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Very Wor. Bro. Right Rev. Christopher George Barlow (1858-1915)

Rt. Rev. Christopher George Barlow was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1858 but was sent over to Brecknock College in Wales for his education. After finishing College, he went into partnership with his stepfather in a manufacturing firm in London, but resigned from the business to become Secretary to his life long friend, Rev. George Henry Stanton, on his appointment as the Bishop of North Queensland.

He was later called to the Anglican priesthood and was made a deacon on 18 December 1881 and served as a curate at Mackay. After ordination on 14 September 1882, he was inducted as Rector of St. Paul's, Charters Towers where he stayed for a three year term.

He was Mission Chaplain from 1885 to 1886, Vicar General and Commissary 1887, Hon. Canon of North Queensland 1887 to 1891 and Vicar of St. James, Pro-Cathedral, Townsville from 1886 to 1891. His spiritual qualities, unobtrusive nature and organising abilities were highly thought of by both clergy and laity.

Very Wor. Bro. Right Rev. Barlow's consecration to the See of North Queensland was on St. James' Day, 1891 in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, by the Bishops of Sydney, Grafton and Newcastle. His election had previously been challenged when it was discovered he had no University Degree. The Archbishop of Canterbury soon remedied that by issuing him with a Lambeth Doctorate of Divinity.

After consecration in Sydney, he travelled to England to recruit priests.

He was enthroned in Townsville on 10 April 1892 and journeyed around the diocese for the next ten years re-organising parish and diocesan incomes and widening church activities, despite droughts, cyclones and a depression. Mission work among the Pacific Island sugar workers at Mackay and on the Herbert River, among the Aborigines at Yarrabah and the Chinese at Townsville, Cairns and Charters Towers, were among his numerous activities.

Realising his Diocese was too large for one Bishop, he raised funds for the Diocese of Carpentaria which was created on 28 November 1900. It was once regarded as his greatest achievement, but later his wisdom came to be questioned.

Originally an Evangelical in churchmanship, he gradually changed to a more moderate liberalism with emphasis on spirituality in worship and the personal faith of clergy. In an address to the New South Wales Provincial Synod, he deplored party bigotry within the church and asked for more humanity and tolerance towards differing points of view.

Having served so long in a tropical climate and being subject to frequent bouts of endemic diseases and long visitation tours his health weakened considerably.

