

Redeeming the City: Premillennialism, Piety and the Politics of Reform in Late-Nineteenth Century Toronto

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When William Howland addressed his loyal supporters gathered at Shaftesbury Hall on 1 December 1885, the inauguration of his first campaign for mayor of Toronto, he spoke candidly and honestly about the need for urban reform. About the election itself, Howland declared that it would be one “in which politics have nothing to do as far as I am concerned.”¹ While on one level this prediction resonated with a proverbial rhetoric typical of municipal politicians at this time, it also spoke substantively to the need for change in a civic governmental system that was clearly fueled by “partyism” and “self-interest.” Even more ambitious than his first, Howland’s second proclamation targeted the moral fabric of the entire city. Howland pledged to retain for Toronto “the character of an honourable city, a God-fearing city,” claiming that he “would rather see it thus than the greatest and richest city in the continent.”² The overwhelming support of these statements voiced by the 1,500 supporters gathered in the Hall, as well as the pointed criticisms leveled against them by more cynical observers,³ revealed the degree to which the public already recognized Howland’s campaign as an unprecedented one that extended beyond the traditional bounds of civic politics. Upon his election to the mayor’s office, Howland quickly confirmed the public’s perception of him as a new breed of politician by opening City Council in prayer and erecting a large motto in his office that read “Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman Waketh in Vain.”⁴

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Despite the intrigue and seeming novelty of the electoral proceedings of 1885, William Howland's speech to his supporters voiced the aspirations of a group of social and political reformers that has received limited treatment in Canadian historiography. As historians of religion and social reform in the transatlantic, Anglo-American world have noted, the voluminous and variegated responses by Protestants to social developments during the late-nineteenth century have made it difficult to refer to "social reform" in monolithic terms. Yet, while acknowledging the broad spectrum of Protestant social initiatives that appeared in the late-Victorian era, Canadian historians have usually slighted what is perceived as the highly moralistic, individualistic and reactionary activities of evangelicals like Howland in favour of more socially "innovative," more intellectually "modern," or more "scientifically and collectively" oriented patterns of social reform that took root in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ It is my contention here, however, that by ignoring, dismissing or even condemning altogether the political and social activities of Howland and the coterie of evangelical reformers around him, historians not only miss out on an important dimension of reform at work in late-Victorian Toronto, but also overlook an important stage in the evolution of a much-broader developing social consciousness in central Canada.⁶

If Howland and like-minded advocates of reform have been on the historiographical margins it certainly is not because of their social and cultural standing. Encompassing all of central Canada but primarily Toronto-centric in composition and focus, the network of evangelicals of which Howland was a part represented one segment of a new Canadian urban elite that was inherently business-derived and oriented.⁷ Among the laymen who operated at the centre of this network of evangelicals, three of the most prominent (and most familiar to historians) were Samuel Blake, Henry O'Brien and Howland.

The second son of Chancellor William Hume Blake of University College and brother to the popular Hon. Edward Blake, Samuel Blake (1835-1914) was born into a well-established family with widespread influence.⁸ Like his brother, Samuel became a lawyer and was called to the bar in 1860. In 1872 he was made a Queen's Counsel by the Ontario Government and then became vice-chancellor of the Ontario Court of Chancery, a post offered to him by John A. Macdonald. Like Samuel Blake, Henry O'Brien (1836-1931) was a low-church Anglican who

succeeded in the legal profession.⁹ O'Brien also was born into a reputable family which included his father, Col. E.G. O'Brien, a naval and military officer in charge of the first settlement at Barrie and Shanty Bay, and his brother, William O'Brien, a federal politician who acquired prominence during the Equal Rights affair of the early 1890s. Henry was the long-time editor-in-chief of the *Canadian Law Journal* and editor of the important *O'Brien's Division Court Manual*, both significant contributions to the legal literature of the time. Although less involved in the business world than many of his evangelical associates, O'Brien did devote a great deal of time and effort to local politics, even serving as Howland's campaign manager in the latter's drive for municipal reform in Toronto during the 1880s.

Without question, the most prominent layman in the network was William Holmes Howland (1844-1893).¹⁰ Howland too was born into an economically and politically influential family: Howland's father was Sir William Pearce Howland, a man of Puritan stock who came to Canada at a young age from Watertown, New York and quickly made his fortune in the grain trade.¹¹ William H. Howland was involved in numerous business ventures during his relatively short life;¹² he was, in fact, president, vice-president or a director of more than a dozen companies during his lifetime. During the late 1870s and the 1880s Howland turned his attention toward the political arena by becoming a founding member of the Canada First movement and, most significantly, by running successfully as mayor in Toronto.¹³

As part of the larger business community, these men were not averse to consolidating social, professional and political ties with Protestants of different denominational and theological stripes through active participation on various boards and councils or in common recreational interests. Henry O'Brien, for example, founded one of the most prominent social clubs in Toronto, the Argonaut Rowing Club, as an outlet for this sort of interaction with other leaders in the community.¹⁴ Their involvement in various interdenominational enterprises and religious associations further indicates the extent to which Howland, Blake, O'Brien and their cohorts shared with many other contemporary evangelicals a common belief in the efficacy of the traditional revivalistic approach to social reform. Imbued with a "religious zeal" that would soon be considered by more radical reformers as anathema to social change, these "conservative evangelicals"

maintained that the most effective means of correcting societal ills was through the spiritual salvation of the individual.

But as willing as they were to form broad alliances with other reform-minded Protestants on the basis of shared sensibilities, Howland, Blake, O'Brien and their associates also maintained certain distinct theological views about what this process meant and how it should be carried out – views that have perhaps served to marginalize them further within the annals of late nineteenth-century reform. Generally speaking, this group of reformers drew exclusively from only those denominations that were committed to a Calvinist view of the Christian faith: Anglican, Presbyterian and Baptist.¹⁵ Conspicuous by their absence from this network of reformers were Methodists. In trying to account for this truancy one contemporary observer half-jokingly surmised that for this group of Calvinist “holy discontents” there “was always the sinister doubt as to whether on that particular day, or in that particular week or month, the Methodist was or was not fallen from grace.”¹⁶ While derisive in tone, this explanation nevertheless points to some of the doctrinal differences that prevented Methodists from joining the ranks of this network of reformers.¹⁷ But if doctrinal orientations and denominational loyalties set these Calvinistic reformers apart from their Methodist counterparts, even more important in bolstering this group’s theological sympathies were the underpinnings of two other intellectual currents: Keswick holiness and premillennialism.

A transatlantic movement that emerged during “Bible and holiness” conferences held at the scenic Lake-District site of Keswick, England, Keswick or higher life holiness selectively integrated ideas from Wesleyan perfectionism, Romanticism and moderate Calvinism,¹⁸ and blended them into a unique theology which stressed personal holiness, intense piety, millennial expectations and Christian service.¹⁹ Essential to this teaching was the idea that the Christian experience was two-tiered state, consisting of a lower or “carnal,” and a higher or “spiritual” state. Movement from the lower to the higher state required, first a crisis conversion experience, and second, a definite act of consecration at which time the believer surrendered fully to God. It was only after this full surrender that the believer was able to realize victory over sin and become a “clean vessel” ready of Christian service.

Within British and North American evangelical circles, Keswick’s heavy emphasis on service in the Christian community and

activism in society at large, as well as its strong dimension of supernaturalism, engendered a real affinity for premillennialism. “Those who believed in the imminence of the second advent, the decisive entry into history, were attracted by the idea that the power of God could already break into human lives.”²⁰ Indeed, whereas Keswick holiness provided Canadian evangelicals like Blake, Howland and O’Brien with a personal, experiential basis for service in the community, premillennialism supplied the energy for such activism. Among the most pressing forces underlying the reformist activities of these Canadian evangelicals was the sense that personal and societal betterment needed to be realized contingently lest the impending return of Christ find a city and a nation unprepared for the final judgement.

Contrary to the more popular postmillennial belief in progress and the gradual Christianization of society, nineteenth-century premillennialists thus believed that churches and culture were both in decline and that this inexorable trend would continue until the apocalyptic return of Christ. Rather than trying to “Christianize the social order,” an ideal which, in their minds, could never be fully achieved, premillennialists considered it the duty of all believers to “redeem the time” by saving as many souls as possible before Christ returned. Far from a radical innovation, this notion of time was deeply embedded in the historical development of Christianity and corresponded with nineteenth-century revivalism and its innate accent on crisis and immediacy.²¹ Explicit in this theology, therefore, was a cultural view that decried the seeming complacency that accompanied societal “progress”; while social and human betterment was accepted as good in itself, it was not to be equated with the realization of a spiritual kingdom.

Because premillennialism often assumed a more radical form in nineteenth-century Canada, such as in the Millerites who predicted the end of the world in either 1843 or 1845,²² this belief system has usually been dismissed by Canadian historians as a fringe movement that had little bearing on the mainstream of Canadian society.²³ Yet, in the late-nineteenth century premillennialism also gained a following among a more gentrified and respectable class of evangelical Protestants. Howland, Blake and other Canadian premillennialist reformers were just a few of the many leading evangelicals from all parts of North America and Britain, for example, who, throughout the 1880s and 1890s, gathered annually at Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario for the Niagara Believers’

Conference.²⁴ Held in July, “in the dog-days, between tennis and polo tournaments, in a pavilion on the grounds of the Queen’s Royal Hotel on the high cliffs overlooking the river and the lake,” this week-long event encouraged fellowship and worship across denominational lines as well as the collective study of Bible prophecy.²⁵ Unlike early-nineteenth-century Millerites or twentieth-century fundamentalists, the Canadians who gathered at this annual prophecy conference (as well as at other similar conferences scattered across North America) espoused a moderate form of premillennialism that rejected any systematic attempts to apply prophecy to historical or current developments and instead emphasized the necessity of spiritual readiness and action communicated through biblical prophecy. As one prominent Canadian clergyman declared in this regard, “What the prophet wishes to fix attention upon is the justice of the Divine government and the necessity of man keeping in mind that the day of retribution will certainly arrive. This is what is really important in the case.”²⁶

Although less insistent than their clerical counterparts in articulating their premillennialist outlook (thereby making it more difficult to measure how exactly this belief system personally impacted them), Howland, Blake and O’Brien nevertheless operated from a clear understanding that Christ’s return was imminent. For the most part, this meant that the reforming efforts of these men elevated the salvation of the individual over the complete restructuring of society. It was this type of thinking that encouraged Howland, Blake and O’Brien to focus much of their attention on the systematic creation and maintenance of several “gospel welfare” institutions ranging from homeless shelters and rescue homes for women to halfway houses and orphanages.²⁷ One of the most important and prominent of these was the Toronto Mission Union, an institution founded in 1884 by Howland, Blake and O’Brien as a corrective to what they considered a serious neglect of the poor by mainline denominations.²⁸ By providing broader, more efficient services to the unchurched of St. John’s Ward and other areas of Toronto without the encumbering formalities of the denominational system, this organization sought to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of the poor, with a decided emphasis on the latter.²⁹

But also embedded within this “salvationist” ideology of reform was an inveterate sense that the spiritual redemption of the individual was closely tied to the restoration of the community. It was only in a

morally upright and physically safe and nurturing environment, these reformers believed in true Keswick fashion, where individuals would be most able to realize salvation, and in turn, live out the disciplined Christian life in the last days before Christ's return. Of course among those whose moral and physical environments garnered the most attention from this group were children and youth, that sector of society which was considered the most innocent and least deserving of God's impending wrath. On one level Howland and his associates worked toward helping inner-city children through the temporary removal of them from the oppressive physical environments in which they were forced to live. This was accomplished, among other ways, by supporting the Children's Fresh Air Fund, a program organized in 1888 by John Joseph Kelso to allow poorer children to leave the poverty-stricken St. John's ward for a day outing on the water.³⁰ Less temporary but similar in nature were this group's efforts (led by Blake) to promote educational reform and provide alternative forms of institutional correction for juveniles. Two of the most notable programs supported by this network which demonstrated this type of commitment were the Victoria Industrial School for boys and the Alexander School for girls, institutions that sought to provide special instruction for neglected boys and girls in academic and occupational subjects as well to nurture them in the spiritual, moral, and intellectual virtues of "true manhood" and "true womanhood"³¹

As articulated in Howland's election diatribe against the extant political machine, informing this group's social activism was a clear sense that the old voluntaristic spirit of nineteenth-century evangelicalism was the most efficient and effective means of dealing with social problems.³² Unlike later, more radical social reformers whose organic view of society eventually abated distinctions between the state and the individual, these conservative evangelicals for the most part maintained a classical liberal idea of government that saw the institution as a source for primary aid only when called upon by individuals. Nevertheless, despite this inherent faith in "depoliticized," voluntaristic forms of social reform, Howland and his associates were not entirely averse to the increased role of government in social improvement; nor were they ideologically opposed to operating themselves within the state apparatus. One may say, in fact, that in many ways, these evangelicals were among

the first to envision the shift from laissez-faire political and economic thinking to a more positive, interventionist view of the state.

One of the most common ways these reformers enjoined government involvement was through effective lobbying for legislative reform; often, such lobbying took place through the less arresting support of sympathetic provincial and federal politicians who themselves were petitioning for legislation on issues ranging from education and juvenile correction to the defense of female propriety and voting privileges. But these reformers also lobbied for institutional reform on their own behalf and on their own terms. Among the most important political quests for these men was their ongoing campaign for prison reform. With Howland acting as its first president and Blake as its primary legal representative, the Prisoners' Aid Association was founded in the 1870s to help prisoners re-enter society after their release,³³ and more importantly, to promote change at the institutional level.³⁴ Besides lobbying for greater distinctions between juvenile and adult offenders, the Prisoners' Aid Association petitioned for the proper classification of adult prisoners according to the severity of their crimes.³⁵

Howland's election as mayor, moreover, demonstrates that these premillennialist reformers were also willing to operate from within the political system – a fact that appears to many historians as incongruous with the “otherworldly” emphases of this group's eschatology. In dealing with the paradoxical question of why nineteenth-century British apocalyptic evangelicals who believed in the world's imminent destruction were among the most interventionist in their political ideology, Boyd Hilton suggests that these paternalists were eager to use any means possible, including governmental intervention, to protect their inferiors from the impending “stormy blasts.”³⁶

While Hilton's assessment contains much truth it fails to appreciate fully the extent to which premillennialist reformers, at least on this side of the Atlantic, actually challenged existing social and political structures and affected substantive, more permanent change to the benefit of Toronto's under classes. Though infused with the rhetoric and moralizing sentiments of the dominant upper middle-class, male, Anglo-Saxon elite, Howland and his associates were concerned with more than providing a moral and spiritual “safety net” for the disenfranchised. Some of their efforts, it may even be suggested, anticipated (whether intentionally or not) and even encouraged a transformation in social

consciousness that would ultimately lead to the broadening and deepening of concerns for structural deficiencies in Canadian society. One area in which this was evident was in Howland's dealings with working class men and women.

Despite the list of reasons offered by the local "working-class" paper the *World* for why Howland should not garner the support of the working man (most notably his stand against taverns), Howland in fact received a surprising amount of support from labourers, both during his two election campaigns and while in office. One explanation for this is that the labour unions that organized and informed the working class were not, at this point, interested in upsetting the social order; in fact, many of their leaders were aspiring to the same middle-class status and values as Howland.³⁷ But just as important was the fact that throughout his political career, Howland not only claimed to understand and even speak for the interests of the working class but, during his term in office, made a concerted effort to back up these claims with political acumen.³⁸

As mayor, Howland was forced to contend with two major strikes, the first at the Massey Manufacturing Company in January of 1886, and the second at the Toronto Street Railway Company later that same year. Although his support for the striking workers in both cases had little effect in resolving the issues that precipitated these conflicts, Howland's endorsement of labour did not go unnoticed.³⁹ Howland also advanced the cause of labour in his involvement in the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labour and Capital. Sponsored by the Federal Government in the late 1880s, this Commission attempted to engender collective reform in Canadian industry by bringing together the interests of pro-National Policy capitalists and organized labour.⁴⁰ In his testimony to the Commission Howland offered numerous suggestions for further legislation that would improve working conditions for the lower class, and particularly for working-class women.

Howland's efforts on behalf of women trapped in austere working conditions were by no means radical enough to signify a break with the sensibilities of his middle-class male contemporaries. Howland's view of working-class women, for instance, was often patronizing in tone, and at times he regarded them as weak individuals who, for any number of reasons, had fallen short of virtuous womanhood.⁴¹ In his own contribution to the Commission, Howland characterized working women as victims, "a helpless class" subject to the whims of greedy industrialists,

and he was quick to point out that one way women often responded to harsh working conditions was by accepting prostitution as an alternative source of employment. But while recognizing that poverty was a major determinant in influencing women to explore this seedy alternative, Howland still maintained that women who took this approach did so in order to gain an “easier way of life.” By simultaneously raising and discounting the economic rationale for prostitution, Howland in this way “declared his belief, typical of evangelical reformers, that working-class women’s ‘rooted laziness’ was the real cause of the problem.”⁴² In the final analysis prostitution was an option for those girls who “had no good training” or supervision and who chose to abandon a moral livelihood for one of leisure. Alternatively, Howland praised the working women who chose the second possible response to exploitation: perseverance. Believing that “a good woman would prefer death to prostitution,”⁴³ he extolled the ability of working women to endure their hardships. In reporting his own findings to the Commission he singled out sewing girls and shop girls as a class “worthy of all respect.”⁴⁴ In his opinion it was “wonderful how bravely they fought the battle of life and how honestly and decently they lived.”⁴⁵

According to Howland, then, one way labour conditions would improve for women was if they themselves were properly trained and nurtured and able to raise the moral standards of all those around them, including their employers. Howland, in this sense, hoped to instill in working-class women the virtues he found evidenced in the middle-class women he admired and supported through various religious and political endeavours.⁴⁶ But as laden with Victorian paternalism as it might have been, Howland’s support of working-class women extended beyond moral and behavioural solutions. Indeed, unlike many of his contemporaries, Howland believed that the only way fair treatment of women in the work place would be achieved and maintained was if government regulation was greatly expanded and broader, systematic alterations to the economic system implemented.

Certainly critics have been justified in noting that while Howland claimed to speak for working-class men and women, he demonstrated little understanding of the deeper, economic and gender imbalances that precipitated this group’s unrest. His solutions to the labour troubles that marked the late nineteenth century were thus usually simplistic in nature, usually entailing a call for moral uplift or an appeal to the consciences

of employers. Yet, Howland was also genuinely determined in his quest to change the environment workers were forced to endure, so much so that he was even willing to publicly challenge the business practices of Hart Massey, one of the foremost Christian benefactors of the day, and lobby for broad legislative measures for the protection of working men and women. However naive and narrow his efforts might have been, therefore, Howland's encounter with labour suggests that premillennialist reformers were moved by more than a desire to provide a temporary opiate for the less fortunate. Though clearly implicated in the economic boosterism of the period, premillennialists like Howland, it may be argued, had slightly less at stake in the material progress of society. This coupled with a sense that societal gains were fleeting nurtured within this group of reformers an appreciation of society's under classes that was perhaps more realistic than that shared by their contemporaries. Such an appreciation was only magnified by a Keswick belief system that endorsed a more holistic understanding of personal redemption and made imperative the physical and structural as well as spiritual and moral reformation of society.

Such explanations for the social activism of this group of reformers may be more suggestive than definitive, and thus open to some debate. But at the very least, the multi-leveled and varied efforts by these reformers to address what they considered the most pressing social needs of their generation suggest that premillennialism melded with Keswick holiness and a traditional emphasis on revivalism served as a potent stimulant for social action. The breadth of these efforts, moreover, not only suggests that premillennialism had much to contribute to the developing social consciousness of the late Victorian era but that this powerful reforming impulse was not yet that different from others advanced during this time. Following the lead of Walter Rauschenbusch who once stated that premillennialism was "a dead weight against any effort to mobilize the moral forces of Christianity"⁴⁷ historians have continued to portray premillennialists as non-involved and little-concerned individualists who, on account of their privatized belief system, chose to fold "their arms in anticipation of the Lord's return and let their dying world pass them by."⁴⁸ Such a simplistic reading, however, fails to note that behind the apocalyptic imagery of premillennialist rhetoric was an essential optimism that was fueled by the "moral and salvific meaning of the Lord's return," a stimulant for

social action that was similar to the “surge of historical hopefulness that irradiated the new theology” of liberal evangelicalism.⁴⁹ In short, a more nuanced understanding of premillennialism suggests, therefore, that the meaning of salvation and social reform for Howland, Blake, O’Brien and their associates was not that dissimilar from the one held by other more “pro-gressive” reformers. While they differed on what came first, both saw the redemption of the individual and the community as intrinsically linked. Indeed, the question for premillennialists was the same one facing most reformers: not one of whether to save souls or the social order, but how to save both.

Endnotes

1. *Globe*, 2 December 1885.
2. *Globe*, 2 December 1885.
3. The most scathing criticism of Howland’s proposed agenda appeared in the pages of the *World*, the self-proclaimed voice of the working class. Even while acknowledging some of the positive contributions of Howland, the newspaper undermined his political acumen stating that “the ratepayers are not voting on philanthropy, on zeal, or on teetotalism, but ‘on a question of civic administration’” (*World*, 2 January 1886).
4. *Globe*, 20 January 1886.
5. For a cross-section of some of the most important works on religion and social reform in Canada see Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); Sara Z. Burke, *Seeking the Highest Good: Social Service and Gender at the University of Toronto, 1888-1937* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996); Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); and Brian Fraser, *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).
6. One historian who has not overlooked this group of social reformers is Ronald Sawatsky. His dissertation, “‘Looking for that Blessed Hope’: The Roots of Fundamentalism in Canada, 1878-1914” (Ph.D. Diss., University

of Toronto, 1985), provides an extensive look at the religious and social activities of this group within the context of early North American fundamentalism. Although I am less interested in understanding these reformers as precursors to twentieth-century fundamentalism, much of the background information in my paper stems in part from Sawatsky's invaluable study. For a more focused discussion of this group's placement in early North American fundamentalism see Darren Dochuk, "Redeeming the Time: Conservative Evangelical Thought and Social Reform in Central Canada, 1885-1915" (M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, 1998).

7. J.M.S. Careless, *Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1984), 128.
8. Blake's ties to the "establishment" were strengthened through his marriage in 1859 to Rebecca Cronyn, the daughter of the Anglican Bishop of Huron. Biographical information on Blake is readily available in H.J. Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898); George Maclean Rose, ed., *Cyclopedia of Canadian Biography* (n.p., 1886); and W. Stewart Wallace, *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1963).
9. For biographical information on O'Brien see Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, 776, and Wallace, *Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 623.
10. Although a prominent figure in Toronto during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there are few biographical accounts of Howland. The only comprehensive study of Howland is Desmond Morton's *Mayor Howland: The Citizens' Candidate* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973). Morton's work focuses primarily on Howland's quest for and attainment of the mayorship of Toronto in the mid-1880s. Another work that provides insight into Howland's social and religious views is Lindsay Reynold's *Footprints: The Beginnings of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Toronto: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1982). See also Victor Loring Russell, *Mayors of Toronto*, vol. 1 (Erin: The Boston Mills Press, 1982).
11. William Pearce Howland's reward for supporting John A. Macdonald in the Confederation debate in 1867 was a knighthood and the lieutenant governorship of the newly created province of Ontario. William H. Howland ended his formal education at age sixteen and took over his father's business while William Sr. pursued his political interests. In 1873 the younger Howland extended his ties among the elite by marrying Laura Chipman, the sister-in-law of Sir Leonard Tilley, another father of Confederation. William and Laura had six children.

12. Howland died suddenly of pneumonia in 1893 at the age of 49.
13. For Howland's inauspicious contribution to the Canada First movement see George T. Denison's first hand account, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity: Recollections and Experiences* (Toronto: Macmillan and Co., 1909). For a historical account of Howland's relationship with the Canada First movement see Carl Berger, *A Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).
14. O'Brien was an avid boatsman who served as the first president of the Canadian Association of Amateur Oarsmen. He founded the Argonaut Rowing Club in 1872.
15. This group was also comprised of individuals who were part of other sectarian groups, such as the Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren, or who were just in the process of leaving the mainline churches to start new "denominations," most notably the Christian and Missionary Alliance.
16. George H. Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas, 1884-1934* (Toronto: Rinehart and Company, 1952), 7.
17. This group of reformers did not define themselves in opposition to their Methodist brethren. Important theological differences, however, kept these two reforming strands distinct from one another. Unlike the Arminian belief system upheld by Methodists, the Calvinist impulse that informed Howland's, Blake's, and O'Brien's theology was predicated on an understanding of salvation and human development which emphasized divine intervention over human agency: humans were not able to cultivate their own spiritual regeneration or rise above their physical, moral, and spiritual shortcomings without first being chosen by God. This emphasis on the sovereign power of God accorded well with the premillennialist belief system and its emphasis on a cataclysmic and supernatural conclusion to human history. Thus, unlike Methodists who remained committed to a human-centered and optimistic postmillennialism, many Calvinists found a natural extension for their predestinarian beliefs the eschatology of premillennialism. For a firsthand account of these theological differences see Thomas Voaden, *Christ's Coming Again: An Exposition of His Teachings on that Subject and a Refutation of Premillennial Views* (Toronto: McClelland and Sons, 1918).
18. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 77.

19. See Katerberg, “‘A Born Again Propagandist’: Dyson Hague and Evangelical Anglicanism in Canada, 1857-1935” (M.A. Thesis, Queen’s University, 1991), 31. Critical to this theology was the middle ground it sought on the issue of human nature. As Marsden explains, “While rejecting as too strong the Wesleyan view of the eradication of one’s sinful nature, the Keswick teachers rejected as too weak the more traditional view that one’s sinful nature was simply suppressed by Christ’s righteousness.” Adherents to Keswick teaching, therefore, believed that a state of holiness, or victory over sin, could be achieved, but that this state had to be constantly maintained and renewed through a continual process of repeated “emptyings by consecration and ‘fillings’ with the Holy Spirit, or the ‘Spirit of Jesus.’” This belief evidently distinguished Canadian conservative evangelicalism from the Canadian Methodist tradition and the strict Calvinist, Princeton theology in the United States, even as it tried to bridge the gap between both (see Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 77-78; and Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* [Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989], chaps. 3 and 6).
20. David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 152.
21. Premillennialism is, arguably, the older of the two main Christian conceptions of time, tracing its roots to the apocalyptic millenarianism that was prevalent in the early church. As Joel Carpenter explains, “Christian millenarianism was revived by radical religious movements during the late Middle Ages and spread through left-wing Protestant ranks during the Reformation. It continued to have a wide circulation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially among the English Puritans and the Pietists of Europe.” Donald Dayton adds that “Protestants have moved back and forth between postmillennialism and premillennialism, especially in periods of revival that seem to promise the advent of the millennium and in times of social change that seem to enliven the more “apocalyptic” of the biblical texts.” In the nineteenth century, a time when evangelicalism enjoyed ascendancy in North American culture, the less drastic postmillennialism proved to be the most popular among Protestants (Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 247; and Donald Dayton, *The Prophecy Conference Movement*, Vol. 1 [New York: Garland Publishing, 1988], 3). For a useful discussion of the connections between revivalism and premillennialism, see Jerald C. Brauer, “Revivalism and Millenarianism in America,” in *In the Great Tradition: In Honor of Winthrop S. Hudson*, eds. Joseph D. Ban and Paul R. Dekar (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1982),

147-160.

22. The best account of Millerism is a collection of essays edited by Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler, *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993). For an assessment of Millerism's impact in Ontario see William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), chap. 6.
23. Even two of the most respected historians of Canadian religion, S.D. Clark and John Webster Grant, have reinforced this view by either typecasting premillennialists as religious fanatics dislocated from society, or by simply devoting little space to the development of this system within Canadian religion and culture (see S.D. Clark, *Church and Sect in Canada* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948], chap.6; and John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988]).
24. First organized in 1878 by a group of Americans, which included such prominent leaders as Nathaniel West, James H. Brooks, William J. Erdman, Henry Parsons and Adoniram J. Gordon, the Niagara Conferences represented the most popular and continuous of several prophecy conferences staged in cities like Philadelphia, New York and St. Louis in the late nineteenth century. These conferences have received some attention by historians, but primarily from within a theological framework. The first major work to highlight the historical impact of this event was Ernest Sandeen's *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970). Sandeen considers these conferences as the foundation of the fundamentalist movement. Other unpublished works have used Sandeen's paradigm in their own assessments of the Niagara Conferences (see Larry Dean Pettegrew, "The Historical and Theological Contributions of the Niagara Conference to American Fundamentalism" (Th.D Diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976); Ronald G. Sawatsky, "'Looking for that Blessed Hope': The Roots of Fundamentalism in Canada, 1878-1914"; Walter Unger, "'Earnestly Contending for the Faith': The Role of the Niagara Bible Conference in the Emergence of American Fundamentalism, 1875-1900" (Ph.D Diss., Simon Fraser University, 1981).
25. Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas*, 12.
26. William Caven, *Christ's Teaching Concerning the Last Things and Other Papers* (Toronto: The Westminster Company, 1905), 89.

27. The term “gospel welfare” is borrowed from Norris Magnuson whose work, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1977) examines the proliferation of these types of social work in the United States. For a more complete treatment of these and other reform efforts undertaken by this group see Dochuk, “Redeeming the Time.”
28. The idea for the Union came from Howland in the wake of his own battle, and dismissal, over ritualism in Grace Anglican Church, a church he had helped build in the early 1880s to minister to the poor. Howland’s experience in this affair had led him to believe that many of the established churches lacked the necessary conviction and vision to “modify and check the usual evils of increasing population” in Toronto (Henry O’Brien Papers, Box 1, Envelope 17, Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library).
29. This philosophy was at the root of the “institutional church” movement in North America which, during this, sought to establish independent churches that met all of the basic needs of the local community. This approach was adopted by some of the most prominent conservative evangelicals in the United States, including Russell Conwell. In fact, Conwell once estimated that there were 173 institutional churches in America in 1900. This movement undoubtedly influenced Howland. For an account of this movement see Cross, ed., *The Church and the City, 1865-1910* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967); and Aaron Abell, *The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900* (London: Archon, 1962). The largest, and most important of the missions was the Sackville Street Mission. Located in St. John’s ward, this mission was, in 1953, the last of the Toronto Mission Union ministries to close its doors.
30. For account of this program see John J. Kelso, *Early History of the Humane and Children’s Aid Movement in Ontario, 1886-1893* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1911). As described by Kelso, the first of these excursions, on 27 June 1888, started with the collection of approximately 400 children in St. John’s ward, and continued with a procession down Yonge Street to the water culminating in a boat ride on Lake Ontario. The spectacle of 400 children marching down Yonge Street was made even grander by those who led the procession. At the front of the children were two of the leading humanitarians of the city, William Howland and the Methodist philanthropist, William Gooderham, and a fife band of the Boy’s Home which led the children in hymns such as “Shall We Gather at the River?” and “Jesus Loves Me” (*Early History of the Humane and Children’s Aid Movement in Ontario*, 26).

31. For a history of these two schools see John J. Kelso, "Early History of Victoria Industrial School," Industrial Schools Association of Toronto Papers, MU1409, Ontario Provincial Archives. Useful secondary accounts of the development of child welfare in Ontario include Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); and Richard Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893: A Study of Public Welfare Administration* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).
32. The traditional voluntaristic approach appealed to these evangelical reformers for at least three reasons. First, by relying on the personal and financial support of individual believers rather than on that of the state, this system celebrated the same values esteemed by middle-class Christian businessmen: stewardship and efficiency. Secondly, the sense of personal duty that was ingrained in voluntarism accorded well with the impulse for Christian service that these evangelicals gleaned from the teachings of Keswick holiness. Finally, voluntarism offered a paragon of Christian community created through the democratic means of persuasion rather than coercion or obligation. This model appealed to evangelical laymen who believed that reform could only occur from the "bottom up."
33. For a brief account of the creation of the Prisoners' Aid Association, see Sawatsky, "Blessed Hope," 241-243. The most active years of the organization began in the mid-1880s after Blake replaced Howland as president. Splane attributes this to the fact that Blake "appears to have been able to devote more attention to the work than Howland, who was mayor of Toronto during this period" (Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario*, 186). The Prisoners' Aid Association maintained a house that provided accommodation and employment workshops. In addition to providing training, the Association also provided jobs for reformed criminals, often in companies, like the Willard Tract Society, which were owned by evangelical reformers.
34. Many of the ideas that the Prisoners' Aid Association endorsed came out of its participation in the Congress of the National Prison Association held in 1887.
35. For an inside account of the political activities of the Prisoners' Aid Association, see Samuel Blake, *Our Faulty Gaol System: Memorandum of an Address Delivered on Behalf of the Prisoners' Aid Association, in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto* (reprinted from *The Methodist Magazine and Review*, November 1896).
36. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 213.

37. Morton, *Mayor Howland*, 23.
38. The clearest expression of this was when Howland testified before the Royal Labor Commission in 1887. In his testimony Howland claimed that his thirty years of serving in the working-class districts of Toronto allowed him to speak with authority and empathy on the issues facing this group (*Globe*, 1 December 1887).
39. For a secondary account of these two strikes see Morton, *Mayor Howland*. Howland was, in both cases, powerless to provide any permanent solutions to the conflicts. In the case of the longer and more violent Toronto Street Railway strike, Howland was forced to end the affair after three days of rioting.
40. See Greg Kealey, ed., *Canada Investigates Industrialism: The Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital, 1889* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).
41. Howland's view of working-class women did not differ from either side represented in the Commission. Both camps, labour and pro-National Policy advocates, for example, voiced a greater concern for "the morality of the women who were swept up in the process of industrial growth" than for the need to curtail improper male behaviour in the work place or facilitate female unionization" (see Karen Dubinsky, "'Maidenly Girls' or 'Designing Women'? The Crime of Seduction in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, eds. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992], 31).
42. Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 35.
43. *Globe*, 1 December 1887.
44. *Globe*, 1 December 1887.
45. *Globe*, 1 December 1887.
46. Howland preached the virtues of Victorian womanhood and was very supportive of middle-class women in their fight against various social ills. In fact, he provided this new "voting bloc" with all the political and legal support he could by lobbying for a significantly expanded franchise for women in municipal elections. See "Mayor's Inaugural Address, 1887," in William H. Howland Biographical File, City of Toronto Archives.

47. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 203.
48. Timothy P. Weber makes this point in *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 66.
49. Grant Wacker, "The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910," *Journal of American History* 72 (June 1985): 62.