⁵¹ From the October-December 1912 edition until the April-June 1914 edition General Booth appeared on the cover, after which the January-March 1915 edition returned to ‘Mrs Booth’.

¹⁵² *Prevention*, Vol. V (Jan.–Mar. 1915), p.292.

demographic position of Britain.¹⁵³ He argued that concerns about the declining birth-rate were crucial to the rise of eugenic analyses; the presence of Dean Inge (a prominent religious member of the EES) as co-chairman of Marchant's commission demonstrates that eugenic ideas possessed an influential position in this body.¹⁵⁴ James Marchant's own work, published in the wake of his fame as 'Secretary of the National Birth-Rate Commission, and the Cinema Inquiry, Director of the National Council for the Promotion of Race-Regeneration, etc.', was absolutely clear as to his eugenic fears:

This book attempts to deal with various aspects of the most complex problem of our corporate life. That problem is to find some remedy for the persistently diminishing birth-rate of our growing Empire and the serious decrease of men of ability born to the better-educated classes, a deficiency in quantity and of quality which has been accentuated by the irreparable losses of hundreds of thousands of promising lives in this world-war, and which must impoverish and may imperil the future of the race.¹⁵⁵

It is somewhat unclear how The Salvation Army, which had a significant working-class membership, could work alongside Marchant, when he made these claims about the 'better-educated classes'. However, it seems that Marchant approached The Salvation Army precisely because he believed that it was a eugenically useful organisation. Marchant's 1908 work, *The Cleansing of a City*, published while he was still employed by the NVA, included a chapter by 'Mrs Booth' that highlighted the same legal weaknesses as described in her later work in *Prevention*.¹⁵⁶ The following year Marchant's book *Social Hygienics*, an explicitly eugenic text that spoke in admiration of the work of Galton, thanked 'Mrs. Booth of the Salvation

¹⁵³ Richard A. Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1995), pp.8–9.

¹⁵⁴ Soloway, *Demography and Degeneration*, p.xiii and p.9.

¹⁵⁵ Marchant, *Birth-Rate and Empire*, p.ix.

¹⁵⁶ James Marchant (ed.), *The Cleansing of a City* (Greening and Co. Ltd., London, 1908), p.xvii.

Army' for providing information from 'unpublished records': the case files of victims who were suffering owing to the 'inequality of the girl and youth before the Law'.¹⁵⁷ The Salvationist rescue homes that facilitated this specialised knowledge were exactly the type of segregational facilities that were outlined in the paper by Clouston and the Manifesto on Public Morals. When these institutions were successful in reforming their occupants, this by very nature represented the cessation of any morally reprehensible behaviour that might lead to further procreation. However, regardless of reform, the identification and containment of these individuals was seen as a eugenic benefit in itself.

There was a similar pattern in the United States of America; The Salvation Army became involved with groups that discussed eugenic themes as a result of mutual interest in the question of public morality. In 1900, a 'Committee of Fifteen' was charged with investigating the 'spread of the Social Evil' in New York City. This committee reached the conclusion that the effects of vice were much more widespread than if they were restricted to the 'degenerate' and 'brutal' alone. It was said:

Even if they [venereal diseases] do not utterly wreck the health of the individual, they impair his industrial efficiency and increase the chance of his becoming a burden upon society. In the long contest for survival among different nations, a high percentage of venereal diseases is a most serious handicap for any country.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Marchant's praise for Galton was only limited by the fear he did not go far enough, by failing to recognise that 'Heredity operates in the social and spiritual spheres'. James Marchant, *Social Hygienics: A New Crusade* (Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd., London, 1909), p.17 and pp.45–8.

¹⁵⁸ *The Social Evil, With Special Reference to Conditions Existing in the City of New York: A Report Prepared under the direction of the Committee of Fifteen* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1902), p.63.

The Committee proposed to address this serious situation with ‘a system we may term the Moral Regulation of Vice’. ‘Flagrant’ incitements to vice would be suppressed, there would be improved ‘public education’, and ‘purer and more elevating forms of amusement’ would be designed to replace ‘low dance-halls’ and their kin. The Committee feared that prostitution laws were undermined by the ‘blackmail’ opportunities that they provided for corrupt police; it therefore proposed that vice should be rebranded from a ‘crime’ to a ‘sin’, except in cases where it took ‘the form of a public nuisance’. Other regulatory measures were intended to deal with the eugenic consequences of vice, the clearest example found in calls for ‘health certificates’ to be required prior to the granting of marriage licenses.¹⁵⁹ A similar study was carried out in Chicago; this made even more explicit calls for eugenic action, and listed a Salvation Army Maternity Home among those called to provide testimony. The study claimed: ‘The honor of Chicago, the fathers and mothers of her children, the physical and moral integrity of the future generation demand that she repress public prostitution’.¹⁶⁰ Divorce was identified as a ‘large’ contributory factor towards ‘sexual vice’, and whilst it was admitted that there were numerous causes for separation, the report singled out one for particular attention:

the Commission does wish to emphasise the great need of more safeguards against the marrying of persons physically, mentally and morally unfit to take up the responsibilities of family life, including the bearing of children.¹⁶¹

This situation was placed in a eugenic light, as the report observed that licenses were required for building houses, owning a dog, running ‘a push cart’ or peddling

¹⁵⁹ *The Social Evil, With Special Reference to Conditions Existing in the City of New York*, p.65, p.146, p.156, p.173, p.177, and p.179.

¹⁶⁰ *The Social Evil in Chicago: A Study of Existing Conditions with Recommendations by The Vice Commission of Chicago* (Gunthorp-Warren Printing Company, Chicago, 1911), p.25.

¹⁶¹ *The Social Evil in Chicago*, pp.41–2.

‘shoe strings’ – in each case, applicants for these licenses were required to demonstrate they were ‘responsible and reliable agents’ – whereas:

for a marriage license, one person, unattended and unknown and, as far as one can know, an epileptic, a degenerate, or who has in his blood a loathsome venereal disease, may pass his name through a window with that of a similarly questionable female...and be granted the divine right to perpetuate his kind and in turn thereby placing a burden and a blight on society and the community for generations to come.¹⁶²

This argument, with its criticisms of ‘epileptics’ and the ‘degenerate’, made it clear that the Committee’s desire to regulate marriage was not just concerned with the control of venereal disease, but a range of dispositions and ailments that it believed were harmful to the race. In the case of ‘moral imbeciles’ it was suggested that nothing other than ‘forcible restraint’ would keep them from vice.¹⁶³ The report recommended that ‘college students of both sexes’ should be taught their ‘responsibility in protecting future generations from hereditary immoral tendencies and physical degeneration’.¹⁶⁴ It is significant, with this background context, that the Committee praised The Salvation Army as one of many institutions that received ‘delinquent girls, and even prostitutes’. The one complaint that the report made was that these institutions could only hold a ‘limited number’ of people.¹⁶⁵ Once again, the work of The Salvation Army in the reform of prostitutes placed it in circles that openly discussed eugenics, and the organisation was praised as a worthy instrument for the protection of national health.

¹⁶² *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p.42.

¹⁶³ *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p.229.

¹⁶⁴ *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p.253.

¹⁶⁵ *The Social Evil in Chicago*, p.276.

Aside from these direct interactions with eugenics, Salvationist publications continued to feature ideas that were either directly influenced by this ideology, or at least compatible with it. The 1914 *Social News* included an account of a man named ‘Jim L’; it was claimed that he was previously ‘among the industrious workers of the city’, but that this was no longer the case after he met ‘a coterie of young fellows who spent most of their leisure in the pool rooms and saloons’. The article provided a bleak description of the consequences of Jim L’s attending these places of leisure, and it is noteworthy that these places were the same as those criticised in the NCPM’s manifesto. The article claimed that:

From a steady young man, a loving husband and indulgent parent, Jim degenerated within a few brief years to a careless, indifferent workman, a poor provider for his family and an ugly and morose man in the home. His downward course was rapid, and in less than a decade his home was broken up, and his wife and child had been driven to seek an asylum with relatives.¹⁶⁶

Both the words ‘degenerated’ and ‘asylum’ were shrouded with ambiguity. It is unclear whether ‘asylum’ was intended to mean that his family took refuge with relations, or, more suggestively, that they entered a public institution where family members were already suffering. Jim’s destination was more certain; he was described as an ‘outcast derelict’, and the article emphasised the depths to which he descended through descriptions of his entering ‘the lowest saloons’, and then correspondingly by the account of his climbing upward after encountering The Salvation Army.¹⁶⁷ The use of the term ‘degenerated’ was a logical counterpart to the phrase ‘regeneration’, that was used in publications of The Salvation Army to describe spiritual conversion, as shown in figure 5.8.

¹⁶⁶ ‘When the Shadows Lengthened’, *Social News*, February 1914, p.11.

¹⁶⁷ ‘When the Shadows Lengthened’, p.12.

[The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The publication with the image was sourced at the Salvation Army National Archives and Research Centre, Virginia, USA.]

Figure 5.8 How We Spent Your Money, SAA.

However, the fact that it was believed physical benefits accompanied religious reform makes the use of the word 'regeneration' ambiguous. The physical and spiritual benefits of conversion were expanded upon in a 1923 'pageant' in New York, 'A Pageant of Regeneration: Descriptive of the Work of The Salvation Army Social Service'. The pageant included an 'open air meeting' and a 'film story' entitled 'The Regeneration of Spike Doran'. 'Regeneration' was not restricted to individuals alone, however, and two other sessions spoke of 'slumdom' and 'slumdom regenerated'.¹⁶⁸ Whereas a person could be described as having a spiritual conversion, it is clear a 'slum' could not. The transformation of this physical environment must have, therefore, come as a result of converted slum-dwellers who were represented synonymously with the place they lived. The 'regeneration' that this account described represented a significant challenge to an enduring social concern; the fact that The Salvation Army used this claim to promote its social work indicates that the organisation appreciated this fact. Linguistic similarities to the eugenics movement were even more pronounced in the program of a 1924 Eastern Territorial Congress. This event, held at the Manhattan Opera House, featured a presentation by the Men's and Women's Social Service Departments; one item on this agenda was described as a "'Better Babies" Lullaby'. The quotation marks surrounding 'Better Babies' were present in the original text, suggesting that this was perhaps quoted from another source, or that this was an intentional reference to the contemporary eugenics movement. Whatever the content of the lullaby, the claim that The Salvation Army brought physical as well as spiritual benefits was stated frequently. The 1926 'Metropolitan Provincial Young

¹⁶⁸ Program: A Pageant of Regeneration (1923). Social Services, General Information Folder, SAA.

People's Congress', held in New York City, included an address from Commander Evangeline Booth which reminded attenders:

Life's formative hours are fraught with responsibilities that outweigh all others simply for the reason that the men and women of to-morrow are in the making to-day.¹⁶⁹

Colonel Marshall highlighted the role that The Salvation Army could play in shaping 'men and women of to-morrow', and said to attenders:

As the tribes went up to Jerusalem let our Young People gather from every part of the Province for the great feast of spiritual, mental and physical uplift.¹⁷⁰

The similarity of this 'feast' to the objective of the NCPM, and its journal *Prevention* (dedicated to spiritual, moral and physical regeneration), is too close to overlook. Whilst the decision by The Salvation Army to use this phrasing may or may not have been intentionally eugenic, the approach is certain to have met with the approval of those working in eugenic organisations.¹⁷¹

In addition to the role that The Salvation Army perceived it could play in shaping the mental, spiritual, and physical future of the nations that it worked in, the organisation continued to employ 'depths imagery' which singled out those amongst whom it worked as a special class deserving of unique attention. A 1930 publication entitled 'Salvage' celebrated the 'Golden Anniversary' of the organisation's work in the United States of America, and 'fifty years of social

¹⁶⁹ Metropolitan Provincial Young People's Congress, 1926, Program of Events. Vertical File Collection, Greater New York Division, SAA.

¹⁷⁰ Metropolitan Provincial Young People's Congress, 1926.

¹⁷¹ It is possible this three part claim to utility was intended as a revised update to William Booth's earlier concerns for 'Soup, Soap, and Salvation!', though the mirror with this would have been imperfect. Booth's phrase cited was cited by Commissioner Alexander M. Damon, 'for nearly fifty years a leader of The Salvation Army', in his article 'What Does the Common Man Really Want?' written in aid of the 1932 Citizens Appeal for the Salvation Army. SAA.

salvage, begun in New York City'. The title of the publication was explained in the comment:

Salvage is the chosen task of the Army...Salvage, for instance of waste paper, by which it is estimated that seven thousand acres of standing timber are saved each year...the much more valuable salvage of men, women, children – who is to compute the human acreage saved?¹⁷²

The imagery of 'depths' in this analogy was made even clearer in a description of the perceived categories of people found in the 'Bowery' area of New York City. The members of the first group were said to be 'migratory labourers' who stayed in the Bowery because 'living is cheap' and there were plenty of 'tide-over jobs'; the second were 'down-and-outs' who were 'brought low by illness, drink, loss of home [or] loss of work'; but the final group was said to be:

On the fringes, the parasites: panhandlers, hoboes, phony cripples, "snow-eaters," drunks, "lush-divers" – a "lush" being a drunk, a "diver" one who picks his pocket.¹⁷³

Not only were these individuals described as 'parasites', a reuse of the same phraseology found in the 1890s, but the activities which defined their lives were so alien to that of normal Christian behaviour as to require unfamiliar descriptive terminology. Salvationist literature typically presented 'drunks' in a bad light; the idea that a species of 'parasite' had developed to feed off them was clearly intended to be a particularly unpleasant parody of the natural order. It is clear that this description was a conscious attempt to employ the 'depths' literary style, as shown by the publication's reference to noted authors in this field. The publication claimed that one area in New York City 'must be seen to be believed. Only Dickens, Hugo, or perhaps Jack London could do it justice.'¹⁷⁴ Naturally the claim that this area

¹⁷² Salvage (1930) SAA.

¹⁷³ Salvage (1930) SAA.

¹⁷⁴ Salvage (1930) SAA.

could not be described was a tantalising descriptive tool in itself, and suggested an alien and inhuman environment that was beyond parallel anywhere outside of an imaginary fictional world.

Whilst publications of The Salvation Army described the reform efforts of the organisation as effective remedies to existing social problems, this did not prevent the American Salvation Army from expressing pleasure at the selective immigration proposals that were favoured by eugenicists in the 1920s. It seems that this was understood as a work of prevention akin to that promoted in the protection of the innocent from being led astray, albeit on a much larger scale. Although The Salvation Army had operated an ‘Immigration, Americanization and Travelers Bureau’ from 1922 – a work intended to help immigrants make a speedy and successful arrival and integration into American life – this did not prevent their stating:¹⁷⁵

There has been a notable falling off on 3rd Class traffic since the enactment of the 3% Alien Law, which is serving a good purpose in checking the flood of European undesirables which we need not particularize at this time.¹⁷⁶

Although this report claimed that there was no need to ‘particularize’ on this matter, the next page focused exclusively on ‘The 3% Alien Law Restrictions’. The law was described as ‘very beneficial’, but was compared to that of Prohibition for the way it brought ‘schemers’ into existence who sought to outmanoeuvre the law. Two examples were provided to demonstrate this challenge. In the first case a group of

¹⁷⁵ The Salvation Army traced its ‘desire and attempt’ to assist immigrants, with various levels of success, to 1902; the issue of ‘Americanization’, however, was not formalised until 1922. See ‘Twenty Years: The Salvation Army Immigrant Department’ in Immigration, Americanization and Travelers Bureau. 1932 Report by Adjutant Fritz Nelson, SAA.

¹⁷⁶ Immigration, Americanization and Travelers Bureau. 1932 Report by Adjutant Fritz Nelson, SAA.

‘Jews and Italians’ claimed that the law did not apply to them as it had been passed after they had already departed; in the second case it was claimed:

It was well known in immigration circles that the Italian Government officials, police and immigration officers were planning to make it easy to empty their jails and dump them on American shores; the same might be said of Poland and Russia, Austria and some of the Balkan States. The 3% Law put a check on this whorde [sic] of undesirables, and the next trick devised [to] fool Uncle Sam was for the Jew to emigrate to Belgium, France and Germany, live there for a while, and then make claim for passports as nationals of the countries names, for the reason that their quotas were larger than the other countries...¹⁷⁷

The undesirables, at first not described, were later twice identified as ‘Jews’ and ‘criminals’, two terms with seemingly interchangeable associations in this account. This description is striking both for its similarity to the comments found in NYCM and other contemporary restrictionist circles, and for its presence in an organisation which otherwise claimed to make great efforts to assist and welcome immigrant groups. In 1932, as The Salvation Army in New York spoke of the ‘distress arising from continued unemployment’, its appeal for financial help was careful to emphasise that:

The work is based on an unswerving faith in the doctrine of the brotherhood of all mankind...Thus the Army concerns itself not at all with the age, sex, race or politics of those in need. It has no thought of proselytizing. If a man is a Catholic, a Protestant or a Jew, he is encouraged only to be a good one.¹⁷⁸

With both of these reports written in the same year, 1932, it is remarkable that such different accounts were given; this is especially pointed given that the first was essentially a history lauding the work of the organisation amongst immigrants. It is likely that in the actions of The Salvation Army, the description from the appeal

¹⁷⁷ ‘The 3% Alien Law Restrictions’, 1932 Report by Adjutant Fritz Nelson, SAA.

¹⁷⁸ *Hunger Knows No Holiday* (Issued by New York City Advisory Board The Salvation Army, 1932) SAA.

was accurate; the other details recorded by the history of the immigration bureau provide strong evidence that a great deal of help and kindness was offered through this work. However, it is also clear that these facts did not remove The Salvation Army from its contemporary culture. Once people were suffering and in need of help, it was right to assist them; however, if they could be prevented from arriving and causing suffering, The Salvation Army was prepared to share the happiness of immigration restrictionists.

The sections above have shown the ways in which The Salvation Army was drawn into associations with external organisations that voiced eugenic ideas, and also the way that eugenic expressions featured in the writing of Salvationists. In addition to this, there is evidence that the internal professional work of The Salvation Army brought the organisation into contact with eugenic principles. One instance of this is found in the case of Mildred Fahey, an officer in The Salvation Army who enlisted for training in 1929 and who had previously studied at the Boston School of Physical Education. After her training with The Salvation Army was complete, Fahey used her previous knowledge in a series of physical education endeavours. She was first appointed to work at a summer camp for children, then at a newly opened gymnasium in New York City, and finally she led Girl Scout Work; in the case of the last appointment, Fahey was advised to make the most of her physical education training to counteract the fact that she knew little about the Scout movement.¹⁷⁹ Her attendance at The Boston School of Physical Education is significant, as this institution has been identified as a proponent of attempts to create an idealised vision of bodily structure, based upon parallels with body

¹⁷⁹ RG 20.84 Box 81/15 Mildred Fahey Oral History. SAA. pp.21–46.

mechanics and streamlining. In 1922, two years before Fahey began her studies, Marguerite Sanderson, the principal of the school, said that ‘the strong, erect figure is desired not only for military fitness, but is [also] being demanded more and more in industry.’¹⁸⁰ The historian Carma Gorman was hesitant to admit the eugenic nature of such comments; she suggested that although there were similarities between such calls for efficiency and the ambitions of eugenicists, most advocates of ‘body mechanics’ believed postural difficulties arose from environmental, not hereditary, defects.¹⁸¹ Of course, the distance that separated views of heredity and environment was often much smaller than this evaluation would allow; there were many advocates of environmental reform who found no difficulty in supporting eugenics, especially in the United States of America where ‘neo-Lamarckian’ ideas were popular.¹⁸² In addition, the historian Christina Cogdell has made a compelling case to demonstrate that there was considerable overlap between those interested in the efficiency of human bodies, national efficiency, and efficient streamlined products.¹⁸³ Fahey was most likely a unique case in The Salvation Army, recognised as such by the organisation’s decision to make use of her specialised skills; however, her case serves as an example of the way that the widely diffused ideas of eugenics had the potential to enter organisations such as The Salvation Army on a personal level and influence the operation of its activities.

¹⁸⁰ Sanderson cited in: Carma R. Gorman, ‘Educating the Eye: Body Mechanics and Streamlining in the United States, 1925–1950’, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (2006), p.844.

¹⁸¹ Gorman, ‘Educating the Eye’, p.845.

¹⁸² This has been noted in Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*.

¹⁸³ Christina Cogdell, ‘Smooth Flow: Biological Efficiency and Streamline Design’, in Currell and Cogdell (eds.), *Popular Eugenics: National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 2006).

A second example of an interaction between individuals in The Salvation Army and eugenics thinkers is so clear as to be beyond dispute. This resulted from the American Eugenics Society's 1939 'Conference on Eugenics and the Church' (part of the renewed propaganda effort detailed in chapter two) at which The Salvation Army was represented by Brigadier Agnes McKernan of New York City. For most participants it is very difficult to know what impact the conference had. The records of the conference are incomplete, so not all of the papers that were presented survive, and the sheer scale of the meeting meant that it would have been difficult for all to make their views heard. Only four papers were scheduled, but there were over 90 representatives from religious organisations, an additional 43 'guests' from elsewhere, and 'all members of the American Eugenics Society' in attendance. No attempt was made to record the views of all participants, but it is possible to gain some insight into the mood at the event by looking at records of the discussion that took place at the end of the conference. The transcript of this discussion records the opinions of only six delegates. One spoke of disappointment that papers at the conference had given too little emphasis to the problem of 'differential fertility', and efforts to ensure that 'worthy' parents achieved a birth-rate at least equal to replacement. The discussion highlighted one area of agreement, which was the view that churches and eugenicists could work together in the area of the 'home'. Dr. Hall¹⁸⁴ stated:

There was one point about which all papers were resolved...the important thing for the eugenicist and for the Christian, was the influence of the Christian home...It seems to me that the Christian and the eugenicists, as evidenced by these papers, can cooperate in the ideals of the home. Those parents who have no strength to give health to

¹⁸⁴ The only Dr. Hall listed amongst participants was Dr. George Hall of St. Thomas Church New York City.

their children, who have not the money to give clothing to their children, and have not the time to devote to their children, should not have children.¹⁸⁵

As for the majority of other participants, there are no records in the AES papers to indicate what McKernan's opinions were; however, details of her work with The Salvation Army indicate that this synopsis was in considerable harmony with the ideas that she would later express. In the 1940s, an article written by McKernan was introduced by the claim that she was a 'noted penologist' who was throwing 'a challenge into every home'. This theme was closely reflected in the provocative title of McKernan's article: 'Are You A Problem Parent?' The synopsis of McKernan's paper cited her 'widely quoted and widely noted' view that:

"There's got to be a three-way merger if we want to cure juvenile delinquency," says the Colonel. "The Home, the Church and the School. All are important, of course, but the first place to start is in the Home."¹⁸⁶

For a Christian speaker to place greater emphasis upon the 'Home' than the 'Church' was perhaps surprising, but it mirrored the conclusion that had been reached at the AES conference that McKernan had attended. Some of the shock from this emphasis may have been reduced for readers by the fact that she was addressing a 'crime wave'; there was, therefore, the added implication that by having more power than the Church, the home also took more responsibility for failing to combat delinquency. McKernan provocatively asked parents:

Have you a little criminal in your home? A murderer, an embezzler, or maybe just a petty thief? Not your Nancy, or your Peter or your Betty Lou. Surely not... Think again, You may be breeding incipient crime germs when you let Betty Lou slide out of drying the dishes night after night... We

¹⁸⁵ Dr. Hall in 'Discussion'. 575.06 Am3 American Eugenics Society Papers, AES Conference on the relation of eugenics and the church, 1939. APS.

¹⁸⁶ Editors Notes, RG20.37 Box 227/13 SAA.

have juvenile delinquency because we have let our youngsters get out of control.¹⁸⁷

McKernan furnished multiple examples of the type of discipline that should be used by parents and schools, along with examples of disastrous cases of crime, alcohol abuse and sexual misconduct, after which she went on to provide some ‘personal opinion’. In this section McKernan abandoned her previous references to case studies, and focused instead on reforms that she hoped would bring beneficial changes as well as the merit of improved youthful discipline:

I’d like to see compulsory physical training for every American boy and girl. A short period – say a year – of every youngsters life could well be spent under adequate discipline. We not only would improve the nation’s health, maintain a large reserve or National Guard, but would also actively aid crime prevention.

This claim for improved health and morals was echoed in similar language that spoke of a ‘crime epidemic’, and a three-sided preventative strategy as a ‘doctor’s prescription’: ‘if you hand it in at the corner pharmacy and the druggist leaves out one of the ingredients, it’s not likely to cure what’s ailing you’. The only optimism that McKernan provided was the claim that diagnosis of the problem assisted with the pursuit of a cure:

Do you think “any nation goes forward or backward on the feet of its little children” is an outworn cliché? It’s not...But here’s a tip to make it easier. It isn’t as though we’re faced with a tough problem like some scientist trying to isolate an unknown germ. I’ll tell you where to look, alright. The place to nip the crime germ in the bud is in the Home. And the time to begin is NOW.¹⁸⁸

It cannot be known if these views were new to McKernan from her encounter with the AES; however, whether she acquired them there or already had them formed, it

¹⁸⁷ Lt. Col. Agnes McKernan, ‘Are you a Problem Parent?’ RG.20.37 Box 227/13 SAA.

¹⁸⁸ McKernan, ‘Are you a Problem Parent?’

seems certain that her opinions would have met with the approval of the AES. There was clearly life in the eugenic ideology outside of the AES.

The case of the NCPM and of the work of The Salvation Army more broadly with purity organisations reveal an important dynamic of the eugenics movement. Where previous historiography has spoken at times dismissively of the way that eugenics organisations like the EES became ‘distracted’ by issues such as venereal disease, it is clear that for groups like The Salvation Army this issue was an important source of interaction with eugenic ideas. To dismiss such subjects as merely peripheral, disregards the historical reality of the contemporary audience of eugenics, and reduces the movement to an unrepresentative subset of the whole. In the case of the AES it is very clear that it is possible to gain a fuller understanding of the work of the Society by looking beyond its own records, rather than by limiting research to those who claimed an ‘official’ eugenic mantle. The section below will illustrate that this tendency, to overlook the eugenic activities of organisations that were not explicitly limited to eugenic work alone, is not just a feature of modern research, but impacted upon the success of the propaganda itself of eugenics organisations.

Eugenic Organisations’ Struggle to Communicate the gospel

The scale of the work of The Salvation Army, its fame on both sides of the Atlantic, and the nature of its work amongst the ‘submerged tenth’, should result in no surprise that the AES was not alone in its attempts to recruit the organisation to support official eugenics groups. The British EES contacted The Salvation Army even earlier than did the AES, but later came to claim that its attempt to recruit the organisation had failed. It seems that this later episode was evidence of both The

Salvation Army and the EES being unaware of the existing support that The Salvation Army had expressed for the ideology of eugenics.

The first contact between the EES and The Salvation Army was at an ‘Emigration Conference’ organised by the EES in November 1918. The *Eugenics Review* listed a number of high profile attenders, including ‘Sir Harry Wilson K.C.M.G., C.M.G., Secretary of the Royal Colonial Institute’, and various members of the eugenics society.¹⁸⁹ The Salvation Army was represented by ‘Commissioner Lamb’, who was involved with the operation of the Hadleigh Colony. The EES explained that its interest in the subject of emigration rested on the belief that:

the settlement of our half-empty lands by the Anglo-Saxon race is a matter of great eugenic importance. Especially eugenic is the problem of inducing *suitable* representatives of our race to settle.¹⁹⁰

In contrast to the perceived importance of this subject, the EES bemoaned the current haphazard nature of emigration. The Society criticised what it termed the ‘dumping’ of emigrants, whereby people were sent irrespective of local need, and arrived to find no possibilities for employment, which made them become reliant upon crime. This background provided The Salvation Army with a favourable introduction to the EES; the Salvationist programme of emigration was said to offer ‘a splendid contrast’ to the haphazard and careless schemes of other organisations.¹⁹¹ It seems that Commissioner Lamb appreciated this praise, and understood the concerns of the EES, as the following edition of *Eugenics Review* featured a letter from him ‘to the editor’, which developed the subject of Salvationist emigration in more detail. Lamb said that the Army’s ‘Emigration Department’ had been founded

¹⁸⁹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1918 p.295.

¹⁹⁰ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1918 p.277.

¹⁹¹ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1918 p.289.

in 1903, with the aim that it would be ‘helpful to the individual, acceptable to the Old Land, and advantageous to the New Country’. He emphasised that The Salvation Army handled this work responsibly, a factor that the EES had identified as a key aspect of the eugenic significance of emigration, and selected only worthy candidates for emigration. Firstly, ‘the department advises enquirers as to their suitability, encouraging no one to emigrate who does not conform to the standards of suitability and fitness established by its long experience’.¹⁹² This was followed by a detailed enumeration of the types of people that had emigrated through The Salvation Army’s service, after which it was reiterated:

Each person for whom the Salvation Army assumes responsibility has to conform to certain standards of health, character, and adaptability. Of course, all emigrants have to undergo a medical examination, but the fact that in grant and loan cases, the applicants are wanting a monetary obligation, enables the department to make special investigation in regard to them, and consequently the standard of suitability of those who obtain advances is very high.¹⁹³

Lamb provided further evidence of the success of The Salvation Army in finding suitable candidates for emigration, and in ensuring their long-term integration into their new homes, through the observation that ‘in one province it was found that 60 per cent. of the women who went through the Salvation Army had been married within two years of their arrival’. This issue was obviously pleasing to the EES, which had discussed sustainability and fertility as a crucial eugenic issue for the success of emigration.¹⁹⁴

The second interaction of The Salvation Army with the EES presents a striking contrast to this first encounter. Interestingly, it was Lamb who represented The

¹⁹² *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1918 p.91.

¹⁹³ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1918 p.93.

¹⁹⁴ *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1918 p.93.

Salvation Army, but he took a very different approach from that of his earlier desire to present The Salvation Army as an organisation that was compatible with eugenic concerns. The contact began in 1932, when the EES expressed an interest in sending representatives to present lectures before Salvationist audiences. Lamb replied that he had tried to ‘keep in touch with the work of the Eugenics Society’, but feared that he could not ‘be regarded as a whole-hearted follower’. He explained this viewpoint by stating ‘My own observations and experience have led me to regard environment, and spiritual influences ~~and example~~ as powerful factors in race culture’.¹⁹⁵ When Lamb was sent charts to illustrate eugenic problems, he was unwilling to dismiss them as wrong – but begged for time for ‘special pleading’ to be heard in the cases given. It is likely that these charts illustrated whole generations of families, such as the example shown in figure 5.7; in this case, Lamb may have been asking for a very considerable delay to eugenic investigations – one that might stretch across several generations. Of course this was not desirable for the EES, and the report that the representative of the Society gave of a meeting with Lamb was not positive. Lamb had brought two colleagues to the meeting, one argued in favour of the EES ‘from his own experience in breeding fowls’, but it was said that Lamb continued to believe that ‘mental defect is not inherited and can be cured by the miraculous intervention of God’. Despite Lamb’s reluctance to accept hereditarian ideas, he was prepared to offer a compromise, and suggested that some lectures could go ahead using genealogical charts to show inheritance of ‘colour and ability’. This one-sided presentation of heredity was not the vision that the EES had for these lectures, and their representative reported that ‘this of course I said was

¹⁹⁵ Correction present in the original. Letters between Commissioner Lamb of The Salvation Army, and Doctor Blacker and Hilda Pocock of the EES SA/Eug/G.25 Eugenics Society: Propaganda and Publicity: Approaches to religious bodies 1930–1931. Wellcome Library, London.

impossible & the women themselves would know it was only one side of the picture'. He added that:

I suggested that their minds are entirely occupied with the living, but that the Eugenics Society was concerned with the prevention of misery of the yet unborn as well as the happiness of many at present alive.¹⁹⁶

This final criticism was likely to have been felt keenly by The Salvation Army, which had previously been accused of focusing too exclusively upon material problems to the detriment of spiritual reform. In this statement, the representative of the EES likened eugenic reform to that of a future permanent salvation – but one that would be brought about by eugenic regeneration rather than heavenly renewal.

What is most remarkable about this correspondence between Lamb and the EES is not that it took place, for it is now clear that such interactions were not unique, but rather that neither Lamb nor the EES recognised that these debates had long-featured in Salvationist literature. Lamb's refusal to admit the negative potential of heredity was in some ways irrelevant; if the EES desired to claim Salvationist support for their claims, there was a choice selection of published statements already available for their use – even those of William Booth. The contrast between Lamb's desire to present the eugenic wisdom of the Salvationist emigration scheme in 1918, and his correspondence with the EES in 1932, suggests that the issue of control may have been at the centre of the latter disagreement. In 1918 the EES did not ask that The Salvation Army adopt any new policy or ideal, it simply praised the existing work of Salvationists and called for others to follow their example. Lamb was naturally willing to demonstrate the full extent to which the Salvationist

¹⁹⁶ SA/Eug/G.25 Eugenics Society: Propaganda and Publicity: Approaches to religious bodies 1930–1931.

scheme was worthy of support and admiration, and seems to have had no concern about where such praise originated. In 1932 the scenario was rather different. Lamb admitted that he did not intend to dismiss all of the influence of heredity, but was reluctant to allow it any power that the reform efforts of The Salvation Army could not overcome. Even here he only called for more time to evaluate the situation. It seems that this issue of control also guided the approach that the EES adopted towards The Salvation Army in 1932. Rather than allowing The Salvation Army to deliver its own viewpoints on heredity, as had happened previously, the EES wanted to provide its own speakers to address the subject. The EES aspired to the status of an official communicator of eugenic knowledge, but the previous interaction of The Salvation Army with the NCPM demonstrates that this was a wish that was never fulfilled. In this case it seems that the interference of the EES undermined the result that it wished to achieve. The Salvation Army had previously made statements that would have met with the approval of eugenicists, but when asked to make this subject a separate goal, the organisation was led to consider the impact that these ideas would have upon its wider work. When the arguments of eugenics were found to support Salvationist activities, there had been no need to question what impact this type of interaction would have. When there was conflict, the priority of The Salvation Army was to conduct its unique brand of religious and charitable work; eugenics was not accepted where it was seen to threaten that work. It seems apparent that the EES had not received the message of the AES, that eugenics was a message best spread by discretion.

Conclusion

The case of The Salvation Army underlines the fact, found in the examples of LCM and NYCM, that eugenic ideas were widely diffused within society, and significant enough to make a tangible impression upon the thinking of groups that had previously been overlooked in the historiography of eugenics.

It is clear that, when studies look solely to the example of organisations like the EES for an understanding of the ideology of eugenics, they risk ascribing these societies with a position that they did not enjoy when they operated. Groups such as the NCPM and The Salvation Army played an active role in shaping the discourse of eugenics, and it would be remiss to overlook their role in the eugenics movement. Eugenics, like those who promoted it, was widespread within society, and not the exclusive preserve of those who paid membership fees to one particular organisation.

The work by a whole host of religious organisations, like The Salvation Army, in fields such as the reform of prostitutes, opened a whole field of eugenic co-operation that has previously been overlooked by those seeking to detail the religious response to eugenics. In this context, The Salvation Army may be said not merely to have responded to eugenic discussions, but actively to have shaped them by providing evidence that was capable of giving force to those who sought to raise the profile of eugenic concerns. Rather than presenting an historiography which would suggest that *even* organisations like The Salvation Army were able to participate with eugenic ideas, this chapter indicates that it would be more accurate to state that *especially* these groups became involved. Their work, the groups they

were concerned about, and the methods they promoted, all made The Salvation Army a natural associate of eugenic thinkers – and indeed the notion of a ‘submerged tenth’, so prominent in Salvationist social policy, made a significant imprint upon eugenic thought itself.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis is distinct for examining the history of eugenics by looking outside ‘official’ eugenics organisations. Previous historical research has noted that the eugenics ideology was more pervasive than those individuals found in eugenics societies alone; however, despite this recognition, research has frequently continued to limit the scope of the examination of this movement to a narrow range of the supporters of eugenics. This has often been done for reasons of practicality,¹⁹⁷ or out of a deserving interest in the most drastic eugenic actions.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the frame of eugenics has been distorted, and in some cases this ahistorical limitation of eugenics appears to have been intentional. John Macnicol noted that the ‘ideologically fragmented’ nature of eugenics made its definition ‘elusive’, and he accepted that many public figures deployed eugenic arguments; however, Macnicol questioned the extent to which these comments could be considered ‘pure eugenics’. He decided that, in order to avoid the scenario whereby the label of ‘eugenicist’ was ‘placed around the neck of nearly every major political and social thinker’, the pervasiveness of eugenic ideology should be tested in terms of its success at enacting sterilisation legislation. Macnicol concluded, based upon this artificially

¹⁹⁷ Lora Lea Knight used the provocative description of eugenics as ‘promiscuous’ to the extent that the ideology ‘resists definition’. In order to make ‘a meaningful (and manageable) comparison’, she limited her study of British and German eugenics to those who wrote in refereed eugenic journals. Knight, ‘Guardians of the Race: Scientific Eugenics and the Woman Question in Germany and the United States, 1900–1945’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Utah, 2004), p.8.

¹⁹⁸ Lombardo accepted that sterilisation was ‘only one expression of the group of ideas we think of as eugenics’, but the collection of essays that he edited focused almost exclusively on these measures. This decision was based upon the grounds that sterilisation was used so regularly and for so long, and that its status as a medical and legal action means there are good archival records. Lombardo, ‘Introduction’, in Lombardo (ed.), *A Century of Eugenics in America*, p.2.

limited definition of eugenics, that the eugenics movement was not as pervasive or influential as previous studies had suggested.¹⁹⁹

By looking at missionary organisations, whose work was amongst those often on the receiving end of eugenic censure, this thesis opens a new window on the extent to which eugenics operated outside 'official' organisations, and the extent to which the ideology succeeded in impressing its importance on wider society. The missionary organisations fell into two important categories: firstly, they were reformers, and sought to transform individuals, and secondly, they were religious. Previous research has accepted that both of these groups were significant in the history of eugenics, but this is the first systematic analysis of religious reform agencies across the period in which eugenics came to prominence.

The missionary agencies were wholly united in their acceptance that eugenic ideas were worthy of discussion, and required a response. In the case of The Salvation Army and NYCM, this resulted in direct interaction with individuals who were involved in eugenics societies. However, in both these cases, these organisations had expressed ideas that were associated with eugenics before their meetings with the individuals involved in the eugenics movement. In other words, the eugenicists were not responsible for the engagement of these societies with eugenic discussions, but general society was sufficiently diffused with these ideas that they filtered into missionary publications. Eugenics was not the preserve of experts. This is even clearer in the case of LCM, which refused to accept evolutionary theory, and

¹⁹⁹ John Macnicol, 'Eugenics and the Campaign for Voluntary Sterilization in Britain Between the Wars', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1989), pp.149–51, and pp.168–9.

adopted the strictest position of the three organisations with regard to temporal welfare. According to previous historiography, this would make LCM the least likely to participate in eugenic discussions; however, in reality the Mission referred to some of the most extreme forms of eugenic ideology, including the 'lethal chamber' solution. Although this solution was rejected, the fact that LCM referred to this discussion indicates the extent of concern that was present in wider society. LCM publications did not soothe these concerns, but rather extended fears of degeneration by adding a spiritual complication to them. Traditional Christian virtues became the guardian of national physical health, and vice represented the threat of Imperial demise.

The same extreme ideas were expressed in the publications of The Salvation Army. Although the two organisations were at opposite ends of the spectrum with regard to their charitable work (if not always their ways of describing this work), both The Salvation Army and LCM referred to contemporary ideas of human extermination. Charity was at the centre of the discussion of eugenic ideas in all three missions; their differing policies on temporal relief did not change this. LCM largely refused to engage in temporal relief work, yet by focusing upon the 'sin' of the poor as the cause of most environmental suffering, the Mission retained an ability to provide eye-watering descriptions of poverty with no concern about hypocrisy. Individual depravity was responsible for most suffering, and only a transformation of the individual would effect lasting change to physical environments. Where bodily degeneration was accepted, this became but another physical manifestation of sin-induced environmental suffering, and again cause for the same remedy of evangelistic work. A notable exception came in the period surrounding the Second

Boer War, a time that has been widely recognised as one of increased profile for eugenics in Britain. In that period, LCM published opinions from people who believed environmental conditions were creating a ‘stunted’ and ‘weak’ generation that would be incapable of religious devotion. It was in that context that LCM demanded environmental intervention from the government, and also changed its own long-standing rejection of temporal relief work.

LCM publications also endorsed the concepts of heredity and environment as part of conversion narratives; in these instances, the challenges posed by these forces were used to highlight the great reforming power of the Gospel. In essence, the greater the challenge, the greater the victory when these were overcome. LCM publications also preserve examples of the opinions of those that the organisation sought to reform, through accounts of missionaries’ conversations with these individuals. In some instances, these articles reveal a further level to the permeation of eugenic ideas, and show that the ideology was embraced by those who sought to use it in defence of their inalterable behaviour. The context of this argument was new, but not its content. Edward Larson has previously noted that the lawyer Clarence Darrow attempted to use the idea of biological determinism as a legal defence in the 1924 Leopold-Loeb case;²⁰⁰ however, the testimonies recorded by LCM reveal that neither this argument, nor the wider theories associated with eugenics, were the preserve of experts or the highly educated alone.

The publications of NYCM featured the same active discussion of eugenic themes, despite the fact that the Mission adopted an almost wholly different policy on

²⁰⁰ On this event, see Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, pp.69–71.

temporal relief, with physical culture and environmental reforms accepted as an essential component of missionary work. A more active policy of charitable intervention, which included the pioneering venture of nurses visiting people in their homes, placed NYCM in direct contact with individuals at the leading edge of eugenic thought and action. However, as with LCM, NYCM was not merely subject to these discussions, but interpreted them according to its own work – and, again similarly to LCM, extended this interpretation further than was the case outside of the Mission. Ideas associated with eugenics did not merely exist upon the periphery, but came to form a central component of the published accounts of the work of NYCM. These ideas were incorporated into claims that the Mission offered an example of rational, economical solutions to poverty, and that it represented true American values against the threat of undesirable alien immigrants. In these contexts, the publications of NYCM made very early calls for the segregation of morally ‘contagious’ individuals, and used arguments for the restriction of immigration that featured in the writings of eugenicists. In addition to this, NYCM was involved in the organisation of the New York Child Welfare Committee; this group succeeded in bringing together eugenicists and eugenic ideas from an international audience, even before eugenic organisations had managed this task.

Of all the missionary organisations studied in this thesis, The Salvation Army has received the most attention from previous scholarship. However, despite this attention, the presence of eugenic discussions within this organisation had been entirely overlooked. Despite the reputation of The Salvation Army as an organisation that would freely assist anyone who came for help, its publications made repeated attempts to impress upon contemporaries that it knew of the

existence of the undeserving, degraded poor. In this argument there were some for whom William Booth openly accepted nothing could be done; the only option for these individuals was to isolate them from the rest of society. The ideas of heredity and degeneration were not considered to be too controversial to feature in the publications of The Salvation Army; they featured in the blueprint for The Salvation Army's international scheme for social and spiritual reform (William Booth's *In Darkest England*), and in localised publications of the organisation in New York and London.

The work of The Salvation Army in the reform of prostitutes, and its calls for protective legislation for those at risk from this vice, led to direct interaction with organisations of a specifically eugenic bent. One of these interactions, that with the National Council of Public Morals, led to high profile leaders of The Salvation Army publicly adding their names to a list of those concerned about racial degeneration, and calling for the enactment of eugenic remedies. This illustrates the central role that issues of venereal disease and temperance had in the eugenics movement. Rather than being undeserving or peripheral subjects, these issues created interest in the eugenics movement, and brought the ideology into close contact with reformers outside of official eugenics organisations. When the EES approached The Salvation Army for a second time, in 1932, it failed to appreciate the extent to which the eugenics discourse had already been incorporated into Salvationist work. This serves as testament to the failure of official organisations to exert control over the ideas they sought to promote.

It is clear that these missionary organisations, and the religious faith they represented, were not of peripheral concern to eugenicists. In the case of both the AES and the EES, there were consistent, determined efforts to present a form of eugenics that would be compatible with the religious sensibilities of wider society. In the AES, this led to the adoption of religious language and imagery, and the regular concern that eugenics had been misunderstood. This fear led to the remarkable suggestion that the AES should continue its work, but without using the term 'eugenics'. Within the EES, there were repeated attempts to ensure that eugenics was understood as an ideology that was harmonious with, or even the fulfilment of, Christian faith. This policy ultimately came to be attacked, as it was feared that the progress of eugenics had been hampered by undeserving deference to the beliefs of religious communities. The fixated concern of eugenicists over the opinions of religious believers serves to underline the necessity for contemporary histories of the eugenics movement to examine these communities with equal attention.

The need to examine groups external to official eugenics societies is also demonstrated by the awareness of eugenicists that they were not in full control of the eugenics discourse. This awareness was the recognition that guided both the references to a 'misunderstood' eugenics, and the belief that others were doing valuable eugenic work without being aware of it. Samuel Holmes, a member of the AES, wrote in the introduction to his voluminous compilation of eugenics references, that:

It is a noteworthy circumstance that much of our knowledge of the topics covered in this bibliography has come from

writers who were apparently unaware of the relation of their contributions to the problem of human evolution.²⁰¹

This belief contrasts sharply with the ideas expressed by the missionary societies, each of which appeared fully aware of the eugenic implications of their work, and gladly interpreted these ideas according to their own needs.

The widespread nature of the eugenics discourse raises important questions about what it means to research the history of eugenics. During the preparation of this thesis there have been numerous media ‘revelations’ related to the history of the movement; one recurring theme has been the question of how individuals who were involved in the eugenics movement should be remembered. When the Royal Mail considered commemorating Marie Stopes in 2008, the media reported an outcry from individuals who dismissed her as unworthy of recognition owing to her involvement with eugenics.²⁰² There has been similar confusion within historiography; Julian Huxley has been portrayed as a perfect example of a reform eugenicist, even though he was involved in projects like the 1930s EES film *From Generation to Generation*.²⁰³ Huxley had a clear editorial authority in this production, and changed the name of the film from ‘Grapes and Thistles’ to ‘From Generation to Generation’. Both of these titles took their inspiration from verses in the Bible, but the second was considered to be less indirect.²⁰⁴ Despite this influence over the presentation of the film, Huxley did not wince from the statement (which he voiced as narrator of the film) that:

²⁰¹ Holmes, *A Bibliography of Eugenics*, p.1.

²⁰² See ‘The Politics of Stamps’, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7669252.stm>, originally published 4 Oct. 2008, accessed 6 Oct. 2011.

²⁰³ See chapter one, ‘(A)historical moral censure of eugenics’.

²⁰⁴ EES, 12 Jan. 1937, SA/Eug/L.39.

Once such children [those in institutions for the ‘feeble-minded’] have been born we must do the best we can for them...but it would have been better by far, for them and for the rest of the community, if they had never been born.²⁰⁵

There can be no doubt that these ideas were as controversial in the 1930s as they are today, as seen in the decision of the EES to take out liability insurance. The EES feared that without this protection, the film would become useless.²⁰⁶ Outside of this work, however, Huxley was involved in numerous projects of a less macabre nature.²⁰⁷ In striking contrast to the commentary of Huxley on the ‘feeble-minded’, the ‘Communication’ display of the National Museum of Scotland includes a gramophone record titled: ‘Zoo Voices: Round the Zoo with Julian Huxley, M.A.’ (See Figure 6.1). In addition, the work of Huxley at London Zoo is commemorated in the name of a lecture theatre.²⁰⁸ Should there be public outcry against this in the same way that there was over Stopes? How do we reconcile the contemporary perception of the benign narration of a recording of zoo noises, with that of a eugenics propaganda film advocating the elimination of the unfit?

²⁰⁵ ‘From Generation to Generation’ [Heredity in Man], SA/Eug/G.50.

²⁰⁶ EES 8 June 1937; and 12 Feb 1940, SA/Eug/L.10. A slightly more sympathetic review of the film was given in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, which although classifying the work as certificate ‘A’ (suitable only for adults), claimed that ‘the pedigree showing mental defect is forcibly, yet tactfully handled’. *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Vol. VI, No. 61 (1939), pp.28–9.

²⁰⁷ The most detailed examination of Huxley’s life is found in Kenneth C. Waters and Albert Van Helden (eds.), *Julian Huxley: Biologist and Statesman of Science: Proceedings of a Conference held at Rice University 25–27 September 1987* (Rice University Press, Houston, 1992). This work includes papers by Allen and Paul that reach differing conclusions regarding Huxley’s position as a ‘reform’ eugenicist. See: Garland E. Allen, ‘Julian Huxley and the Eugenic View of Human Evolution’; and Diane B. Paul, ‘The Value of Diversity in Huxley’s Eugenics’.

²⁰⁸ The ‘Huxley Lecture Theatre’, see:

<http://www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/corporate-and-private-events/huxley-lecture-theatre-and-bartlett-room.465.AR.html>, accessed 6 Sep. 2011.



Figure 6.1 'Zoo Voices: Round the Zoo with Julian Huxley, M.A.', T.1976.69–T.1976.69.7, National Museums of Scotland. Image © author.

This question is perhaps less pressing for deceased individuals than for societies that trace their history to this period of eugenics. It is not the argument of this thesis that the presence of eugenic ideas within Christian missionary agencies ought to lead to a reinterpretation of these organisations as eugenics societies. In the same way, the presence of Christian ideology and language within eugenics societies did not make them Christian organisations. The existence of similar ideas in eugenics societies and Christian organisations does not prove that one adopted these from the other; in the case of the missionary groups studied in this thesis, there is good evidence that eugenic ideas were expressed prior to the foundation of formal eugenics societies. Instead of this, it is hoped that this thesis illustrates that these groups shared a broad understanding of the problems faced by society, and that there was a great deal of flexibility in interpreting how these difficulties could be faced.

The conclusions of this thesis, regarding the diversity and the diffused nature of the discussions surrounding eugenics, might provide an alternative meaning to the title of the recent book *A Century of Eugenics in America*: it would take a further century to uncover all those for whom eugenics came to represent a compelling aspect of social and scientific thought. Eugenic ideas permeated society, to the extent that they were found amongst the most unlikely candidates.

**Appendix One: Number of Missionaries Employed by New York City Mission
Between 1865 and 1935**

Year	Number of men's branch missionaries	Number of women's branch missionaries (nurses in brackets)
1865	31	6
1866	32	11
1867	34	12
1868	25	13
1869	23	13
1870	-	-
1871	25	15
1872	22	14
1873	22	14 (1)
1874	21	8 (1)
1875	20	7
1876	13	16
1877	15	19
1878	17	19
1879	17	26
1880	15	23
1881	16	30
1882	18	27
1883	18	33
1884	12	34
1885	13	32 (8)
1886	-	-
1887	5	31 (7)
1888	-	-
1889	-	-
1890	6	44
1891	-	-
1892	7	37
1893	5	35
1894	-	-
1895	6	40
1896	6	46
1897	6	-
1898	6	41
1899	6	37
1900	6	38
1901	9	-
1902	14	40
1903	-	-
1904	16	40

1905	15	40
1906	14	40
1907	12	40
1908	12	45
1909	13	45
1910	13	45
1911	-	-
1912	16	45
1913	19	50
1914	16	50
1915	17	50
1916	17	50
1917	16	50
1918	19	50
1919	14	40
1920	-	35
1921	-	31 (10)
1922	16	30 (9)
1923	14	31 (9)
1924	14	32 (9)
1925	-	31 (8)
1926	12	29 (7)
1927	11	31 (9)
1928	11	34 (10)
1929	13	31 (8)
1930	14	38 (9)
1931	-	-
1932	-	-
1933	-	-
1934	-	-
1935	13	38 (8)

Years for which no information is available indicated by a dash.

Total number of missionaries in the women's branch consists of the number in brackets added to the figure to the left; i.e. in 1873 there were fifteen female branch missionaries.

**Appendix Two: EES Involvement in External Events and Organisations, as
recorded in Minutes From 1907 to 1935.**

SA/Eug/L.1

- 3 June 1908 agreed to send a representative to the 'International Moral Education Congress'
- 7 Oct. 1908 agreed to have a representative on the Council of the Social Service Institute
- 9 June 1909 agreed to host meetings with the Chicago-based 'Society for the Promotion of Social Hygiene'

SA/Eug/L.2

- 2 Mar. 1910 invited to send a representative to the 'National Council of Nurses'
- 2 Mar. 1910 invited to the Birkenhead Health Conference
- 6 Apr. 1910 accepted an invitation to send representatives to the Social Welfare Council
- 30 May 1910 agreed to co-operate with other groups in pressing the government to address the issue of the 'feeble-minded'
- 6 July 1910 agreed to send individual members to assist with the Divorce Law Reform Union
- 14 July 1910 sent delegates to the Public Morals Conference
- 1 Feb. 1911 desired to participate in the 'Universal Races' Congress'
- 1 Feb. 1911 sent a representative to join the committee of the National League for Physical Improvement
- 1 Mar. 1911 agreed to co-operate with the 'National Association for the After Care'
- 5 Apr. 1911 sent delegates to the National Health Conference organised by the Royal Institute of Public Health
- 1 Nov. 1911 sought to present papers at the International Prison Commission
- 4 Oct. 1912 sought to present papers to the Child Emigration Society
- 6 Nov. 1912 sent representatives to the National Health Society and the National Health Week

SA/Eug/L.3

- 30 May 1913 sent a delegate to the conference organised by the Criminal Law Amendment Committee
- 15 Oct. 1913 sent a representative to the Council of the Child Welfare Enquiry Office, at the request of the Social Welfare Association
- 25 Mar. 1914 Child Welfare Exhibition
- 15 May 1914 sent a delegate to the conference of the International Federation for the Abolition of the State Regulation of Vice

SA/Eug/L.4

- 17 July 1914 expressed intention to attend a conference on Sexual Research in Berlin
- 21 Mar. 1916 agreed to liaise with the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene regarding its meetings
- 16 Jan. 1917 co-operated with the 'Baby Week' Initiative organised by the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality
- 13 Feb. 1917 agreed to send a representative and memorandum to the Round Table Conference organised by the National Temperance League
- 15 May 1917 Mother's Union

SA/Eug/L.5

- 7 Jan. 1919 Association of Feeble Minded
- 13 May 1919 appointed a delegate to the National Conference on Infant Welfare
- 4 Nov. 1919 shared a stall at 'The "Englishwoman" exhibition' with the National Babyweek Council; the National League for Health, Maternity, and Child Welfare; the National Society of Day Nurseries; and the Women's Imperial Health Association

SA/Eug/L.6

- 5 Oct. 1920 expressed 'good wishes' and sympathy to the All-America Conference on Venereal Disease
- 2 May 1922 accepted the invitation of the Malthusian League to send a delegate to the International Birth Control Congress
- 3 Oct. 1922 participated in the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship
- 1 May 1923 had 'informal discussions' with the Council for Family Endowment
- 26 Feb. 1924 agreed to monthly meetings in association with the Charity Organisation Society, the Royal Institute of Public Health, and National Health

SA/Eug/L.7

- 1 Apr. 1925 agreed to send a representative to the standing conference on Social Work, at the invitation of the Charity Organisation Society
- 6 Jan. 1926, approached the Child Welfare Congress
- 6 Jan. 1926 approached the Leicester Health Exhibition
- 10 Feb. 1926 attended the Birth Control Conference, organised under the chairmanship of Dr. J. C. Bond
- 11 Nov. 1925 hosted a meeting attended by eleven different birth control clinics
- 10 Nov. 1926 participated in the World Population Congress, Geneva
- 10 Nov. 1926 participated in the International Genetics Congress, Berlin
- 10 Nov. 1926 participated in the Public Health Congress, Ghent

SA/Eug/L.8

- 13 July 1928 allowed the British National Population Committee to use the EES address whilst they were without premises of their own

SA/Eug/L.9

- 2 Nov. 1932 expressed the desire to co-opt a representative from the National Union of Teachers for the EES Council

Appendix Three: Letters received by the AES Requesting *A Catechism of Eugenics*

New York	57	Oregon	7	Maine	3	South Carolina	1
California	36	Missouri	7	Connecticut	3	Alabama	1
Ohio	29	Texas	6	New Hampshire	3	Utah	1
Pennsylvania	23	Colorado	5	Nebraska	3	Nevada	1
Illinois	18	Wisconsin	5	Maryland	3	Idaho	1
Iowa	17	Florida	4	North Carolina	3	Virginia	1
New Jersey	16	Washington	4	Arizona	2	West Virginia	1
Michigan	14	Hawaii	4	North Dakota	2	Montana	1
Massachusetts	13	Vermont	4	Georgia	2	Oklahoma	1
Kansas	10	Minnesota	4	Rhode Island	1		
Indiana	7	Louisiana	3	South Dakota	1		

There was also one request from Washington D.C., and further afield there were twelve from Canada, one from the United Kingdom and one which could not be identified.

AESP, Box 1 Abbott-AES Catechism (no.) 5, Folder AES Catechism of Eugenics, Requests (no.) 1 – 5; and AESP, Box 2 AES Catechism (no.) 6 – AES Correspondence (Jan. 1966), Folder AES – Catechism of Eugenics, Requests (no.) 6 – 17.

Appendix Four: Osborn and Dodge Family Connections

The following information is necessarily incomplete as the Annual Reports ceased publishing much of this information in 1901. The monthly magazines contained some of this information but much of this was printed on the covers, which were often not included in the bound volumes held in the New York Public Library. The information that survives nevertheless reveals that the family demonstrated a sustained interest in the work of the Mission, and devoted considerable time and money to the organisation.

Mrs. William H. Osborn [Virginia Reed Sturges 1831–1902]

Second Directress Women's Branch: 1887, 1890, 1892–1893, 1895–1896, 1898–1900

Executive Committee: 1887, 1890, 1892–1893, 1895–1896, 1898–1901

Honorary Manager: 1887, 1890, 1892–1893, 1895–1896, 1898–1900

Obituary, March 1902: Recorded 28 years of service to the mission.¹

Buildings named in her honour: School for Training Christian Leaders (Virginia Osborn Memorial) – Opened 1912; Virginia Day Nursery

William E. Dodge Jr. [1832–1903]

Director: 1865, 1867–1869, 1871–1885, 1887, 1890

Executive Committee: 1867–1869, 1871–1885, 1887, 1890, 1892–1893

Finance Committee: 1868–1869; 1871–1883

¹ NYCMM, Vol. XV (Mar. 1902), p.11 and p.13–15.

Board of Directors, 1892, 1893, 1895, 1896

Treasurer: 1867

Mission Station Committee (Treasurer) 1866

Building Committee 1869, 1884, 1885

Chairman Broome Street Church Committee: 1890, 1892, 1893

Obituary, September 1903: 'For many years a director of the New York City Mission and Tract Society...he steadfastly contributed toward the work most liberally'.²

Mrs William E Dodge Jr. [Sarah Hoadley]

Honorary Manager Women's Branch: 1887, 1890, 1892–1893, 1895–1896, 1898–1900

Mrs W. E. Dodge

Manager, Church of the Covenant (NYCM Church Representative) 1866, 1867, 1868

Board of Managers of the Virginia Memorial and Jewell Nurseries: 1893, 1895, 1896

Mrs H. Fairfield Osborn [Lucretia Perry 1858–1930]

Board of Managers of the Virginia Memorial and Jewell Nurseries: 1895, 1896

Treasurer of Building Fund for new fireproof building: 1900

Obituary, October 1930: Recorded as on the Board of Managers of the Virginia Day Nursery since 1892, and Vice-President 'for several years'; also stated Mrs William

² NYCMM, Vol. XVI (Sep. 1903), p.1.

H. Osborn made the Training School possible from 1895–1916. Noted that ‘Mrs. Osborn...was a real partner in all of Mr. Osborn’s scientific researches’.³

Cleveland H. Dodge [1859–1926]

Director 1885, 1887, 1890

Mrs William Church Osborn [Alice Clinton Hoadley Dodge 1865–1946]

Honorary Manager of the Virginia Day Nursery, 1927–1929

Financial Aid:

The Osborn-Dodge family regularly appeared in subscription lists; a short sample indicates the substantial nature of this support:

William E. Dodge, donations to the Mission Station Fund: \$5,000, 1867; \$2,500, 1868

W. E. Dodge Jr., donations to Mission Station Fund: \$500 1867

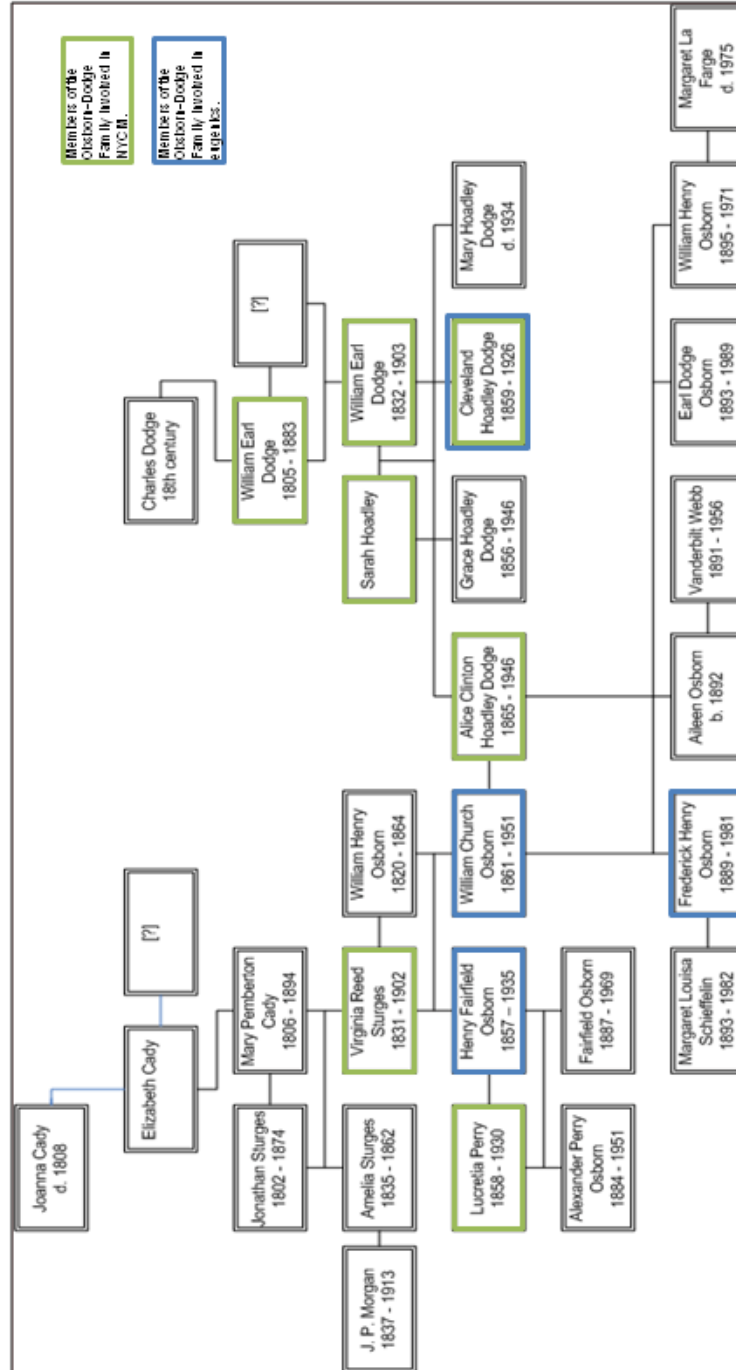
Mrs W. E. Dodge Jr., Support of Female Assistant Missionaries: \$360 –1875

Loulu Perry Osborn: \$50,000 offered to NYCM in connection with the New York Cooking School, later reduced to \$25,000 [Minutes 11 June 1928]

³ NYCMM, Vol. LIII (Oct. 1930), p.13.

Appendix Five: Osborn and Dodge Family Tree

Appendix four: Osborn and Dodge Family Tree



Biographical Information from: Osborn and Dodge Family Papers Finding Aid, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University Library – <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/getEad?e.adid=C0537&kw=>, accessed 5 Oct. 2011

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American Museum of Natural History, Archives and Special Collections, New York

Eugenics Papers of Frederick H. Osborn and Gladys Schwesinger, Box 5, Eugenics E8, Folder 9

Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers. Correspondence: Individuals, Boxes 5 – 11 [especially correspondence between HFO and Leonard Darwin, C. B. Davenport, Madison Grant, Julian Huxley]

American Philosophical Society Library Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:
575.06.Am3 American Eugenics Society Papers:

Box 1 Abbott – AES Catechism (no. 5). Folders: American Eugenics Party; AES By-Laws, Constitution, Certificates of Incorporation (no.) 2; AES By-Laws, Constitution, Certificates of Incorporation (no.) 3.

Box 1 Abbott – AES Catechism (no.) 5. Folders: Catechism of Eugenics, Requests (no.) 1 – (no.) 5

Box 2 AES Catechism (no.) 6 – AES Correspondence (Jan. 1966). Folders: Catechism of Eugenics, Requests (no.) 6 – (no.) 17

Box 2 AES Catechism (no.) 6 – AES Correspondence (Jan. 1966) Folders: Conference on the Eugenic Aspects of Housing; Circulars; Conference on Eugenics in Relation to Nursing, 1937; Conference on Medicine and Eugenics; Conference on Publicists, 1937; Conference on Education and Eugenics, 1937; Committee on Finance and Membership; Committee on Legislation

Box 5 AES Crackpot – AES Iowa. Folders: AES Eugenics Committee Minutes 1922; AES Eugenics Committee Minutes, 1923; AES Eugenics Committee Minutes, 1924; AES Eugenics Committee Minutes, 1925; AES – Fairs (Exhibits); AES Fitter Family Contest; “Crack-Pot” Literature (no.)1

Box 7 AES Membership Camp 1930 – AES Popular Educ. Comm. Folders: AES Minutes, 1925–1926; AES Minutes,

- 1927–1929; AES Minutes 1930–1935; AES Minutes February–June 1936; AES Minutes, September–December 1936; AES Minutes, January–May 1937; AES Minutes, January–May 1938; AES Minutes September–November 1938; AES Minutes, 1939; Folder AES Minutes, 1940; AES Minutes 1941–41; AES Membership Campaign, Miscellany; AES Popular Education Committee
- Box 11 AES Princeton 4th (Transcripts (no.) 6) – AES Printing Orders. Folders: AES Printing Orders (1926–1942) (no.) 1 – (no.) 15
- Box 12 AES Program in Genetics – AES Treasurer’s Report. Folders: AES Sermon Contest, 1926 #2 – #7
- Box 13 American Frame – Cheste. Folders: [Entrants to the Eugenics Sermon Contest] Arndt, H.; Baker, Rufus C.; Benedict, George; Butler, W. F.; Cameron, Duncan P.; Carlson, Walter M
- Box 14 Clark – Gottesman. Folders: [Entrants to the Eugenics Sermon Contest] Close, Kenneth R.; Colley, Thomas E.; Connolly, Charles Parker; Evans, Wayne; Cunningham, A. F.; Davis, Percy Allen; Donaldson, George Huntington; Dowd, Quincy Lamartine; Elliott, Alfred O.; Fetter, George C.; Gemmill, Benjamin M.; Godwin, W. F.
- Box 15 Graham – Hutchins. Folders: [Entrants to the Eugenics Sermon Contest] Griffin, William E.; Hansen, J. A.; Harris, Sidney E.; Hester St Clair; Hill, Ruth K.; Horst, E. Clemens;
- Box 16 Ingraham – Morton. Folders: International Commission on Eugenics [Meetings of the International Commission on Eugenics Ad Interim Committee of the United States of America, Feb. 1922–Sep. 1922]; International Congress of Eugenics, 2nd Executive Committee, Minutes [1921]; Folders of committee members and those approached for the committees.
- Box 16 Ingraham – Morton. Folders [Entrants to the Eugenics Sermon Contest] Kearnst, Lewis; Kirkpatrick, Edwin A.; Knox, Sarah T.; Loeb, Leo; MacArthur, Kenneth C.; MacCullum, John Archibald; Marley, H. P.; Mayer, Harry H.; Mead, J. Calvin; no. 27; no. 35; no. 4
- Box 17 Mo-Osborn 17 Papers, Folder Osborn, Frederick – Papers. Folders: (no.) 2 [‘Memorandum on the Eugenics Situation in the United States, May 24, 1933’]; (no.) 3 [‘A Eugenics Programme for the United States’ (Dec. 1935); and ‘Social Morality in a Diminishing Population’ (1934 and

1935)]; (no.) 4 ['Notes for Eugenic Program', 1934; Heredity and Environment Paper, 1934]; (no.) 5 [Frederick Osborn address at the Conference on Population Studies in relation to social planning, 1935]; (no.) 6 ['Moral Responsibilities of Parenthood', 1936]; (no.) 8 [memorandum of remarks at birth control meeting, 1937]; (no.) 9 [Philosophy of Eugenics, 1938; American Eugenics Society Annual Meeting, 1938]; (no.) 10 [Frederick Osborn article in *Living*, 1939; Paper at Annual conference of health officers, Saratoga Springs, 1940]; (no.) 11 ['Adventures in Science', 1940; Paper delivered before the Maternal Health Association of Ohio, 1940]; (no.) 12 ['Heredity and Eugenics Today: Is Eugenics Practical?'], 1948]

Box 18. Folders: [Entrants to the Eugenics Sermon Contest] Osgood, Phillips Endecott; Pengilly, Richard; Philip, William Anderson; Simmons, Daniel Monroe; Slaten, A Wakefield; Smiley, James L.; Stoops, J. D.; Stockwell, F. Olin; Tegarden, J. B. Hollis; White, Frederick M.; Wagner, H. N; Waterman, Joseph MacNaughton

London City Mission Archive, 175 Tower Bridge Road, London

Memoir of George Gillman, recalling fifty years of work with London City Mission.

The London City Mission retain minutes of committee meetings for the entire period covered in this thesis.

New York City Mission Society Archive, United Charities Building 105 East 2nd Street, New York, NY. [Prior to my research the organisation was unaware of the extent of its historical records, which were kept uncatalogued and unknown in filing cabinets. In the hope these fantastic records are more widely consulted I have listed the scope of this collection below.]

Appointment Diary: 1864–1865 (including reference to the abolition of slavery)

Applications to the mission's Gramercy Training School, 1885: application forms of Alberta Morrow; Amelia Slaughter; Butler; Deborah Knot; Eleanor Pendleton; Eliza E Rockwill; Helena Blackadar; Katheryn McLeod; Lucy Sanderson; Maria Williams

Biography of John Dooly and letter from author; and Dooly testimony letter from the cornerstone of the Broome Street Tabernacle

‘City Mission Scrap Book No. 11’: Cuttings from various newspapers and periodicals October 1880–June 1886

‘City Mission Scrap Book No. 12’: Cuttings from various newspapers and periodicals July 1886

Diary of Camp Sharapoon, 1939

Easter promotional publications of the Female Branch of the New York City Mission: 1903–1905; 1910; 1914–1941; 1946.

Finance book and minutes: 1860

Financial ledger: 1867–1890

Unpublished Annual Reports 1812–1822

Minutes of the Female Branch: 1822–1827; 1825–1827; 1847–1877; 1878;

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Female Branch: 1874–1880

Minutes of the Committee: 1827–1828; 1831–1847; 1866–1890; 1867–1872; 1891–1897; 1898–1903; 1903–1910; 1910–1914; 1914–1935; 1936–1941; 1940–1952

Minutes of the Executive Committee: 1866; 1872–1891

Mission Station Book: 1865–1867

New York Historical Society

Osborn Papers – Box XII – Lucretia Perry Osborn undated correspondence and papers. These were consulted for information concerning Lucretia Osborn’s involvement with NYCM, but the letters are primarily between Lucretia, her publisher and HFO.

Osborn Papers – Box XXV Henry Fairfield Osborn Diaries 1912–1927

Osborn Papers – Box XXVI Henry Fairfield Osborn Diaries 1928–1935

The National Archives, London

BT 58/37/COS/4412, Incorporation application from the National Council of Public Morals to the Board of Trade.

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MH 51/547, Correspondence between the Eugenics Education Society and the Board of Control regarding sterilisation legislation, 1920s–1930s.

The Salvation Army International Heritage Center, Denmark Hill, London

Social Services: Rescue Work Folder

Social Services: Poor Man's Lawyer Folder

[Social Services: Prisoners (work among) A) books, pamphlets etc (incl. book reference list)]

[Social Services: Prisoners (work among) B) correspondence]

[Social Services: Prisoners (work among) C) Memorandums, reports, newsletters etc]

Social Services: Prisoners (work among) D) periodicals

[USA: General – beginnings to 1920]

The Salvation Army National Archives and Research Center, Alexandria, Virginia, U.S.A.

Congresses: National Conference of Social Work, 1936

Day Care Centers: Rescue and Medical Services; Social Services

Emigration and Immigration

Food and Shelter Programs

Farm Colonies

Fresh-Air Charities – Camps

New York City, 1870s

RG 16.1 Cherry Tree Children's Home Collection, Box 195/14 and 195/15

RG 18.1 New York, New York – Cherry Street Corps, Slum Settlement and Day Nursery – Slum Settlements

RG 20.37 McKernan, Agnes, 1883–1981

RG 20.84 Fahey, Mildred Parker, 1906–1988 Personal Papers and Manuscripts

Woodyards – Adult Rehabilitation Centers

Women's Social Services

The Wellcome Library, London. © The Galton Institute.

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SA/Eug/D.55 Eugenics Society, Church Congress, 1930

SA/Eug/G.25 Eugenics Society, Propaganda and Publicity, Approaches to religious bodies 1930–1931

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1914–1918

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1918–1920

SA/Eug/L.6 Eugenics Society, Council and Executive Council
1920–1924

SA/Eug/L.7 Eugenics Society, Council 1925–1926

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SA/Eug/L.9 Eugenics Society, Council 1930–1934

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SA/Eug/L.11 Eugenics Society, Council 1941–1952

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