

which forms the subject of this picture and which is intimately connected with the colonisation of our country, among the associations which it wakens in civilised minds are those connected with infant baptism; for in old Christian countries that anyone should arrive at the age of maturity without being admitted by baptism into the pale of Christianity is a most unusual occurrence. But here – in this country and in this rite – we see old men and children praise the name of the Lord, and confess that his name alone is excellent.’¹⁰ Such was the reaction of Wellington colonists to the acceptance of Christianity by a highly regarded chieftain of the proud race on which an alien culture was making its impact. Sentiments expressed, moreover, by those who had come to the infant colony to make a better life than that offered in their homeland where Englishmen were forcibly coming to recognise that hundreds of thousands of their fellows worked and suffered and lived in as much ignorance of Christianity as any ‘noble savage’.

It is significant that on the same page of the *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Straits Guardian* a reference is made to the engraving in the *Illustrated London News* (of 9 April 1853) of the interior of Otaki Church from Mr Barraud's drawing but the two works are not linked. The inference that can be taken from this is that contemporary Wellingtonians knew where the baptism took place, especially as the *Wellington Independent* did not find it necessary to mention the venue.

The Petone pa at this time is recorded as being the largest and best fortified in the Wellington district, and its 136 residents better off as regards ‘comfort and wealth’ than all other Wellington natives.¹¹ William Colenso writes ‘they have built themselves a weather boarded Chapel with shingled roof . . . their *one* glazed semi-gothic window in the East End of their Chapel had a large plain cross in it – painted red on the outside.’¹² He makes no mention of distinctive Maori decoration in the Chapel. In marked contrast to this, Rangiatea Church at Otaki was remarked upon by clergy, travellers and the Governor himself. Archdeacon Hadfield reported to the Church Missionary Society that it was ‘the finest native building in the country’;¹³ Reverend Richard Taylor termed it ‘a noble Maori edifice’;¹⁴ Charlotte Godley while not admiring its ‘barn-shape’ found the ‘inside very handsome in effect in the peculiar Maori style’.¹⁵ Sir George Grey in a letter to Reverend H. Venn, secretary of the Church Missionary Society, referred to the building of the church by native labour, its cost to build and observed that ‘being built of the most durable materials will stand for a century at least’.¹⁶

To return to Barraud's painting, there is no evidence to suggest that it was in fact lithographed and it would seem to have remained unknown and forgotten until acquired by Mr Nan Kivell. It can be assumed that Sir George Grey did not bring it back to New Zealand