Evangelical Seceders from the Church of England, c. 1800-1850.

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Christ Church

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This Work is Dedicated to my Wife--Catherine Louise Carter--and to my Parents--James Charles Carter and Iona Mary Carter--Whose Love and Encouragement has Sustained me Throughout its Completion.

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Short Abstract

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Evangelical Seceders from the Church of England, c.1800-1850

This thesis examines the major themes and personalities which influenced the outbreak of a number of Evangelical clerical secessions from the Church of England during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Chapter one discusses the relationship between the Evangelicals and the Church of England.

Chapter two examines the Evangelicals' objections to certain aspects of the Established Church during the late eighteenth century, especially those things which appeared to inhibit evangelism.

Chapter three examines Irish Evangelical seceders, in particular the secessions of John Walker and Thomas Kelly. These influential clergymen abandoned the Church and established their own 'connexions' based on a return to 'Apostolic' principles, which were propagated with disruptive effects on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Chapter four investigates the outbreak of the Western Schism: a small band of well-connected Evangelical clergy and laymen who seceded from the Church of England in 1815, and formed their own religious 'connexion.' The Schism's antinomian influence was considerable, provoking an alarmed response.

Chapter five enquires into the outbreak of millennial expectation in England, in particular the influence of

Henry Drummond and Edward Irving, and the founding of the celebrated Albury Conferences for the study of unfulfilled prophecy.

Chapter six explores the similar outbreak of millennial expectation in Ireland. Lady Powerscourt, the Powerscourt Conferences, the early career of John Nelson Darby, and the formation of the Christian Brethren are all considered.

Chapter seven is set in Oxford, where Darby's teachings were being advanced by Henry Bulteel, the influential Evangelical curate of St. Ebbe's. The propagation of Bulteel's dogmatic Protestantism produced a theological and doctrinal backlash, which paved the way for the advancement of the Oxford Movement and the publication of the Tracts.

Chapter eight examines the secession of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, and the Evangelical response to the Gorham affair.

Chapter nine probes into the contentious case of the Rev. James Shore, and the canonical implications of clerical secession from the Church of England.

These Evangelical secessions were often influential out of all proportion to their numbers, provoking consternation within both the Church and Evangelicalism, and highlighting the inherent tensions between the evangelical conversionist imperative and the principles and practice of a national religious establishment.

Long Abstract

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Evangelical Secedersfrom the Church of England, c.1800-1850

This thesis examines, within a chronological framework, the major themes, events, and personalities which influenced the outbreak of a number of clerical and lay secessions from the Evangelical wing of the Church of England during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The first chapter discusses the complex relationship between the Evangelicals and the Church of England. The Revival was cradled in the Church and most Evangelicals remained warmly disposed towards it: the Church's parochial structure, which provided spiritual 'ducts of conveyance' by which the isolated and impoverished regions could be reached with the gospel, was lauded as an important aid to evangelism; its episcopal structure was admired for ensuring the exercise of proper authority and order; and its formularies were praised as Scriptural and Apostolic, and for providing a necessary prophylactic against the introduction of heretical doctrines.

Moreover, the great majority of Evangelicals warmly supported the continuation of the Church-State connection. Establishment secured the endowments and provided the rates by which the parochial structure was sustained, it helped promote social order and civil respect, and it assisted the State in meeting its obligations to promote true Christian teaching and belief. As the debate over establishment heated up in the 1830s, prominent Evangeli-

cals, such as Thomas Chalmers and Hugh McNeile, through the celebrated debates sponsored by the Christian Influence Society, came to the forefront in defending the principle and practice of a religious establishment.

At the same time, as chapter two explores, the eighteenth-century Evangelicals were not uncritical of the Church and frequently took an ambivalent stance towards it. In the view of most early Evangelicals, the true Church was the 'Church of Christ,' the invisible body of all regenerate souls, and it was this body--and not the visible Church of England--which commanded their ultimate loyalty. Hence, the extension of Christ's invisible Church by soul-saving took priority over the demands of earthly institutions, even if this involved the violation of Canon law through 'trespassing' into the 'dark' parishes of neighbouring clergyman.

There were other hindrances to evangelism which strained the loyalty of the early 'gospel clergymen' towards the Church. The bishops made ordination difficult for Evangelicals. The patronage system blocked Evangelicals from appointments to livings, and broke the continuity of Evangelical teaching in parishes where a 'gospel clergyman' had died or retired. Inertia and social conservatism hindered the work of evangelism. Added to these tensions were others of a doctrinal nature. The revival of Reformed doctrines which had been overlaid since the Restoration, aroused a good deal of clerical opposition. Evangelicals were branded as 'enthusiasts' and neo-Puritans by their opponents. Not surprisingly, some early 'gospel clergymen' came to despair of winning a permanent

place for their movement within the Church. Frustration played a large part in the gradual drift of Methodist clergymen, like John Wesley, away from the Church they had tried to awaken, and in the outright secession of others, such as Thomas Wills, of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion.

In spite of these difficulties, by the onset of the nineteenth century Evangelicalism had established a bridgehead in the Church. The movement had a growing hold on the middle classes, advowsons were being purchased by Evangelical benefactors, and 'gospel clergymen' were increasingly being placed in positions of spiritual influence and power. Consequently, the Evangelical movement rapidly became more respectable and more closely tied to the Church of England.

In chapter three, the scene switches to Ireland, where, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the burgeoning Evangelical movement experienced a serious setback through the secessions of John Walker and Thomas Kelly. These talented, but erratic 'gospel ministers', arguably the most capable and influential Irish Evangelicals of their day, established their own rival bodies based on their interpretation of 'Apostolic' principles. From this new perspective, they openly denounced the Established Church and seriously disrupted the harmony of Irish Evangelicalism. More importantly, Walker, in particular, by promoting his dogmatic high Calvinism, encouraged the doctrine of separatism: that true believers must dissociate themselves from the 'world' (especially the Established Church), and unite within an 'Apostolic' form of church polity. Doctrines which had been advanced earlier

by the Scottish Dissenters John Glas and Robert Sandeman, were repackaged and propagated by Walker within Irish and English Evangelicalism, with disruptive effects.

Chapter four examines the outbreak of similar views in England, during the so-called Western Schism. This high Calvinist and antinomian disruption in the West Country involved a relatively small number of well-connected clergy and laymen, who seceded from the Church in 1815 and formed something resembling their own 'connexion.' The influence of the Schism upon the Church of England, and especially upon Evangelicalism, was much greater than numbers alone indicate, provoking an alarmed response. It also proved important in providing leaders who were to surface again in subsequent secessions.

Chapter five examines the outbreak of millennial expectation in English Evangelicalism, and its influence upon a number of 'gospel clergymen' who seceded from the Established Church. The leading role of Henry Drummond--seceder, Tory MP, banker, religious philanthropist, and a former figure in the Western Schism--is examined, as are the Albury Conferences for the study of unfulfilled prophecy which he organized. An account is given of Drummond's spiritual ally, Edward Irving, perhaps the leading figure in English millennialism, who indirectly influenced a number of Evangelicals to secede from the Church, and helped the spread of the 'prophetic fever' across the Irish Sea.

The outbreak of millennial expectation in Irish Evangelicalism, and the consequent secession of a number of leading Evangelicals from the Established Church, is exam-

ined in chapter six. Paramount among those who advanced these teachings in Ireland were Lady Powerscourt, who organized the influential Powerscourt Conferences for the study of unfulfilled prophecy (the Irish equivalent of the Albury Conferences), and John Nelson Darby, who, as a young curate, resigned from the Church and formed his own extremely influential 'Apostolic' movement: the Christian Brethren. In Darby one can see the recrudescence of many of the teachings of John Walker: high-Calvinism, separatism, and a return to 'Apostolic' teachings, served up to the evangelical world in dogmatic fashion.

In chapter seven the study returns to England--to pre-Tractarian Oxford--where Darby's teachings were being advanced with vigour and not inconsiderable success at St. Ebbe's Church. Henry Bulteel, the high Calvinist Curate of St. Ebbe's, provided an interesting and important Evangelical counterpoint to the eloquent preaching of John Henry Newman at St. Mary's. Both were influential in undergraduate circles, both provoked official opposition within the University, and both eventually seceded from the Church of England: Newman for Catholicism, fame and possible beatification; Bulteel for Protestant Dissent and obscurity. Prior to his secession, however, Bulteel advanced the doctrines of high Calvinism with a vehemence seldom heard within the English Church of his day. His influence in Oxford during the late 1820s/early 1830s was considerable. Many undergraduates, such as William Gladstone, were temporarily attracted to Bulteel's dogmatic Protestantism only to abandon it for some form of High Churchmanship, such as that being advanced by the early

proponents of the Oxford Movement. Bulteel's unsteady spiritual trajectory is indicative of the disturbed state of ultra-Evangelicalism at this time: after seceding from the Church he became, at first, an Irvingite; later a Strict Baptist; and finally, it appears, a member of the Christian Brethren--thus suggesting that the potential points of connection between the various Evangelical seceders were considerable.

Not all Evangelical seceders left the Church of England because they were drawn by the millennial hope or because they were high Calvinists. In chapter eight the secession of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, perhaps the most influential of all Evangelical seceders, is examined. Noel was a Whig, reformist Evangelical who was deeply troubled by the Church's inability to reach the populations of the great cities with the gospel. The Church, he argued, had become bogged down in its own legal and administrative inertia. Its legal constraints and parochial structure placed harsh and unnecessary encumbrances on evangelism; untold millions were now going untaught in the truths of the gospel. Moreover, the Church's opposition to pan-evangelical cooperation further isolated the urban masses from gaining access to spiritual truth through interdenominational missionary expedients. The Church-State connection, Noel concluded, was doomed; the Church must be freed from the chains of an unchristian State. Until this occurred, he would be compelled to minister among the Dissenters where he had more freedom of movement and thus more effectiveness. Noel's influence was considerable; his secession was a severe blow to Evangelicalism and to

the Church, not least because it came at an awkward moment during the height of the Gorham affair--another crisis which drove a small number of Evangelicals to secede from the Church, and threatened to completely divide the Establishment along Protestant-Catholic lines.

In the final chapter, the legal ramifications of clerical secession from the Church of England are examined. James Shore, an obscure Evangelical clergyman from rural Devon, was caught up in a prolonged conflict between his patron, the Duke of Somerset, and his Diocesan, the fiery and temperamental Henry Phillpotts, the Bishop of Exeter. When Shore attempted to secede from the Church (taking his congregation and building with him), Phillpotts instituted legal proceedings alleging that long-standing Canon Law prohibited clergymen from seceding from the Church of England. This not only provoked a long and embittered legal battle which drew national attention to Shore and to the plight of seceding clergymen, but resulted in Shore being imprisoned for the crime of seceding from the Church. The implications for all seceding clergymen were considerable: public outrage was expressed throughout the country, and a Bill was introduced in the commons to remedy the situation. Nevertheless, Shore remained in prison for some months until, close to death, he was finally released. Although no other cases of clergymen being prosecuted for seceding from the Church could be found, the threat of such action hung for years over the heads of those Evangelicals who felt compelled to abandon the Anglican ministry for that of Protestant Dissent.

Although the number of Evangelicals who seceded from the Church of England during the first half of the nineteenth century was not large, the secessions which did occur were often influential out of all proportion to their numbers. Moreover, there probably remained, just beneath the surface, the potential threat of a large disruption similar to that which occurred in Scotland in 1843. Hence, the Evangelical seceders provoked consternation within both the Church and Evangelicalism as a whole, and highlighted the tensions between the evangelical conversionist imperative, and the principles and practice of a national establishment of religion.

List of Abbreviations

Al. Cant.	*Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Part II. Compiled by John and J.A. Venn. 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1940).
Al. Dub.	*Alumni Dublinenses*. Edited by George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir. (Dublin, 1924).
Al. Ox.	*Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886. Edited by Joseph Foster. 4 vols. (Oxford, 1888).
A.R.	Annual Register.
B.L.O.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
B.M.	Baptist Magazine.
C.G.	Christian Guardian.
C.O.	Christian Observer.
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
E.R.	Eclectic Review.
Ed.R.	Edinburgh Review.
E.M.	Evangelical Magazine.
G.M.	Gentleman's Magazine.
J.E.H.	Journal of Ecclesiastical History.
J.R.H.	Journal of Religious History.
Non.	Nonconformist.
O.R.O.	Oxfordshire Record Office.
V.E.	*Vox Evangelica*.

Notes:

1) The use of the term 'Evangelical' in this study refers to those adherents of 'serious religion' within the Church of England; conversely, 'evangelical' refers to those of a similar theological leaning who adhere to various forms of Protestant Nonconformity.

2) In selected quotations and references, capitalizations have been standardized in keeping with modern usage and fashion.

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The initial suggestion for undertaking a research project in English church history was made by Dr. Wesley Balda in February 1982. At the time, it was impossible for me to envision the completion of such an ambitious task. His encouragement, both initially and at several points during the course of this study, is greatly appreciated.

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My introduction to American Episcopalianism occurred at All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, California. Its stimulating worship, community life, and challenging ministry advanced by the Rector, the Rev. Dr. George Reg-

is, have all been greatly missed by a homesick Californian.

My first exposure to English Evangelicalism occurred at St. Aldate's, Oxford. This vibrant congregation provided a living testament to many of the ecclesiological, doctrinal and theological tensions examined in this study.

Several bodies have provided generous financial assistance, without which the completion of this thesis would not have been possible. These included an Overseas Research Students Award made by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principles of the Universities of the United Kingdom; a grant from the Denyer and Johnson Fund of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Oxford; and a grant from the Squire Marriott Fund, also of the Faculty of Theology. I remain most grateful for the provision of this assistance.

The completion of this study owes much to a host of friends and individuals too numerous to mention. Mrs. Victoria Hobson sharpened my prose and prevented my stumbling into a number of grammatical pitfalls. Professor Leland Carlson and Dr. Michael E. Moody argued, in invigorating and convincing fashion, that religious 'cross-currents' were an important--and much neglected--aspect of English ecclesiastical history. Professor Patrick Collinson offered valuable suggestions into the case of the Rev. James Shore. Dr. Timothy Stunt provided much appreciated abstracts of his own important publications. Mr. Richard Sharp provided a living testimony of those things which were estimable in eighteenth-century High Churchmanship.

Dr. Peter Nockles' work on the early nineteenth-century English Church remains a stimulating model of excellence.

My parents, who never imagined that one of their four sons would be able to study at Oxford, have been a great source of love and encouragement throughout the completion of this thesis.

My wife, Catherine, has been a fount of constant encouragement and support. Her love and belief in her husband, and in the completion of this thesis, have enabled me to persevere through many dark, lonely nights of study and writing. It is to her, and to my parents, that this study is dedicated.

My greatest debt, however, remains to my supervisor, Dr. John Dixon Walsh of Jesus College. It was he who first suggested the topic examined in this study--albeit in modified form--during an afternoon walk in the gardens of the Huntington Library in March 1983. His encouragement, approachability, persistence, dogged determination, and, most especially, his knowledge and love of the study of English Evangelicalism, have been paramount in the completion of this dissertation. As a scholar, mentor and friend, my debt to him remains immeasurable.

Preface

Though the Evangelical Revival was cradled in the Church of England, its relationship to its mother Church was not always an easy one. From the outset its presence aroused hostility. There were persistent claims that Evangelicals were suspect as Churchmen; that they were half-hearted in their attachment to the Establishment, if not downright disloyal. Their theology aroused uncomfortable memories of militant Puritanism: solifidian theories of justification by faith alone, 'enthusiastic' views of the need for drastic regeneration by the Holy Spirit, potentially antinomian ideas of predestination and final perseverance--all these had uncomfortable resonances of a bygone fanaticism which should by now have been laid to rest.

Evangelical ecclesiology was regarded with similar suspicion, for it laid paramount stress on the overriding claims of the invisible 'Church of Christ,' the redeemed body of all elect souls, gathered out of the world from all churches and nations. The promotion of the 'Church of Christ' was seen by Evangelicals as the object of all their work, taking precedence, in the last resort, over attachment to any visible, terrestrial church. Many Churchmen feared that this ecclesiological premise would encourage dangerous contacts with Protestant Dissent. If the only abiding spiritual categories were those which separated the regenerate from the unregenerate, was it not probable that Evangelical ministers would have far more in common with like-minded Dissenters than with allegedly 'unregenerate' cler-

gymen of their own Church? The cooperation of 'gospel clergymen' with Methodists and Nonconformists in voluntary associations like the Bible Society increased this suspicion.

By the end of the eighteenth century the course of the Revival seemed to have confirmed some of these fears, as several large evangelical groupings moved out of the orbit of the National Church. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion had formally seceded from the Church in 1783, by which time many of Whitefield's Calvinistic Methodist societies had already slipped more quietly into Dissent. The Wesleyan Methodists remained formally in the Church until Wesley's death in 1791, and retained an anomalous stance towards the Church thereafter, but were clearly destined for separate existence well before the end of the century, despite their founder's claim to "live and die a member of the Church of England." The para-Church organizations built-up by the clerical leaders of 'Methodism' in its various forms, professed sympathy for the Church, but operated increasingly outside its control and authority. Though there was deep respect for the Reformation formulae of the Church of England, it seemed to many Methodist leaders that the great majority of the clergy no longer professed them and opposed those who did. Though the Church of England with its high prestige, social hegemony, and vast endowments, seemed by far the best instrument for any campaign of national regeneration, the Establishment also put daunting legal and administrative hindrances in the way. By the end of the

eighteenth century, not a few mission-minded clergymen had come to believe that they could operate far more effectively outside the parameters of the Establishment than within it.

At the same time, however, an increasingly large body of 'gospel clergymen' had moved in the opposite direction, to become far more firmly attached to the order and authority of the National Church, by law established. They distanced themselves firmly from the 'irregularity' of the Methodists, and saw predecessors like William Grimshaw of Haworth, or John Berridge of Everton, who indulged in occasional bouts of field-preaching, as sadly misguided. By 1800, it had become clear that 'irregularity' produced more Dissenters than Churchmen, and that 'connexions' like Wesley's could not be contained within the Church as it was at present constituted. The great majority of Evangelical clergymen were by now firm 'regulars,' with a loyalty to the principle of order in both Church and State that had been stiffened by the anti-'Jacobin' reaction of the 1790s. They were confident that they could capture the apparatus of the Established Church far more easily by quiet, orderly infiltration, than by 'irregular' militancy. With a firm foothold in Oxford and Cambridge, with their nation-wide network of voluntary societies, and with spokesmen like William Wilberforce and Hannah More, they felt that they had far more to gain by working with the grain of establishment sentiment than by opposing it. By the early nineteenth century, the dominant tone of Anglican Evangelicalism was captured by

the title of a well-known work by James Bean: *Zeal Without Innovation.*[1]

But though clerical Evangelicalism was by now safely corralled within the canonical bounds of the Church, this did not mean that all tension between the claims of the gospel and the claims of the Establishment had vanished. There was a great fund of Anglican loyalism among the Evangelical clergy during the first half of the nineteenth century, but it was by no means total and it was always subject to potential strain. Much writing on Evangelicalism has assumed too easily that the views of moderates like those around Charles Simeon at Cambridge, or Wilberforce at Clapham, or those of the '*Christian Observer* school,' were those of all Evangelicals. Evangelical praise for the Church-State connection, and professions of contentment with the formularies of the Church--especially its liturgy--often concealed doubts, and should not be taken too easily at face value. Recent work on early nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, such as that by Ian Bradley on the Clapham Sect, or Clyde Ervine's close study of the variant views of clerical leaders on some key issues of theology, have revealed the diversity of outlook which lurked beneath the apparent unities of 'vital religion.'[2] This was especially the case after the mid-

[1]See J.D. Walsh, 'The Anglican Evangelicals in the Eighteenth Century,' Aspects de l'Anglicanisme ed. by M. Simon (Paris, 1974), p. 102.

[2]See Ian Bradley, 'The Politics of Godliness: Evangelicals in Parliament, 1784-1832' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1974); W.J.C. Ervine, 'Doctrine and Diplomacy: Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797 to 1837' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1979).

1820s, when a stern reaction arose to the alleged worldliness and accommodationism of moderate leaders.

This study aims to explore still further the complexities of Evangelicalism, by looking at those clergymen who were so discontented with the *status quo* in the Established Church that they were propelled into outright secession. There were far more of these than have been realized--indeed, they numbered at least a hundred in the period between 1800 and 1850. Save for a brief article by H.H. Rowdon, or for the briefest of allusions in scholarly works, often in footnotes, their existence has been virtually ignored.[3] Yet they are surely worthy of study. Those who made their exit to the right of the Anglican stage by seceding to Rome, have attracted a great deal of attention, particularly those who went with Newman or Manning: those who made a leftward exit into Protestant Dissent have been virtually ignored. This is regrettable, for although these Protestant seceders constituted only a small fraction of the Anglican clerical body, their existence is a tribute to the problems which Evangelicals--as well as Tractarians--felt about the viability of the famous Anglican *via media*. If Newman seceded because he thought the Church of England to be insufficiently Catholic, a number of fervent fellow clergymen departed because they took the opposite view and found the Established Church too unreformed and 'Popish.' There was unanimity here among the rival types of secession-

[3]See H.H. Rowdon, 'Secession from the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century,' V.E., 1964, pp. 76-88.

ists as well as their obvious divergence; a Romeward seceder like Manning and a high Calvinist seceder like J.C. Philpot were agreed in regarding the Church of England as a highly imperfect and artificial amalgam of irreconcilable elements held together by a crude Erastianism. Both saw it as lacking in firm discipline and deplorably subject to exploitation by worldly, secular-minded interests.

The Evangelical secederes are of significance because they often articulated anxieties--and sometimes expectations--which troubled many of their brethren who did not leave the Church. There was much about the government and liturgy of the church which worried conscientious exponents of 'vital religion,' but which was suppressed or expressed privately. The secederes brought these tensions out of the closet and into the open. By examining them, a further picture can be gained of the complexities of Anglican Evangelicalism which may help to offset the rather homogenized and consensual picture which many accounts still present.

The main focus of this dissertation is on the period between 1800 and 1850, especially that of the 1830s and 1840s which produced the greatest number of secessions. There is, however, a brief introductory chapter which summarizes some of the catalysts for secession visible in the eighteenth century. Between these early secederes and those of the first decades of the nineteenth century, there are obvious similarities. Some of the same recurrent trigger-mechanisms for secession are visible in both periods: dissatisfaction with the

worldliness fostered by the patronage system, and the dubious connection of the Church with politics; impatience at the restraints imposed on evangelism by Canon law and by the authority of the bishops; grave doubts about some of the Prayer Book rubrics and ceremonies; a proclivity to a high Calvinism which emphasized the need for the separation of the elect from spiritual contact with reprobates. The importance of any of these factors varied between individuals: by no means all seceders, as we shall see, left the Church of England for the same reason.

There was also a difference of emphasis between the early period and that under discussion. The eighteenth-century seceders were few in number and often moved by despair at the sluggishness and inertia of the church authorities; some of the most prominent of those who left in the 1830s and 1840s, however, were moved by a different consideration--not so much by the inertia of their fellow Churchmen as by their misguided activism. They were aghast at the progress of the Oxford Movement and at the threat which 'Popery,' both within the Church and outside it, posed to their hopes of making the doctrines of the Reformation once again triumphant in the Church. They were almost as worried by the currents of theological liberalism which seemed to threaten the Scriptural foundation of the gospel. They watched with alarm as Whig governments appointed Broad Churchmen like Renn Dickson Hampden to high positions. Some Evangelicals began to question the value of the Church-State connection after the 'constitutional rev-

olution' of 1828-1832 seemed to destroy the Anglican character of Parliament, and render the Church vulnerable to the political hostility of Roman Catholics, Dissenters, and secular radicals. This period too saw an upsurge of theological currents which made some Evangelicals dissatisfied with the state of their Church. High Calvinism, millenarian excitement, a romantic, primitivistic yearning to regain the simplicity of the apostolic Church--all these took their toll and eroded the loyalty of Evangelical clergymen in this troubled time.

This is in many ways an exploratory study, and, of necessity, it is not an exhaustive one. No doubt much work remains to be done. Though there were some group secessions, many Evangelical clerical seceders went out of the Church as isolated individuals, and a good deal probably remains to be uncovered about their particular case histories from local sources which could not be properly searched in the time available for this dissertation. It is highly likely that there were a number of quiet seceders who left no trace on the obvious sources; men who wrote no pamphlets or excited no publicity. Had they departed *en masse*, like the Scots ministers of the Great Disruption, they would have been much more easily pinned down.

In completing this study, I have been compelled to cut what is only a swath through the tangled undergrowth of this particular tract of Anglican history. For the most part, I have left out of consideration the many lay seceders from the Church, though some of the

more prominent of these appear from time to time. This is essentially a study of clerical secessions. I have focused my attention largely on particular episodes which illustrate the main issues involved, hoping at a later date to fill in some of the more obscure spaces of the canvas. The sources which are readily available turned out to be rich enough to give a good deal of coverage: there is a very large amount of printed source material available in the shape of sermons, tracts, and biographies, which I consulted for the most part in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and in the British Library in London. Religious and secular periodicals of the period yielded a great quantity of further information, especially the files of the *Christian Observer* and the *Record*. In addition, the picture has been filled out by the discovery of some interesting manuscript sources, notably the Diaries of John Rashdall and John Hill, and the papers of the Noel family.

Evangelicals and the Church of England

The origins of the Evangelical Revival are to be found in the Church of England. To the surprise of Nonconformists, the religious revival for which many of them had prayed descended in the 1730s not in their Godly meeting-houses where the old Reformed Calvinism survived, but within a Church of England which seemed to have apostatized from the 'doctrines of grace.' In England it was clergymen like the Wesleys, George Whitefield, James Hervey, and in Wales, Anglicans like Daniel Rowland and the layman Howell Harris who set the new Evangelical movement in motion.

In time, the forces of renewal were often proved too strong to be contained in the structures of the Established Church: the new wine spilled over the rim of the old bottles as 'connexions' which began inside the National Church moved across its frontiers into separatism. The 'Inghamites,' the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, Wesleyan Methodism, Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, and other smaller groupings all moved along a trajectory that led them towards Dissent, though not without many anomalous intermediate stages.

Yet a sizable proportion of the growing band of 'gospel clergymen' still stayed within the Church into which they were ordained. These came to be known as Evangelical clergymen--a title which will be attributed to them throughout this study--and they were, at least by the late eighteenth century, taxonomically distinguished from the 'Methodism' of the more irregular evangelical bodies. In historical categorization, 'Evan-

gelical' has come to be equated with this large body of Christians who subscribed to a theology and spirituality characterized--in David Bebbington's recent account--by the general evangelical attributes of conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism, but who practised their piety within the State Church.[1]

For many, conformity to the rubrics, liturgy, and canons of the Church came easily: to others, who will be the main subject of this study, it did not, but was accompanied by anxiety, tension, and, in some cases, schism. Before embarking on the tangled story of the minority of the outright seceders from the Church, it is necessary to examine the views of the establishmentarian majority, who saw no insuperable obstacle between themselves and loyalty to the Church of England by law established, or to its formularies.

It has often been said that the early Evangelicals were not intellectuals.[2] Being primarily concerned with soul-saving--the 'one thing needful'--it is said that they possessed no deep interest in the close study of theology, metaphysics, history, or ecclesiology. This is true only in a limited sense, for the movement was capable of throwing up a homespun biblical commen-

[1]See D.W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (London, 1989), p. 3.

[2]See William Gladstone, Gleanings of Past Years, 7 vols. (London, 1879), 5:11; 'The Evangelical Movement; its Parentage, Progress, and Issue,' British Quarterly Review, July and October 1879, p. 14; W.H.B. Proby, Annals of the 'Low Church' Party in England, Down to the Death of Archbishop Tait, 2 vols. (London, 1888), 1:348f; C.K.F. Brown, A History of the English Clergy, 1800-1900 (London, 1953), p. 169f; John E. Linnan, 'The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman, 1816-1826,' 2 vols. (Th.D. thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 1965), 1:188f.

tator like Thomas Scott, a church historian like Joseph Milner, and a moralist like Thomas Gisborne. If Evangelicalism produced few students of ecclesiology to compare with those of the Oxford Movement, nevertheless Evangelicals, as aggressive and innovative evangelists, were forced constantly to come to terms with ecclesiological issues in ways seldom faced by the ordinary incumbent who took the existing ecclesiastical order and status quo for granted. The active commitment to soul saving itself raised questions. How far was a godly minister to be constrained by canons that appeared to hinder the preaching of God's Word to all people? How far was the duty of obedience to bishops to be carried when it inhibited the welfare of souls who were perishing? Was the liturgy of the Church sufficiently consonant with Scripture to be accepted and used without danger or serious hesitation? What was the relationship of converted souls, at present a small minority in the National Church, to the apparently unregenerate majority with whom they associated in the open community of the parish Church? What was the 'Church of Christ' and what were its relations to the terrestrial Church of England? At a more pragmatic level still, did the Establishment to which all Evangelicals belonged and from which the 'gospel clergy' drew their income, do more harm than good to the gospel cause by associating the Church with the world of high politics and local lay patronage? Such questions were not only theoretical issues but matters of great pastoral concern to an Evangelical incumbent. They frequently acquired sali-

ence in particularly contentious situations--as when a zealous evangelist collided with a prickly bishop or an unsympathetic patron, or when Evangelicals sat down to ponder the propaganda of Nonconformists against the Established Church. These issues demanded some kind of an answer.

Central to Evangelical ecclesiology was the idea of the 'Church of Christ', the invisible body of all regenerate souls to which alone could be given the adjectives, 'one, holy, and catholic.'[3] Here, at the theoretical level, all Evangelicals were agreed. The 'half-regular' John Berridge, justifying his field-preaching to Lady Huntingdon, wrote, "I regard neither high church, nor low church, nor any church, but the 'Church of Christ', which is not built with hands, nor circumscribed within peculiar walls, nor confined to a singular denomination."[4] While they prized the visible church into which they were ordained, Evangelicals maintained that its interests should be subordinated to those of the real church, the 'Church of Christ', or the invisible body of all believers. John Newton, who settled at Olny and London as a 'regular' parish priest after contemplating a career in Dissent, agreed: the invisible church, he insisted, was God's "peculiar kingdom, which He has established distinct from the kingdoms of this world, though diffused and extended among them, and which, in due time, like leaven, will

[3]See John H. Overton, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1894), p. 97; Yngve Brilioth, The Anglican Revival (London, 1925), p. 41.

[4]Letter of 26 April 1777, quoted in Charles Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (Cambridge, 1940), p. 251.

pervade and assimilate them all to Himself."[5] So too did the impeccably 'regular' Thomas Robinson of Leicester, who described the true 'Church of Christ' as "one compact well-ordered society," united "under one common Head, actuated by one Spirit, having the same hopes and enjoyments, and directed by the same laws and principles." Its membership was composed of those "of every age and place,...far removed from and unknown to each other, diversified by a thousand external modes and customs, and divided into a thousand denominations."[6]

What then was a visible church? The Evangelicals gratefully cited the 19th Article which had defined it as:

> A congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

Much, of course, depended on the definition of such key phrases as 'faithful,' 'pure,' and 'duly ministered.' Most Evangelicals had no difficulty in accepting that their own Church, whatever its defects in practice, was fundamentally sound and based on the attributes set out in the 19th Article. The Church of England as it now stood, claimed Thomas Robinson, was a body in which "the truth of the gospel is maintained, in all its essential points, where the sacraments are duly administered," and where "the pastoral office has its regular and proper exercise."[7] The Church of England rested on

[5]John Newton, The Lord Reigneth, in The Works of the Rev. John Newton, edited by Richard Cecil, 6 vols. (London, 1824), 4:405.

[6]Thomas Robinson, The Christian System, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (London, 1825), 3:324f.

[7]Ibid., 3:334. See also C.O., 1804, p. 28.

the bedrock of Scriptural fundamentals. Whether or not the majority of the Church clergy were loyal in advancing these attributes was far more problematic, but it was not difficult for early Evangelicals to regard the growing number of 'gospel ministers' as proof that there was at very least a righteous remnant in the Church of England which was the harbinger of far better things to come.

More difficult was the prickly question of church membership. Only 'real' Christians were members of the 'Church of Christ'. These were defined in somewhat varied terms, though the criteria for membership--conversion and regeneration--were clear enough. These 'real believers' were variously defined as the body of those called out of--and separated from--the world;[8] a congregation of God's faithful and elect;[9] and a collection of true and faithful believers who have been called to eternal life by the Holy Spirit,[10] and who concur on the fundamentals of the Christian faith.[11] Many--but not all--Evangelicals also believed that membership in the visible church was properly initiated by the sacrament of baptism, rightly received.[12]

[8]Robinson, 3:324.
[9]C.O., 1804, p. 352. See also 1841, p. 270.
[10]Richard Hill, An Apology for Brotherly Love, and for the Doctrines of the Church of England (London, 1798), p. 25ff.
[11]Ibid., p. 156f.
[12]See John Overton, The True Churchmen Ascertained (York, 1801), pp. 103f, 106; John H. Pratt, ed. Eclectic Notes (London, 1856), pp. 368-372; Arthur Pollard and Michael Hennell, eds., Charles Simeon (London, 1959), pp. 106-112; Hugh McNeile, Lectures on the Church of England (London, 1840), p. 13ff. Cf. Thomas Scott, Essays on the Most Important Subjects in Religion, 10th ed. (London, 1823), p. 212f.

But what was the relation of the 'real' to the merely 'nominal' Christians with whom they were associated in their membership of the National Church? As John Overton put it sharply in his *True Churchman Ascertained*:

> Either...the Church of England considers *all* persons real Christians who are comprehended within her external pale, or she considers only *some* of her visible members entitled to this character, and the rest mere nominal and professed Christians[13]

By operating within the structure of a National Church which was open to all who had been baptized, and whose rubrical offices--such as those for baptism, marriage, and burial--were used indiscriminately for all, whether godly Evangelicals or unrepentant sinners, the Evangelicals opted for Overton's second category. They accepted that the elect were ultimately not to be infallibly distinguished from the regenerate in the terrestrial church: such judgment pertained ultimately to God (though strong assumptions could no doubt be made by an experienced pastor as to the true spiritual state of some individual members of a congregation). Here they had Calvin behind them. Everyone should understand, Calvin had maintained, that the visible church must be "composed of good and bad men mingled together."[14] Unlike the pastors of the 'gathered' churches of the Independents and Baptists, Anglican Evangelicals were generally committed to the principle that the wheat must be allowed to grow with the tares: that there could be no separation of 'visible saints' from the un-

[13]John Overton, The True Churchmen, p. 102.
[14]John Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1932), 2:235.

regenerate lump. The presence of unregenerate individuals in the community of a church was no cause for secession from it. The ministry of the Word and administration of the sacraments, as Calvin had declared, "have too much influence in preserving the unity of the church, to admit of its being destroyed by the guilt of a few impious men."[15] Overton agreed that "in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good."[16] John Newton described the visible church in terms of a corn-floor on which chaff is mingled with the wheat, or a fisherman's net enclosing a great multitude of fish both good and bad.[17]

Evangelicals became indignant when High Churchmen like Charles Daubeny, and others, denounced them as 'Dissenters in the Church' whose loyalty to the Church of England by law established was weak and grudging, and whose real place was with the Nonconformists outside her walls.[18] Much of the force of this accusation lay in the association of Evangelicals as a whole with the irregularity of the Methodists, and those early 'gospel ministers' like Berridge or William Grimshaw who were prepared to copy Wesley or Whitefield to the extent of field-preaching in other men's parishes. Though--as we shall see--irregularity still persisted here and there, this charge was manifestly unfair by

[15]Ibid., 2:238.
[16]John Overton, The True Churchmen, p. 103.
[17]Newton, The Lord Reigneth, 4:406.
[18]See Charles Daubeny, A Guide to the Church (London, 1798); Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicane (London, 1803); On the Nature, Progress, and Consequences of Schism (London, 1818); Thomas Kipling, The Articles of the Church of England Proved Not to be Calvinistic (Cambridge, 1802).

the late eighteenth century, when most Evangelical parish clergy were scrupulously 'regular,' dissociated themselves from Methodism, and kept their ministrations to their own parishes. But the charge of being 'Dissenters in disguise' also rested on the suggestion that the 'gospel clergy' were grudging or secretly hostile in their attitude to much in the Church's polity and formularies. This was vehemently denied by the 'regular' Evangelicals. John Overton's *True Churchmen Ascertained*, published in 1801, repeated the claim, often made in the eighteenth century, that the Evangelical clergy were not merely clandestine Dissenters, but were actually 'the *true* Churchmen,' since they alone subscribed to the Calvinistic Thirty-Nine Articles and the Homilies which explained them, in clear and unambiguous terms.[19] If the prime essential of true Churchmanship was purity of doctrine, then the 'gospel clergy' who accepted unequivocally the pure teachings of the Reformation were the true successors of Cranmer, Jewel, and the other Protestant teachers who founded the present reformed Church of England. If the test of Anglican orthodoxy was a doctrinal test, it was Daubeny and his allies who were the 'true Dissenters,' for they had apostatized from the plain and unequivocal meaning of the Articles. The *Christian Observer* also staunchly defended the reality of Evangelical loyalty to the Church. There is no body of men, it claimed:

> who are more attached to the principles of the Church...whatever shades of difference they may manifest in the explanation of some of its doc-

[19]John Overton, The True Churchmen, pp. iv, xi, 397.

> trines...They have universally displayed a zeal and earnestness in its cause which all cannot but admire, and many would do well to imitate. It is true, that they have in some cases bordered too much upon enthusiasm: but even this is far better than cold apathy and religious indifference.[20]

By the end of the eighteenth century, especially after the outbreak of the French Revolution had created a conservative backlash in England, Evangelicals went out of their way to distance themselves from disorderly Methodism and Dissent, and to underline their devotion to the formularies and order of the Church. Various apologists praised the episcopal polity of the Church of England. Though episcopacy was not essential, for it pertained to the *bene esse* rather than the *esse* of the Church,[21] it was ancient, of Apostolic origins, and, with its principle of hierarchy, far more suited to the ordering of fallen human nature than the 'republican' synodical system of the Presbyterians.[22] In some quarters of the Evangelical world, the principle of Apostolicity as a foundation for Holy Orders seems to have been held with a fervour which might have surprised later and post-Tractarian generations. A correspondent of the *Christian Observer* in 1804, echoing the eighteenth-century High Churchman Jones of Nayland, claimed that the Church had been governed by bishops, priests, and deacons from Apostolic times: where these orders were to be found duly appointed, *the word preached*, and the sacraments administered, there the

[20] C.O., 1818, p. 12.
[21] See Norman Sykes, Old Priest and New Presbyter (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 5, 85ff.
[22] C.O., 1803, p. 709ff; 1804, pp. 1ff, 28; 1839, p. 287. See also Thomas Gisborne, Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion (London, 1799), p. 347.

'Church of Christ' was to be found, with its form and authority.[23] Thomas Robinson claimed that:

> The Church of England has the fairest claim to our favour and most cordial attachment. It contains the two grand requisites for a Christian society, Truth and Order. Its ministry, consisting of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, we consider not only as a national and excellent institution, calculated for edification, but as most consonant to the mind of Christ, as having been established by his apostles, and from them transmitted and continued by a regular succession.[24]

As late as 1836, the *Christian Observer*, in reviewing the Oxford *Tracts*, reaffirmed its belief in the Apostolic nature of the Anglican priesthood:

> The Papists are continually renewing their charge of the invalidity of the claim of the Church of England to the seal of Apostolic Succession...We see no reason to doubt that the present bishops and clergy of the Church of England are descended in an unbroken line from the Apostles of Christ, in a regular transmission of the ministerial function.[25]

The Thirty-Nine Articles and the Homilies also gained the warm assent of Evangelicals. Not only did several of the Articles appear to reflect the moderately 'Calvinistic' theology held by most Evangelicals, but they also expressed the fundamental principle of the Reformers in ways that avoided extremes and kept to the true *via media* of the English Church.[26] The catechism was accepted equally warmly: it was so formulated

[23]C.O., 1804, p. 28. See also p. 352; 1805, p. 716.

[24]Robinson, 3:335; Gisborne, p. 354f; T.R. Birks, Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1852), 1:99.

[25]C.O., 1836, p. 562. See also 1831, p. 383f; 1834, p. 100. This was, however, dismissed by Wesley as a "fable." See also The Letters of John Wesley, ed. by John Telford, 8 vols. (London, 1931), 7:284; Gisborne, p. 349f.

[26]See Hannah More, Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess, in The Works of Hannah More, 6 vols. (London, 1834), 4:351f; T.R. Birks, The Present Crisis (London, 1854), p. 9f.

as to do immense good.[27] The Anglican formularies were seen not only as Scriptural;[28] they were also an effective prophylactic against the introduction of heresy into the Church.[29]

Evangelical approval of the liturgy was fervent, though not without minor qualifications which were often unexpressed, at least in public. Any small doubts about its perfection were, however, counterbalanced by the suspicion that *Prayer Book* reform, if it came, might be pushed through by High Churchmen or liberals such as the Feathers Tavern petitioners in the 1770s. Henry Venn described the liturgy as the most excellent yet devised in Christendom and feared its possible alteration.[30] The *Christian Observer* maintained "a filial veneration" for the liturgy, and its editors declared their joy in using the same words of prayer as their forefathers. The liturgical form of worship was sharply contrasted to that of extempore prayer, and praised for allowing less dependence upon man and more upon the Holy Spirit, and for affording little scope for personal display or for criticism of the officiating minister.[31] The practice of common prayer was seen

[27] C.O., 1808, p. 764ff.

[28] See John Morison, The Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society, 2nd ed. (London, 1844), p. 26; Gisborne, p. 354f; Birks, Memoir, 1:99; J.D. Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals in the Eighteenth Century: With Especial Reference to Methodism' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1956), p. 27ff.

[29] See Gisborne, p. 354f.

[30] Henry Venn, ed. The Life and a Selection of the Letters of the Late Rev. Henry Venn, M.A., 2nd ed. (London, 1835), p. 175f. See also T.T. Biddulph, Essays on Some Select Parts of the Liturgy of the Church of England (Bristol, 1798); Basil Woodd, The Excellence of the Liturgy (London, 1810); Pamphleteer, 1812, pp. 159-183; Birks, Memoir, 1:99.

[31] C.O., 1820, p. 76.

as essential to public worship: Hugh Stowell extolled the excellencies of the liturgy and criticized those who came to Church primarily to hear the sermon.[32] Charles Simeon, who was wont to proclaim, "the Bible first, the *Prayer Book* next, and all other books and doings in subordination to both,"[33] lauded the Anglican prayers as his personal "marrow and fatness."[34] He advised the young men at his famous conversation parties: "pray the prayers and don't read them only; adhere sacredly to the directions of the rubric, except where they have become obsolete, and the resumption of them would clearly do harm."[35] When William Ward, Bishop of Sodor and Man, chanced upon a communion service at Holy Trinity, Simeon instinctively administered both elements to him alone before administering to the remainder of the congregation, justifying his action on the basis of strict adherence to the rubric.[36] Though the wording of the burial service worried some scrupulous Evangelicals, most accepted it. While extolling the benefits of the *Prayer Book* in a lecture at Great St. Mary's, Simeon defended the use of the burial service over an unrepentant man, "because we speak not of *his*, but of *the*, resurrection to eternal life; and because, where we do not absolutely *know* that God has *not* pardoned a person, we may entertain *some* measure of hope

[32]Hugh Stowell, The Excellencies of the English Liturgy (London, 1865), p. 4ff.
[33]Quoted in Smyth, p. 291.
[34]William Carus, Memories of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A., 3rd ed. (London, 1848), p. 210.
[35]Quoted in Abner William Brown, Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A. (London, 1863), p. 12.
[36]Ibid., p. 12f.

that he *has*."[37] He similarly accepted the rubric for baptism, urging that the remission of our sins and the regeneration of our souls was attendant on it--adding, however, that the *Prayer Book* insisted upon a further change in a believer's heart.[38]

There were, as we shall see again and again, barely concealed difficulties in the liturgy. Evangelicals willingly conceded that it was a human composition and as such imperfect.[39] Some disliked the Athanasian Creed. Simeon admitted that some scrupulous Christians had seceded from the Church because of the defects in the *Prayer Book*, "in the hope of finding a purer worship elsewhere."[40] Even among the clergy loyal to the Church, it was often conceded that some Popish survivals still remained which ought one day to be removed.[41] These comments became more open after the onset of the Oxford Movement, when it became apparent that these 'blemishes' were being exploited by Tractarians and Ritualists. This unease led to the publication of at least twenty revisions of the *Prayer Book* between 1842 and 1894, mostly by embattled ultra-Evangelicals.[42]

Despite the presence of minor imperfections in the Church and its formularies, Evangelicals remained adamant that Dissent was unjustified. Although their

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[37]Charles Simeon, The Excellency of the Liturgy (Cambridge, 1812), p. 44.
[38]Ibid., pp. 47-51.
[39]See Abner Brown, p. 221; C.O., 1805, p. 732; Hannah More, Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont (London, 1793), p. 20.
[40]Simeon, The Excellence, pp. 71-78.
[41]See John Scott, Reformation, Not Subversion (London, 1831).
[42]A. Elliott Peaston, The Prayer Book Revisions of the Victorian Evangelicals (Dublin, 1963), p. 2ff.

catholic spirit could readily countenance fellowship with evangelical Dissenters, they regarded the Church as immeasurably superior to Nonconformity. Dissent was seen as unbalanced and prone to constant schism. In its chapels, Simeon and others alleged, the congregation held a dangerous whip-hand over its minister, whose salary it provided, and so prevented him from preaching the gospel fearlessly in the way possible to the clergy in a State Church whose incomes came from endowments and tithes.[43]

The Dissent of evangelical Christians was seen as essentially unnecessary.[44] It was not to be compared to the separation of the Church of England from the Church of Rome which had apostatized from the faith, for the foundations of the English Church were pure and Reformed. Those who went over to Dissent were schismatics who divided the body of Christ. Nonetheless, the Evangelical clergy urged their people to treat Dissenters with charity and kindliness and not to anathematize them in the style of some High Churchmen. Since much Dissent stemmed from the lack of real religion in the Church, the best way to prevent its further progress was for the Established clergy to outpreach their rivals by a fervent exposition of the gospel.[45]

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It was impossible for the Evangelical clergy to ignore the issue of establishment, especially when the campaign for Test Act repeal surfaced once more in the

[43]See Abner Brown, p. 221f.
[44]See Pratt, p. 3ff.
[45]See Ibid., p. 178ff; Abner Brown, p. 223.

1780s, and when active political campaigns for disestablishment followed in the wake of the Reform Bill crisis in the 1830s.[46] By nature, Evangelicals were happiest when engaged in 'soul-saving;' like Hannah More they regarded "the unpleasant and boundless fields of controversy" accompanying the establishment debate as best left to others, since engagement in controversy only embittered relations with the Dissenters whom they were trying to woo. "Far be it from me," she wrote, "to stand forth the fierce champion of a liturgy, or the prejudiced advocate of forms and systems. A sincere member of the Establishment myself, I respect its institutions without idolatry, and acknowledge its imperfections without palliation."[47] When Evangelicals did comment on the issue, their statements were usually defensive and pragmatic, more concerned with the pastoral utility of a national religious provision than with the claim that the Church of England had any exclusive right to the promulgation of religious truth. Yet the increasing stridency of political Dissent, especially after the formation of the Anti-State Church Association (later the Liberation Society) in 1844, forced them into periodic defence of their position.

Evangelicals defined establishment in a number of different, though usually not discordant terms. One of the most succinct yet comprehensive definitions was

[46]For a survey of the disestablishment campaign, especially in its later stages, see William H. Mackintosh, Disestablishment and Liberation (London, 1972).

[47]See Hannah More, An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, 3rd ed. (London, 1791), p. 4f.

given by the *Christian Observer* in 1839. A valid establishment was one founded on:

> Articles of belief and sacramental institutions, as well as moral principles, collected and arranged out of the inspired volume, and deriving their authority from their incontrovertible accordance with its announcements. There must also be a body of men, including a gradation of officers, whose business it is to teach the truths--to administer the ordinances, and to inculcate the precepts, thus drawn forth from the volume of inspiration. To these men...will belong the duty of setting forth national articles of faith...and of determining rites, ceremonies, and functional polity...Towards the effective workings of a system, which is thus to be co-extensive with the community by which it has been adopted, an adequate provision for its ministers and the maintenance of public worship are indispensably necessary.[48]

The Evangelicals' defence of their own Establishment drew on a wide variety of arguments, some of them derivative and commonplace, others stemming more directly from the nature of Evangelical piety. Inevitably, the arguments from Scripture had their place, for no major commitment could be undertaken without the confidence that it had biblical sanction of some kind.[49] The English Church was established, claimed Charles Girdlestone, the Evangelical Vicar of Sedgley, "not only by the law of the land, but by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its ministers have that appointment which at the first came from Him."[50] As we shall see below, the argument from Scripture was not entirely straightforward, since disestablishmentarian Dissenters were capable of using it to oppose the Church-State connection. The religious opponents of establishment

[48] C.O., 1839, p. 287.
[49] See Ibid., 1826, p. 343.
[50] Charles Girdlestone, Church Rates Lawful, But Not Always Expedient (London, 1833), p. 11. See also his three letters on Church reform (London, 1832-4). See also John Scott, p. 29ff.

understandably made much of the lack of State support in the New Testament era and in the centuries of persecution that followed it, pointing out that the church was most pure while it was free of State control: it was Constantine's elevation of Christianity into a State religion that had corrupted it into a worldly institution. For their part, Evangelicals often based their reply on the precedence of the Old Testament.[51] Here in ancient Israel could be found the close, covenanted union of Church and State. Hugh McNeile developed the idea that since God had appointed those in power--notably the Crown as head of the Church, the State maintained a concomitant--and sacred--duty to promote Christianity.[52] When this contractual obligation was fulfilled, God would grant His favour and protection to the State.[53] To Evangelicals steeped in the parallelism between ancient Israel and modern England--the 'elect nation' favoured of God--the idea of the covenanted people came easily, as it had done to their forebears. The divine blessings were seen to flow from the contractual relationship with Jehovah. The establishment and maintenance of true religion would advance the authority and stability of the State, check lawlessness and insubordination, and encourage patriotic

[51]See Thomas Scott, A Letter (Kilkenny, 1816), p. 21f; Christian Guardian, 1824, p. 385f; Record, 19 February 1849; William Marsh, The Church and the State (London, 1849), p. xiii; Record, 19 February 1849.

[52]Hugh McNeile, Letters to a Friend (London, 1834), p. 17. See also The Church and the Churches (London, 1846), pp. 532, 547f, 558n; Daniel Wilson, A Farewell Charge, 2nd ed. (London, 1845), p. 24; Record, 23 July 1838,

[53]See R.B. Seeley, Essays on the Church (London, 1834), p. 103; More, Hints, 4:348.

love of country.[54] As the historian Joseph Milner claimed, God had established true religion "to ensure public respect," and "to restrain and punish the propagators of irreligious opinions."[55] By ensuring that the State had a moral and spiritual basis in the Christian faith, establishment would control arrogance and pride among the governors of the realm and encourage them to seek God's will in affairs of State. Only religion, firmly grounded in State sustenance, could restrain sinful human nature and place before the conscience those offers of eternal reward and punishment that would stabilize society and preserve it from anarchy and lawlessness.

More important than arguments from civil prudence were those based on the spiritual and pastoral benefits of establishment. The huge advantages to be gained from the nation-wide coverage of the parochial system were well appreciated.[56] Moreover, the existence of legally binding rubrics and confessional doctrines ensured continuity of pure teaching in a parish and helped to prevent schism.[57] The Scottish evangelical

[54]See Wilson, p. 24ff; Wilks, p. 25; William Marsh, p. xxi; C.O., 1823, p. 722; Robinson, 3:337; McNeile, Lectures, p. 160f; McNeile, Letters, p. xii; C. Marsh, The Life of the Rev. William Marsh, D.D. (London, 1867), p. 154; More, Hints, 4:354.

[55]Joseph Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, 6 vols., (York and Cambridge, 1794-1809), 2:232.

[56]See Thomas Scott, A Letter, p. 30; More, Hints, 4:349f; John Scott, p. 16ff; Samuel Charles Wilks, Correlative Claims and Duties (London, 1821), pp. 25-37ff; Record, 18 October 1830; Walsh, p. 43ff; Best, p. 73ff.

[57]See Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, 5 vols. (London, 1838), 2:27; James Bean, Zeal Without Innovation (London, 1808), p. 24; Wilks, p. 69ff; C.O., 1808, p. 223ff.

Thomas Chalmers, perhaps the greatest influence of his day on the issue, claimed that establishment provided 'ducts of conveyance' for irrigating the nation with divine grace through the reading and the preaching of Scripture.[58] Thanks to provision of priests and churches across the whole landscape of England, Wales, and Ireland by the State, no person could be considered as outside the ministrations of the Established Church. The contrary principle of voluntarism was described by the *Christian Observer* as "infidel and practically ineffective."[59] Hannah More concurred, asserting that an:

> outward profession of our holy religion, which is secured by an establishment, is an inestimable blessing to a community; that the public benefits which result from it are beyond reckoning, besides the far greater utility of affording to each individual, that light of information, and whose means of religious worship, which, duly used, will ensure eternal happiness.[60]

On the basis of Chalmers' famous *Lectures on Religious Establishments*, the Evangelicals argued that under a voluntarist system of 'ecclesiastical free trade,' religion only went to those who demanded it and were prepared to pay for it, and not to the mass of spiritually destitute who, bound by their sinfulness, did not demand it, even though they needed it most. William Wilberforce advised that "it is the disease of man's nature to be insensible of its existence...Hence religion must be offered to men: must go in search of them."[61]

[58]Thomas Chalmers, Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches, 1838, in The Collected Works of Thomas Chalmers, 25 Vols. (Glasgow, 1835-42), 17:196.
[59]C.O., 1839, p. 287.
[60]More, Hints, 4:348.
[61]R.I and S. Wilberforce, 2:401.

Only that religion which was provided by an establishment could seek out irreligion in its darkest pockets and corners. Hugh McNeile, the most prolific English Evangelical advocate of establishment, denounced the arguments of the Voluntaries who advocated 'free trade in religion' as leaving men utterly devoid of spiritual teaching:

> To obtain a voluntary support the man must dilute his teaching to meet the prejudices of fallen man; he must only assail the natural character as far as conscience will bear it, setting forth, what they know already, that they are indeed what they ought not to be, so as to do it gently, so as not to alarm and disturb too much; and thus measuring his statements of doctrine, so that he may not bring forward what may make them recoil from him; seeking to be palatable, instead of seeking to be true; he must consider the prejudices of his people in preparing his discourses, instead of considering the contents of the Word of God.[62]

Evangelicals had little time for those who praised the American 'experiment' of separating Church and State. Many Dissenters, on the other hand, held up the example of the United States as a model of Church-State relations. Since the American Constitution had prohibited federal support for any religious confession, religion had not withered but had prospered: evangelical piety, it seemed, flourished far more under a system of free, unfettered competition then it did in Europe, where crippling legal constraints and corrupt political association with an aristocratic ruling order held it back. Evangelicals rejected this thesis.[63] Only a national establishment could provide religious instruction for the mass of those too poor to pay for it, or

[62]E.M., 1834, p. 154. See also Wilson, p. 25. See also William Marsh, p. xiv.
[63]C.O., 1807, p. 54; 1826, p. 343f; Wilson, p. 25.

cope with the vast areas of rural England virtually unserved by voluntarism.

There were other less visible but still important advantages of establishment. The legal, parliamentary foundation of the Church's teaching meant that her sacred formularies would be constitutionally preserved against the encroachments of religious heresy, whether Socinian or Popish.[64] Continuity of teaching would be maintained.[65] Though the Anglican Establishment had no monopoly of religious truth (for the Reformation doctrines could also be found among Methodists and Dissenters, as well as in the Scots Kirk), Evangelicals supported it because it seemed to them to rest on the bedrock of Reformation truth. Without this guarantee of doctrinal purity, the principle of establishment by itself would have had little intrinsic appeal.

The Evangelicals' commitment to the principle of establishment was sufficiently pronounced to convince Charles Simeon, amongst others, to conform to the Kirk (rather than the Episcopal Church) while travelling in Scotland.[66] Nevertheless this basic loyalty did not preclude some reservations about both the concept and the workings of the Church-State connection. Hannah More, Thomas Gisborne, and others admitted that establishments, as human institutions, are necessarily im-

[64]McNeile, Letters, p. xiii; William Marsh, The Church, pp. ix, xxi;. Gisborne, p. 354f; More, Hints, p. 4:349, 354; C.O., 1832, p. 561; Ian S. Rennie, 'Evangelicalism and English Public Life, 1832-1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1962), p. 310.

[65]R.I. and S. Wilberforce, 2:401; C.O., 1806, p. 630; 1821, p. 625; 1835, p. 84.

[66]Carus, p. 90; Anon., A Brief Memoir of the Late Revd. William Richardson, 2nd ed. (London, 1822), p. 30n.

perfect.[67] As Henry Ryder, the first Evangelical bishop, warned his clergy, "committed to earthen and tainted vessels, the administration of the 'sincere milk of the Word' cannot fail to contract a stain from the vehicles in which it is dispensed."[68]

As the great Scottish Disruption showed, the issue of 'intrusion' was the point at which a clergyman's duty as a member of the Establishment could most sharply come into conflict with his conscience and his right of private judgment as a believer. How should a clergyman respond when the State attempted to impose 'heretical' doctrines opposed by Scripture? Who was to formulate Church doctrine, the State or the Church? As Thomas Scott succinctly put it: "we may lawfully worship, and officiate as ministers, in an *establishment*; provided that establishment does not require of us things in other respects contrary to our consciences."[69] The real problem, in the opinion of Hugh McNeile, came when the State transgressed the Scriptural limits of its authority in doctrinal matters. This, far more than obedience in matters comparatively indifferent, such as those of ritual, was the crux:

> The Church has Scriptural authority to decree rites and ceremonies, *in addition* to what is contained in Scripture, provided there be nothing in them '*contrary* to God's Word written.' But the Church has no authority to enforce any doctrine in addition to what is contained in Holy Scripture. Doctrines in addition to the Bible must be rejected for conscience sake. But ceremonies in addi-

[67] More, Remarks, p. 17; Gisborne, p. 355f; Thomas Scott, A Letter, p. 20f.
[68] Henry Ryder, Charge (Stafford, 1828), p. 7
[69] Thomas Scott, A Letter, in Peter Roe, ed. The Evil of Separation From the Church of England Considered (Kilkenny, 1815), p. 29. See also Thomas Scott, A Letter (Kilkenny, 1816).

> tion to, and not in opposition to the Bible, if decreed by the ruler, must be received, adopted, and practiced, for conscience sake.[70]

Fortunately for the Evangelical clergy, he added, "this distinction is fully recognized, and very happily expressed, in Article Twenty of the Church of England."[71] Thomas Chalmers, who led the opposition to State intrusion at the time of the Scottish Disruption, agreed that although the Church should willingly and rightfully receive all its maintenance from the civil power, "it follows not that it therefore receives its theology from the same quarter; or that this theology should acquire thereby the slightest taint of infusion of secularity."[72] Despite such resolves, most English Evangelicals, as we will see in subsequent chapters, capitulated to repeated examples of what many regarded as State intrusion during the first half of the nineteenth century. But not all. The question of unacceptable Erastianism set in motion the reluctant secession of a number of 'gospel ministers' from the Church.

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Through most of the eighteenth-century Evangelicals felt no strong need to articulate their views on the Establishment in any sustained and formal manner. John Wesley occasionally set down his views on the relationship of Methodism to the Church of England, in order to clear his own mind and restrain his supporters

[70] McNeile, Letters, p. 46f.

[71] Ibid., p. 47. This Article granted to the Church power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith. At the same time, it prohibited the Church from advancing any doctrine that is contrary to God's written Word.

[72] Chalmers, Lectures, in Chalmers' Works, 17:197.

from drifting towards separation, but his was an exceptional case. For the most part, the principle of establishment was taken for granted by Evangelicals. It was assumed rather than actively contemplated.

The early decades of the Evangelical Revival were not years in which the Church perceived itself to be under siege. There was little challenge from Dissent--declining or stagnant until the 1780s--while Methodism under Wesley remained within the boundaries of the Established Church. Then, in the 1790s, a new degree of self-consciousness entered into the Evangelical view of establishment. The Dissenting campaign for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts between 1787 and 1790 created something of a panic concerning the future of the old order in Church and State, particularly as some of its leaders were 'rational Dissenters' like Capell Lofft whose views on the Trinity were suspect.[73] The connection of Unitarianism with democratic politics and 'Jacobinism' in activists like Joseph Priestley and renegade Anglicans such as Gilbert Wakefield and John Horne Tooke increased the alarm. So too did the remarkable upsurge of Methodism and evangelical Nonconformity in the 1790s. Suddenly it seemed not impossible that, if this trend continued, the Church of England might become a minority Church--like the Church of Ireland--and be doomed to disestablishment on numerical grounds.

The 1790s and the Napoleonic wars produced a flurry of Evangelical affirmations in defence of the Church

[73]See Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIII Century (Cambridge, 1934), p. 341f.

of England, its Thirty-Nine Articles, its liturgy, and its civil connection. Hannah More's influential *work Village Politics* (1793) extolled the benevolent virtues of a strict social and religious hierarchy in which the parish Church--undergirded by its established status--played a vital role. Joseph Milner's celebrated *Church History* (vol. II, 1795) claimed that the supreme civil power had a right "To establish the true religion by positive institutions...To ensure public respect to these institutions by penal laws...[and] To restrain and punish the propagators of irreligious opinions."[74] The Evangelical commentator Thomas Scott argued in 1815 (the year of the battle of Waterloo) that an establishment provided a faithful and conscientious minister with more advantages for usefulness than can be found elsewhere; likewise those who worshipped within an established church had far greater advantages for edification.[75]

In the post-war years Evangelical fears for the future of establishment seemed to have receded somewhat, though there still seemed a possibility that godless English radicals might one day pull down throne and altar. The potential challenge of evangelical Dissent seems temporarily to have diminished. It became clear that Wesleyan Methodism--by far the largest grouping outside the Church--was still in favour of the establishment principle: under the control of Jabez Bunting and his allies it was not disposed to threaten

[74]Milner, 2:232.
[75]Scott, Letter, in Roe, p. 14.

the existing order in Church or State.[76] Dissent in general seemed politically innocuous. When Nonconformist disabilities under the Test and Corporation Acts were lifted in 1828, Evangelicals for the most part shared the view of Parliament and the episcopate that Nonconformity presented little threat to the Anglican Establishment. Few heeded the warnings of the high Tory Evangelical Sir Robert Harry Inglis that the Tests should be retained as a bulwark against any further attack on the Church.[77]

This complacency was rudely shattered by the sudden resurgence of political Dissent in the Reform Bill crisis. Dissenting demands for complete equality and for disestablishment came to many Evangelicals as a bolt of lightening from a clear sky. The editors of the *Record*, for instance, declared that they would never have supported repeal of the Tests if they had "believed that it added any real power to the Dissenters to the disadvantage of the Church;" still less if they had thought "that it was tantamount to a casting off of the allegiance which this Kingdom professed to Christ and his religion."[78] The attack on the establishment principle was no longer led by 'radical Dissenters,' Socinians, and the like, but by evangelical Dissenters--the very Christians with whom Evangelicals rubbed shoulders at Bible Society or Anti-slavery meetings--devout men like Edward Miall and Thomas Binney. It was all the more disturbing for that.

[76]See David Hempton, Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850 (London, 1984), pp. 185-190.
[77]See Rennie, p. 111.
[78]Record, 29 July 1828.

What made the polemic of the evangelicals within the Liberation Society particularly alarming was their apparent link with dangerous democratic movements, particularly to the pressure-group politics of the middle class radicals of the Anti-Corn Law League. Their willingness to cooperate with Roman Catholics, Socinians, and other 'heretics' in bringing down the Church only served to convince Evangelicals that disestablishment might be the prelude to national apostasy and godlessness.[79] As the *Christian Observer* remarked:

> The main object of the confederacy of Radicals, Papists, Infidels, and Political Dissenters of every name, is to insert the point of the wedge that is to tear asunder all national church establishments...The principle once legislatively entrenched upon, the successive stages of demolition will be easy and consistent.[80]

The Evangelicals' defence of establishment, therefore, was prompted by fears about the destructive potential of the campaigners against the great institutions of Church and State, as well as by their positive belief in the superiority of the Church and its civil connection. They came to see disestablishment not as a movement which aimed to restore civil and religious rights, but as a force for irreligion.

Though agreed on the need to preserve the Established Church, Evangelicals differed over the best way to achieve their objective. As we shall see in later chapters, the movement tended, especially from the late 1820s, to fragment into divergent sub-groupings between which there was a marked degree of friction. This

[79] See Hugh McNeile, Speech (Edinburgh, 1844), pp. 4, 6-15; Record, 18 October 1830.

[80] C.O., 1837, p. 62f. See also Hugh Stowell, Speech, 1843, Pulpit, 43, p. 440.

cleavage was especially apparent between the co-called Recordites--who followed the lead of the ultra-Protestant and Tory periodical the *Record*--and those more moderate Evangelicals whose views were expressed by the *Christian Observer*, organ of the pragmatic Clapham coterie. The liberal leanings of the '*Christian Observer* school'--which favoured both Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill--were rejected by the Recordites, who demanded a firmer, more resolute opposition to the solvent acids of political liberalism: a more dogmatic and Calvinistic theology than that offered by Charles Simeon and his like, and a more vigorous defence of the existing order in Church and State.

At the opposite extreme to the *Record*--and far removed from the moderate, Whiggishly-inclined establishmentarianism of the *Christian Observer*--was the small party gathered around the mercurial Evangelical philanthropist Sir Culling Eardley. In December 1839, Sir Culling, who came to believe that disestablishment would be beneficial for the Church as well as an aid in evangelism, founded the Voluntary Church Association, a body committed to uniting Churchmen and Dissenters in enacting the disestablishment of the Church of England.[81] The Association, which was firmly denounced by the *Christian Observer* and by many other Evangelicals,[82] issued a series of tracts to further their cause, as well as a monthly paper, the *Voluntary* (which merged, after 1846, with the *Christian Examiner*).

[81]See G.I.T. Machin, Politics and Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868 (Oxford, 1977), p. 107; Mackintosh, p. 8).

[82]See C.O., 1846, pp. 604-611.

It was the conservative Recordites who were most active in defending the Establishment. In 1832 the Christian Influence Society, dominated by the Recordite Alexander Gordon, was founded in order "to give a right direction to the public mind on the subject of religion and morals and the general state of society."[83] It encouraged a number of Evangelicals--by no means all of them Recordites--to publish works defending the Church and its civil connection, most notably William Dealtry's *The Importance of the Established Church* (1832), and *An Argument for a Church Establishment* (1833), by William Scholefield, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge.

Both writers made full use of the pragmatic arguments for establishment, many of which were familiar enough. "In order to promote Christian knowledge among all classes," urged Dealtry, and "to diffuse those social and domestic blessings which are necessary to the well-being of society, you must adopt a system which plants Christian teachers in every part of the country, so that no hamlet and no individual shall be left without the means of instruction...This is an object which an established church alone is able to accomplish."[84] Rhetorically, Dealtry placed the counter-factual hypothesis before his readers: what would England be like *without* a State religion? He was in no doubt of the

[83]In addition to the less important Established Church Society, also founded by Evangelicals two years later. Rennie, p. 300.

[84]William Dealtry, The Importance of the Established Church (London, 1832), p. xvii. Dealtry was John Venn's successor as Rector of Clapham and later Archdeacon of Surrey.

answer: it would be a moral desert, punctuated only by a few haphazardly scattered oases. Moreover, a legally constituted national church, whose doctrinal formulae were guaranteed by act of Parliament, would be unlikely to defect from the principles of the gospel. Voluntary churches, on the other hand, could and did apostatize--witness the declension of the old Presbyterian churches into Unitarianism. As long as the Church of England remained established, she would remain "the depository of that sacred fire which she received from the altar of the Lord."[85]

Scholefield, too, exulted in the "UNIVERSAL PASTORAL SUPERINTENDENCE" conferred by establishment, which brought "the whole length and breadth of the land under the eye and cognizance of Scriptural pastors who are set apart and detached from all other cares for the special purpose."[86] He held that the withdrawal of that nation-wide ministerial coverage would lead England back to virtual paganism, especially in the great cities. He rejected the claim of the Voluntaries that the vigorous state of religion in the United States proved the efficacy of the separation of Church and State. Though Dissenters often argued that voluntarism encouraged enterprise and vitality in religion, there was no real evidence to substantiate the claim. Most existing evidence was drawn from the state of religion in some of the great American cities: it ignored the

[85]Ibid., p. xviii.
[86]James Scholefield, An Argument for a Church Establishment (Cambridge, 1833), p. 11)

appalling spiritual destitution of the myriad scattered and isolated settlements in its villages and forests.[87]

The most celebrated exponent of the case for establishment on the ground of pastoral utility was Thomas Chalmers, whom the Christian Influence Society induced in 1838 to deliver his celebrated *Lectures on the Establishment and Extension of National Churches.* It was perhaps ironic that a Scottish Presbyterian became the most influential voice in the establishment debate south of the Tweed, but Thomas Chalmers was no obscure Scot. Articulate, highly intelligent, possessing great eloquence and oratorical skills, and widely known and respected in English religious and political circles, Chalmers was uniquely qualified to defend the principle of establishment. Additionally, he had written perhaps the most influential defence of establishment to date, his celebrated *Christian and Civic Economy*, first published in 1821.[88] Thus, his contribution to the ensuing debate can not easily be overstated.[89]

Chalmers was also a most able and energetic advocate of Church extension. When Lord Melbourne rejected the Kirk's plea for the funding of church building in Scotland, Chalmers, bitterly disappointed, accepted the Society's invitation to deliver a series of lectures in London during April and May 1838. To have captured

[87]Ibid., p. 16.

[88]Chalmers' Works, 14. See also Chalmers, On the Use and Abuse of Literary and Ecclesiastical Endowments, 1827, in Chalmers' Works, 17:29-184; On Religious Endowments, 1829, in Chalmers' Works, 11:439-462; The Cause of Church Extension, n.d., in Chalmers' Works, 18:105-147.

[89]See Stewart J. Brown, Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland (Oxford, 1982), pp. 269-271.

Chalmers was in itself a *coup*. In most respects he was an exponent of free trade. Though not uncritical of the overblown claims of political economy, he believed in tariff reduction and the repeal of the Corn Laws.[90] At the same time, he did not extend his free trade principles to religion, but firmly rebuffed the Voluntaries who did. This might appear paradoxical, but then Chalmers' career was full of paradoxes, not the least of which was his future role in the great Disruption, in which, though a fierce exponent of establishment as a principle, he nevertheless led the seceders of the Scots Free Church into Nonconformity. There was an element of paradox, too, in the anxiety of the Christian Influence Society to invite him, for the Society's mouthpiece, the *Churchman's Monthly Review*, had earlier blamed Chalmers for popularizing free trade views in religious circles.[91]

"It may be well in commerce, that markets should be left to find their own spontaneous level," Chalmers asserted in the second of his lectures, "but it is not well that matters should thus be left in Christianity--else no attempt will be made, either to instruct the poor or to reclaim the profligate."[92] Government had a duty to encourage the spread of Christianity throughout the land; voluntarism could not compensate for this responsibility, for it functioned only to meet the demands of those who already possessed religious concern

[90]See Boyd Hilton, The Age of Atonement (Oxford, 1988), p. 66.
[91]See Donald M. Lewis, Lighten Their Darkness (New York, 1986), p. 154f.
[92]Chalmers, Lectures, 17:246.

and the means to afford pew rents, while neglecting the irreligious, the ignorant, and the poor. Religion was not like trade, which followed the laws of supply and demand, for those who needed it most, the poor and the ignorant, demanded it least. The premise for 'ecclesiastical free trade' was a flawed one: it left out the vital fact of human depravity and natural dislike of God's Word. Chalmers' most impassioned argument was directed against the Government's rejection of church extension--an issue on which the Kirk enjoyed the support of the great mass of the Scottish people. He warned that such insensitivity to the unfranchised poor, who were often ignored by Parliament, would not be tolerated by the Established clergy, who would continue to fight on their behalf to ensure the extension of religion.

Chalmers' six lectures were an enormous success.[93] Lauded throughout Britain, they were immediately published in both Glasgow and London, and within a year eight thousand copies had been printed.[94] The Nonconformist backlash, however, was swift and severe. 'Voluntary' journals printed critical reviews, and the Dissenting Deputies immediately appointed a sub-committee to present the counter-case for voluntarism.[95] Ralph Wardlaw, an able Scottish Congregational minister from

[93]See Owen Chadwick, 'Chalmers and the State,' in A.C. Cheyne, ed. The Practical and the Pious (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 65-83.

[94]W. Hannah, Memories of Dr. Chalmers, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1849-52), 4:37-46.

[95]See Bernard Lord Manning, The Protestant Dissenting Deputies (Cambridge, 1952), p. 389; Voluntary Church Magazine, October 1838, pp. 433-441; Presbyterian Review, January 1840, pp. 398-429.

Glasgow, was soon appointed by the Deputies to deliver a series of lectures in answer to Chalmers, and these were delivered in London in April and May 1839 to equally large and enthusiastic audiences.[96] They were quickly published,[97] moreover, and, with later editions, well over eleven thousand copies were printed.[98]

Wardlaw set out his argument by juxtaposing the unscriptural nature and intrinsic unfairness of establishment, against the Scriptural nature and numerous advantages of voluntarism. The nature of establishment, as defined by Chalmers in terms of pastoral utility, or Gladstone in terms of a *national personality*, or Coleridge in terms of a *national civilization establishment*, should be rejected by Christians as unsound and contradictory. The voluntary principle, on the other hand, was instinctive to a man's nature; a matter of free will and not coercive; set out in the New Testament as the model of the Christian church; and more likely to provide the English Church with increased efficiency, spiritual purity, and independence from civil intrusion.[99]

Nor were Chalmers' critics all Voluntaries. From a very different angle, Gladstone (now a High Churchman) published his own work on establishment, which was decidedly unsympathetic to Chalmers' use of severely

[96]Manning, p. 390.
[97]Ralph Wardlaw, National Church Establishments Examined (London, 1839).
[98]Manning, p. 390f.
[99]See Wardlaw.

utilitarian arguments on behalf of establishment.[100] In a letter to Henry Manning, Gladstone wrote that Chalmers' lectures were as "a jumble of church, un-church, and anti-church principles...I do not believe that he has even looked in the face the real doctrine of the visible church and the Apostolic succession, or has any idea what is the matter at issue."[101] Gladstone concluded that Chalmers had played into the hands of the most insensitive Erastians among the Protestant Constitutionalists, who regarded the Church as little more than a mere appendage of the State.[102]

Sensing that they had lost the momentum in the debate over establishment, the Christian Influence Society responded to Wardlaw's lectures by arranging for another set of lectures to be delivered during March 1840 in the same rooms as Chalmers' earlier triumph. Hugh McNeile, the combative Irish Rector of St. Jude's, Liverpool, was not the Society's first choice as speaker, neither was he the epitome of moderate and temperate Evangelicalism like Christopher Benson, Prebendary of Worcester (the Society's first choice),[103] which must have earned McNeile points with some of the more ex-

[100]W.E. Gladstone, The State in its Relations with the Church (London, 1838). Although welcomed by Evangelicals as an aid to the campaign, the work was censured by the C.O. (1839, pp. 126, 286) for exalting episcopal churches above established (but non-episcopal) bodies, such as the Scottish Kirk.

[101]Quoted in John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 2 vols. (London, 1902), 1:171f.

[102]See Rennie, p. 307f; C.O., 1839, pp. 126, 285-299.

[103]Christopher Benson, the moderate Evangelical Master of the Temple, had agreed to deliver the lectures; however, for some undisclosed reason he had become indisposed and was unable to fulfil this obligation.

treme elements within the Society. Nevertheless, he was well-known as one of the most articulate and prolific defenders of establishment in England,[104] and as perhaps the most influential member of the anti-Catholic Protestant Association.[105] His *Lectures on the Church of England* succeeded in raising the debate to the higher ground occupied by Wardlaw by setting forth the biblical and historical basis of the English Establishment.[106]

It was McNeile's aim to sharpen Evangelical thinking on the issue and to underscore the claim that the establishment of the Church of England rested not merely on its utility--as Chalmers had demonstrated--but on *truth*: he would "vindicate fundamentally the SCRIPTURAL standing of our Church."[107] Its clergy were part of a great historical secession traceable back to Apostolic times,[108] its liturgy was an aid to worship,[109] its formularies ensured continuance of proper doctrine,[110] its endowments gave the means of disseminating the gos-

[104]Besides those works cited above see Hugh McNeile, The True Scriptural Ground and Limits of Church Authority, 1830, Pulpit, 14, pp. 293-299; The Danger of the Church of Ireland, 1832, Pulpit, 19, pp. 17-26; Church Reform, 1832, Pulpit, 19, pp. 254-262; The Constitutional and Ritual of the Church of England Defended, 1834, Pulpit, 23, pp. 241-250; Church Endowments Defended Both Upon Scriptural and Secular Grounds, 1834, Pulpit, 23, pp. 289-304; Church Endowments Defended, 1834, Pulpit, 30, 321-333; The Church Establishment (London, 1837); The Scriptural Warrant for an Established Church, 1837, Pulpit, 30, pp. 269-279; The Church and the Churches (London, 1846).

[105]See Machin, p. 95f.

[106]See Hugh McNeile, Lectures. For the Dissenting response see George Redford, Christianity Against Coercion (London, 1840).

[107]McNeile, Lectures, pp. 5, 147-199.

[108]Ibid., p. 56ff.

[109]Ibid., p. 104-113.

[110]Ibid., pp. 113-116, 272.

pel in places untouched by voluntarism.[111] A church was not merely a local institution, a gathered church of saints withdrawn from the world and set up on a voluntary basis: it was set out in Scripture as a national institution, a visible society, including multitudes who were not spiritual. "We recognize a commandment to baptize *nations*," he claimed, "to cast a net which enclosed not good fish only, but bad also...We recognize, therefore, a demand for *outward means*, not upon a congregational scale only, but on a national scale."[112] This great task was beyond the reach of the voluntary principle. McNeile dismissed Wardlaw's claim that the Jewish theocracy was no precedent for a modern constitutional monarchy in a liberal State: that Israel showed a national establishment "so peculiar and *unique* as to place it beyond the reach of imitation."[113] Far from it. The ancient Jewish State was, *pari passu*, always a paradigm for the modern Christian State. National worship and a national priesthood remained the model which, though in modern variations and forms, must be accepted as the divine model.

McNeile was one of several Evangelical apologists who realized that the case for the Anglican Establishment could not be rested on merely utilitarian grounds. The Scriptural debate, as we have seen, was always difficult to win, since precedents from the Old and New Testaments seemed to point in differing directions. Ancient Israel provided an example for the nation cov-

[111]Ibid., p. 204-208.
[112]Ibid., p. 165.
[113]Ibid., p. 171.

enanted with Jehovah, obeying the biblical injunction: 'Kings shall be thy nursing fathers and Queens thy nursing mothers.'[114] To T.R. Birks, whose treatise *The Christian State: or the First Principles of National Religion* (1847) was the most systematic exposition of the Evangelical theory, the Old Testament showed beyond any shadow of doubt that it was the divine will that all rulers should rule in the fear of God, actively spread the Word, and recognize "the corporate existence, social work and Divine commission" of God's Church.[115] Kings and Queens should promote religion in their kingdoms in the same godly spirit that Abraham governed his patriarchal family in ancient times, though of course in a modern State this paternal character was somewhat limited.[116] Yet today, as then, the ruler was the representative of the State before God.[117]

The New Testament, on the other hand, provided difficulties for those attempting a clear-cut appeal to Scripture, though this did not prevent Evangelicals from seeking one. What was one to make of the Voluntaries who cited texts like 'My Kingdom is not of this world?' William Dealtry was compelled to admit that "although neither our Lord or His Apostles *enjoined* a national religious establishment," he remained convinced that "the tendency of the Christian churches at

[114]Isaiah 49:23. Quoted in William Dealtry, Religious Establishments Tried by the Word of God (London, 1833), p. 21.
[115]T.R. Birks, The Christian State: or the First Principles of National Religion (London, 1847), p. 16f.
[116]Ibid., p. 190; Dealtry, Religious Establishments, p. 12f.
[117]Birks, The Christian State, p. 115ff.

a very early period took that direction," when thus formed into one large ecclesiastical body, even before the conversion of Constantine.[118] "There was wanting only a Christian Emperor to give it the regular form"--a task which Constantine duly began to shoulder.[119] Without Imperial establishment, half the Roman world would have remained in the darkness of idolatry. The establishment principle, in short, was explicit in the Old Testament but implicit in the New, and plainly evidenced in the developing course of the history of the primitive church.

With such arguments, the great mass of Evangelicals remained content. The patriarchal theocratic argument helped to satisfy the high Tories of a paternalist cast of thought. The argument from utility convinced those who were more in tune with the pragmatic liberalism of the age of Russell and Peel. Yet, as we shall see, not all Evangelicals were convinced. The Scriptural case for establishment was as vigorously denied--by impeccably evangelical Dissenters who were manifestly members of the 'Church of Christ'--as it was affirmed by the Evangelicals of the Church. The battle of texts was inconclusive. The argument from utility was even more keenly two-edged. If establishments were said to promote the extension of the gospel, it was by no means clear that the existing establishment of the Church of England did not also hinder evangelism, tying it to a corrupt patronage system in Church and State, and preventing the evangelization of the people by its

[118]Dealtry, Religious Establishments Tried, p. 28.
[119]Ibid., p. 29.

stiff-necked legalism. Perhaps the example of the United States was more valid than Churchman cared to admit? The basic weakness in the ideological defence of establishment by Evangelicals was (at least in the view of many High Churchmen) that at its heart it had a comparatively low theory of the terrestrial or 'visible' churches. The interests of the invisible 'Church of Christ' remained always paramount. No terrestrial church form, no particular polity or order, was exclusive or even *jure divino*. Evangelicals admitted that the existing Church of England, though it rested on excellent foundations, was very far from perfection and in need of considerable reform. Hugh McNeile admitted in his defence of the Church that some clergy did not live up to their calling, that the appointment of bishops smacked of Erastianism, and that the liturgy contained embarrassing blemishes (which, he suggested, should be put in brackets and allowed to be omitted by scrupulous Evangelicals).[120] It remained a legitimate inference from Evangelical ecclesiology that if the gospel could be proclaimed more effectively outside the Establishment, or in a regime in which Church and State was separated, then the zealous Christian might have to abandon a moribund State Church. As we shall see, not a few 'gospel clergymen' accepted the logic of this position.

[120]McNeile, Lectures, pp. 262, 245-249.

The Prelude: Evangelicals and the Church During the Late Eighteenth Century

Very few of the early leaders of the Evangelical Revival were separatists in principle. They accepted the idea of a national church by law established, and firmly rejected the separatists' idea of true churches as small local bodies of 'visible saints' gathered out of the unregenerate world. The early Methodist leaders believed that a national reformation would be best accomplished by a revival within the National Church; their aim was to leaven the Anglican lump, not to found a new denomination. Wesley thought that the Puritans had failed to regenerate the country because they had hived off the 'godly ones' into conventicles, abandoning the task of converting the whole nation to concentrate on the sanctification of the small minority of their own sectarian 'saints.' If the converts of the Revival were to follow the same course, he claimed, they would dwindle into narrow sectarianism and marginality.[1] Thus Wesley's deep loyalty to the Church was partly due to his belief that its parochial structure would be of great assistance in transforming the nation's spiritual state.[2] Most Evangelicals also found Puritan scrupulosity over issues of ritual and liturgy difficult to comprehend. It was for Wesley a weakness in the godly men of the seventeenth century that they spent "much of their time and strength in disputing

[1]Works of John Wesley, ed. by Thomas Jackson, 3rd ed., 14 vols. (London, 1831), 7:278, 427f.
[2]See John Wesley, 'Reasons Against a Separation From the Church of England,' 1758; Quoted in the C.O., 1805, p. 139ff; Frank Baker, William Grimshaw 1708-1763 (London, 1963), p. 250f.

about surplices and hoods, or kneeling at the Lord's Supper."[3]

In some important respects it was easier for a vigorous conversionist reforming group to exist in the eighteenth-century Church than it had been in the late seventeenth. There were few checks from the authorities in Church and State. By the time the Revival broke out in the late 1730s, moderation and Latitudinarianism were in the ascendant. Walpole and the Pelhams, like their Whig episcopate, were disinclined to stir up Church affairs by high-handed actions: sleeping dogs were left to lie, as far as possible, in Church and State. The religious temperature dropped. The absence of Convocation after 1717 removed an arena of clerical controversy, and thus made partisanship and group intolerance harder to sustain. The decentralization of the Church made collective condemnation very difficult to mount. Episcopal discipline was usually mild. Heterodox clerics were generally left alone. Spectacularly 'irregular' reformers like Wesley and--even more--Whitefield did not suffer prosecution, let alone expulsion, and died as fully accredited clergymen of the Established Church.

Nevertheless, the role of the Evangelical clergyman in the eighteenth-century Church was not an easy one. If episcopal prosecution was seldom forthcoming, it was always there, in reserve, as a threat. Evangelicals found themselves ostracized by colleagues and

[3]Entry of 13 March 1747, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, ed. by Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols. (London, 1938), 3:286.

ridiculed by neighbours. Not infrequently they were attacked in visitation sermons as they sat silent beneath the pulpit. In 1739, for instance, the Bishop of London published a stinging denunciation of Whitefield and his followers in a *Pastoral Letter*, following it up with an anonymous pamphlet attack on Methodism, *Observations upon the Conduct of a Certain Sect* (1744), which was widely distributed in parish churches. Moreover, the early Evangelicals were often cut off from patronage: many served their entire career as low-paid curates in obscure parishes. Their Calvinistic doctrine was often denounced as 'enthusiasm.' Though Reformed theology had been dominant in the Church until the Restoration, it had been largely overlaid after 1660 by 'Arminian' doctrine, whether that of Laudian High Churchmen, or Latitudinarians. When the Evangelicals tried to restore a Calvinistic interpretation of the Articles they were continually told by those in authority that their theology was un-Anglican; it was the teaching of seventeenth-century Puritan regicides and modern Dissenters, but not that of the Church of England. It is hardly surprising therefore that many early Evangelicals were seized from time to time by a strong sense of loneliness and isolation which strained their sense of loyalty to the Church to which they belonged.

The chief pressure on the early Evangelicals' allegiance to the Church did not come from personal opposition, however. It came rather from the hindrances placed on their mission by the deadweight of establish-

ment--by legal restraints, the shortcomings of the patronage system, and by the massive inertia of tradition and social conservatism. The Evangelicals perceived the Church to be tragically hampered in its task, and in the thrall of what Peter Virgin has recently described as 'An Age of Negligence.'[4]

The most obvious point of conflict between early Evangelical clergymen and their Church came over Church order. The call to 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation' was not easily obeyed within the legal confines of the Establishment, and early Evangelical clergymen often found themselves driven to adopt evangelistic expedients which conflicted with existing Anglican practice or rule.[5] Extempore prayer; the formation of 'religious societies' often owing no allegiance to the parish minister; irregular preaching in fields, barns, hired rooms, or private houses; even--in the case of the Methodists--the building of preaching-houses and the authorization of lay preachers--all these pragmatic expedients involved conflict with the legal structures of the Established Church. The theological justification of such clerical 'irregularity' can be found in the tendency of the ear-

[4]Peter Virgin, Church in an Age of Negligence (Cambridge, 1988).

[5]Such 'expedients' have been closely studied in several important scholarly accounts. See Charles Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (Cambridge, 1940); J.D. Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals in the Eighteenth Century: With Especial Reference to Methodism' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1956); Frank Baker, John Wesley and the Church of England (London, 1970). They were not universally accepted by all early Evangelicals, a number of whom, such as Walker of Truro, disagreed with Wesley over such activity. See C.J. Abbey and J.H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century, 2nd ed. (London, 1902), pp. 324, 378.

ly Evangelicals to separate doctrine and ecclesiastical 'order.' Consequently, they contended that primary loyalty must be given not to any particular denomination, but to the invisible church, the so-called 'community of saints.'[6]

The 'gospel clergymen' who participated in these practices can be placed in two broad categories: 'irregulars' and 'half-regulars.' The 'irregulars' were unbeneficed clergy like Wesley and Whitefield, who engaged in itinerant preaching, officiated cheerfully in unlicensed and unconsecrated chapels, and set about establishing their own 'religious societies' in a nationwide 'connexion' which took no orders from parish clergy or diocesan bishops.[7] Wesley claimed that he began to engage in clerical 'irregularity' only because he had been shut out of the Church. He and his brother Charles were "dragged out," as he later described it, "by earnest Importunity, to preach at one Place and another, and another, and so carried on, we know not how, without any Design, but the general one, of saving souls."[8] In another account, he defended his relaxed attitude toward order as a justified reaction to the Church's spiritual malaise:

> I wonder at those who still talk so loud of the indecency of field-preaching. The highest indecency is in St. Paul's Church, where a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the

[6]Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' p. 60.
[7]See John Walsh, 'Religious Societies, Methodist and Evangelical, 1738-1800,' in W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood, eds., Studies in Church History, 23, Voluntary Religion (Oxford, 1986).
[8]John Wesley, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, (London, 1745), p. 115.

> highest decency in a churchyard or field, when the whole congregation behave and look as if they saw the Judge of all, and heard him speaking from heaven.[9]

Wesley defended the formation of 'religious societies' for private study and exhortation as having precedent in primitive Christianity, and as "the most effectual means for restoring our decaying Christianity to its primitive life and vigour and the supporting of our tottering and sinking Church."[10] Whitefield concurred:

> None but those who have experienced it, can tell the unspeakable advantage of such a union and communion of souls. I know not a better means in the world to keep hypocrisy out from amongst you. Pharisees and unbelievers will pray, read, and sing Psalms; but none, save an Israelite indeed, will endure to have his heart searched out.[11]

High Church critics dismissed such claims. The Methodist societies resembled Nonconformist conventicles. Their members were disregarding the numerous opportunities for fellowship already provided by the Establishment.[12] These associations offered laymen too much authority: "so infectious is the itch of 'exhorting,'" one critic claimed, "that no sooner one of them can scarce read, but he catches the distemper, and sets up for a public exhorter."[13] These separate voluntary

[9]Entry of 28 August 1748, in Wesley's Journal, 3:373.

[10]Letter of 12 December 1760, in The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., ed. by John Telford, 8 vols. (London, 1931), 4:119.

[11]Quoted in L. Tyerman, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, 2 vols. (London, 1876) 1:319. Cf. The Works of the Rev. John Newton, 6 vols. (London, 1808), 2:103; Eclectic Notes, ed. by J.H. Pratt, (London, 1856), p. 186.

[12]George Stanhope, Advice to the Religious Societies (London, 1730), p. 6.

[13]Quoted in Eifion Evans, Daniel Rowland and the Great Evangelical Awakening in Wales (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 159.

gatherings destroyed the unity and Christian fellowship of the National Church and divided its flocks. Wesley retorted that they were necessary to provide a private fellowship which the public worship of the Church did not offer:

> I answer, that which never existed cannot be destroyed. But the fellowship you speak of, never existed. Therefore, it cannot be destroyed. Which of these true Christians had any such fellowship with these? Who watched over them in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them as they had need? This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship: But alas! Where is it to be found? Look *East* or *West*, *North* or *South*: Name what parish you please: is Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners, a mere rope of sand? What Christian connexion is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each others souls? What bearing of one another's burdens? ...The real truth is...we *introduce* Christian fellowship where it is utterly destroyed.[14]

Even more serious was the charge of schism, for the societies were often free from episcopal authority, and even from the effective authority of their own leaders. In response, Wesley repeatedly exhorted his lay preachers 'to keep to the Church,'[15] and to "do the work of evangelists," in the belief that lay evangelists preaching the Word were sanctioned by the New Testament, and were quite distinct from the ordinary priestly ministry, whose task was to give regular pastoral care and administer the sacraments. They were 'extraordinary messengers.'[16] Likewise Whitefield pleaded with his 'exhorters' not to consider themselves priests or their 'societies' as sectarian, but as mem-

[14]John Wesley, A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists (Bristol, 1749), p. 8.
[15]Wesley, Reasons Against a Separation, p. 139.
[16]Wesley's Works, 7:273-281. Cf. Entry of 12 September 1739, in Wesley's Journal, 2:274.

bers of the Church called to remain in it until heard or thrown out:

> The end of your meeting is not that you may think yourselves more holy than your neighbours, much less to form a sect or party, or to promote a schism or sedition in the Church or State. No: such thoughts, I trust, are far from you; for they are earthly, sensual, devilish. The only end which I hope you all propose by your assembling yourselves together, is the renewing of your depraved natures, and performing the hidden life of Jesus Christ in your souls.[17]

Predictably, however, such appeals often went unheeded.

By the same pragmatic argument the irregulars justified other expedients--'prudential helps' in Wesley's terminology. 'Preaching houses' were built to house meetings of the converts who were gathered in; in due course many of them were licensed as Dissenting meeting-houses in order to protect them from the attention of mobs and from the possibility of prosecution as illegal conventicles. Societies quickly evolved into full-fledged churches. 'Connexions' hardened into virtual denominations. The 'irregular' Methodist clergy led their groups slowly, but inexorably, out of the Church of England. Pressure from lay preachers for full ministerial status became increasingly difficult to resist. The process varied from one nascent denomination to another, and was characterized by many anomalies of relationship to the mother Church of England. Some of the English Calvinistic Methodist societies broke off into Nonconformity at an early stage, possibly because of Whitefield's absences in America and early death, or because of their more strict Calvinism. Some of the clergy leading Lady Huntingdon's Connexion

[17]Quoted in Tyerman, 1:318. Cf. Evans, p. 177.

formally seceded in 1781. The Wesleyans remained formally within the Church of England until Wesley's death in 1791, and drifted only slowly away from it thereafter. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, on the other hand, under the leadership of Thomas Charles of Bala, resisted separation until 1811, when eight of their foremost lay preachers were ordained and the Connexion formally seceded.

In addition to full-time unbeneficed itinerants like John Wesley, George Whitefield, Thomas Charles, and their clerical associates, there were a number of 'half-regulars'--clergy who combined a parochial cure of souls with occasional preaching trips into the parishes of their 'unawakened' colleagues. Many of the early evangelists were prepared to set off on field-preaching tours with Methodist leaders, or conducted their own irregular services in neighbouring parishes, including William Grimshaw, John Newton, John Fletcher, and Thomas Haweis.[18] Perhaps the most notorious 'half-regular' of his day was John Berridge, the incumbent of Everton.[19] Although cordially approving of the Anglican formularies--and thankful for a building to preach in and for Church revenue to live on--Berridge feared that the gospel was not being heard in every parish.[20] Abandoning ecclesiastical order for the 'higher call' of soul-saving, he developed an extensive itinerant ministry throughout the region, preaching in barns,

[18]C.G. Brown, 'Itinerancy and Loyalty. A Study in Eighteenth Century Evangelicalism,' in the J.R.H., June 1971, pp. 235, 237.

[19]See Smyth, p. 250f; Marcus Loane, Cambridge and the Evangelical Secession (London, 1952), p. 83.

[20]Smyth, p. 276ff.

farmhouses, cottages, and in the open air.[21] Likewise Henry Venn, the well-known Vicar of Huddersfield,[22] who served as private chaplain to Lady Huntingdon, itinerated at her chapels, in neighbouring parishes, in private houses, in farmers' barns, as well as preaching for Rowland Hill at Surrey Chapel.[23]

A catalyst in encouraging the work of 'half-regulars' was the formation of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Although warmly attached to the Church, the Countess, concerned that the gospel was not being preached in every parish, began to appoint a number of sympathetic clergymen as her private chaplains, including Whitefield, Hill, Berridge, Venn, William Romaine, John Eyre, and Haweis.[24] These Evangelicals operated in several distinct worlds. Some were 'half-regulars' ministering in their own benefices, preaching occasionally for the Countess, and acting as her private spiritual consultants whenever summoned. Others were 'ir-

[21]Brown, p. 233.
[22]See Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' pp. 185-232.
[23]Ibid., p. 206; E.R., December 1839, p. 627f; Sidney, p. 167f. This clerical 'irregularity' later caused some embarrassment to his son, John Venn, (1759-1813), Rector of Clapham and a prominent member of the 'Sect,' who went to great pains to point out his father's increasing commitment to normative Churchmanship. See John Venn, The Life and a Selection From the Letters of the Late Rev. Henry Venn, M.A., 2nd ed. (London, 1835). Such a claim, which disclosed much about the changes in Evangelical attitudes to clerical 'irregularity' from one generation to another, was later contested by several plausible accounts, and perhaps reflected the younger Venn's fears over the expansion of Dissent and the future of the Church in the early nineteenth century. See A.C.H. Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, 2 vols. (London, 1844), 6th ed., 1:291ff; Sidney, p. 167f; E.R., December 1839, p. 627f.
[24]Seymour, 1:83.

regulars,' employed full-time by her and ministering to her Connexion.

The appointment by Lady Huntingdon of Anglican clergymen as her private chaplains was followed by the establishment of her own 'Anglican' chapels in which Prayer Book services were conducted. This approach to extra-parochial ministry, however, soon plunged the Connexion into complex judicial entanglements, for the legal status of these chapels was anomalous--in limbo betwixt the Establishment and Dissent--since the Countess had made no attempt either to have them licensed and consecrated as parish churches or proprietary chapels, or to register them as Dissenting meeting-houses.[25] This unsettled situation soon introduced legal complications, and, in 1781, Lady Huntingdon was compelled to seek protection for some sixty-seven of her chapels under the Toleration Act.[26] Some of her chaplains--such as John Bradford, William Taylor, and Thomas Wills--seceded from the Church, taking the oaths of allegiance as Dissenting ministers; while others, including Venn, Romaine and Berridge, rapidly withdrew from the Connexion.[27] Two years later, the Connexion began ordaining its own ministers.[28]

As the Revival progressed, the number of 'half-regulars' rapidly decreased. Ecclesiastical regularity became the norm by the 1770s or earlier. The reasons

[25]She acted under the presumption that her right to appoint private chaplains also extended to the establishment of private chapels.

[26]Welch, pp. xvii, 64.

[27]A. Elliott Peaston, The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches (London, 1964), p. 67.

[28]Welch, p. 67ff.

for this have been explored by several historians, particularly Charles Smyth and J.D. Walsh.[29] It became increasingly plain to most 'gospel clergymen' that the Methodists were sliding towards formal Dissent and were rapidly forfeiting their claim to be a ginger-group within the Establishment. The price of 'irregularity' began to appear too high. When a 'new Toryism' began to grow in the age of the American and French Revolutions, young clerical converts were more disposed than their elders to appreciate the importance of order to a well-constituted establishment in Church and State. By the end of the century 'regularity' had largely triumphed. The Evangelical clergy who now poured out of Oxford and Cambridge colleges felt secure and confident in their attachment to the Established Church: their numbers were growing, their position was secure, and they hoped, in the not too distant future, to win back the Church as a whole to the once-forgotten principles of the English Reformation.

Nonetheless, despite the triumph of 'regularity,' the position of the 'gospel minister' in the eighteenth-century Church of England remained one of tension, however much that tension could be concealed by affirmations of loyalty to the Establishment. As long as Evangelicalism remained a vigorously evangelistic force in a Church which was deeply antagonistic to the 'enthusiasm' of its conversionist message, it was bound to collide with the prejudices of contemporaries. There were a number of points of potential conflict--

[29]See Smyth; Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals.'

both ideological and ecclesiastical--which often forced even loyal establishmentarian Evangelical clerics to consider the grounds for their allegiance to the State Church.

One problem was the primary issue of obtaining ordination. Some bishops saw all Evangelical ordinands as potential Methodists, prone to irregularity and disobedience. It was usually more convenient and less provocative for bishops to curtail the supply of Evangelical ordinands than to attempt the prosecution of troublesome clerics already in Holy Orders. They feared them as concealed Dissenters; a Trojan horse of Puritan separatism in the bosom of the Establishment. Rowland Hill was refused ordination by no fewer than six bishops on account of his extensive itinerant ministry. Eventually, the aging Bishop of Bath and Wells was persuaded to ordain him to a modest curacy,[30] with the understanding that he would be 'priested' elsewhere.[31] Hill's unwillingness to refrain from itinerancy, however, prevented his ordination to the priesthood, and, like the Welshman William Williams,[32] he re-

[30]Edwin Sidney, The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill (London, 1834), pp. 48, 88.
[31]Edward W. Broome, The Rev. Rowland Hill: Preacher and Wit (London, 1881), p. 11.
[32]Evans, p. 62.

mained a deacon for the remainder of his life.[33] When Howel Harris sought ordination from the Bishop of St. David's in 1736, he was instead sent away "with an offended look" and "a severe check" for his evangelistic zeal.[34] Rather than take up a ministry within Dissent, as did many of his contemporaries similarly circumstanced, he continued to adhere to that Church--and to that ministry, albeit lay--to which he believed that God had called him:

> As to the lawfulness of laymen's preaching, in some cases and at times of necessity, I saw in the Acts of the Apostles the account of Apollos, and others, who were scattered by the death of Stephen, having no other mission than being moved by the Holy Ghost and love to the immortal souls of their fellow creatures. I thought a greater time of necessity could hardly be than at present, when the whole country, in a cursory sense, lay in a lukewarm, dead condition...Seeing this, and feeling the love of Christ in my heart, I saw an absolute necessity of going about to propagate the gospel of my dear Master and Redeemer.[35]

Several of the Countess of Huntingdon's lay preachers were rejected out of hand for ordination. When Jehoidah Brewer presented himself before the Bishop of Llan-

[33]Broome, p. 11ff. "A more habitual violation of Church principles was never perhaps exhibited in a single life." He was the sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, first baronet, MP for Lichfield, and the younger brother of Sir Richard Hill, second baronet, MP for Shropshire, and provocative defender of Calvinism. See the E.M., 1834, p. 458. He first established an itinerant ministry while a Cambridge undergraduate. His adult life was spent in a dizzying combination of 'irregular' ministerial activities, including frequent visits to his private chapel at Wotten-under-Edge, Gloucestershire; at Surrey Chapel, London; or his annual preaching tours. In 1776, he established a voluntary society, the *Societas Evangelica*, to encourage 'settled' Evangelicals to become involved in itinerant ministry. See Broome, p. 20; P.E. Sangster, 'The Life of the Rev. Rowland Hill (1744-1833) and His Position in the Evangelical Revival' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1964), p. 69.

[34]Evans, p. 47.

[35]Quoted in Ibid., p. 57f.

daff in 1777, he was interrogated about his preaching in Dissenting conventicles and about his Calvinism, and turned away.[36] Many other examples could no doubt be adduced. It is noticeable that those Methodists who were ordained were often dispatched to far-flung, Colonial frontiers where they could do most good but also least harm.[37]

Episcopal discipline could be brought to bear on those who broke the rules of order. This was not surprising, since in their plain sense the Canons appeared to prohibit all evangelistic activity outside a clergyman's own parish (and even some within it). Canon seventy-one, for example, expressly prohibited the clergy from holding meetings in private houses:

> No Minister shall preach, or administer the holy communion, in any private house, except it be in times of necessity, when any being either so impotent as he cannot go to Church, or very dangerously sick,...upon pain of suspension for the first offense, and excommunication for the second.[38]

Similarly, Canon seventy-three stated:

> No priest...or any other persons, shall meet together in any private house, or elsewhere, to consult upon any matter or course to be taken by them ...which may [in] any way tend to the impeaching or depraving of the doctrine of the Church of England or of the Book of Common Prayer, or of any part of the Government and discipline now estab-

[36]See C.E. Watson, Rodborough Tabernacle: An Account by John Knight, Written in 1844, in Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society. Edited by Albert Peel. vol. 10, 1927-29, pp. 277-287, p. 284.

[37]A number of English clerical societies eventually secured a steady flow of Evangelical ordinands into the Church. These included the Elland Society founded by Henry Venn at Huddersfield in 1767, the Bristol Clerical Education Society founded by T.T. Biddulph in 1795, and the London Clerical Education Society founded by Simeon in 1816. See Smyth, p. 243f; Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' pp. 233-273.

[38]C.H. Davis, The English Church Canons of 1604 (London, 1869), p. 70f.

> lished in the Church...under pain of excommunication.[39]

These Canons were seen by many Evangelicals as unjustified encumbrances upon evangelism and the pastoral ministry. Rowland Hill advised that the Canons could be ignored because they had not been ratified by Parliament and were, consequently, episcopally unenforceable.[40] He later dismissed them as "*the mere bully of the high priests,*" and boasted that he had transgressed them "*a thousand times.*"[41] Both John Wesley and the Irish Evangelical Albert Blest claimed the right to organize extra-parochial gatherings on the ground that the intent of the Canons prohibiting conventicles was not, as its language suggested, aimed at their loyal and orthodox 'societies' and itinerant preaching, but at those who would promote sedition and impugn the Articles and the liturgy.[42] John Berridge, when summoned by his Diocesan and threatened with legal proceedings over his clerical 'irregularities,' was content to exculpate himself simply with the retort: "There is one Canon, my Lord, which saith, *Go preach the gospel to* EVERY CREATURE."[43]

Such cavalier attitudes to Church order were generally overlooked by the bishops, who on the whole showed remarkable restraint--or negligence--in enforc-

[39] Ibid., p. 72f. See also Canons 11 and 12.
[40] See J.B. Williams, A Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings (London, c.1774), p. xviiif.
[41] Quoted in Edward Barry, The Friendly Call of Truth and Reason to a New Species of Dissenters (Reading, 1799), p. 44.
[42] See Wesley's Journal, 5 June 1739; Maiben C. Motherwell, A Memoir of the Late Albert Blest (Dublin, 1843), p. 31.
[43] Smyth, p. 262.

ing canonical obedience, a reluctance which was perhaps accentuated by the fact that the costs of any litigation had to come from their own pockets.[44] On occasion, however, Evangelicals who engaged in 'irregular' forms of ministry were formally disciplined by their Diocesan. As early as 1739, for instance, Benjamin Ingham was forbidden to preach in any Church in the Diocese of York, an act which pushed him into virtual Dissent.[45] In 1762, Thomas Haweis was removed from his Oxford curacy by the new Bishop, John Hume, under pressure from anti-Calvinist forces within the University.[46] Six years later, these same forces were responsible for the celebrated expulsion of six Methodist undergraduates from St. Edmund Hall.[47] In about 1778, John Bradford was discharged from his curacy at Frelsham, Berkshire, by his rector who objected to his 'irregularities.'[48] Likewise, William Gunn was dismissed from his curacy at Farnham, Surrey, at the instigation of several wealthy individuals who opposed his evangelistic preaching.[49] The situation in Wales was similar, where Daniel Rowland had his licence withdrawn by the Bishop of St. David's in 1763.[50] Though such disciplinary actions did not generally affect the 'regular'

[44]Virgin, p. 160.
[45]See Diary of an Oxford Methodist, Benjamin Ingham, 1733-1734, ed. by Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Durham, North Carolina, 1985).
[46]Wood, p. 79f.
[47]See S.L. Ollard, The Six Students of St. Edmund Hall Expelled From the University of Oxford in 1768 (London, 1911).
[48]See A Friend, Memoir of the Revd. Thomas Wills (London, 1804), p. 213ff.
[49]See Ralph F. Chambers, Strict Baptist Chapels, 5 vols. (London, 1963), 1:72; E.M., 1807, 44f.
[50]See Evans, p. 325.

Evangelical clergy, they nevertheless gave cause for unease. The spectacle of zealous evangelists suffering for the gospel was unsettling.

The patronage system of the Church of England was another anxiety-inducing factor. By the late eighteenth century Evangelicals were starting to dig themselves into some important livings, and were learning to use the anomalies of the patronage system for their own benefit, but during much of the century there had been great resentment at the exclusion of many 'gospel clergymen' from preferment. As William Richardson of York complained bitterly, the moment an Evangelical clergyman "becomes serious in religion and exemplary as a parish priest, he is, by the courtesy of England, styled a *Methodist*; and this name will make him obnoxious to all who have preferment to bestow. Should he happen to succeed to a benefice, it is considered a *portentous* circumstance, and an act of *ecclesiastical suicide* in those who presented him!"[51] In his *Plea for the Church* (1797), an unusually radical but much reprinted tract, David Simpson of Macclesfield rounded on the inequities of a system which placed the appointment of spiritual offices in lay and often unworthy hands. The evil, he considered, operated from the very top to the lower rungs of the social system; from the King himself, through the Lord Chancellor, who controlled many Crown livings, down to any squire who purchased an advowson on the open market by an act of virtual simony. An atheist or a papist could buy the right to ap-

[51]Anon., A Brief Memoir of the Rev. William Richardson, 2nd ed. (London, 1822), p. 47.

point to a cure of Anglican souls. Those who were supposedly the fathers of the Church, the Bishops, were chosen by political worldlings and were amenable to the civil power. Very few Evangelicals would have followed Simpson in his call for disestablishment[52]--certainly not in the dark days of the wars against Revolutionary France--but many, as we shall see, felt pangs of conscience at the Erastianism of the patronage system, as well as its use against the extension of the gospel. Rowland Hill, for example, readily admitted that religious establishments were never likely to prove the most spiritual of bodies, and easily became "injurious." Consequently, he wished to see a reduced form of episcopacy which made appointments to the bench less attractive to patronage-mongers, than that which existed at present, although (given the choice) he would still prefer to be governed by bishops rather than by the Tory lay autocrats who championed the ultra-Protestant cause. On these principles alone, he declared himself "no enemy" of the Establishment, but he deeply lamented that, by its civil connection, it had lost much of its "original purity and design."[53]

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The issue of patronage lay behind one of the endemic problems of Anglican Evangelicalism in the eighteenth century (and beyond): that of maintaining a suc-

[52]D. Simpson, A Plea for Religion, 5th ed., (London, 1808), p. 143ff.

[53]Rowland Hill, Journal of a Tour Through the North of England and Parts of Scotland (London, 1799), pp. 106-109n. Cf. Hill, Spiritual Characteristics Represented in an Account of a Most Curious Sale of Curates by Public Auction (London, 1803).

cession of gospel preaching in a parish, when a 'gospel minister' departed or died and was replaced by an opponent of the 'doctrines of grace.' This problem--labelled the 'problem of continuity' by Charles Smyth--has been well documented in recent writing on the Revival.[54] It arose repeatedly and led to the secession of large numbers of laymen into Nonconformity. At the heart of the matter lay the inability of Evangelical incumbents to ensure the succession of a like-minded clergyman after their death, retirement, or transfer to another parish. Advowsons were legally held by a variety of patrons, and could be purchased by Oxford and Cambridge colleges, city companies, or by anyone prepared to acquire patronage rights on the open market. In practice, they were often held by wealthy and powerful patrons who deferred to the interests of political or family connection when making appointments.

For many early Evangelicals, this practice posed a serious dilemma, for after labouring in a parish to advance the so-called 'doctrines of grace,' they feared having their work destroyed after their departure by the appointment of an unsympathetic--or even an unorthodox--successor. John Berridge complained in 1777 that the arrival of such a successor often compelled the parishioners to secede to evangelical Dissent, and although God was calling more Evangelicals into the Church, the movement might one day be forced to secede *en masse* because of problems of succession.[55] William

[54]See Smyth, pp. 201-247.
[55]The Works of the Rev. John Berridge, A.M., ed. by Richard Wittingham, (London, 1838), p. 517f.

Grimshaw was so distrustful of his own patron that in 1758 he built a Methodist chapel in his parish for his congregation's 'dual use' (or 'singular use' if the parish fell into theological 'darkness') after his death.[56] Edward Bickersteth, who occasionally attended the ministry of the Dissenter William Jay at Bath, argued that it was "a positive duty to go where Christianity, and not mere morality, is preached," even if this entailed attending a ministry outside the Church.[57] Henry Venn also conceded that after the departure of a faithful minister, Evangelicals ought to go to where the gospel was preached even if this entailed crossing parish boundaries--anathema to High Churchmen--or, as an even more drastic course, attending the local meeting-house.[58] When Venn left Huddersfield in 1771, his parishioners pleaded with him to stay, even accusing him of dereliction of duty for abandoning his flock.[59] He could not, however, accede to their wishes. The great congregation which he had built up rapidly evaporated when the patrons, the Ramsden family, replaced him with a stiff anti-Evangelical of whom a disgusted parishioner remarked "they might as well have put a poker in't pulpit."[60] The local Baptist chapels soon filled up. How to cope with this recurrent problem was an agonizing question. When pressed by his parishioners whether they should search for the gospel else-

[56]Grimshaw was the well-known incumbent of Haworth, Yorkshire. See Baker, William Grimshaw, p. 252.
[57]See T.R. Birks, Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, 2 vols, 2nd ed. (London, 1852), 1:43; C.O., 1807, p. 303.
[58]See Smyth, pp. 272f, 242.
[59]Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' p. 221f.
[60]Quoted in Walsh, 'Religious Societies,' p. 296.

where, Venn encouraged patience and prayer, but some of his converts set about building a chapel in the parish in the hope that the former congregation might reunite. Venn, now at Yelling, offered his approval and financial assistance to the scheme. By now he had ceased to insist that his former flock continue to attend the parish Church: he wrote instead encouraging them to hold fast to the faith, to avoid disputes, and to look charitably on that Church through which they had been converted.[61]

Further examples of such unrest are easy to find. Besides those who seceded over the issue of continuity, many others left either because they had been 'abandoned' by the Church, particularly within the new urban industrialized areas where the Church could not form new parishes--and build new churches--fast enough to keep pace with the rapid migration; or because evangelical Dissent offered an attractive alternative to local Anglican listlessness and heterodoxy.[62] In 1796, a group of Evangelicals in Camberwell, alarmed that the gospel was no longer preached in the parish, built a chapel from their own resources. As the bishop and vicar refused to consent to its licensing, it was registered under the Toleration Act as a Dissenting meet-

[61]See Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' p. 241f; Venn, p. 174f.

[62]See Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' p. 84. Robert Robinson (1735-1790) was an example of this second pattern. See William Robinson, Select Works of the Rev. Robert Robinson of Cambridge (London, 1861); E.M., 1794, p. 72.

ing-house known as Camden Chapel.[63] Other examples of London chapels built under similar circumstances can be found, including Orange Street Chapel, Islington Chapel, Stockwell Chapel, and Union Chapel, Islington.[64] Although High Churchmen responded to such developments by appealing to the interests of the Church and by advocating passage of new legislation which would advance the Church's effectiveness and strengthen its defences,[65] their pleas failed to stem the steady flow of lay seceders into Protestant Dissent.

Perhaps the most spectacular example of the problems associated with Evangelical continuity involved the parish of St. Giles', Reading, which split apart no fewer than four times within the scope of forty years.[66] When its first Evangelical incumbent, the 'half-regular' William Talbot,[67] was succeeded in 1774 by the unsympathetic William Bromley Cadogan,[68] the first major congregational secession occurred, with many parishioners going to the local Baptist meeting-house.[69] Surprisingly, however, Cadogan soon embraced evangelicalism himself and reunited his scattered

[63]Basil F.L. Clarke, The Building of the Eighteenth-Century Church (London, 1963), p. 197f. Henry Melville, minister from 1829-1843, finally convinced Bishop Blomfield to license the chapel, and it was consecrated in 1844.

[64]See Henry Allon, Memoir of the Rev. James Sherman (London, 1863), p. 127.

[65]See John Mann, The Stranger in Reading (Reading, 1810), p. 141.

[66]See Smyth, pp. 201-247.

[67]Allon, p. 157; Henry Gauntlett [Detector], Letters to the Stranger in Reading (London, 1810), p. 78.

[68]Allon, p. 158. For Cadogan see Richard Cecil, Memories of the Hon. and Rev. W.B. Cadogan, M.A., John Bacon, Esq., R.A., and the Rev. John Newton (London, 1812).

[69]Smyth, p. 218; Allon, p. 159.

flock.[70] When he was succeeded in 1797 by Joseph Eyre, a High Churchman opposed to Evangelicalism, the second secession occurred, some parishioners leaving because Eyre publicly threatened to exclude them from the Sacrament unless they ceased from attending services in nearby parishes.[71]

Many of the seceders then set about organizing their own meeting-house, christened St. Mary's Chapel, which opened in December 1798.[72] Unlicensed and unconsecrated, its formularies closely resembled those of the Church in that its preachers adhered to the Anglican liturgy and wore a gown;[73] the sacraments, however, were not administered.[74] In October 1805, the Evangelical clergyman Henry Gauntlett became the minister at St. Mary's at the invitation of Sir Richard Hill, the brother of Rowland Hill.[75] Hill had described the congregation as being "zealous for the Church," but warned that "if they cannot hear the gospel in it," they will separate and "keep as near to it as they can."[76] After Gauntlett's departure two years later, those members of

[70]Allon, p. 159f. See also Henry Gauntlett, p. 78f; Sermons: By The Late Henry Gauntlett, Vicar of Olney, Bucks. With a Memoir of the Author, ed. by C.T. Gauntlett, 2 vols. (London, 1835), 1:li.

[71]The seceders numbered as many as one thousand parishioners. See Henry Gauntlett, pp. 82, 80.

[72]Loc. cit. See also Clarke, p. 198.

[73]Clarke, p. 198.

[74]Edward Barry, The Friendly Call of Truth and Reason to a New Species of Dissenter (Reading, 1799), p. 4f. Such chapels were not uncommon in Evangelical circles. They were privately owned, controlled by trustees guided by a deed of trust, and often, until episcopal supervision intensified during the nineteenth century, unregistered under the Toleration Act.

[75]Loc. cit. Allon (p. 161) incorrectly claims that Henry Gauntlett came to St. Giles' in January 1805.

[76]C.T. Gauntlett, p. xlix.

the congregation who had joined after its original establishment and who were less attached to its Anglican principles, requested the trustees to alter its continued use of the liturgy.[77] Their refusal led to the third major secession and to the establishment of a new body which met at a former Presbyterian Chapel in Minister Street.[78] After James Sherman became its pastor in 1821,[79] St. Mary's reunited with the Church, becoming a proprietary chapel christened 'the Episcopal Chapel of St. Mary,' and licensed by the Bishop.[80]

The congregation, however, was still in two minds, torn between the diverse poles of Anglicanism and Dissent. Approximately two hundred so disapproved of the Chapel's new Anglican status that they seceded and purchased a property across the street, on which they constructed a new Congregational chapel.[81] With this fourth and final schism, the Evangelical congregation first established by Talbot and advanced by Cadogan was almost entirely scattered within the space of forty years.[82] The Reading case was an extreme example of a common event. It would be difficult accurately to calculate the losses to the Church through this form of leakage, though in 1810 Gauntlett claimed that at least

[77]Clarke, p. 198.
[78]Allon, p. 162. The new establishment was named Salem Chapel. Its first minister was Thomas Wood, who later removed to Jewin Street, London. He was succeeded by Thomas Parrott, who later moved to Plymouth. See Seymour, 2:412. For a review, see the E.R., 1839, p. 627f.
[79]Seymour 2:412. Clarke (p. 198) claims that Sherman arrived in 1820.
[80]Ibid., p. 164f.
[81]Clarke, p. 198.
[82]Smyth, p. 236.

two hundred thousand laymen had been lost to evangelical Dissent in recent years.[83]

Continuity of Evangelical ministry was a problem whose severity was to diminish with the passage of time. As Evangelicalism gained in respectability, attracting increasing numbers of patrons, lay and clerical, the issue was in general less keenly felt. But it did not entirely vanish, for the vagaries of the patronage system, with its dependence on the changing personal whim of patrons, be they laymen or a bishop, continued to emphasize the lottery element in the appointment of the Church's pastors.

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Behind all the debates on the issue of Church order within the Evangelical camp were two priorities which needed to be kept in balance. On the one hand, there were immortal souls to be saved; an obligation so overwhelming and sacred that it might seem that all other obligations necessarily yielded to it. Surely, the interests of the 'Church of Christ', the invisible body of all regenerate saints, were paramount? Yet on the other hand stood loyalty to the order and discipline of the branch of the visible Church, a Church to which Evangelicals owed the duty of canonical obedience, sacralized in their ordination oath of obedience to the bishop. To undermine that order for the short-term advantage of irregular preaching was to take an incalculable step into the dark. Would not repeated breaches of discipline gravely weaken the whole struc-

[83]Henry Gauntlett, p. 70.

ture of the National Establishment and--in the long term--promote Dissent and religious anarchy? The alternatives were put by T.D. Whitaker, strong Tory but fervent Evangelical: "on the one hand, men are not to be left to perish in ignorance in order to preserve an establishment; and on the other, they are not deliberately to be driven into schism to save their souls."[84]

Balancing the demands of the visible Church of England against those of the invisible 'Church of Christ' could be an agonizing task. Not surprisingly it was an issue which received very different pastoral responses. The 'irregulars' and 'half-regulars' saw the needs of the 'Church of Christ' as paramount. The ultimate end of the Church was to save souls, and its structures were to be regarded as pragmatic instruments for the achievement of this end. As Wesley put it: "What is the end of all ecclesiastical order? Is it not to bring souls from the power of Satan to God, and to build them up in His fear and love? Order, then, is so far valuable as it answers these ends; and if it answers them not, it is nothing worth."[85] The case for irregularity rested on a separation of the doctrine from ecclesiastical order. The chief aim of a church was seen as the propagation of the gospel; to this end the maintenance of any particular party or ecclesiastical system was subordinate. "What it is you have 'deliberately engaged yourself to defend'?" Wesley asked the Earl of Dartmouth, "the constitution of the Church

[84]T.D. Whitaker, An History of Whalley, 4th ed. (London, 1872-76), p. 251.

[85]Letter of 25 June 1746, in Wesley's Letters, 2:77f.

of England. And is not her doctrine a main part of this constitution? A far more essential part thereof than any rule of external order?"[86] As the Church's *raison d'etre* was evangelism and soul-winning, its legal and administrative apparatus (including order) must be subservient to that purpose. The assertion of the Puritan Richard Baxter, "it's better that men should be disorderly saved than orderly damned, and that the Church be disorderly preserved than orderly destroyed" was only too applicable.[87] As John Wesley claimed, "I would observe every punctilio of order, except where the salvation of souls is at stake. Then I prefer the end before the means."[88] John Berridge advised young preachers in 1775:

> Ask no man's leave to preach Christ; that is unevangelical and shameful. Seek not much advice about it; that is dangerous...If you are determined to be evangelically regular, i.e. secular irregular; then expect, wherever you go, a storm will follow...which might frighten you, but will bring no real harm.[89]

On such an assumption the 'irregular' Evangelical was seen as a better Churchman than either his Latitudinarian colleague who kept to the Church's order but betrayed its doctrine, or his High Church colleague, who kept to both order and doctrine but abandoned the Church's imperative to save souls.

The response of the 'regulars' was to remain true to the constitution of the visible Church to which they belonged. They too used pragmatic arguments, but on

[86]Letter of 10 April 1761, in Wesley's Letters, 4:148.
[87]Richard Baxter, Five Disputations of Church-Government and Worship (London, 1659), p. 165.
[88]Wesley's Letters, 4:146.
[89]Quoted in Smyth, p. 249.

the side of order. The Church of England was not only properly constituted, with its admirable liturgy and Reformed Articles, but, as a national, established body was by far the most effective agency for a nation-wide campaign of evangelism. To weaken her strength in the pursuit of short-term gains would be extremely dangerous. It was far better to work from within the Establishment and its orderly system than to operate outside it. The quiet successes of field-preaching were bought at too high a price--that of alienating the sympathy of the clergy and the great mass of loyal Anglicans. It was far better to stay within the framework of Church order and work hard to capture it intact for the gospel.

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By 1800 the 'regulars' were overwhelmingly in the ascendant. Irregularity was frowned on and its few practitioners were soon to be strongly criticized in the pages of the *Christian Observer*.[90] In England few new unbeneficed roving 'irregulars' were produced: Wesley and Whitefield were regarded as archaic figures of the past.[91] Though a few 'half-regulars'--like Haweis--still existed, they were isolated figures. In most ways, therefore, the battle for Church order in the Evangelical soul had been won decisively by the 'regu-

[90] C.O., 1802, p. 162.

[91] Canon Smyth's claim (p. 255) that "the fundamental divergence between Evangelicals and Methodists came over the problem of Church order," is partly, although not entirely, a matter of generational differences, in that as the Evangelical movement gained strength and acceptability toward the end of the eighteenth century, fewer of its adherents were required to be 'irregular,' or were temperamentally suited to irregularity.

lars.' There were many factors behind this victory. The outbreak of the American and French Revolutions, and the fear of political radicalism at home, had set in motion a conservative neo-Toryism which affected the Church as strongly as any institution, and encouraged high views of the need for hierarchy, authority, obedience, and tradition.[92] The alarming growth of Methodism and evangelical Nonconformity in the 1790s seemed to threaten the future of the Established Church: if Dissent continued to expand at this rate, would the Church not soon be a vulnerable minority institution like her offspring the Church of Ireland? Many Evangelicals now felt guilty at the way in which the irregularity of their own colleagues had encouraged this upsurge in Dissent. Too many of those who had been converted by irregular preaching had joined Dissent rather than the Church. "The clergyman beats the bush and the Dissenters catch the game," complained Charles Simeon, expressing the view of many of his colleagues.[93]

The need for irregularity seemed less now that 'serious religion' had gained a substantial bridgehead in the Establishment. By the onset of the nineteenth century, Evangelicals no longer felt themselves massively outnumbered. They had a growing hold on the middle classes. The 'problem of continuity' seemed less urgent, for it was being addressed by the advance-

[92]See Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' pp. 327-367; Nancy Uhler Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1803' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1975).

[93]William Carus, Memoirs of the Life of the Revd. Charles Simeon, M.A. (London, 1847), p. 139.

ment of Evangelical patronage. Perhaps the first Evangelical systematically to engage in such trade appears to have been John Thornton, the great 'Russian merchant,' who used his wealth to buy advowsons.[94] Another was William Marsh, the influential incumbent of St. Peter's, Colchester.[95] The most vigorous and successful Evangelical investor in patronage, however, was Charles Simeon, who acquired some twenty-one separate advowsons (many were key parishes in large towns, some with multiple rites of presentation) prior to his death in 1836.[96] These were then placed under the care of a trust established by Simeon. The trust had the further task of procuring further rites of patronage by purchase or by gift. As the Church moved into the nineteenth century, this work of acquiring advowsons in key towns and cities, as Simeon intended, created a number of 'spheres of influence,' in which Evangelicals could labour with the assurance that their efforts to advance the gospel would not be undermined by an unsympathetic successor.[97]

Another important change was the ability of moderate Evangelicals to secure ordination in the Church. Several bishops, in particular Beilby Porteus of London, Shute Barrington of Durham, Thomas Burgess of St.

[94]See 'Incidents in the Life of John Thornton, Esq., the Philanthropist,' in the Congregational Magazine, 1842, p. 825; Venn, p. 491f. His son, Henry, advanced the work after his father's death in 1790. See Carus, pp. 368f, 380ff; Cf. Evans, p. 326.

[95]C. Marsh, The Life of the Rev. William Marsh (London, 1867), p. 112f.

[96]Smyth, p. 246n.

[97]See W.D. Balda, '"Spheres of Influence:" Simeon's Trust and its Implications for Evangelical Patronage,' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1981).

David's, and William Lort Mansel of Bristol, regularly ordained moderate Evangelicals.[98] Even more significant to the Evangelicals' ability to gain ordination was the appointment of Henry Ryder in 1815, as the first Evangelical bishop, for this marked the beginning of the movement's direct access to influence on the episcopal bench.[99] In spite of this advance, however, there remained a few bishops who refused to consider such requests, such as Herbert Marsh of Peterborough, who required all candidates for ordination to face his so-called 'Cobwebs to catch Calvinists'--a notorious list of eighty-seven questions devised to expose latent Calvinists.[100]

But if early nineteenth-century bishops were more accommodating to 'gospel ministers' in some respects, they were also sterner in others. Even before the Church reforms of the 1830s, there were signs of a tighter episcopal control of clerical irregularity. For example, while the eirenical Bishop Porteus showed kindliness and understanding to Evangelicals and was an admirer of Wilberforce and a friend of Hannah More, he was still swift to inhibit the Revd. Dr. Draper from preaching in the Diocese of London in 1809 on the grounds that he had accepted the Presidency of Cheshnut College, the training centre for lay preachers for Lady

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[98] See Smyth, p. 245.

[99] See G.C.B. Davies, The First Evangelical Bishop (London, 1957).

[100] See D.N.B. Marsh was criticized in the House of Lords for this heavy-handedness, and by Sydney Smith in the pages of the Edinburgh Review (vol. xxxvii, 1822, p. 432ff). Cf. See the Record, 14 June 1849.

Huntingdon's Connexion.[101] No such action had been taken against John Fletcher in a similar situation at Trevecka in earlier years. Similar treatment was meted out to the Revd. Isaac Bridgman in 1823, when he began to itinerating in Gloucester Diocese, in the old Rowland Hill style. Writing in the 1840s, William Carus noted in his *Memoirs of Simeon* the contrast between the old days and the new. "For many years it was not deemed irregular, even by the Bishops, for clergymen to preach in Lady Huntingdon's chapels, provided the prayers were said. Preaching in barns, or other places, was viewed much in the same light. It was not until a comparatively recent period that the Bishop's licence was deemed absolutely necessary."[102]

By the 1820s--perhaps before--there were signs that the abuses which had scarred the Church in the 'Age of Negligence' were beginning to be reformed. Episcopal superintendence of the clergy increased; pluralism and non-residence began to be weeded out and the lot of curates improved;[103] parsonages and churches were rebuilt, or modernized; and diocesan administration was improved as the office of rural dean was revived in some dioceses, bringing the localities under closer episcopal surveillance. Above all else, the rise of Tractarianism during the 1830s increased the polarization between Evangelicals and High Churchmen, leading indirectly to tighter ecclesiastical control

[101] See Robert Hodgson, Life of Beilby Porteus (London, 1811), pp. 266-274.
[102] Carus, p. 277f.
[103] See G.F.A. Best, Temporal Pillars (Cambridge, 1964); Virgin passim.

and discipline, and even, in some instances, to prolonged conflict and litigation.

Nonetheless--as we shall see repeatedly in the pages to come--doubts about the efficiency of the Established Church as an agency of soul-saving did not go away. The old patronage system retained much of its hold on the Church: bishops were still appointed by politicians; parsons could be appointed by laymen of dubious spiritual credentials. In some respects the issue of Crown patronage was *more* sensitive in the 1830s than before, since thanks to the repeal of the Tests and to the enactment of Catholic Emancipation, Parliament could no longer be considered a 'lay synod of the Church of England:' Church appointments in the name of 'the Crown' could henceforth, in theory, be made by politicians of non-Anglican faith. There were still devout Anglican clergymen who came to feel that the legal and disciplinary trammels of establishment tragically hampered the work of evangelism, and should be disregarded on that account. By the 1840s this anxiety was becoming acute, as the extent of urban de-Christianization became apparent. An Evangelical Churchman like Baptist Noel could still respond to the appalling spectacle of 'spiritual destitution' in London and the great manufacturing cities much as John Wesley had responded to neglected rural-industrial communities like those of Kingswood colliers or Cornish tinners in the 1740s, seeing the situation as one of acute crisis in which many of the ordinary restrictions

of Canon law and legality should be suspended or scrapped.

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Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century, Church order was no longer the chief catalyst for disaffection to the Establishment. Instead, doctrinal differences, particularly those relating to the Anglican liturgy, played a larger part as a trigger for individual secessions. Theological 'extremism' was probably a more significant irritant than pastoral exasperation. This, too, had its roots in the eighteenth century. As we have seen, the normative Evangelical view of the Prayer Book was one of reverence. But the admiration was not total. There were still apparent relics of a Popish past to be seen in the liturgy. Although many Evangelicals concurred with Rowland Hill that the liturgy was "a public blessing to the nation,"[104] and although many of the Evangelical secederes continued to use it after leaving the Church (while omitting what they regarded to be its 'Popish' or Arminian vestiges),[105] a number of others strongly objected to one or more aspects of it. Why sensitivity to theological error in the liturgy became acute in the early years of the nineteenth century remains uncertain. Among other influences, of course, the increased strife and controversy between

[104] Quoted in Sidney, p. 440f.

[105] Although this practice was of questionable legality, no seceder was prosecuted in the ecclesiastical courts over this, and it was even defended by some Evangelical clergy: Henry Venn encouraged his old parishioners at Huddersfield to continue to use the liturgy in their new meeting-house, for it was full of sound doctrines and teachings. See Venn, p. 174f; Henry Gauntlett, p. 71.

Evangelicals and High Churchmen brought certain aspects of the liturgy into higher profile, and gave prominence to the 'Catholic' nature of the Prayer Book. Liberal plans for Prayer Book reform may also have focused Evangelical attention on the shortcomings of the liturgy. In either case, Evangelicals became concerned over the issue of whether portions of the liturgy were doctrinally unsound, or their Protestant nature corrupted and distorted by modern practice. The Anglican burial service serves as a good example of such concern, leading to intra-party strife.

From an early date, instances of Evangelical discontent over the wording of the burial service can be found. Every 'gospel minister' was called upon to bury parishioners who, on any normal construction, could be presumed to be unrepentant and were sometimes gross sinners who had died in a state of virtual self-excommunication. Yet every clergyman was required according to the sixty-eighth Canon to provide a Christian burial service for them *and* to inter their corpses in consecrated ground:

> No minister shall refuse...to bury any corpse that is brought to the...Churchyard...And if he shall ...(except the party deceased were denounced excommunicated *majori excommunicatione*, for some grievous and notorious crime, and no man able to testify of his repentance) he shall be suspended by the Bishop of the diocese from his ministry by the space of three months.[106]

The officiating clergyman was also canonically required to proclaim at every burial, "we commit his body to the ground...in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus

[106]Davis, p. 66f.

Christ." Was it not hypocrisy, or worse, to pronounce this optimistic message? To some sensitive Evangelicals, the compulsion to read the rubric demanded hypocrisy and was an unscriptural perversion of a sacred rite. By the implicit assumption that all those buried were regenerate souls, parochial discipline was destroyed, awkward questions were raised about the efficacy of paedobaptism, and the distinction between elect and reprobate was blurred. Consequently, the 'Church of Christ' was reduced to little more than the 'church of the world.' These doubts about the burial rubric worried some early Evangelicals. Walker of Truro, for instance, was embroiled in an unpleasant controversy over his refusal to bury a notorious drunkard, which led to his estrangement from much of his congregation and the local squire.[107] W.J. Brook, shortly after being installed as curate at St. Nicholas, Brighton, in 1800, was required to read the burial service over a baptized parishioner who had, as he put it, "died in sin" and "without a hope" of gaining salvation. Brook found this so revolting that he immediately seceded from the Church, to end his days as minister to the high Calvinist Providence Chapel, Brighton, where he laboured until his early death in 1811.[108]

Rather surprisingly, the Baptismal rubric--which troubled the consciences of many nineteenth-century Evangelicals--caused rather less anxiety to those of the

[107] See Edwin Sidney, The Life, Ministry, and Selections from the Remains, of the Rev. Samuel Walker, B.A., (London, 1835), p. 13f.

[108] John White Middelton, An Ecclesiastical Memoir of the First Four Decades of the Reign of George the Third (London, 1822), p. 218; Chambers, 2:122.

eighteenth. The declaration "seeing now...that this child is regenerate," and the prayer towards the end of the service thanking God "that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this Infant with thy Holy Spirit," could been seen as an affirmation of an *ex opere operato* theory of baptismal regeneration and a denial of the Evangelical conviction that regeneration normally accompanied conversion. Doubts about the rubric occasionally surfaced and were instrumental in causing the secession from the Church of Isaac Slee, who ended his days as a Baptist minister in Haworth, Yorkshire, in 1784.[109]

In 1797, David Simpson of Macclesfield complained that there were "not a few persons" who objected to the unscriptural wording of a number of Prayer Book rubrics, including those for Baptism, Confirmation, the Service of the Sick, Holy Communion, Ordination, and Burial. "It seemed a hardship to the enlightened and conscientious part of the clergy," he wrote, to comply with forms which so controverted the Reformation doctrine of the Articles. "When we baptize children, we thank God that it hath pleased Him to regenerate them with the Holy Spirit, to receive them for His own children by adoption, and to incorporate them into His holy Church." When the same children are presented to the bishop for confirmation, he also addresses the Divine Being as having "vouchsafed to regenerate them by water and the Holy Ghost, and as having given unto them the forgiveness of all their sins," while many of them

[109]See Cecil Edgar Shipley, The Baptists of Yorkshire (Bradford, 1912).

are as vile young rogues as ever existed. Thus, "when we come to bury them, we dare do no other then send them all to heaven, though many of those we commit to the earth have been as wicked in life as men well can be this side of hell. This surely is a great hardship. Yet we have no remedy. We must do it, or forfeit our roast beef and plum pudding."[110] Simpson planned to secede in 1799, but died before he could do so.

His was an extreme voice. Yet, as we shall see, Simpson's doubts about the liturgy were to surface again and again in the early nineteenth century, especially during the 1830s and 40s when the Tractarian Movement was drawing attention to the 'Catholic' implications of the language of the liturgy. By the time of the Gorham case, Evangelicals were murmuring audibly about Prayer Book reform. This had not often been the case in the eighteenth century; why not remains an open question. Perhaps the early Evangelicals were too absorbed in 'the one thing needful'--the saving of souls? Perhaps it was because, like Wesley, many had been raised within the High Church tradition. It is also likely that early Evangelicals feared liturgical reform, on the grounds that any alterations at that time would more probably be not in a Reformed but in a liberal direction (as was favoured by the Feathers Tavern petitioners in the 1760s and 1770s), or else in a High Church direction, when the Laudian tradition reasserted

[110]D. Simpson, A Plea for Religion, 5th ed. (London, 1808), pp. 150, 155f.

itself strongly in the 1780s and 1790s.

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A further cause of theological friction between the early Evangelicals and their Church lay in the 'Calvinism' to which most of them subscribed. Though a predestinarian theology might appear to be plainly deducible from some of the Articles, it had been eclipsed after the Restoration, and its revival within the National Church was vigorously opposed. 'Calvinism,' like 'Methodism,' was a blanket term when used pejoratively, and was used to convey many disparate theological modes --including (ironically) Wesley's 'Arminianism,' which some misinformed critics considered to be Calvinistic. The prevailing suspicion of predestinarian Calvinism was fuelled by a number of connected anxieties. It was now seen as the creed of sectaries and Cromwellian levellers and regicides, conducive to fanatical theories of the need for a 'dominion of grace' of the elect over the reprobate. It was seen as pastorally disruptive, skimming off the predestined saints from the mass of the unregenerate in ways which divided a parish in two, and negated the conception of an Anglican clergyman as equal pastor of all the souls within his cure. The doctrine of predestination was believed to encourage despair among those who thought themselves 'elect.' Calvinists who carried their fatalistic doctrine of grace to its logical conclusion (it was claimed) often fell into the foulest sin, convincing themselves that as privileged members of the elect, they could not fall from grace and so could commit sin with impunity: what-

ever they did, they would 'finally persevere.' The essence of Calvinism, charged John Wesley in a famous epigram, was that a man was either saved do what he *would*, or damned do what he *could*.[111]

Most Calvinist Evangelicals rebuffed charges like these without too much loss of confidence. They were fortified by the belief that the Articles were clearly on their side, at least if taken in their plain and literal sense. They were confident that their teachings were those of most English Reformers and the majority of divines in the Church of England until the Civil War. The predominant tone of Evangelical Calvinism was one of moderation. Its exponents attempted to avoid the over-systematization of the Puritans. They tried to stick to the simple formulations of Scripture, avoiding speculative theories about free will and necessity. They avoided so-called 'double predestination;' accepting predestination to life as a doctrine clearly set out in the New Testament, but refusing to preach predestination to death on the grounds that it was not plainly advanced in the Scriptures. They tried to formulate a doctrine of grace which made God totally responsible for man's salvation and man alone responsible for his damnation. They embraced Total Depravity, particular election, justification by faith through grace, gradual Sanctification, and Final Perseverance,[112] but adhered to these doctrines not with rigid dogmatism, but with flexibility. Richard Cecil argued

[111]See The Consequence Proved, in Wesley's Works, 10:370.

[112]See Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals,' pp. 1-10.

that Scripture must be interpreted as it was found, without attempting to force it into a particular system.[113] In other words, when the Bible--and the Articles, Canons, and Prayer Book--revealed Calvinistic doctrines (such as predestined election), they should be accepted as such; when Arminian (such as the injunction to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling), likewise. With this approach, the Calvinistic emphasis on the sovereignty of God's grace would be complemented by the Arminian emphasis on man's responsibility, avoiding antinomianism on the one hand and Pelagianism on the other.[114] Charles Simeon was the most celebrated exponent of this 'middle-way Calvinism.' Writing of himself in the preface to one of his most popular works, he declared that he:

> ...takes his religion from the Bible; and endeavours as much as possible, to speak as that speaks ...He does not hesitate to lay the whole blame of men's condemnation on their own depraved will,... [and] does not scruple to state...'that we have no power to do good works...without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will'...He is aware, that advocates for this or that system...will be ready to condemn his as inconsistent,...[but] it is possible that the truth may lie, not exclusively in either, nor yet in a confused mixture of both, but in the proper and seasonable application of them both.[115]

By the early nineteenth century it seems to have been uncommon for Evangelicals to preach sermons on predestination. Though widely accepted as a biblical truth, predestined election was seen as a non-essen-

[113]The Remains of the Rev. Richard Cecil, M.A., ed. by Josiah Pratt, 8th ed. (London, 1825), p. 297.
[114]See W.J.C. Ervine, 'Doctrine and Diplomacy: Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797 to 1837' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1979), p. 35.
[115]Charles Simeon, Helps to Composition, or One-Hundred Skeleton Sermons (Cambridge, 1801), p. vf.

tial, and as a truth better kept for the private encouragement of saints rather than one to be propagated from the pulpit. One reason for this reticence in advancing predestinarian doctrine was that it might encourage antinomianism among the unwary, for moderate Evangelicals were uneasily aware that there were many high or hyper-Calvinists who carried the doctrine of predestination to lengths which encouraged immorality and fatalism. Henry Venn found this distortion of the doctrine rampant among the Dissenters of some of the East Anglican villages around his parish of Yelling. "A false, libertine Calvinism" of this type, he complained, "stops up every avenue: sin, the law, holiness, experience, are all nothing. Predestination cancels the necessity of any change, and dispenses at once with all duty."[116]

To the embarrassment of most Evangelicals, doctrines like these were not only the property of rural Nonconformists: they had a well-publicized foothold in the ranks of the 'gospel clergy' themselves. Though hyper-Calvinists were few in number they were active, especially in Ireland and in the West of England. A particular *bête-noire* of the moderate Calvinists was Robert Hawker, Vicar of Charles, near Plymouth, from 1784 to 1827, who popularized extreme Calvinism in a series of sermons and cheap tracts.[117] So extreme was his teaching that William Wilberforce would not allow his children to go to services at the Lock Hospital in

[116]See Venn, p. 34.
[117]See The Works of Robert Hawker, D.D., ed. by J. Williams, 10 vols. (London, 1831).

London when Hawker was preaching, lest they drink in his 'poison.'[118] The origins of Hawkerite teaching can be traced to a long ultra-Calvinist tradition running back at least to the early seventeenth-century works of writers such as Tobias Crisp and John Saltmarsh. The hyper-Calvinists carried the doctrine of divine sovereignty to such lengths as virtually to eliminate human agency in things spiritual. They spoke of 'eternal justification' by a divine covenant before Creation itself: worse, they taught the doctrine of 'eternal sanctification'--that all the sins of an elect soul were blotted out before they were even committed. For the ultra-Calvinist there was no such thing as spiritual growth. From his birth, the predestined chosen one was clothed in Christ's perfect holiness: whatever his sins of infirmities, they were already expunged from the sight of God.[119]

The hyper-Calvinist held that the moral law had no binding force on the true Christian. Thanks to the 'finished work of Christ', the sinful acts of an elect soul were not debited to his account. The moral law was not a rule of life for the Christian; he would follow it voluntarily out of an interior principle of love, but he was no longer bound by it, and if he broke it, he need feel no anxiety above his spiritual safety. The gospel *freed* men from the obligation to obey the law; they should no longer strive to please God by com-

[118] R.I. and S. Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce, 5 vols. (London, 1838), 3:473.

[119] See J.D. Walsh, MSS 'Calvinism.' Cf. Peter Toon, The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity 1689-1765 (London, 1967), p. 144f.

mutative acts or 'good works.' There was only one command in the gospel, and it was not '*work*' but '*believe.*' The proof of election did not lie in any outward proofs of faith. The true believer knew that he was one of the predestined elect not from any signs of increasing holiness in his life, but from the assurances of an interior conviction that he was God's chosen one. Here, in the opinion of most Evangelicals, the hyper-Calvinists lapsed into the old heresy of antinomianism, which had plagued English Calvinists for over two hundred years.[120] Advanced during the early seventeenth century by John Eaton, Tobias Crisp, John Saltmarsh, and Robert Lancaster, amongst others, antinomianism declined until the re-publication of Crisp's works in 1689-90, when it enjoyed a considerable revival among Nonconformists.[121] There was a collective outbreak in 1719 in Exeter (always a seed-bed for high Calvinist teaching, as we shall see), involving at least three separate Nonconformist congregations ranging over a wide area of the West Country.[122] For the most part, ultra-Calvinists were 'theoretical antinomians' who did not allow their belief in the freedom of Christians from the obligations of the moral law to influence their conduct in the direction of immorality. But this was not always so, and examples could easily

[120] See Toon, p. 28.

[121] Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., Puritans and Predestination. Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525-1695 (Chapel Hill, 1982), p. 113; Christopher Hill, 'Dr. Tobias Crisp, 1600-1643,' in Balliol Studies, ed. by John Prest, (Oxford, 1982), pp. 55-76.

[122] Toon, p. 37f. These congregations supported 4 ministers, and were controlled by a committee of 13 laymen.

be found of 'practical antinomians:' Calvinist extremists who lapsed cheerfully into sin--usually sexual--under the belief that they were eternally sanctified.[123]

By the close of the eighteenth century, hyper-Calvinism had again gained ground amongst Nonconformists, so much so that it had become, in the alarmed opinion of the Dissenting historians Bogue and Bennett, "the most prevailing evil of the day."[124] This poison, however, far from being confined to Dissenters, was also being swallowed in increasing portions by Evangelicals. The reasons behind this are difficult to determine. It is likely that there was some seepage of antinomian ideas from Dissent to Anglican Evangelicalism, for the areas especially affected--Ireland and the English West Country--had a long Puritan-Nonconformist tradition of hyper-Calvinism. In part, the exaggerated Calvinism of Hawker represented an extreme reaction against the repeated assaults of the High Church polemicists such as Richard Mant, who were launching virulent attacks against a Protestant interpretation of the Articles and Prayer Book.[125] The sharpening of the conflict between Church parties in the 1830s seems to have produced more rigid and thorough ideas of predestination in the Evangelical ranks. Increasing tension seems to have produced extremism.

[123]See Joseph Hart, Hymns (London, 1759), p. 5f.
[124]James Bogue and James Bennett, History of Dissenters, 4 vols. (London, 1808-1812), 4:392ff.
[125]See Richard Mant, An Appeal to the Gospel, (Oxford, 1812).

Not surprisingly, extreme Calvinism of this type was denounced not only by those outside the Evangelical Revival, but by many embarrassed moderate Evangelicals. Thomas Scott, for one, conducted a long campaign against the antinomian tendencies of high Calvinism, most notably in his widely-read *Treatise on Growth in Grace* (1787). Hyper-Calvinism was all the more threatening because it represented not so much an outright denial of the Evangelical 'doctrines of grace' as an exaggeration or perversion of them. It ran counter to the activist strain in gospel teaching that characterized mainstream Evangelicalism. Extreme predestinarianism was opposed to the evangelism and the whole missionary outreach of the Revival: what use was it preaching to the unconverted and offering God's grace to all (ran the argument of the 'hypers'), if the fate of every soul had been sealed before eternity? To urge repentance and conversion on sinners was to imply that God's grace was not sovereign and that salvation was attainable by an act of human will. The presence of men like Hawker among the 'gospel clergy' posed a grave problem to Evangelicals, not so much because hyper-Calvinism won large numbers of converts (its theology militated against mass proselytism), but because it brought the Evangelical gospel into disrepute and gave great polemical advantage to opponents of the Revival. It lent substance to the constant argument that the tendency of Evangelicalism was in an antinomian direction.

High and hyper-Calvinists were strongly represented among Evangelical clergy seceding from the Church of England, as we shall see in the following chapters. Why was this? There would seem to be no obvious connection between a high predestinarian theology and separatism: many extreme Calvinists--like Hawker himself--were content to remain within the Anglican Establishment and to conduct an energetic parish ministry within it. Yet there can be little doubt that high or hyper-Calvinists were more susceptible to the lure of secession than most of their Evangelical colleagues. In the late eighteenth century two well known secederS--John Bradford, who left the Church in 1778, and W.J. Brook, who seceded around 1800--abandoned the Church to take up their ministry in hyper-Calvinist chapels, becoming allies of the celebrated William Huntington S.S. (Sinner Saved), coal-heaver turned preacher, who held a role in Nonconformist circles rather similar to that of Hawker in the Established Church, as the mentor and publicist of 'hyperism.' Many more were to follow in their footsteps during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Several reasons can be suggested for the link between extreme Calvinism and separatism. First, the mere espousal of such *outré* views cut a clergyman off from his fellows and brought ostracism and vilification, not only from his 'carnal' colleagues, but still more from angry Evangelicals. If 'hyperism' was weak and derided in the Church, it had a long and not unrespectable foothold in Dissent, particularly among the

Strict Baptists in whose chapels high Calvinism flourished. It was tempting for a clergyman wearied of controversy over his alleged 'antinomianism' to leave a troubled parish for a quieter, more congenial billet among Nonconformist friends and admirers. Secondly, there was a barely submerged tendency in high Calvinist theology itself towards the separatist theory of the 'gathered church.' There was much in the teaching of ultra-Calvinism to encourage ideas of the elect as an eternally privileged, sanctified body, totally and utterly distinct from the mass of unregenerates. Why should God's chosen ones associate promiscuously in worship with those who were eternally cast off by Him? Why should God's children not assemble together in their own meetings, to hear the pure Word, untrammeled by contact with the impure?[126] The demands of fellowship with like-minded souls could easily encourage secession from the parish Church, which was open to believers and non-believers, saints and worldlings alike. A separated church in which the elect were visibly set apart from the world would symbolize the eternal distinction separating the children of light and the children of darkness.

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These, then, were some of the catalysts which from an early date produced dissatisfaction with the *status quo* of the Church of England among some 'gospel clergymen.' Their relative salience in any individual secession, or in group secessions, varied from case to case.

[126]See J.D. Walsh, MSS 'Calvinism.'

Doubts about the liturgy, frustrations about the way in which the legal trammels of establishment hindered the work of evangelism, personal collisions with Church authorities, and leanings to high Calvinism; each of these could set in motion a determination to leave a Church that appeared irredeemably fallen. In some, one consideration predominated; in others, another. At times they were combined.

This dissertation is concerned with the course of Evangelical secessions in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is difficult to formulate a precise estimate of the number of these seceders.[127] Two contemporary accounts shed light on this question by claiming that about a hundred Evangelical clergymen seceded into the Nonconformist ministry during the first half of the nineteenth century,[128] a figure which represents approximately two per-cent of the Evangelical clergy, if Conybeare's celebrated 1853 estimate of the numerical strength of the various Church parties is accepted.[129] This study has identified some eighty-seven Evangelical clergymen who seceded from the Church of

[127]See H.H. Rowdon, 'Secession From the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century', in V.E. (London, 1964), pp. 76-88.

[128]James Shore, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, M.A., by Himself (London, 1849), p. 23; Non., 21 March 1849, p. 221.

[129]See W.J. Conybeare, 'Church Parties,' in the Ed.R., 1853, p. 338. Conybeare claimed that of 18,000 Established clergy, 5,800 were adherents of 'serious religion.' Approximately 100--or around 2 percent--of these seceded into the Nonconformist ministry. In comparison, the most reliable estimate of Tractarian seceders suggest that 96 seceded to Rome prior to 1853, or 9.6% of Conybeare's estimated 1,000 Tractarian clergy. See George W. Herring, 'Tractarianism to Ritualism,' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1984), p. 45, and Appendix.

England into Protestant Dissent, mostly during the first half of the nineteenth century, in addition to a number of prominent Evangelical lay seceders.[130]

The great bulk of Evangelical clergy, it is clear, avoided secession and remained within the Established Church. Most condemned secession unequivocally.[131] Numerically, therefore, the seceders remained a very small group, albeit an important one for their publicity value, since they aroused much anger among Churchmen and much sympathy among Dissenters, for whom their propaganda value in the campaign against the Establishment was considerable. But their importance does not cease here. Much of the significance of Evangelical secession lies not in the numbers involved, but in the insight it provides into the difficulties and doubts--usually submerged in published sermons or biographies--which assailed many Evangelicals who tried to reconcile their Churchmanship with their evangelistic fervour, spiritual experiences, and formal theology. The seceders made explicit, and carried to great lengths, doubts which clearly surfaced in a great many Evangelical minds. They are to Evangelicalism what the Romeward

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[130] See Appendix 1.

[131] The Eclectic Society referred to it as an unscriptural apostasy and heresy, which diminished affection and humility; weakened the strength of the Church; relaxed order, government and discipline; produced a party spirit, bigotry and uncharitableness; and advanced evil. See J.H. Pratt, p. 3. High Churchmen were equally harsh in their denunciations of secession. See George Isaac Huntingford, A Call for Union with the Established Church (Winchester, 1800); John Randolph, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London (London, 1810); William Phelan, The Bible, Not the Bible Society (Dublin, 1817), p. 95. Secession was, however, defended by some Evangelicals. See Ambrose Sherle, Charis (London, 1803), p. 117ff.

seceders of the Oxford Movement were to the English High Church tradition--an example of what could become of a grouping within the Church which found the *via media* unsatisfactory and determined to seek a more coherent and extreme position, unhampered by English moderation and compromise.

As the spiritual climate in England began to heat up during the early years of the nineteenth century, such moderation proved increasingly unattractive for some 'gospel ministers', who needed more rigid and identifiable boundaries between the elect and the non-elect. Evangelicalism then begin to fragment into various--and often highly adverse--camps. One of the first examples of this fragmentation occurred in Ireland, where two prominent clergymen, acting under the compulsion of their Calvinistic dictates, seceded and set up their own separate 'connections' in order to wage spiritual warfare on their rivals. Before long, this separatist influence crossed over the Channel and began to undermine English Evangelicalism, as evidenced in the eruption of the so-called 'Western Schism' in 1815. Shortly thereafter, the emergence of the Recordites can be seen--a small, but highly influential, body of conservative Evangelicals who were more doctrinaire and Calvinistically advanced than their contemporaries.[132] The Recordites were, as a rule, firm supporters of the Established Church, but their tendency to a dogmatic and Puritan spirituality helped incubate secessionist tendencies.

[132]Their organ, the Record, began publication on 1 January 1828.

We can then find numerous examples of the further expansion of this conservative doctrinairism within English and Irish Evangelicalism. One segment gathered around Edward Irving and the so-called Albury Circle; one around John Nelson Darby and the early Christian Brethren; and a third arose in Oxford where the eruption of high Calvinist doctrines occurred chiefly around three prominent local Evangelicals: Henry Bulteel, J.C. Philpot, and William Tiptaft. These disruptive events helped (as we will see in the following chapters) to alienate a number of moderate Evangelicals from their party and even, over time, from their Church. The fragmentation of Evangelicalism and the propagation of its more extreme doctrines, helped, by a reactive process, to act as one of the triggers of the Oxford Movement, and aided the polarization of the Church of England during the following years.

The Secession of Thomas Kelly and John Walker and the Revival of 'Apostolic' Practices Within Irish Evangelicalism

At the outset of the nineteenth century, Evangelicalism was in the ascendant: less prone to extreme forms of speculative Calvinism, more 'regular' in its adherence to the norms of Anglican Churchmanship, and increasingly acceptable within fashionable circles. Nonetheless, it it still had its unacceptable face, for a small number of 'irregular' and doctrinally extreme 'gospel clergymen' remained on the scene, within the bounds of the Establishment, but ministering outside its accepted confines and conventions. While similar examples of outrè clergy could still be found in England, they became especially prevalent in and around Dublin. Here, a revival of so-called 'Apostolic practices' occurred around 1803, accompanied by determined separatism, anti-Erastianism, anti-clericalism, and extreme forms of Calvinism. This revival quickly led to the secessions of two prominent Evangelicals from the Established Church and to the creation of two new religious 'Connexions' which rivalled--and often opposed--both the Anglican Establishment and one another. This chapter will examine the ethos of Irish separatism and its repercussions on Anglicanism in England and Ireland.[1]

[1]This study will build upon the recent scholarship on Irish Evangelicalism. See Alan R. Acheson, 'The Evangelicals in the Church of Ireland, 1784-1859,' (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, 1967); Desmond Bowen, The Protestant Crusade in Ireland, 1800-1870 (Dublin, 1978); Irene Hehir, 'New Lights and Old Enemies: The Second Reformation and the Catholics of Ireland, 1800-1835' (M.A. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1983); Joseph Liechty, 'Irish Evangelicalism, Trinity College Dublin, and the Mission of the Church of Ireland at the End of the Eighteenth Century' (Ph.D. thesis, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1987); Myrtle Hill, 'Evangelicalism and the Churches in Ulster Society: 1770-1850' (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, 1987).

The unsettled and often turbulent life of Evangelicalism in Dublin reflected the wider unease of Anglicanism in what was in some respects an alien and certainly a difficult environment. The Church of Ireland, as the religion of the educated gentleman, was not the religion of the poor.[2] Although enjoying some success in ministering to the spiritual needs of the minority governing classes and producing many notable individuals, it remained in the eyes of the Celtic peasantry the symbol of Saxon supremacy and domination; the so-called "handmaid of the Ascendancy."[3] Consequently, it was unable properly to compete with the Catholic priests for the affections of the people, or strongly to resist the temptations which accompanied its social elevation and legal establishment.[4]

During the late eighteenth century, the state of Irish Anglicanism had become, in the view of the High Church polemicist Richard Mant, "very low indeed," resembling "the wilderness, the solitary place and the desert realized." This was "a season of *supineness* and *inaction*"[5] as to religion, where Protestants and Catholics were divided into separate cultures, where the dissemination of French revolutionary principles was feared equally by the politicians and by the leaders of the two rival religious camps,[6] and where the Anglican clergy languished in rela-

[2]See James Anthony Froude, The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, 3 vols. (London, 1872-4), 1:157.

[3]J.K.L. [James Doyle], Letters on the State of Ireland Addressed by J.K.L. to a Friend in England (Dublin, 1825), p. 69. Doyle was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin.

[4]Froude, 1:157.

[5]Richard Mant, History of the Church of Ireland, 2 vols. (London, 1840) 2:779.

[6]See Bowen, p. 1ff. Maynooth College was founded in 1795, in part to protect the Irish Catholic clergy from imbibing radical French teachings.

tive prosperity and indolence. James Doyle, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, complained to Marquis Wellesley that many of the Established clergy:

> destitute of employment and forbidden to exert their talents and industry in other pursuits if they be religiously inclined, become enthusiasts,...or...implicate themselves in worldly concerns, contrary to the command of the Apostles; thus degrading their profession whilst they seek in vain to serve two masters.[7]

In the north, Anglicanism and Presbyterianism vied for political and social supremacy, each despising the other while remaining tied to an unholy alliance against the omnipresent Church of Rome.[8] As pressure mounted to enact Catholic emancipation, Protestant and Catholic tensions in Ulster increased, making social integration even more difficult in some respects than in the south.

Nor did the spiritual climate of Ireland improve after the Act of Union in 1800.[9] "At that time religion was at a low ebb in the Church of Ireland," claimed the Scottish evangelical Alexander Haldane, "and Evangelical men were made the objects of ridicule and reproach."[10] Although increasingly native born and middle class, the Church of Ireland clergy were still primarily younger sons of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and landed gentry, who continued to monopolize the Church's wealthy livings while doing little or nothing to promote its welfare, "either by

[7] J.K.L. [James Doyle], Vindication of the Religious and Civil Principles of the Irish Catholics in a Letter Addressed to Marquis Wellesley by J.K.L. (Dublin, 1823), p. 40.

[8] Bowen, p. 29ff.

[9] Which, amongst other things, united the Church of England and the Church of Ireland into one spiritual and political body.

[10] Alexander Haldane, Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of His Brother, James Alexander Haldane (London, 1852), p. 342.

their liberality or their labour."[11] Well-educated gentlemen, refined and hospitable, the clergy were seen by the Protestant landowning class as a welcomed cultural oasis in the midst of a spiritual and social desert.[12] But although enthusiastic about advancing Protestantism, they were impotent and demoralized, living and working in isolation from the social and spiritual life of the encircling Catholic majority. As the Victorian novelist and satirist Anthony Trollope wrote:

> Of all men the Irish beneficed clergyman is the most illiberal, the most bigoted, the most unforgiving, the most sincere, and the most enthusiastic...Soured by the misfortunes of his own position, conscious that something is wrong, though never doubting that he himself is right, aware of his own unavoidable idleness, aware that when he works he works to little or no effect...It is a life-long grief to him that in his parish there should be four hundred and fifty nominal Roman Catholics, and only fifty nominal members of the Church of England.[13]

The episcopal bench in Ireland was often ineffectual. Obtaining preferment not through ability or vigour but through the old channels of social or political connection, the bishops expected to pass from small 'rearing dioceses' to richer and more powerful appointments unless convicted of a gross neglect of duty.[14] The wealth of the bench was dangerously blatant, its bishops described by one Victorian critic as "a sort of Levitical tribe, far better endowed than any other priestly order ever was in the history of the world."[15] Although in 1815 membership

[11]James Godkin, Ireland and Her Churches (London, 1867), p. 217.
[12]R.W. Martin, Ireland Before and After the Union (London, 1848), p. 367.
[13]Anthony Trollope, Clergymen of the Church of England (London, 1866), p. 115f. See also The McDermots of Ballycloran, 3 vols. (London, 1847).
[14]Bowen, p. 40.
[15]Godkin, p. 526.

in the Church of Ireland was less than the population of the Diocese of Durham (comprising some ten percent of the province's total population), it was nevertheless governed by no fewer than four archbishops and twenty-two bishops. Its annual revenues totaled some £800,000, three-quarters of which came from tithes mostly paid by the more than six million Irish Catholics.[16]

Not surprisingly, given this atmosphere of privilege and torpor, Irish Evangelicalism began to gain momentum through its fervour. 'gospel ministers', lauded by the religious writer Alexander Knox (High Churchman though he was), enjoyed considerable success in advancing the 'doctrines of grace' within the spiritual void left vacant in the aftermath of the French Revolution. "In Ireland," Knox assured his friend Dr. Alcock in 1802, "things are better. All good, there, is not confined to Methodists, nor the methodistical. We have, there, many who, though not at all methodistical, have religion sincerely at heart, and have hearts finely formed for liberality."[17] Moderate in their Calvinism, and less rigidly attached to the Establishment than their English counterparts,[18] the Irish Evangelical clergy operated freely within the parochial and extra-parochial circles of Dublin's blossoming revival. From here they corresponded with prominent English Evangelicals, inviting them to come and preach to

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[16] See T.H. Lister, State of the Irish Church, Ed.R., 1835, pp. 502-9.

[17] Quoted in Remains of Alexander Knox, Esq., 4 vols. (London, 1834-37), 4:104. See also 4:501.

[18] William Magee was compelled to address the issues of clerical 'order' and 'regularity' at some length in his primary visitation charge as Archbishop, at a time which such practices had mostly disappeared amongst English Evangelicals. See A Charge (Dublin, 1822), p. 23ff.

their flocks; they also made reciprocal visits across the Channel.

In this work, Evangelicalism was greatly aided by Irish Methodism. Both had established a foothold in the province during the eighteenth century, with Methodism predominating well into the 1800s. Subsequently, they grew side by side, Evangelicalism finding its greatest influence amongst the landed gentry and Dublin's influential middle classes, while Methodism was most effective amongst the lower orders in town and country. The social effects of their teachings, however, were much the same, with their respective followers, according to one Victorian account, "in habits and demeanour strict;...active in repressing vice and irreligion, and zealous to promote works of benevolence and charity."[19]

Precise estimates of the size of the two movements are difficult to make. In 1791, around the time of Wesley's death, there were twenty-nine circuits, sixty-seven Methodist preachers, and fourteen thousand Irish members,[20] including perhaps some 'Church' Methodists who continued to receive the sacraments at the Church and who were, therefore, often indistinguishable from Evangelicals.[21] By 1802, there were one hundred and twenty-two Wesleyan meeting-houses in Ireland. Fourteen years later, the movement had grown to forty-eight circuits, one hundred and thirty-three preachers, and nearly twenty-nine thousand members.[22] In contrast, the Evangelical party at

[19]See J.T. Ball, The Reformed Church of Ireland, 2nd ed. (London and Dublin, 1890), p. 269f.
[20]Godkin, p. 106.
[21]Bowen, p. 34.
[22]Godkin, p. 106.

this time was relatively small; one account estimated its strength in 1797 at twenty-nine clergymen,[23] though it steadily grew to gain ascendancy in the Church by the mid-nineteenth century.[24] Evangelicalism benefited greatly not only from its social--and established--status, but also from the pervasive challenge of the old enemy, Catholicism; for it was commonly accepted by most Irish Protestants outside Ulster that it would be disastrous for Protestantism to splinter into smaller groups as in the north. This belief hindered orthodox Dissent from expanding as rapidly in Ireland (outside the northern counties) during this period, as it did in England,[25] leaving the Evangelicals to advance the 'doctrines of grace' without hindrance from their Protestant 'allies.'[26]

The influence of Evangelicalism was disproportionate to its numbers, for even critics of 'serious religion' were impressed by its success. As William Magee, the High Church Archbishop of Dublin, optimistically reported to the House of Lords in 1825:

> there has been lately an excitement of attention to the subject of religion throughout the people, such as perhaps there has not been before at any period since the Reformation. In truth, with respect to

[23]See Maiben C. Motherwell, A Memoir of The Late Albert Blest (Dublin, 1843), p. 64.

[24]Donald Harmon Akenson, The Church in Ireland (New Haven, 1971), p. 132.

[25]In 1816, there were 7,490 Nonconformists in Dublin: 2,200 Orthodox Presbyterians, 760 Unitarians, 140 Presbyterian Secederes, 1,700 Independents, 1,420 Methodists, 230 Moravians, 150 Baptists, 650 Quakers, and 240 Miscellaneous Dissenters (including Kellyites and Walkerites). See Godkin, p. 106.

[26]Even by 1850, there were only 24 Congregational, 16 Baptist, and 12 Brethren chapels in Ireland. Bowen, p. 34ff.

> Ireland, the Reformation may, strictly speaking, be truly said only now to have begun.[27]

Likewise, Gladstone claimed that the Irish Evangelical party made, if not earlier progress, then greater, than its English counterpart, for its growth was aided by the highly political nature of the local religious climate.[28] In Ireland, as elsewhere, Anglicanism tended to move along its Protestant-Catholic poles in direct reaction to the religious orthodoxy of its major opponent. Where Catholicism was in the ascendancy, as in Ireland, or where it was influential, as in Liverpool, Protestant forms of Anglicanism predominated; on the other hand, where Protestantism was in the ascendancy, as in Scotland, Episcopalianism tended toward more Catholic forms of expression.

This counter effect was not lost on the Irish Evangelical clergy, whose advancement of the 'doctrines of grace' was enthusiastically welcomed by many Protestants as a prophylactic against religious and social dominance by Rome. As Trollope put it rather acidly, the Irish Evangelical parson:

> is a severe, sombre man, one who speaks of life in sad, subdued tones...He is preaching every moment... Find him asleep, and you will find him preaching with a long-protracted, indignant, low-church Protestant snore...[He] does not shake hands with you without leaving a text or two in your palm,--with his own special comments on their tenor as regards the Pope

[27]The Evidence of His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, Before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, on the State of Ireland (Dublin, 1825), p. 9f. Magee (1766-1831) was successively Bishop of Raphoe (1819-1822), and Archbishop of Dublin (1822-1831). After a celebrated career at Trinity College, Dublin, he became rector of Cappagh, co. Tyrone, and Killeleagh, co, Down, and was once considered by Spencer Percival for the vacant see of Oxford.

[28]William E. Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement; its Parentage, Progress, and Issue,' British Quarterly Review, 1879, p. 10.

> ...His clerical activities are always at work against enemies and not on behalf of friends.[29]

In this receptive spiritual climate, Evangelicals came to exert a disproportionate influence within the Established Church in Ireland. This can be seen within such national institutions as Trinity College, Dublin, where several 'gospel ministers' became distinguished Fellows;[30] and on the Episcopal bench, which elevated a number of accomplished Evangelicals--such as Robert Daly and Power le Poer Trench--to positions of leadership.[31]

In the 1790s there were traumatic upheavals in Ireland, as the spirit of revolution spread, stimulated by French example. The formation of the United Irishmen, the insurrection and massacre at Wexford and elsewhere in 1798, sent a profound shock through the country. Here, without doubt, was an atmosphere favourable to the growth

[29]Trollope, Clergymen, p. 105ff.

[30]Liechty, p. 124. Of the 29 Evangelicals serving in the Church of Ireland in 1797, almost all had attended Trinity College.

[31]Daly (1783-1872), a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was successively Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin (1842-1843), and Bishop of Cashel, Emly, Waterford, and Lismore (1843-1872); Trench (1770-1839), after graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, was successively Bishop of Waterford (1802-1810), Elphin (1810-1819), and Archbishop of Tuam (1819-1839).

Some confusion surrounds Trench's adherence to Evangelicalism. Akenson (p. 133) denies his adherence to Evangelicalism; however, the D.N.B. and others claim otherwise. While opposing the more extreme doctrines of 'vital religion,' Trench actively promoted the interest of Evangelicalism on many different levels, including the Bible Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Irish Society, of which he served a lengthy term as President. Upon his death, the well-known Evangelical Peter Roe, described him as "an honoured instrument in the promotion of Evangelical religion." See Joseph D'Arcy Sirr, A Memoir of the Honourable and Most Reverend Power Le Poer Trench (Dublin, 1845), pp. 61, 459, 487, 791.

of 'serious religion.'[32] As one contemporary account wrote, "we live in an age when not only the pillars of government, but the adamantine foundations of religion itself, shaken as it were by an earthquake, tremble to its base."[33] A re-vitalized Protestantism based on faith and conversion, with implications for the transformation of the 'inner' man, offered a two-fold attraction. First, the personal, experiential piety of evangelical religion gave solace in a period of acute anxiety. Second, the evangelistic energies of the Revival offered a possible way of dealing with the insurgency of the rebellious Catholic majority: the conversion of the peasantry to 'vital religion' might bring about the stability which force of arms could not achieve. Many landlords previously opposed to methodistical 'enthusiasm' now welcomed travelling preachers. Consequently, from the 1790s began what Desmond Bowen has appropriately christened 'the Protestant Crusade' for the spiritual conquest of the Irish people.

The alarms of the Revolutionary era could have two potentially contradictory results, however. On the one hand, it could assist the creation of a pan-evangelical movement, similar to that on the mainland in which various religious groups united to promote the gospel: not only to galvanize 'nominal' Protestant churchgoers, but also to convert the mass of Roman Catholics. In such a framework, converted evangelicals of all persuasions could cooperate

[32]For more information on the Wexford Rising and the accompanying civil unrest in Ireland during the 1790s see J.C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923 (London, 1966), pp. 263-265; Marianne Elliott, 'Ireland and the French Revolution,' in H.T. Dickinson, ed. Britain and the French Revolution (London, 1989), pp. 83-101.

[33]Ireland's Mirror, or A Chronicle of the Times, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1804-1805), 1:iii.

against the Roman menace which surrounded them. In unity lay strength. Yet there was also a countervailing force which promoted schism and theological extremism. The links between social or political movements and religious attitudes are often obscure, but it is likely that the trauma of the Revolutionary era had a catalytic effect on some Evangelical minds in very different ways: if it provoked evangelism in some quarters, it also exacted millennialism in others. In some minds the political-religious tensions of the period aroused a different reaction: a desire for purist separatism, a drawing apart of the chosen few into a tight-knit brotherhood which cut itself off from the wicked and turbulent world which threatened it.

The conception of the 'Protestant crusade' produced a number of interesting effects upon the Irish religious scene. One of the most significant was the establishment of religious societies, or special interest groups organized to promote a specific goal.[34] These included the Hibernian Bible Society, formed in 1806; the Hibernian Church Missionary Society, formed in 1814; Dublin's General Evangelical Society, formed in 1787; and the Olster Evangelical Society, formed in 1798.[35] These voluntary societies had a number of advantages over the parochial ministry, upon which the Irish Evangelicals were quick to capitalize. Although parishes were fixed geographically, the societies were inter-diocesan; geographical boundaries were largely irrelevant to them and their members.[36]

[34]See Akenson, p. 134. Most were pan-evangelical, in that they included both Churchmen and Dissenters; some, like the Hibernian CMS, were strictly Anglican.
[35]See loc. cit.; Liechty, pp. 6, 56.
[36]Akenson, p. 134.

Thus, they served as a means in which Evangelicals could engage in 'irregular' itinerant ministries, not tied to parish boundaries and able to penetrate evangelistically into 'dark' parishes without incurring canonical censure. Second, the societies were not under the authority of diocesan bishops or the Church, but were semi-autonomous bodies controlled by boards of governors.[37] These boards were generally composed of clergy *and* laymen, Churchmen *and* Dissenters, with the Anglican clergy sometimes in the minority. Thus, a Society's evangelistic efforts could benefit from its Anglican connections (in such things as using the Church's formularies and rubrics), or it could ignore them, whichever proved most advantageous in a given situation. Either way, these powerful associations had the result of softening the boundaries between Church and Dissent. Those Evangelicals engaged in them were unlikely to be stiff Churchmen. Their attachment to the established religion was more shallowly rooted than usual. Despite these advantages, however, the societies did contribute to a certain escalation of Anglican-Nonconformist tensions, as High Churchmen were quick to denounce any work (or body) which involved cooperation with Dissent. Thus, the efforts of Evangelicals to strengthen the Establishment through evangelism and developing links with orthodox Nonconformists often--and ironically--led to its weakening.

Another effect of the 'Protestant crusade' in Ireland was the opening of private homes in Dublin and elsewhere to the ministry of Evangelicals, Methodists, and Moravi-

[37]Loc. cit.

ans--a work which, although 'irregular,' attracted a large number of important middle class converts to the cause of 'serious religion.'[38] Even more influential was the establishment of a number of private evangelical chapels operating on the fringes of the Church, such as Dublin's York Street Chapel[39] and Plunket Street Chapel.[40] By far the most significant of these 'extra-parochial' preaching-houses was in Bethesda Chapel, Dublin, the so-called 'cathedral' of Irish Evangelicalism.[41]

Bethesda Chapel had been opened in June 1786, "according to the forms of the Episcopal Church,"[42] with Edward Smyth, a close associate of Wesley and an Arminian, and William Mann, a moderate Calvinist, serving as its first chaplains.[43] William Smyth, a local Evangelical lay patron who was anxious to establish an Evangelical presence in Dublin, had personally financed the Chapel's construction,[44] having been led to believe that it would be licensed by his uncle, the Archbishop of Dublin, as a chapel-of-ease; however, his uncle's premature death and the unwillingness of his successor, John Cradock, to sanc-

[38]See A. Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon, 2 vols. (London, 1839), 2:215f.

[39]This was Independent, but pan-evangelical. See Liechty, p. 68f, Godkin, p. 105.

[40]This was associated with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, with William Cooper serving as minister. See William Urwick, 'Memoir of the Late Rev. Thomas Kelly, of Dublin,' E.M., 1856, p. 64; Acheson, p. 19; Godkin, 104f.

[41]Bowen, p. 68; and Richard Sinclair Brooke, Recollections of the Irish Church (London, 1877), p. 18. See also Akenson, p. 132. It was occasionally known as Lock Chapel.

[42]C.H. Crookshank, Memorable Women of Irish Methodism in the Last Century (London, 1882), p. 112. The foundation stone had been laid in July 1784. The building was destroyed by fire in 1839, Bethesda Church being erected in its place.

[43]Seymour, 2:202; Liechty, 331f.

[44]Crookshank, p. 112. Seymour, 2:202.

tion the ecclesiastical 'irregularity' of an unlicensed building, prevented this, and the Chapel instead became a Dissenting meeting-house protected by the Toleration Act.[45] In spite of this setback, Bethesda continued to stand in close connection with the Church, its deed of trust stipulating that its trustees and chaplains be drawn from the Evangelical clergy. This created a most 'irregular' situation in that several Episcopally ordained Evangelicals were not only officiating in what was technically a Dissenting meeting-house, but they were also trustees over its affairs. This unusual status continued until 1825, when Bethesda was licensed as a proprietary chapel of the Church of Ireland by Archbishop William Magee.[46]

In spite of its early status on the fringes of the Established Church, Bethesda soon became the centre of the Irish Evangelical movement;[47] it was a venue for such well-known 'gospel ministers' as the Arminian John Wesley and the moderate Calvinist Rowland Hill.[48] This ministry was so popular and influential that the Provost of Trinity College soon inhibited his students from attending its services, while the unsympathetic Bishop of Cashel regarded attendance (or preaching) at Bethesda as a test of disloyal Churchmanship in those seeking ordination or preferment.[49] With the resignation of both Smyth and Mann in

[45]See Acheson, p. 27ff.
[46]See Ibid., p. 162.
[47]Seymour, 2:230f. Stokes characterized Bethesda as "the headquarters of the followers of Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon in Dublin." See G.T. Stokes, 'John Nelson Darby,' Contemporary Review, 1855, p. 539. Haldane (p. 342) referred to it as "a beacon-light in the midst of darkness."
[48]Seymour, 2:206, 219, 225. Wesley preached at Bethesda in 1787, some four years before his death.
[49]Liechty, p. 332.

1794, however, the nature of Bethesda Chapel began to change.[50] Reflecting larger changes within Irish Evangelicalism as it began to mature and separate from its Methodist cradle, the Chapel became more rigidly Calvinistic, more separatist, and less attached to the formularies of the Established Church. The Scottish high Calvinist James Alexander Haldane was warmly received by John Walker and Walter Maturin, Bethesda's new chaplains, when visiting Dublin during the summer of 1804, preaching frequently at the Chapel.[51] In the course of time, these changes had a profound effect upon the prosperity of both Bethesda and Irish Evangelicalism.

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Despite its success, the Evangelical movement was not without its concomitant difficulties. Even more than in England, there remained an undercurrent of Protestant extremism. Encouraged by the religious dogmatism of Scotland and Ulster, Irish Evangelicalism was not entirely successful in resisting 'irregularity,' or in adhering to the moderate 'doctrines of grace' which had now united most English Evangelicals into a coherent and influential party. Consequently, Irish Evangelicalism suffered two damaging reversals at the beginning of the century: the secessions of Thomas Kelly and John Walker, two of the most gifted and energetic clergymen of their generation, whose loss to the Church and to the Irish Evangelical movement encouraged subsequent outbreaks of theological

[50]Tensions apparently developed between the Calvinism and Arminianism of the Chapel's two chaplains. See Seymour, 2:213.

[51]Haldane, p. 341f.

extremism, and sent shudders through religious circles on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Thomas Kelly was born in Dublin in 1769, the son of Thomas Kelly, a wealthy and prominent Dublin lawyer.[52] Of a most amiable disposition and buoyant spirit,[53] he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1785, intending to practise law; it was here that his friendship with John Walker developed.[54] Around this time, after coming under the influence of the Hutchinsonians,[55] he became an ascetic, so reducing himself by fasting that he jeopardized his own life.[56] Out of this period of spiritual exploration--and with the aid of John Walker--Kelly was converted to 'serious religion,'[57] and in 1792, against the expressed wishes of his parents, he abandoned the law and was ordained in the Established Church.[58]

In early 1794, intent on advancing 'free grace' within Dublin's numerous but lifeless parish churches,[59] Kelly and three friends arranged to preach in succession each Sunday afternoon at St. Luke's.[60] Although it produced

[52]His father, the Rt. Hon. Chief Baron Kelly, was a judge of the Irish Court of Common Pleas. See Frederic Boase, Modern English Biography, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1965), 5:806; Brooke, p. 193. Kelly was perhaps best known as the author of 765 hymns. See Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture (Dublin, 1804); Hymns Adapted for Social Worship (Dublin, 1811); and Hymns Not Before Published (Dublin, 1815).

[53]Urwick, p. 61. Cf. Anon., The Life and Letters of William Urwick, D.D., of Dublin (London, 1870).

[54]B.A. 1789. See Al. Dub., p. 458; Brooke, p. 193.

[55]Written by John Hutchinson (1674-1737) and first published in 1724.

[56]Urwick, p. 62.

[57]Ibid., p. 61f.

[58]C.H. Crookshank, History of Methodism in Ireland, 3 vols. (London, 1886), 2:67.

[59]Urwick, p. 63.

[60]Loc. cit. The three were: Walker, Walter Shirley, and Henry Maturin. See loc. cit.; Anon., The Life and Letters of William Urwick, p. 281.

much local excitement this work was quickly halted by the Rector,[61] who dismissed their extempore preaching[62] as being "tantamount to Methodism and Dissent."[63] Kelly also celebrated communion at small, private gatherings of Evangelicals: although such ministry was uncanonical, he believed that it did not violate Christ's laws.[64] His episcopal superiors saw differently. Robert Fowler, the Archbishop of Dublin, summoned Kelly and his friends to answer charges of preaching strange and pernicious doctrines.[65] To this accusation the four replied that they taught only those things set forth in the Articles; Fowler, however, was unimpressed, and inhibited the four from further ministry within the diocese.[66]

As a result, the four, like Wesley and Whitefield a generation earlier, were forced to minister in Dissenting meeting-houses, in private homes, in the open air, or outside the diocese. Some migrated to Dublin's private chapels, while Kelly, at first continuing at a local 'drawing room meeting' at the home of Alderman Hutton,[67] soon left for Athy.[68] He then married a Miss Tighe of Rosanna, who contributed a substantial sum to his already considerable fortune,[69] and migrated to Blackrock, officiating at an

[61]Motherwell, p. 71f. See also Seymour, 2:213f.
[62]Brooke, p. 193.
[63]Loc. cit.; Urwick, p. 63.
[64]John Hall, The Memory of the Just. A Tribute to the Memory of the Late Thomas Kelly (Dublin, 1855), p. 17f. See also Haldane, p. 342.
[65]Urwick, p. 63.
[66]Loc. cit.; and, Crookshank, History of Methodism, 2:67.
[67]Urwick, p. 64. See also Brooke, p. 16.
[68]Crookshank, History of Methodism, 2:67, 71.
[69]Ibid., 2:67. Kelly's wife was the only child of Sir William and Lady Betty Fownes, and upon their death, she inherited their large fortunes and estates. See Seymour, 2:213.

Anglican chapel-of-ease which he had recently constructed from his own resources. Kelly's genius for preaching and organization soon attracted a large congregation, and this served as the foundation of his influential, if unsettled, ministry.[70]

Kelly then began to preach wherever called, at Bethesda Chapel, at Kilkenny, or in neighbouring parishes, either on his own or in partnership with the English Evangelical Rowland Hill, whose pan-evangelical fervour he now shared.[71] By 1802, he had formed his own preaching Connexion which, in partnership with the Countess of Huntingdon and the Independents, supplied preachers for the work of the local interdenominational General Evangelical Society.[72] As they set off on their itinerant tours, Kelly's preachers were reminded that they were not being sent out "as the agents of *any* party in the 'Church of Christ';" their only purpose was to "declare the pure and simple gospel to all who are willing to hear it."[73]

Kelly was too wealthy and temperamentally independent to obey those (like Fowler and most of the episcopal bench) whom he did not respect, and too sensitive to subject himself to further episcopal discipline.[74] In 1803, therefore, he formally seceded from the Church, concluding that his ministry and personal influence would be more useful within his own Connexion.[75] This decision was partly based upon the belief that a national establishment of religion, "whatever truth might be embodied in its con-

[70]Crookshank, History of Methodism, 2:67.
[71]Seymour, 2:219, 225.
[72]Hibernian Evangelical Magazine, 1802, p. 183.
[73]Quoted in loc. cit.
[74]Brooke, p. 17.
[75]Acheson, p. 32.

fessions and its ritual, could not, *as a system*, be so modified as to bring into operation the principles of the New Testament."[76] Kelly therefore concluded that he must secede or forever be identified with the abuses of the Church. He later justified his decision in terms of his pan-evangelical ecclesiology. By seceding from the Church of England he could maintain closer fellowship with the members of the 'Church of Christ'. He could, he said:

> avow a personal fellowship...with every minister of the...Church who cordially holds, faithfully preaches, and consistently exemplifies...justification 'by the grace of God...' I can see...the multiplication of faithful and zealous preachers of this doctrine in the...Establishment...[which] with me, is but one species of a genus...I do not dissent from the sound doctrine embodied in certain Articles...neither do I dissent from the persons, whether clergymen or others, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.[77]

Kelly then set about establishing, at his own expense, meeting-houses affiliated with the 'Kellyites,' as his Connexion was quickly labelled.[78] Some of his pulpits were filled by laymen and local ministers, others with students from the Haldanes' academy in Scotland.[79] Although the precise geographical location and numerical strength of the Kellyites remains uncertain, congregations were known to exist at New Ross, Waterford, Blackrock,[80] Dublin, Athy, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick,[81] Portarlington, and Wexford.[82]

[76]See Motherwell, p. 79.
[77]Quoted in Urwick, p. 65.
[78]Brooke, p. 193.
[79]Urwick, p. 65.
[80]Loc. cit.
[81]Robert Milne, An Attempt to Defend the Church of England Against an Attack Made Upon her Fundamental Principles, etc. (Dublin, 1817), p. 7.
[82]H.H. Rowdon, 'Secession From the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century,' V.E., (London, 1964), p. 78.

The Kellyites' theological and doctrinal principles remain clouded, partly because Kelly was uninterested in engaging in religious controversy which might detract from his evangelistic efforts. Although his movement was less radical than the parallel new Connexion formed by Kelly's old friend John Walker (discussed below), it is clear that Kelly wished it to resemble as much as possible the Apostolic model: baptism and communion were regarded as sacraments; two orders of ecclesiastical offices were established, elders and deacons; and informal ordination, which was open to every qualified member, was seen as an appointment to an office or a position of trust.[83] The worship was not, however, as in Walker's body, thrown open to everyone wishing to speak, but was conducted by various members according to a pre-arranged plan, with perhaps an opportunity for extempore prayer and preaching. Baptism was made strictly on profession of faith.[84] These new doctrinal positions bore some resemblance to those of the Irish Independents, as Kelly was repeatedly informed by William Urwick, the well-known Congregationalist minister of York Street Chapel, Dublin.[85]

Kelly was a moderate Calvinist who objected to the sacerdotal claims of the Established Church. Always eager to promote the doctrines of free grace, he rejected the more extreme forms of speculative Calvinism advanced by Walker and his followers. He also rejected a suggestion that the Kellyites unite with Walker's new Connexion be-

[83] Hall, pp. 19, 22.

[84] William Blair Neatby, A History of the Plymouth Brethren (London, 1901), p. 27f.

[85] Urwick, p. 280f. York Street Chapel was a foundation established in 1808 by the Countess of Huntingdon, which could accommodate over sixteen-hundred worshipers.

cause of the proviso, insisted upon by the latter, asserting that the Arminian John Wesley was in hell.[86] In spite of numerous attempts to enlist his aid either in the Evangelical movement or in the disestablishment campaign, Kelly remained aloof, refusing to be drawn away from his work in building up the Kellyites.[87]

When Kelly eventually responded in print to the criticism of his secession,[88] he defended his doctrines as unchanged since the time of his ordination. Nor did he see his separation from the Established Church as constituting any threat to the State.[89] Indeed, secession based upon spiritual principles must lead Christians to become, as in Apostolic times, loyal and peaceful members of the community;[90] however, since the early church had been founded upon the principles of selection and spirituality,[91] and since the Establishment had lost both of these attributes, it neither was, nor could be, based upon the same ancient model. The Established Church, he concluded, had mistakenly replaced the doctrines of selection with comprehension, and Christian spirituality with secularity.[92]

Kelly's tract provoked a number of interesting responses. Thomas Scott, the well-known English Evangelical and biblical commentator, published a detailed statement supporting religious establishments and denouncing Kelly's

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[86]See Neatby, p. 27.
[87]Acheson (p. 122) claims that there is no evidence that Kelly led even one other person to secede from the Established Church. Cf. Brooke, p. 194.
[88]Thomas Kelly, A Plea for Primitive Christianity (Dublin, 1815). For a response to this see Milne.
[89]Ibid., p. 2f.
[90]Ibid., p. 4.
[91]Ibid., p. 8f.
[92]Ibid., p. 9f.

various assertions.[93] He dismissed the existence of an establishment during Apostolic times as an impracticability, and argued that if the Church attempted to expel the Evangelicals from its midst, it would self-destruct.[94] Power Le Poer Trench, the Archbishop of Tuam, wrote twice to Kelly attempting to entice him back into the Church.[95] After being rebuffed in this effort, he replied: "It is clear to me...that your objection is not to the doctrines or discipline of our Established Church, but to all establishments as such."[96] If Kelly would only consider the views of Joseph Milner and Thomas Chalmers, the Archbishop suggested, he would come to understand the value of religious establishments.[97] What he objected to, Kelly replied, was any institution whose existence involved personal responsibility, which might force its members to forego their right of private judgment. Although conceding that an establishment could exist without Christians being inhibited from professing their own principles, it was a matter of principle which prevented him from consistently belonging to any establishment. He also stated

[93]Thomas Scott, A Letter (Kilkenny, 1816). See also William Burgh, Dissent From the Church of England Shewn to be Unwarrantable, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1833). Kelly responded to Burgh's attack in A Letter to the Rev. William Burgh (Dublin, 1833).

[94]Scott, p. 4ff.

[95]Letter from Le Poer Trench to Kelly, 16 October 1820, in Sirr, p. 728ff. By one account, Peter Roe also made repeated attempts to entice Kelly back into the fold of the Church. See Brooke, p. 194.

[96]Letter from Trench to Kelly, 21 December 1820, in Sirr, p. 730.

[97]Ibid., p. 731. Joseph Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, 6 vols. (York and Cambridge, 1794-1809); Thomas Chalmers, The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns, 3 vols, (Glasgow, 1821-1826), 1:91, 93. These essays had previously been published in separate form, first in the Ed.R., and then independently. See Stewart J. Brown, Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland (Oxford, 1982), p. 144.

that he regarded the disestablishment of the Church as unessential, and that he saw no reason to separate from those who chose to remain within it.[98]

Kelly's unwillingness to issue blanket condemnations of the Church or to agitate for its disestablishment tended to moderate the impact of his secession. On the surface, this appears a mere episode; however, when the Kellyite schism is seen within its overall context as a group separation occurring simultaneously with the more spectacular secession of John Walker, it takes on added significance. Together, the two almost simultaneous secessions sent shudders of alarm through both the Irish Church and Evangelicalism at large.

Though the nature of Kelly's schism drew unwelcome attention to the discontentment of Evangelical ultras, it did not give the new Connexion enough publicity to ensure its permanence, for by 1856 a number of his chapels had ceased to function altogether. Congregations still met at Dublin, Waterford, New Ross, Athy, and perhaps elsewhere, but by now the number of adherents had diminished considerably. Kelly continued to minister to the bodies meeting at Dublin and Athy until his death in 1855, but whether--and for how long--they continued after that time remains uncertain.[99] The rapid decline of the movement may have been due to its organizational structure, which rejected formal ministry; or it may have been the result of the rapid growth of 'serious religion' within the Irish Establishment or within such new competing sects as the Brethren, which began to emerge in and around Dublin during the

[98]Sirr, p. 731.
[99]Urwick, p. 65f.

late 1820s. In any case, Kelly's secession, and the establishment of his Connexion, gave dramatic publicity to the difficulties encountered by 'gospel ministers' in adhering to the fixed creeds and practices of the Anglican Establishment.

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The secession of Kelly's former friend and colleague, the more volatile and vitriolic John Walker, was, in terms of its impact upon the Established Church and both English and Irish Evangelicalism, more significant.[100] It led to the establishment of the first indigenous Irish Dissenting body;[101] it robbed the forces of Irish Evangelicalism of its most popular, and perhaps most able, commander;[102] it encouraged the revival of 'Apostolic practices,' with an accompanying separatism and high Calvinism, within Irish and English Evangelicalism; it brought about--by abreaction--increased discipline and clerical 'order' among those Evangelicals who stayed in the Irish Church;[103] it discredited Evangelicalism precisely at the moment in which it was beginning to win converts within fashionable circles; and, perhaps most serious of all, it damaged the mission of the Church of Ireland by providing Catholics

[100]For biographical accounts of Walker see D.N.B.; James Wills and Freeman Wills, The Irish Nation: Its History and Its Biography, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, London, and Dublin, 1875) 4:452-456; John S. Crone, A Concise Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1937), p. 258; Alfred Ware, A Compendium of Irish Biography (Dublin, 1878), p. 544; Henry Boylan, A Dictionary of Irish Biography, 2nd ed. (Dublin, 1979), p. 360f; Liechty, pp. 313-389.

[101]Liechty, p. 42. Formed, perhaps, simultaneously with Kelly's Connexion. See Ibid., p. 378.

[102]See Wills and Wills, 4:453f.

[103]See William Magee, A Charge (Dublin, 1822), p. 23ff.

with a sensational and well-publicized example of Protestant schism and division.

Walker was born in 1768 in County Roscommon, the son of the Evangelical clergyman Matthew Clericus Walker.[104] He entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1786,[105] and was later ordained, quickly establishing such a reputation within Dublin's burgeoning Evangelical movement as a popular and effective minister that he was later described by a contemporary as "the father of what religion was then in the Church."[106] In 1792, James Garie, a chaplain in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion in Dublin, greeted his arrival ecstatically, exclaiming that "the Lord has in some measure appeared for his cause in this city, by raising up Mr. Walker...to preach in the Churches with much zeal, simplicity, and clearness."[107] Walker's attractiveness derived from the fusion of two contradictory characteristics. On the one hand, he was a man of decided opinions, who appeared to the public as a harsh and uncompromising controversialist, doing battle at various times with the Church, the Methodists, the Haldane brothers, the Baptists, Dissenters in general, with Alexander Knox and his circle, and, finally, with his erstwhile Evangelical allies.[108] Yet, ironically he was also a shy and sensitive scholar with little interest in politics, and with a noticeable

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[104] D.N.B. The family later moved to Co. Tipperary. See Liechty, p. 314.
[105] Al. Dub., p. 847.
[106] See J.H. Singer, Brief Memorials of...B.W. Mathias (Dublin, 1842), p. 204.
[107] Quoted in Seymour, 2:214f.
[108] Liechty, p. 315.

speech impediment.[109] He blended religion and scholarship, dogmatism and liberality, sternness and sensitivity, in a complex and explosive mixture.[110]

In 1796, Walker published two theological texts which quickly gained the attention of Evangelical leaders in England.[111] After his inhibition at the hands of Archbishop Fowler, he itinerated around the Irish countryside, fully aware that such 'irregular' behaviour might provide his superiors with new grounds of attack, though this threat did little to dampen his sense of Providential guidance.[112] Meanwhile he pursued his teaching duties at Trinity College, where he gathered a small group of students around him to pray and read the Bible; he also taught Sunday school on Abbey Street, entertained visiting Evangelical dignitaries,[113] and hurled himself into numerous pan-evangelical enterprises.[114]

Shortly afterwards, Walker and his friend, the moderate Calvinist Walter Maturin, were appointed to replace Smyth and Mann as chaplains at Bethesda Chapel.[115] This arrangement lasted for three years, after which Maturin

[109]Ibid., p. 316, 334. At college he was a Classics Gold Medalists. In 1791, he was elected to a fellowship See Crookshank, History of Methodism, 2:67. In 1799, he was Donnellon Lecturer. See Al. Dub., p. 847.

[110]Liechty, p. 322.

[111]John Walker, Substance of a Charity Sermon (Dublin, 1796); and, The Church in Danger (Dublin, 1796). Rowland Hill was so moved by Walker's ability as to characterize him as "that most valuable servant of God." See Rowland Hill, Journal of a Tour Through the North of England and Parts of Scotland (London, 1799), p. 6. Hill himself had achieved great popularity in Ireland. See Seymour, 2:219, 225.

[112]See E.M., 1856, p. 64.

[113]Liechty, p. 125f.

[114]See Motherwell, p. 63.

[115]Crookshank, History of Methodism, 2:67; Acheson, p. 32; and Haldane, p. 341f. Thomas Kelly, George Carr, and the Rev. Dr. Thorpe often assisted.

became Rector of Raphoe, and Walker was left in sole charge of the Chapel's influential ministry.[116] Here, he quickly rose to prominence as the leading figure in Irish Evangelicalism, exerting his considerable presence upon every aspect of 'serious religion' in Dublin. By 1800, however, it became evident that a pronounced change had taken place in his religious thinking.

In 1799, for instance, he remarked ominously that he had come to see the Evangelical movement as a means of preparing the Church for the inevitable--and beneficial--disestablishment that awaited it.[117] In the following year, he publicly accused the middle and higher classes of a cold indifference in worship that he said was tearing the moral fibre of the nation.[118] Two years later, he produced a scathing attack on Methodism, which revealed the increasingly extreme nature of his ecclesiology and the soaring levels his high Calvinism had reached.[119] Here were clear signs of increasing disillusionment with the existing 'gospel world' in Ireland.

Walker began his attack on the Wesleyans--and on Arminianism in general--with a sharply dualistic vision of the current religious world. There were, he held, two distinct groupings to be discerned:

> Those who through grace are 'on the Lord's side,' and those who are of the world. The former are scattered through various outward churches, under various names: but they are all one body, having one Lord,

[116] Liechty, p. 334.
[117] Singer, p. 39.
[118] John Walker, A Sermon, General Fast (Dublin, 1800)
[119] John Walker, An Expostulatory Address to the Members of the Methodist Society in Ireland (Dublin, 1802), in Essays and Correspondence, Chiefly on Spiritual Subjects, by the Late John Walker, ed. by William Burton, 2 vols (London, 1838), 1:1-32.

> one faith, one hope. Nothing but blind bigotry suggests that they are to be found only under one denomination...They are daily discovering themselves to be brethren, and acting in brotherly concern for the advancement of that one cause.[120]

In this spiritual union, Walker had not yet progressed to the point of strict separatism from all other professed believers; he could still address his Methodist adversaries as brethren. But his evolving ecclesiology was soon to alter so emphatically that even this concession would prove impossible.

Walker rounded on Wesleyan Methodism as an agency of religious tyranny, encouraging "idolatrous attachment to men and submission to human authority."[121] He saw Wesley as a domineering autocrat who enslaved his adherents in spiritual bondage.[122] His doctrines of faith, grace, justification, and sanctification were a perverted "mass of the most dangerous errors," designed to sanction a system not of spiritual assurance, but of human feelings.[123] Sanctification should instead be regarded as an act which brings Christians into a particular relationship with God, in which they become a holy nation and a peculiar people,[124] and which occurs at the precise moment of conversion.[125] The natural man is both a voluntary agent and the slave of sin; while no machine, devoid of free will, he remains evil until converted.[126] Walker advanced the doctrines of God's electing love, effectual grace, and the final perseverance of the saints,[127] while emphatically

[120]Ibid., 1:7f.
[121]Ibid., 1:8.
[122]Ibid., 1:10.
[123]Ibid., 1:10, 16.
[124]Ibid., 1:14f.
[125]Ibid., 1:19.
[126]Ibid., 1:28.
[127]Ibid., 1:29.

denying the accusation that he subscribed to the doctrine of so-called double predestination.[128] Later, against Wesley's Irish admirer Alexander Knox, he also defended the Scriptural basis of free grace and election, and the Calvinistic nature of the Articles.[129]

Walker's ecclesiology was now undergoing rapid 'Apostolic refinement.' He had come to believe that God's kingdom was not of this world, but distinct and independent from every political regulation of man. A religious establishment, he now believed, was a mere political institution; the great mass of those connected with it are persons who gave no evidence of belonging to the kingdom of our Lord. Christ's disciples were not the citizenry of the State, but a people chosen out of a world which hated and despised them. Though Walker still valued his position in the Church for the opportunities it provided for reaching multitudes who would otherwise remain ignorant, he had now come to believe that he would eventually be expelled from it.[130]

Was he a hypocrite in remaining inside an imperfect establishment? No, Walker replied. All establishments offered secular temptations to Christians: such temptations were endemic to all institutions. The root of the danger lay not in the existence of an establishment *per se*, but in the human--and therefore corrupted--nature of an establishment. The true believers, the members of the 'Church of Christ', would be unharmed by the worldliness

[128] Ibid., 1:30f. See also Liechty, p. 62f.
[129] John Walker, A Series of Letters to Alexander Knox (Dublin, 1802), in Walker's Essays, 1:33-174; 1:43, 46.
[130] John Walker, An Address to Believers of the Gospel of Christ, (Dublin, 1804), in Walker's Essays, 1:175-213, 1:192f.

of an established church and would continue in truth and grace despite the civil connection of the church to which they belonged.

Walker considered the possibility of seceding, but was reluctant to abandon a position in which he saw himself providently placed; by so doing he might excite unseemly controversy. For the time being, he decided to remain in the Establishment.[131] If, however, he should be expelled from the Church, the reasons for his ejection would bring the light of publicity onto the principles for which he stood, and justify his separation. While looking cheerfully at the prospect of expulsion, he demurred from the idea of actively seceding.[132]

Although these changes in Walker's spiritual outlook offended a number of Evangelicals, he became increasingly unconcerned by their hostility; indeed, he now denounced not only 'nominal' Christians, but professed Evangelicals as apostates from the Apostolic faith:

> Within the past few years various trying circumstances concurred to open my eyes on the real character of that part of the religious world, which goes under the name of *evangelical*; and brought to my attention the awful evils that reign in the majority of that class of professors...My attention was thus forced to the melancholy contrast, between that way in which Christians were walking in these days, and walked in the days of the Apostles. I began increasingly to remark how the disciples, in the Apostolic Churches, *walked together* as brethren, closely united with each other, and separated from them that believeth not.
>
> Since the commencement also of the public controversy in which I was engaged, in consequence of my Expostulatory Address to the Methodists; I have had increasing opportunities of observing how few of those, who profess what is called *evangelical* doctrine, understand or believe the Apostolic gospel ...I saw more and more clearly that the little flock of genuine disciples had been awfully scattered among the heathen, and had been in consequence too much

[131] Ibid., 1:193f.
[132] Ibid., 1:194.

> 'learning their works;' that they ought to be collected together as of old, and called back--both for their own profit and for the glory of their Lord--to walk together according to the Apostles rule.[133]

At about the same time, he discussed his views with receptive friends and published them in a small pamphlet.[134] Nine months later, with eight like-minded Brethren, he began an attempt to live in all things according to what he saw as the one Scriptural and Apostolic rule.[135]

An important aspect of this rule was separatism; worshipping apart from those outside the Apostolic faith and practice. Believers were called to walk as those who are not of the world; they were chosen out of the world and crucified to the world, strangers and pilgrims upon earth whose life is hid with Christ in God. They are called to come out and be *separate*, as a *peculiar people*.[136] At first, Walker's separatism remained primarily theoretical, for, he believed that it was not inconsistent with Christian duty to remain within the Established Church.[137] An establishment was merely:

> a provision made by the State, for the religious instruction and edification of the inhabitants...according to certain prescribed forms and regulations, which were to be observed by its officiating ministers in their *public* exercises, in the places publicly allotted by the State for their ministrations, and at times appointed by public authority and usage: but ..without any design originally to abridge their Christian liberty in other respects.[138]

[133] Ibid., 1:196f.
[134] John Walker, Hints on Christian Fellowship (Dublin, 1804).
[135] John Walker, An Address to Believers, in Walker's Essays, 1:197; A Brief Account of the People Called Separatists (Dublin, 1821), in Walker's Essays, 1:556-650, 1:556f.
[136] Ibid., 1:185f.
[137] Ibid., 1:197.
[138] Ibid., 1:198.

If the regulation of *public* worship was the only concern of the State in the area of devotion, it followed that the State should grant latitude in its prohibition of all private ministrations, such as Bible readings and preaching in private houses. Only if this prerogative of private association was abrogated, and the rubrics were made obligatory for all forms of devotion, did acceptance of the establishment principle become unlawful for true Christians. Despite this stance, however, Walker was clearly moving towards more drastic steps, for he began to prohibit so-called 'mixed communion' (or the practice of 'believers' and 'non-believers' uniting in worship) at Bethesda Chapel: although 'mixed communion' was not intrinsically unlawful, its continuance might give outsiders the wrong impression.[139]

Walker soon moved on to regard 'Apostolic principles' as incompatible with a civil establishment of religion. Since such establishments were contrary to the nature and laws of Christ's kingdom, adherence to Scripture mandated secession.[140] But he also concluded that it would be equally wrong to affiliate with the Dissenters, who were just as corrupt, or indeed to associate with any existing religious body.[141] Instead, employing what he regarded to be the same divine rule as the Apostles, he determined that the congregation at Bethesda should become a separate body, unconnected in a formal way with other believers, with himself as its anointed leader.[142] Here true Christ-

[139]Ibid., 1:199.
[140]Ibid., 1:200-205.
[141]Singer, p. 102.
[142]J.H. Overton was wrong in claiming [in The English Church in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1894), p. 315], that Walker and his followers remained in the Church.

ians would unite with the 'mixed multitude of pagans' (that is nominal Christians) in the public reading and expounding of the Scriptures, but not in the singing of hymns or in prayer which were reserved only for those acknowledged as authentic brethren. For how, Walker asked, could unbelievers "'call on Him, in whom they have not believed?'"[143]

As soon as this view came into Walker's mind, it was accompanied with the immediate conviction that he should now separate himself from all spiritual connection with the outside world. Consequently, on October 8th, 1804, he wrote to John Kearney, the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, announcing that he was seceding from the Church and resigning from his Fellowship.[144] Not content to offer a simple resignation, he stated, in some detail, the reasons for his secession, in order to mark those principles he could no longer conscientiously retain.[145] That same evening, the Provost sent for him, tearfully urging retraction or time for reconsideration;[146] Walker declined, however, fearing that delay would suggest indecision. On the following day, the Provost, after consulting with the two Deans, expelled him from the College. Far from being upset, Walker appeared to welcome his brusque expulsion as a mark of true piety and divine favour;[147] seven days later, he extended his separation by

[143] John Walker, An Address to Believers, in Walker's Essays, 1:209.
[144] See Ibid., 1:205. Kearney was later Bishop of Ossory.
[145] Ibid., 1:206.
[146] John Walker, Supplementary Annotations on Livy (Glasgow, 1822), p. xiif.
[147] John Walker, An Address to Believers, in Walker's Essays, 1:205f.

resigning from three voluntary--and pan-evangelical--religious societies.[148] Henceforth he attempted to support himself and his family by collecting pew rents and the voluntary tithes of the congregation at Bethesda, preparing private students for university admission, publishing Classical commentaries, and offering lectures on university subjects.[149]

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After seceding from the Church, Walker faced a delicate situation at Bethesda Chapel. Controlled by Evangelical trustees decidedly unsympathetic to extreme forms of high Calvinism and anti-Erastianism, and with a majority of the congregation now excluded from full worship, it was a hostile and divided house with an uncertain future. On October 15th, Walker wrote to Benjamin Williams Mathias, his former student and now head of the trustees, informing him of his secession and stating that he would no longer continue with "the usual forms of divine service" at the Chapel.[150] Such an ambiguous situation was not allowed to continue, however, for the trustees quickly intervened in order to prevent Walker's new theological 'extremism' and anti-Erastianism from further eroding the Chapel's already

[148] Ibid., 1:206. These were: The General Evangelical Society of Dublin, The Society for Distributing Evangelical Tracts, and the Association Incorporated for Promoting Religion and Virtue.

[149] D.N.B.; Liechty, p. 317. In 1822 Walker placed an advertisement for 2 or 3 private students which he was willing to receive into his home at 8 Camden Street, Camden Town, for tuition. He denied, however, any intention to proselytize his students. See John Walker, Supplementary Annotations.

[150] Quoted in Singer, p. 90f. Mathias had graduated B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1796, M.A. in 1799. In 1797, he was ordained to the curacy of Rathfryland, Co. Down, by Dr. John Porter, Bishop of Killala. See D.N.B; W.D. Killen, The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, 2 vols. (London, 1875), 2:382.

tenuous relationship with the Established Church. As the trustees steadfastly refused to countenance his ministry, Walker was forced to abandon the work at Bethesda.[151] Mathias was then appointed as its new chaplain where, according to at least one account, he implemented a rather exact form of Churchmanship.[152]

These tensions produced predictable havoc amongst the congregation. Around fifty members of the original body remained with Mathias, forty-two seceded with Walker, while the rest abandoned Bethesda to worship elsewhere.[153] With this small core, Walker established the first congregation of his Connexion in Stafford Street, Dublin, which he unashamedly christened the 'Church of God.'[154] It met with a mixed--albeit not an indifferent--public response. A Dublin magistrate hotly argued that the "Government ought to *exterminate from society* such [false religious] principles."[155] An anonymous critic suggested that the best response would be "a straight jacket--a shaven head--some clean straw--and a dark room in Swift's Hospital," though on reflection he admitted that the best course for opponents who refrained from "dignifying their nonsense by persecution,...[was] refutation and ridicule."[156] Some

[151] See Walker's Essays, 1:105ff.

[152] Walter Alison Phillips, ed. History of the Church of Ireland, From the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 3 vols. (Oxford and London, 1933), 3:331.

[153] Singer, p. 149; Mathias, p. 97.

[154] Motherwell, p. 89f. It was also known as the 'Separatists' and the 'Walkerites.'

[155] See Walker's Essays, 2:13.

[156] A Beneficed Clergyman, Strictures on a Pamphlet, Entitled the Monstrosities of Methodism (Dublin, 1808), p. 2. See also William Cooper, An Address to the Church Assembling in Plunket-Street, Dublin (Dublin, 1805); A Letter to Mr. John Walker, (Dublin, 1808); A Member of the Church of Christ in Sligo, Marked Separation in All Religious Meetings...Considered (Dublin, 1805).

Evangelical families were devastated when one (or more) of its members, now adhering to Walker's body, refused to worship or enter into any form of fellowship with their relations.[157] Walker's rigidly separatist views deeply shocked the exponents of a united, pan-evangelical Protestant evangelism in Ireland. In 1806, a group in England, concerned about the advancement of 'serious religion' in the province, formed the Hibernian Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in Ireland. In the following year it dispatched a high-powered delegation to investigate the state of religion in Ireland.[158] The Walkerites, their report revealed, although still a small body, had been considerably aided by a zealous, but anonymous, Scottish benefactor (perhaps Robert or James Alexander Haldane), and had been active in promoting both Sunday schools and the disreputable doctrine of '*marked separatism.*' Any further advance of their erroneous teachings was likely to inflict serious damage upon missions to the Catholics as well as upon the delicate religious balance in the province:

> The broaching of their system in Ireland...is calculated to do unspeakable mischief. Should it be suffered by Divine providence to flow in a more copious stream, the eager propagators of Christianity will feel themselves proportionally thwarted in their noblest endeavours. Papists will declaim with renewed advantage on the divisions of Protestants, and the sons of infidelity and vice will approach the majesty of pure and undefiled religion with augmented violence and scorn.[159]

Walker's secession was followed by much Evangelical breast-beating. Peter Roe, the influential Evangelical

[157] See Liechty, p. 375.

[158] It included the Nonconformist historian David Bogue and the the Welsh Calvinist Thomas Charles of Bala. See Motherwell, p. 190f.

[159] Motherwell, p. 192.

incumbent of St. Mary's, Kilkenny, and the co-founder of the Ossory Clerical Association, saw the loss of Walker--and the establishment of the Separatists (as Walker's body was often referred to)--as "truly lamentable--hurtful to the Church of England and to the cause of God."[160] Henry Maturin wrote that although the number of Evangelical clergy was increasing, the secession of Walker and his followers "weakens our hands."[161] The Irish Evangelical Albert Blest confessed that Walker's secession had forced him to consider all that had recently been accomplished "in conveying the leaven of divine truth into the College and the Church, as blasted forever."[162]

Notoriety quickly made the Church of God an object of attention throughout Dublin's fashionable circles. Public interest was aroused by the spectacle of a man sacrificing his collegiate honours and distinctions for conscientious motives, and intrigued by a body which took far more seriously than usual the Scriptural admonitions in Romans 12.2 against being "conformed to this world."

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Once out of its Anglican cradle, the Church of God's teachings quickly moved to what the 'gospel world' deemed to be unacceptable positions. Its ecclesiology placed an extreme emphasis on the visible and local church. The fundamental principle of the Walkerites was that their Church had made a full return to Apostolic practices. Hence, at last, the primitive brotherhood of the first Christians was re-enacted. The Church was once again to

[160]Cited in Samuel Madden, Memoir of the Life of the Late Peter Roe, A.M. (Dublin, 1842), p. 142.
[161]Cited in Acheson, p. 127.
[162]Quoted in Motherwell, p. 168.

be seen as a collection of Christians believing one faith, living under one rule in the closest brotherhood, at peace with one another, and taught and edified by the spiritual gifts of the elders.[163] The Church of God was inspired by the radical, primitivistic assumption that *Acts* revealed once and for all the Christian order in its fullness, and that such an order could--and should--be reconstituted.

The adherents of the new Church would manifest the genuine characteristics of Christ's disciples. The same Apostolic word came to them still, with the same authority as in the first century, containing God's commandments for their profit and their glory. The Church was not called on to make any regulations for its fraternal union, but simply to adhere to the unchangeable laws of Scripture.[164] It should refuse to subscribe to any oaths.[165] It should also refuse to sanction any form of organized clergy, for these would all too easily become "a class of pretended agents between God and the people," dressed up in the "trappings and claims of the Jewish priesthood."[166] The Church was to assemble together on the first day of the week, when its members would take bread and wine as a memorial of Christ's resurrection, would pray and offer praise, read the Scriptures, exhort and admonish one an-

[163]John Walker, An Essay on the Divine Authority of the Apostolic Traditions (Dublin, 1807), in Walker's Essays, 1:224-255; Remarks on Certain Questions (Dublin, 1810), in Walker's Essays, 1:310-332; A Brief Account, in Walker's Essays, 1:556-560;

[164]John Walker, A Brief Account, in Walker's Essays, 1:557.

[165]In 1822, he had an Act of Parliament passed exempting the Separatists from this necessity. See John Walker, The Petition of Certain Christian People Resident in London (London, 1822), in Walker's Essays, 2:1-22. See also G.M., 1833, p. 540f.

[166]John Walker, Thoughts on Religious Establishments (Dublin, 1810), in Walker's Essays, 1:1:333-344, 1:338.

other as brethren "according to their several gifts and ability," contribute gifts to the poor, and express their fraternal affection by saluting each other with a holy kiss.[167]

An essential element in the formulation of the Separatists' unique ecclesiology was a firm rejection of religious establishments. Every attempt, they contended, to dress up Christ's kingdom in a garb which attracted worldly respect and approbation, under the mask of promoting its interests, only served to disguise its real character.[168] The Church must instead revert to the Apostolic principles of the pre-Constantinian Church, for it was the Imperial establishment of Christianity which had led to its disastrous corruption and secularization.[169] A State Church was anti-christian, a thing of this world, a creation of human policy, usurping the prerogative of God.[170]

Even more alarming to Evangelicals was the Church of God's pronounced separatism. Its starting point was the assumption of the eternal incompatibility of Church and world. As the gospel was "peculiarly offensive to the world and peculiarly unintelligible,"[171] and as all brethren were "a despised and suffering people, hated by all men for his name's sake,"[172] Christians must necessarily live and worship in absolute separation from other so-

[167]John Walker, A Brief Account, in Walker's Essays, 1:559f.
[168]John Walker, Thoughts on Religious Establishments, in Walker's Essays, 1:333.
[169]Ibid., 1:336.
[170]Ibid., 1:341.
[171]John Walker, Supplementary Annotations, p. xiii.
[172]John Walker, A Brief Account, in Walker's Essays, 1:559.

called believers.[173] This principle was rigorously carried out. During a six week tour of Scotland, in which Walker met many religious men, he found not one true believer with whom he could unite in fellowship.[174] When his daughter later developed friendships with Evangelicals outside the Separatists, he informed her that unless she renounced these associations and reunited with the Church of God, he would be "obliged (though with a bleeding heart) solemnly to renounce all fellowship" with her, and to despise her "as one rejecting the word of the Lord, and savouring not the things that be of God--but the things that be of men."[175]

The Walkerites adopted other practices which distinguished them from orthodox Evangelicalism. Baptism by immersion, for instance, which Walker claimed had been perverted by post-Apostolic believers and which now should return to its Judaic form, was to be administered to entire families--adults *and* children alike--upon the conversion of the head of the house. As Christ had offered no instruction other than merely affirming the Jewish rite by which he himself had been baptized, his followers should do likewise.[176]

As was so often the case, separatism was combined with high Calvinism. Although not easily defined, Walker's high Calvinism tended to dominate (at least in public

[173]John Walker, Thoughts on Religious Establishments, in Ibid., 1:334.

[174]John Walker, Remarks on Certain Questions, in Ibid., 1:310.

[175]Letter to Miss Walker, April 1813, in Ibid., 2:199.

[176]See John Walker, Thoughts on Baptism (Dublin, 1805), in Ibid., 1:214-223. See also Observations on a Letter Addressed to the Author (Dublin, 1809), in Ibid., 1:256-309.

perception), the theological orientation of the Church of God. He was soon commenting disparagingly about human conscience and conviction of sin,[177] while condemning Arminianism as a blasphemy,[178] "as contrary to the essential doctrines of the gospel", and its adherents as "*no...real believer*[s]."[179] He advanced the dangerous teaching that there was no true repentance previous to faith; such "*infidel repentance*," as he described it, "is no more 'a preliminary to faith, than Murder or Adultery,'"[180] which in themselves were on equal footing with the prayers and alms-deeds of a Cornelius.[181]

By the time of his secession, Walker had become so distrustful of human efforts to reach God that he informed the congregation at Bethesda that the prostitutes in attendance (from the adjoining Lock penitentiary and workhouse) were closer to being in a state of grace and divine acceptance than most of those present.[182] Nor were his later comments on 'free grace' any less moderate. In 1821, for instance, he claimed that "all solicitude or effort of the sinner to do anything, or to get anything, for the purpose of making his peace with God, and obtaining the forgiveness of his sins, must originate in the ungodliness of his mind, arrogating to himself the work,

[177]John Walker, An Expostulatory Address, in Ibid., 1:24.
[178]John Walker, Letter to W.C., 7 May 1829, in Ibid., 2:456
[179]John Walker, An Expostulatory Address, in Ibid., 1:51f.
[180]John Walker, A Series of Letters, in Ibid., 1:112f.
[181]Ibid., 1:154. Moderate Calvinists, by contrast, spoke of the distinguishing circumstances of a hopeful nature in the cause of penitents who appear to have been peculiarly atrocious offenders before repenting. See C.O., 1803, p. 192.
[182]See Liechty, p. 346.

which the Son of God came into this world to perform, and which it is declared He has finished."[183] He held an unflinching doctrine of particular redemption: Christ had not died for any...or on behalf of any--save those, whom he shall absolutely 'bring unto glory.'"[184]

In spite of these assertions--and despite repeated accusations by his critics--Walker's advocacy of antinomianism in any form other than a theoretical one is difficult to establish.[185] Although an admitted advocate of Calvinistic doctrines, he emphatically denied that he was an extreme Calvinist. He dismissed low--or moderate--Calvinism as "contemptible in its philosophy, as it is insidiously ungodly, in all its origins and principles," and also criticized what he called high Calvinism, which, although "it often assumes a more plausible appearance,--while it appears to assert strongly and decisively many of the most important truths of Scripture," was "but a more deceitful perversion of the gospel; substituting for that real revelation of God...a presumptuous confidence on the assumed favoritism of the individual; and disconnecting in his mind the ideas of departing from the living God and destruction, the ideas of walking after the flesh and death."[186] Walker reserved this final reproach exclusive-

[183]John Walker, A Brief Account, in Walker's Essays, 1:558.

[184]John Walker, Remarks Corrective of Occasional Mistranslations in the English Version of the Sacred Scriptures (London, 1831), in Walker's Essays, 2:54-122, 2:82.

[185]See E.R., 1838, p. 523; David Robert Ross, A Reply to the Author of a Article Entitled 'Sandemanian Theology, John Walker' Which Appeared in the E.R. of November 1838 (Dublin, 1839), p. 9

[186]John Walker, A Sufficient Reply to Mr. Haldane's Late Strictures Upon the Author's Letters on Primitive Christianity (London, 1821), in Walker's Essays, 1:432-506, 1:439f.

ly for antinomians, like James Harington Evans of the Western Schism, "who think of a work of grace that makes them better, or less wholly evil, than they were by nature." Men such as this, he concluded, "know little of the true grace of God."[187]

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Walker's own writings, and those of his contemporaries, provide some insight into the practices and progress of the Church of God. In about 1818, Walker stated that the Separatists had multiplied at a surprising rate. In Dublin they sometimes exceeded one hundred, with six or seven little churches meeting in the countryside amounting to about one hundred more. Among these brethren, according to Walker's claim, were twelve or so former Evangelical clergymen who had seceded from the Church, and more than twenty former Baptist ministers.[188] In 1821, he published a brief *apologia* for the founding of the movement which boasted that, amongst other things, the Separatists had been drawn mostly from Dublin's prosperous Evangelical ranks. They were, he admitted:

> a very small sect; very little known, and less liked: nor do they expect ever to be numerous or respectable on earth. Their most numerous church (assembling... in Stafford Street, Dublin,) consists perhaps of about one hundred and thirty individuals. They have about ten or twelve smaller churches in different parts of Ireland: and within the last two years a church in the same Connexion has appeared in London, assembling in Portsmouth Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.[189]

[187]John Walker, Letter to R.L.C., 5 March 1818, in Ibid., 2:248.

[188]Letter to J.H., n.d. (c.1818), in Ibid., 2:243.

[189]John Walker, A Brief Account, in Ibid., 1:556f. Elsewhere he revealed that a congregation also existed in Leith. See John Walker, Seven Letters to a Friend on Primitive Christianity, (London, 1834), p. 107.

Various accounts of the Church of God made contrasting claims as to its size and influence. One alleged that outside Ireland it had flourished and increased, especially in the West of England, Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol, and Birmingham.[190] Another claimed that congregations existed in Waterford, Kilkenny, and Cork.[191] A further congregation appears to have been gathered around James Buchanan of Camowen Green, near Omagh.[192]

In practice, the Church lived according to what is considered to be a strict Apostolic rule. Any teaching unconnected with its sectarian peculiarities was denounced in the strongest language. For example, a small group of Separatists, after their expulsion from Bethesda Chapel, would occasionally return, wait for a reference to the necessity of practical holiness and good works, and, upon hearing one, march out in unison, "declaring that this was legal[istic] doctrine, and not such as a Christian could listen to."[193] Nor were the Walkerites without their own internal divisions. Around 1815, for example, a schism developed in the Stafford Street congregation over the long-established practice of 'holy kissing.' This was administered to the occupant of the adjoining seat upon arrival and departure; however, one day a newly married wom-

[190] Stokes, p. 539f.

[191] Madden, pp. 140, 256f. Of these, the Dublin and Birmingham congregations continued to exist until at least 1885. See Stokes, p. 539f.

[192] Buchanan, a protege of the Haldanes, had formed a religious body in 1807 which developed some formal ties with Walker and his Connexion; however, it was less committed to extreme forms of Calvinism and held certain Baptist principles. In 1816, Buchanan emigrated to America, where, three years later, he became the British Consul in New York. See F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement (Exeter, 1968), p. 81.

[193] Singer, p. 149.

an--not 'one of the initiated'--was greeted at the appropriate moment and fashion by a burly Irish blacksmith. A terrific hubbub then ensued, with the kissers on one side, and the anti-kissers on the other. Eventually the former, backed by Walker, prevailed in the dispute, but at this point, for some unexplained reason, Walker abandoned Dublin for the quieter, less quarrelsome atmosphere of London.[194]

Here things remained relatively calm until 1829, when open schism erupted between the London and Dublin congregations over the issue of internal discipline.[195] The Separatists regarded the maintenance of discipline as a divine command, excluding so-called backsliders from fellowship and from the sacrament. When a member of the Dublin body therefore openly disclaimed subjection to discipline, and was not immediately silenced or put out of the congregation but instead became the object of lengthy debates, Walker and his London followers felt compelled to intervene.

At first, private attempts were made by individuals in London to admonish the Dublin brethren and to recall them to those spiritual principles of Christian fellowship from which they had departed. These proved unsuccessful, however, and the plague not only continued to rage in Dublin but also spread to London.[196] A small deputation was then formed which wrote to Dublin, denouncing the

[194] Loc. cit.; and, A.R., (Appendix to Chronicle), 1833, p. 249.

[195] See John Walker, Statement of the Interruption of Christian Connexion Between the Church in London and the Church in Dublin (London, 1829), in Walker's Essays, 2:23-53. This teaching was based on 1 Corinthians 5:11.

[196] Ibid., 2:24.

brethren for having allowed the Church to be turned into "a theatre for theological controversy and debate," and admonishing them to expel anyone who refused to submit to the divine authority of holy discipline.[197] When the existence of this letter was announced in Dublin, it was dismissed by the entire congregation as "an officious interference" and "a usurpation of jurisdiction over them."[198]

Three divisions in the Dublin body quickly developed: those openly opposed to discipline, those who favoured debate and time for consideration, and those in favour of firm discipline.[199] A schism occurred when the third group seceded from the other two. Because the disputants showed no sign of shame or sorrow, the London congregation now severed its Dublin connection.[200] Although the disciplinarians managed to re-establish fellowship with their London brethren, the entire episode was an embarrassing debacle which confirmed Walker's critics in their belief in the fissiparous tendencies inherent in the extreme forms of Protestantism.[201]

It appears that Walker continued to reside in London until almost the end of his life. His affection for Ireland and for Trinity College never wavered, however, and in 1833 his old College attempted to atone for its earlier unkindness by granting him an annual pension of six-hun-

[197] Ibid., 2:25f.
[198] Ibid., 2:27.
[199] Loc. cit.
[200] Ibid., 2:28.
[201] Ibid., 2:31.

dred pounds.[202] He then returned to Dublin, perhaps to visit, perhaps to reside: he died on October 25, 1833 before receiving the proceeds of his pension.[203]

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Despite the Church of God's critical stance toward other religious bodies, its internal divisions, and its circumscribed development as a Connexion, it exerted a tremendous influence upon Evangelicalism throughout Ireland and Britain, less perhaps by its small congregation than by the number--and loquacity--of its critics. Its impact was variously assessed. One critic complained rather wildly that the leaders of the Church of God pursued leading Evangelicals throughout Ireland, England and Scotland, "poaching upon their congregations, robbing them of their most devout adherents, and representing themselves as specially spiritual" because of their Apostolic freedom from dependence on tithes and endowments.[204] Another critic saw the Church's influence as small, and on the whole beneficial: although Walker had caused a few unsteady characters to wobble, the debates which he had triggered off had in fact strengthened the Establishment,

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[202]D.N.B. In 1822, Walker exclaimed "I have never complained, nor do I now complain; I was expelled from that PROTESTANT University, as a disgrace to it, *for believing the Scriptures;* and after I had tendered the *resignation* of my Fellowship." See John Walker, Supplementary Annotations, p. xiii, xi. In his introduction to *Murray's Compendium,* Walker expressed his hope that his words might serve the students of Trinity College, "for though no longer connected with that body, I must continue to feel an interest in its true prosperity." See R. Murray, Murray's Compendium of Logic (London, 1847), p. iii.

[203]S. Austin Allibone, A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors Living and Deceased, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1877), 3:2543. See also G.M., 1833, 2:540; London Literary Gazette, 1838, p. 5; and the A.R., (Appendix to Chronicle), 1833, p. 249..

[204]See Stokes, p. 539.

provoking much sober thought about the grounds of allegiance to it.[205]

The Separatists' most important critic was Peter Roe.[206] Although an occasional itinerant,[207] and not above attending a Dissenting chapel when travelling if a 'gospel minister' did not occupy the pulpit of the parish Church,[208] Roe was a moderate Calvinist[209] who was firmly attached to the Anglican formularies.[210] Prior to Walker's secession, Roe had found much to admire in his teachings, describing his address to the Methodists as "a work full of logic and *sophistry*, ably written, and containing ...truths" which few could answer.[211] Within two years, however, this admiration was destroyed by Walker's secession and by his growing theological extremism. Comparing the Separatists' dogma with the earlier teachings of the Puritan Robert Browne, Roe claimed that Walker had come to possess:

> the highest, and I believe most extravagant doctrines of Calvinism; deals very much in censure, and in condemning those who differ from him, yet I could also observe with sorrow, very unwarrantable prejudices entertained against those who do not think with him. How many who reprobate the doctrine of infallibility, really believe it, and act upon it.[212]

In September 1813, the town of Kilkenny was 'invaded' by the Church of God. This was hardly surprising to Roe,

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[205]Letter from the Evangelical John Quarry of Cork to Peter Roe, 1813, cited in Madden, p. 257f.

[206]See Thomas J. Johnson, John L. Robinson, and Robert Wyse Jackson, A History of the Church of Ireland (Dublin, 1953), p. 251; Akenson, p. 132.

[207]Madden, p. 112f.

[208]Quoted in Ibid., p. 198ff.

[209]Killen, 2:386. See also Madden, p. 96ff.

[210]Madden, p. 556.

[211]Peter Roe diary entry for 2 October 1802, cited in Madden, p. 116. Roe's admiration for the work continued for many years.

[212]See Ibid., p. viiif; Peter Roe diary entry for 10 September 1804, p. 140.

for not only had the Separatists been advancing throughout the area for some time, but they habitually targeted the flocks of leading Evangelical clergymen.[213] At first Roe believed that the seceders would enjoy little or no success in Kilkenny,[214] but he soon came to realize that a strong counterattack must be mounted if his congregation was to be preserved from decimation. Consequently, he set about collecting a number of 'letters' against separation from the Established Church from leading English and Irish Evangelicals, including Thomas Scott, Leigh Richmond, and Charles Simeon,[215] which, together with an introduction and conclusion, he published together with a lengthy essay of his own on secession.[216]

Predictably, the work received an enthusiastic reception from Evangelicals, who were only too glad to see the appearance of a major statement supporting the Church-State connection and validating their position within the Establishment. Some High Churchmen, on the other hand, denounced it for ignoring the Scriptural benefits of episcopacy.[217] Roe and his contributors were, however, undeterred by such criticism, and the work succeeded in per-

[213] Ibid., p. 255f.

[214] Peter Roe diary entry for September 1813, cited in Ibid., p. 256.

[215] Although Richmond's and Simeon's were published anonymously. The Irish contributors included William Digby, the Archdeacon of Elphin; George Hamilton, the Rector of Killermogh; William Napper, the Curate of Old Ross; Dr. Thomas Grace, the Archdeacon of Ardfert; Robert Shaw; and W.D. Hoare. See Stokes, p. 539; Madden, p. 260; and, Catherine M. Marsh, The Life of the Rev. William Marsh, D.D. (London, 1867), p. 114.

[216] Peter Roe, The Evil of Separation from the Church of England Considered (Kilkenny, 1815). For a review see C.G., 1818, pp. 346-349. Such was its acceptance and popularity that a second edition, corrected and enlarged, was published in England two years later.

[217] See William Phelan, The Bible, Not the Bible Society, (Dublin, 1817), pp. 110-170.

suading most of Roe's congregation to remain within the Church.[218] Yet the criticism from High Churchmen illustrated the Establishment's internal divisions, providing Walker and his followers with apparent corroboration for their prediction that any house so divided must surely be close to self-destruction.

The 'letters' themselves were both accommodating and aggressive. Urging Christian unity and the advantages of establishment, they encouraged Churchmen to contemplate the love, peace and joy contained within the gospels.[219] On the other hand, Walker was strongly attacked for being more concerned about precise points of sectarian identity than about Christianity itself: by his extremism he was seen as helping on the cause of infidelity.[220] Much was made of the egalitarianism of the new Church, which was seen as dangerously anarchic and lacking the hierarchical authority of an Apostolic ministry:[221] it was especially denounced for allowing unqualified individuals to speak or minister whenever moved by the Spirit.[222]

Not surprisingly, Evangelicals sought to place the new schism on a heresiographical tradition, so that it could be the better identified. It was easier to controvert Walkerism once it could be portrayed not as a new and vital movement, but merely as an old heresy revived. The most plausible theory was that in founding the Church of God, Walker was restoring the doctrines of John Glas and

[218] Madden, p. 259.
[219] Anon. Extract of a Letter, pp. 95, 117.
[220] See W.D. Hoare, Extract of a Letter, in Peter Roe, The Evil of Separation, p. 97; Thomas Grace, A Letter, in Ibid., p. 101.
[221] Robert Shaw, A Letter, in Ibid., p. 123.
[222] Ibid., pp. 124-132.

Robert Sandeman.[223] This was not surprising, for Sandemanianism was already rife among some Irish Protestant religious groups and had made especial inroads among the Baptists.[224] Greville Ewing, the Scottish seceder turned Congregationalist, had been strongly influenced by the teachings of Glas and Sandeman during the 1790s. His own views were imbibed by the brothers Haldane who, in turn, introduced their own fiery brand of high Calvinism and separatism to Dublin's Bethesda Chapel during the summer of 1804.[225]

Glas was a deposed Scottish clergyman who had formed a religious Connexion (known as the Glasites) based upon Apostolic, separatist, and idiosyncratic Calvinistic principles.[226] In 1744, he was joined by Sandeman, his son-in-law, who was responsible for transferring the sect to England and America, where it became known as the Sandemanians.[227] The Glasites practiced weekly communion, the so-called 'love-feast,' the holy kiss, and the washing of feet. They espoused communal practices which had a radical resonance: a community of goods, weekly collections for the poor, and abstention from eating blood or strangl-

[223]See D.N.B.; E.R., 1838, p. 519. These accusations resulted in the publication of a strong attack on Sandemanianism in 1810. See Andrew Fuller, Strictures on Sandemanianism, in Twelve Letters to a Friend (Nottingham, 1810).

[224]See Joshua Thompson, 'Baptists in Ireland, 1792-1922: A Dimension of Protestant Dissent' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1988), p. 29f.

[225]Haldane, pp. 231, 353. Although the Haldanes expressed disapproval of the Sandemanians' extremism, they shared many doctrinal and theological points in common.

[226]See D.N.B.; The Works of Mr. John Glas, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1761).

[227]See D.N.B.; Robert Sandeman, Letters on Theron and Aspasio, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1757). A second edition, with an appendix, was published in 1759; and a third edition, with the addition of an enlarged appendix, was published in 1762.

ed meat. In their polity, they maintained a plurality of elders in each congregation, two of whom must be present in all acts of discipline and in the administration of communion.[228] Their Trinitarian and Christological views were highly unorthodox. Furthermore, they condemned all religious establishments as hostile to Christ's kingdom, and remained strictly separate from all other so-called believers.[229]

The theological and doctrinal resemblances between the Glasites and the Church of God forced Walker repeatedly to contrast his own position with theirs. In this process a number of interesting admissions were made. Walker allowed that he had become acquainted with Sandeman's writings during the course of a correspondence with Alexander Knox in 1802-1803.[230] Although the Walkerites and Glasites concurred on many points,[231] they also differed, especially on their views of assurance and sanctification. Referring to Sandeman's views in 1818, Walker admitted:

> Precious as his vindication of the truth appears against the corruptions and perversions of the popular divines, we conceive that he himself afterwards awfully perverts and corrupts it, in representing the gospel as calculated to afford a sinner joy at first on believing, only as satisfying him that he *may pre-adventure* be saved because *any* sinner may be saved, but leaving him doubtful whether he believes it or not, till after a course of painful exertion in the work of faith and labour of love he is led to discover in himself some good evidence of his faith, which affords him personal confidence towards God...I do

[228]Charles Buck, A Theological Dictionary, 2nd ed. (London, 1833), p. 844f.

[229]See David Bogue and James Bennett, History of Dissenters, 1688-1808, 4 vols. (London, 1808-1812), 4:107-125.

[230]Letter to J.H., n.d. (c.1818), in Walker's Essays, 2:242.

[231]Letter to Anon., April 1804, in Ibid., 1:407; Letter to R.L.C., 14 January 1818, in Ibid., 2:239; Letter to J.H., n.d. (c. 1818), in Ibid., 2:242; Letter to A. M'I, 12 June 1821, in Ibid., 2:338.

> believe that in their body it has been a root of bitterness and leaven of ungodliness.[232]

At another time, he advised an acquaintance that his (the friend's) decision to separate from the Glasites appeared "to have been mercifully ordered," for they seemed to him to possess a system not of divine but of human prescription, "laid down for them by a man."[233] Though he criticized their adherence to the practice of sprinkling in baptism,[234] their understanding of what constituted a church,[235] their exaggerated emphasis on the role of elders in the body,[236] their understanding of the feast of charity, and their views on salutation,[237] he allowed that in all other respects the two Connexions maintained no essential differences.[238]

The Glasites and Sandemanians were not the only bodies which gave rise to comparison with Walker's Connexion. One anonymous critic, a former member of the Church of God, but now an Evangelical clergyman writing in the *Christian Guardian* in 1818, accused the Separatists of holding ultra-Calvinist doctrines indistinguishable from those of the Western Secederes.[239] Given the extreme variability of the Seceder's theological positions, this claim was not easy to sustain, and was dismissed by Walk-

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[232]Letter to R.L.C., 14 January 1818, in Ibid., 2:239f. See also Ibid., 2:258, 274, 282, 286, 293, 389, 418.

[233]Letter to J.H., n.d. (c. 1818), in Ibid., 2:242.

[234]See Letter to R.L.C., 23 April 1818, in Ibid., 2:254

[235]Letter to A.M'I., 12 June 1821, in Ibid., 2:339.

[236]Letter to R.L.C., 14 January 1818, in Ibid., 2:239; Letter to J.H., n.d. (c.1818), in Ibid., 2:242f; Letter to Anon., 25 August 1823, in Ibid., 2:390.

[237]Ibid., 2:243.

[238]Loc. cit.

[239]See the C.G., 1818, p. 171ff. For information about the rise of the Western Secederes see Chapter 4.

er, who severely criticized the Western Schismatics.[240] It had some plausibility, however, in relation to the Walkerites views of sanctification. These, it was claimed, encouraged antinomianism by ridiculing 'growth in grace,' by advocating an instantaneous and imputed sanctification, and by depreciating the moral law as absurd and blasphemous. The exclusivism of the Walkerites outraged not only those who held to the principle of an inclusive national Church, but also those who maintained the pan-evangelical principles of the Bible Society and other joint evangelical associations. The Walkerites' claims for their own small sect seemed absurd: they anathematized all churches but their own, and, although rejecting individual perfection, they nevertheless extolled their own Church as perfectly pure.[241]

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At the start of the nineteenth century, Evangelicalism was in the ascendant in Ireland; advanced by its adherents as the best means of inculcating new life into the weak and ineffectual Anglican Establishment, and as the most effective prophylactic against domination by Rome. It had by now extended beyond the early evangelistic campaigns and Methodist societies established by Wesley and had become more respectable, moving into the Church, into Dublin's prosperous middle classes, and even into aristocratic Ascendancy circles. From here, it provided some of the spiritual energy, vigour, and firepower which was re-

[240] See Letter to R.L.C., 14 January 1818, in Walker's Essays, 2:239f; Letter to R.L.C., 23 February 1818, in Ibid., 2:244; Letter to R.L.C., 5 March 1818, in Ibid., 2:246f; Letter to J.G.S., 12 June 1821, in Ibid., 2:324ff.

[241] Ibid., p. 172f. Cf. Sandemanian Theology--John Walker; E.R., 1838, pp. 519-531, p. 519

quired to fulfil the Church's ambitious mission: a thoroughgoing Protestant Reformation throughout Ireland.

It was for these reasons that the secessions of Thomas Kelly and John Walker--and the formation of their respective, albeit small, Connexions--were seen as such serious setbacks to the advancement of both 'serious religion' and the wider cause of Irish Protestantism. Starting out their careers as respected and influential Evangelicals likely to enjoy substantial preferment in the Church, both Kelly and Walker sacrificed much in terms of status and financial gain to satisfy the requirements of conscience. Early on, the two were friends mutually committed to advancing the 'doctrines of grace' against the gigantic presence of Irish Catholicism. Their subsequent extremism, particularly Walker's high Calvinism and separatist dogma, however, split them asunder.

This eccentricity did much to discredit Protestantism as a whole in the eyes of the Catholic majority who saw their careers as proof of the inherent instability of Reformed religion. While liberal Anglicans, High Churchmen, and Catholics were confronted by an Evangelicalism that was unified, respectable, theologically moderate, and above all else successful, they were compelled to take notice; when the movement began to fragment, however, with its leading adherents rejecting the Church and seceding into obscure forms of Dissent, advancing extreme doctrines, and separating from all who disputed their claim to exclusive religious insight, its effectiveness and influence were compromised.

The importance of the Kellyite and Walkerite movements was not confined to Ireland. They had long-term effects, visible in the Western Schism in 1815, and still more among those who founded the Plymouth Brethren in and around Dublin in the late 1820s. The vision of primal 'Apostolical' purity and brotherhood which Kelly and Walker had held up for view as a higher and more fulfilling evangelical path, encouraged others to secede from the Church, to build upon their extreme theology and ecclesiology, to embrace Apostolic principles, and to form their own religious connexions. Kelly and Walker were only two amongst a long list of 'gospel preachers' who seceded from the Church during the early nineteenth century, but they were among the most significant. They offered an idealized image of an evangelicalism severed from all compromising entanglements with the State and the world of aristocratic patronage, set apart from an encroaching world, rejecting the social accommodation of genteel Anglican Evangelicalism, and disavowing the compromises of 'moderate' Calvinism. The ridicule and hostility which they suffered only seemed to enhance their claim to Apostolic authority: had not the gospels always stressed that true saints of God would endure such tribulations? The Irish separatists --as we shall see in later chapters--exerted a powerful influence on later movements on the mainland.

The Western Schism

The Western Schism, as it was quickly labelled by its critics, has remained an obscure and unexplained footnote in the history of the Church of England ever since its outbreak in 1815.[1] Although episodic clerical secessions from the Church had occurred amongst Evangelicals during the previous century, especially within Methodism, such disruptions were surprisingly sporadic and inconsequential. When, therefore, a whole coterie of West Country Anglicans abandoned the Church in sensational fashion, they produced the most noteworthy schism of its kind for over a century.[2]

The label 'Western Schism' was ironically adapted from the great split experienced by the Catholic Church during the final years of the fourteenth century. Since the Nonjurors, mass clerical secessions from the English Church had been virtually unknown, and the notion of a conspiratorial band of believers coming together to propagate its new theological 'discoveries' and 'truths' at the expense of accepted Anglican doc-

[1]Some brief attempts to assemble the details of the Schism have been made. See S. Baring-Gould, The Church Revival (London, 1914), p. 95ff; Alan Brockett, Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875 (Manchester, 1962), p. 162ff; L. Pamela Fox, 'The Work of the Reverend Thomas Tregenna Biddulph With Special Reference to His Influence on the Evangelical Movement in the West of England,' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1953), pp. 108-116; Charles Hole, A Manual of English Church History (London, 1910), p. 391ff; W.H.B. Proby, Annals of the 'Low Church' Party in England, Down to the Death of Archbishop Tait, 2 vols. (London, 1888), 1:292; Howard V. Young, Jr., 'The Evangelical Clergy in the Church of England, 1790-1850' (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1958), p. 92f; W.J.C. Ervine, 'Doctrine and Diplomacy: Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797-1837' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1979), pp. 70-72.

[2]Charles Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (Cambridge, 1940), p. 254.

trines and traditions, and even to advocate the disestablishment of the National Church, was new and startling. Consequently, the notoriety and publicity which accompanied the Schism prefigured, on a much smaller scale, that aroused by the Tractarian secessions which followed some thirty years later.[3]

Despite fears that the Schism would produce a wave of Evangelical secessions throughout England and Ireland, its influence was largely confined to the counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire and Somerset. It involved a comparatively small group bound together by close ties of friendship, kinship and ideology. Its reverberations were also circumscribed by the extremism--and inconsistency--of the principles of its leaders, and by their reluctance to advertise their views or engage in public debate. The swift and severe denunciation handed out by its critics also may have played a role in limiting its effects on the evangelical public. Public condemnation indeed was so vehement and effective that it not only gave the Schism dangerous publicity, but, in some ways, proved more significant than the Schism itself, reflecting the anxiety of most Evangelical clergymen over the manner in which the Schism had strained relations with their fellow Anglicans.

It was this anxiety which resulted in the Evangelicals--and not the liberals, or the High Churchmen--becoming the chief critics of the Schism.[4] At first glance, this may appear surprising, for the seceders

[3]See James J. Evans, Memoir and Remains of the Rev. James Harington Evans (London, 1852), p. 32.
[4]Young, p. 94.

had exceptionally good Evangelical credentials and party contacts. Such points in their favour, however, were soon offset as other 'gospel clergymen' became disillusioned by the secceders' antinomian leanings which, they realized, could be used to tar every advocate of 'serious religion' with the same disreputable brush. Not for the first time, Evangelicals therefore found themselves compelled to defend their Anglican orthodoxy on two different fronts, simultaneously asserting their claims to be 'true Churchmen'--the true inheritors of the English Reformation--against liberals and High Churchmen, whilst also attempting to prevent exaggerations of the 'doctrines of grace' by their high Calvinist brethren, those 'ultra-Evangelicals,' as Charles Simeon referred to them, whose extremism threatened to bring the entire party into disrepute.

The high predestinarianism among the Western secceders also seemed to substantiate, in embarrassing fashion, some of the most repetitious charges which had long been levelled against the Evangelical party: that its doctrines were incipiently antinomian; that it encouraged predestinarian fatalism; and above all, that it was potentially schismatic, and that Evangelical clergymen were in reality 'Dissenters in the Church,' whose loyalty to the national Establishment was lukewarm and suspect. The significance of the Schism, therefore, lay less in the secession of a handful of little-known clergy and lay people from the Church of England, and more in the damage which it inflicted on Evangelical claims to represent Anglican orthodoxy, and

in the pattern it set for further outbreaks of theological extremism. For this reason it was a significant episode during an uneasy period in Anglican history.

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The Western Schism arrived at an awkward time. In the early 1800s, Evangelicals had begun to assert their Anglican credentials with increasing success and to gain increased acceptance for their claims to be a legitimate, respectable and--despite their proselytizing energy--doctrinally moderate element within the Church. Its clergy were now overwhelmingly 'regular' in their attitudes to Church order; there were now virtually no 'irregulars' like Wesley or Whitefield, while the 'half-regulars' like Rowland Hill, who combined a settled ministry with occasional field-preaching and appearances in Dissenting chapels, were becoming increasingly scarce. Evangelicals--such as those of the dominant '*Christian Observer* school'--were eager to proclaim their loyalty to the Canons and rubrics of the Established Church. Furthermore, the doctrine of the Evangelical clergy was by now overwhelmingly 'moderate' in its Calvinism; mildly predestinarian, eclectic and practical, and careful to avoid what had become known as the 'rigours of Calvinism,' such as two-fold predestination. Biblical commentators like Thomas Scott had stressed the need for the pursuit of holiness and growth in grace in the life of the Christian, and rebutted the antinomian tendencies of high Calvinism. The historian Joseph Milner had, with some success, given the Evangelicals a respectable pedigree to be

traced back not only to the Reformation, but through the Augustinian tradition of the Middle Ages back to the early Fathers.[5]

Through the patient labours of these Evangelical apologists, the party sought to establish its Anglican credentials and to attract to its ranks respectable middle class and aristocratic sympathizers who had formally been alienated by the disorderliness of the Methodists. The Western Schism threatened this new-found respectability. It revealed to the world--and especially to the 'gospel world'--that the Evangelicals' much-touted attachment to the principles of the Established Church often concealed strong doubts about particular aspects of the Anglican system.

While Simeon and many others had extolled the Prayer Book, there remained, as we have seen, certain 'Popish' survivals in its formulae--such as the baptismal and burial rubrics--which most Evangelicals preferred to ignore. "There are few enlightened ministers in the Establishment," claimed one of the seceders, "who have not, at some period or other, found their consciences wounded, from the use of that form of service prescribed for the public baptism of infants."[6] It was to these inconsistencies that the seceders now drew embarrassing attention. Meanwhile, the publicity

[5]Joseph Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, 6 vols. (York and Cambridge, 1794-1809). See J.D. Walsh, 'Joseph Milner's Evangelical Church History,' J.E.H., 1959, pp. 174-187.

[6]Thomas C. Cowan, A Brief Account of the Reasons Which Have Induced the Rev. T.C. Cowan to Secede From the Established Church, 2nd ed. (Bristol, 1817), p. 31. For a response see A Layman, The Church of England Vindicated (Exeter, 1818).

given to the handful of high, or hyper-Calvinists in the Western Schism brought into high relief those aspects of predestinarianism which most Evangelicals had been at pains to avoid.

Thus, the extremism of the Western Schism provided the spectacle of a group of Evangelicals who were not content with moderation, compromise and the acceptance of paradox, but instead wished to push their Reformed theology to unpalatable extremities. By 1815 the Evangelical party had become accustomed to frontal attacks by liberals and High Churchmen, to which they had learned to respond on the whole with dignity and moderation, if not silence, but it was an altogether different matter to keep quiet when they saw their own doctrines of grace being perverted and exaggerated by unbalanced and well-connected Evangelicals, who seemed expert at attracting publicity to their cause.

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Some confusion exists as to where the Schism actually began. One account places it in Bristol,[7] one in Somerset,[8] and two in Hampshire.[9] In any case, the catalyst which initiated the Schism appears to have been the removal of a Mrs. Harriet Wall from London to Lymington, Hampshire.[10] Like Irvingism and Brethrenism some two decades later, the Western Schism was based on the religious eccentricities of wealthy and well-connected lay Evangelicals in alliance with a small band

[7]Hole, p. 396.
[8]Fox, p. 109.
[9]Baring-Gould, p. 95f; Richard Warner, Considerations on the Doctrines of the Evangelical Clergy (Bath, 1817), p. 60.
[10]Baring-Gould, p. 95.

of like-minded clergymen who served under their patronage in nearby parishes. The network which held the Schism together in some kind of tenuous collective existence was the kinship of the Baring family, a family of merchants, East India Company directors, and bankers. The prime mover, as far as can be ascertained, was Mrs. Wall--eldest daughter of Sir Francis Baring, M.P., Chairman of the East India Company and founder of the Baring banking house, who was described by Lord Erskine as "the first merchant of Europe."[11]

Mrs. Wall was the widow of a partner in the Baring Bank and, after her husband's death, she settled at Lymington to be near her brother, Sir Thomas Baring, of Stratton,[12] and her son. Zealous in her recently acquired Calvinist faith, she set about converting her rural circle. She enjoyed some success in this work, drawing into her coterie Sir Thomas Baring and his wife; the Hon. and Rev. George Baring, curate of Durston, Somerset (where he was the protege of the non-resident Evangelical, T.T. Biddulph); and her two younger sisters, Mrs. Kemp and Mrs. Story. According to the diarist, John Louis Mallet, who had married into the Baring tribe, these two sisters induced their husbands to abandon their property and become Evangelical cler-

[11] D.N.B.

[12] (1772-1848). 2nd Baron Northbrook, MP for Wycombe, 1806-1832, and Hampshire, 1832, he was the eldest son of the founder of the Baring Bank. He was also the father of Charles Thomas Baring, the controversial Evangelical Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol and Durham, and a member of at least 47 Evangelical voluntary societies. See Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 88, 357.

gymen.[13] Mr. Kemp, Lord of the Manor of a large part of Brighton, then built a chapel there from his own resources in which he officiated as a Nonconformist minister.

Together with James Harington Evans,[14] a nearby curate at Milford--described as a man of "education and talent," but possessing "peculiar views"[15]--they started a small sect of their own.[16] In this, they were soon joined by Thomas Snow--another banker's son, who had briefly been an actor and was now a neighbouring incumbent at Micheldever;[17] George Bevan, who served,

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[13]Mallet was the son of Mallet du Pan, and the husband of Lucy Baring. Excerpts from his unpublished diary are quoted at length in Baring-Gould (p. 95ff), and serve as the basis for the latter's comments on the Schism.

[14]Evans (1785-1849) was the son of James Evans, Vicar of St. Thomas', Salisbury. He matriculated at Wadham College, Oxford, 20 June 1799 (at age 14) and graduated B.A. in 1803 and M.A. in 1808. See Al. Ox., 2:434. He was described by by Hole as "the scholar of the party" (p. 391). For an obituary of Evans, see B.M., January 1850, p. 36ff

[15]Baring-Gould, p. 96.

[16]See E.H. Broadbent, The Pilgrim Church, 3rd ed. (London, 1945), p. 368f.

[17]Snow (1786-c.1865) of Langton House, Blandford, Dorset, was educated at Sherborne School, and Queens' College, Cambridge (matriculated 1810, B.A. 1814). He was ordained at Norwich in 1813, and, in the following year, as the result of his friendship with George Baring, was appointed as Vicar of Micheldever, Hampshire, a living under the patronage of Thomas Baring. See Al. Cant., 5:586.

perhaps, at the neighbouring parish of Stratton;[18] and Thomas Connolly Cowan, curate of St. Thomas', Bristol.[19] Another member of the group, later to achieve prominence as an architect of the Irvingite movement, was Henry Drummond, also a banker, and a character of considerable religious influence and volatility.

Once assembled, the group quickly began to make its presence felt locally. A hostile local clergyman claimed that at a nearby village the secederś' high Calvinism had divided the community and had undermined social order by its rigoristic separation of the elect from the reprobate. "*Family harmony* withered away," he noted; children began to look upon their parents "with pity and contempt, as not so far *advanced*, or deeply *experienced*, as themselves; sisters quarreled with sisters on points of 'knotty divinity,' and servants regarded their masters as 'mere babes' in grace; or rather, as not having any grace at all; groping in 'darkness visible' here, and condemned to 'utter darkness' hereafter."[20]

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[18]Bevan (1782-1819) of Fosbury, Wiltshire, was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge (matriculated 1809, B.A. 1813), and admitted at Lincoln's Inn on 21 January 1805. He subsequently was ordained in the Church; however, no record has been located as to where he served prior to the outbreak of the Schism. See Al. Cant., 1:253; The Records of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn, 2 vols. (London, 1896), 2:20; Burke's Landed Gentry, 3 vols., 18th ed. (London, 1965), 1:59. Baring-Gould (p. 96) claims Bevan was minister at Micheldever and Snow at Stratton; however, this conflicts with Al. Cant., which claims that Snow was vicar of Micheldever. Bevan, therefore, may have served at Stratton.

[19]Very little is known about Cowan's background. He matriculated at Trinity College, Dublin, 1793, and was made B.A. in 1798. See Al. Dub., p. 184.

[20]Warner, Considerations on the Doctrines, p. 60f.

When the non-resident incumbent first received word of this situation he returned unannounced on the following Sunday intending to preach, only to find that Evans, his curate, had arranged to have a clerical ally of similar views officiate on that particular day. Evans then pleaded with the vicar to yield to his friend who had come expressly to preach and was expected by the congregation; however, this was refused, upon which Evans' unidentified friend immediately made his way to the church porch, where he loudly announced: "Ye who are inclined to remain in darkness continue in the Church, but you who wish to *hear the gospel*, follow me." The church then emptied. The vicar preached to nearly naked walls, while his rival addressed a large crowd in the nearby fields.[21]

The movement then began to spread outwards. A contemporary account described dramatically how the preaching of one of the seceders in an unnamed West Country town alienated (by his high Calvinism and his antinomian teaching) the inhabitants, first from their own teachers and later from religion altogether:

> By exalting *faith* and decrying *works*, as all emanating from the *law*, with which Christians...had nothing to do, he produced a complete revolution in the place. This success he acquired by his appeal to the corrupt passions, by telling his hearers that all who thought as he did, were decreed to eternal life; and that, being interested in the decrees, the fluctuation of frames and feelings, sins and frailties, however great, could not, in the least, counteract designs which were settled from all eternity...God was not constrained by merit, nor restrained by demerit,...[and that] sin could not hurt them.[22]

[21] Ibid., p. 61f.

[22] Joseph Cottle, Strictures on the Plymouth Antinomians, 2nd ed. (London, 1824), p. 31. This was first published in 1823.

When a notorious drunkard heard these doctrines being advanced, he at once exclaimed: "this is the preaching for me!" The effect of this heretical message, however, was weakened when the preacher suddenly disavowed his recent errors and promised henceforth to promote "the true sentiments of the Bible" to counteract his recent heresy.[23] If perhaps exaggerated, this account highlights the volatility which was to characterize the Schism throughout its brief course.

Back at Stratton, Sir Thomas Baring regularly hosted the newly formed party in his luxurious house. It was here in these early days that the young converts travelled to discuss, debate and settle their new theological discoveries, in an atmosphere in which "vital Christianity could be combined with the refinements of creature comforts and attendance."[24]

If male patronage made the Schism possible, it was inspired and driven forward--at least according to public perception--largely by female religious zeal, a factor which rendered it even more suspect in the eyes of many patriarchally-minded Evangelicals. At Stratton, Mrs. Wall, who was described as having a "dexterous intelligence" and a "cool temperament," and being much given to doctrinal novelties, was believed to possess "a real superiority over the heated brains and crude notions of her disciples."[25] As the *Christian Observer* noted drily, "*women* have been foremost in embracing and organizing this lamentable defection from

[23] Ibid., p. 32.
[24] Baring-Gould, p. 96.
[25] Loc. cit.

received principles," as one might expect from a sex which lacked the steady judgment and "cool, discriminating, and enlarged view of things" characteristic of masculinity. It was these 'honourable women,' suggested one observer, who, like Eve, had blindly led their menfolk astray.[26]

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Soon after the seceders began meeting as a group at Stratton about 1814, their attachment to the Established Church began to diminish, and alternatives, more congenial to their new--and rapidly changing--doctrines, began to emerge. By the following year, the group's growing objection to various features of Anglican worship and teaching, and their rapid drift into doctrinal eccentricity, led to their outright secession from the Church. Shortly thereafter, Baring invited Bevan, Snow, and Evans to reside at his home in Somerset, near Taunton, and the focus and energy of the movement now shifted west. In 1816, Baring purchased the Octagon Chapel in Middle Street, Taunton, from the Methodists and reopened it.[27] There he baptized Snow, Bevan, and several others by immersion.[28] He himself was then baptized, in the same fashion, by Bevan.[29] In this old Nonconformist stronghold, in which Baring described his congregation as 'Trinitarian and Particular Baptists,' the seceders' high Calvinism proved palata-

[26]C.O., 1819, p. 33.
[27]Bristol Gazette, 25 April 1816.
[28]Ibid., 30 May 1816.
[29]Ibid., 27 June 1816.

ble to a number of the local inhabitants and attracted large congregations.[30]

The Taunton phase, however, did not last long in its united form, and the *quadrumvirate* soon split up. Toward the end of 1816 a new phase of the Schism emerged as Evans moved to London[31] and Snow migrated to Cheltenham, while Baring and Bevan remained at the Octagon Chapel, where they propagated their new doctrines and itinerated in the surrounding countryside. Not to be outdone, Mrs. Baring also preached, and went about with her harp into the local cottages, where the country-folk went opened-eyed and mouthed to catch a glimpse at the so-called, "wonderful lady."[32] In 1817, Baring handed over his responsibilities at the Octagon Chapel to John Mason, a former servant of Mrs. Wall and a talented lay preacher. Baring then moved to Exeter--another Dissenting stronghold--where he built a new chapel for the promulgation of his tenets.[33]

This rapid fragmentation of the group's original leadership revealed its effervescence and restlessness. To the outside world, however, their dispersal may have suggested that something approaching a missionary campaign was now in progress, and that the Schism was being deliberately exported to new centres where its doc-

[30]Brockett, p. 165.
[31]Fox, p. 110.
[32]Jane Miriam Crane, Records of the Life of the Rev. Wm. H. Havergal, M.A., 2nd ed. (London, 1882), p. 14.
[33]Bristol Gazette, 4 February 1819.

trines could spread and infect unsuspecting believers.

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J.H. Evans was not only the most influential figure to emerge from the Schism, but also provided the most information about his own--and perhaps the group's --reasons for seceding from the Church.[34] Doubts over the propriety of a national religious establishment had begun to dominate his thinking by the early months of 1815. These uncertainties quickly came to the notice of his superior, the non-Evangelical rector of Milford, who, in the spring of that year, gave Evans a six-month notice to abandon his position. During the following months, however, Evans decided not to look for another position within the Establishment, but to secede from it altogether, a decision that came as a great setback to his family. He had been brought to this conclusion primarily as the result of three long-standing and familiar objections to the Church: its baptism of infants, its civil connection, and its absence of discipline.[35]

After arriving at Walford House, Baring's Taunton residence, and being baptized, Evans began a preaching ministry in the neighbouring towns and villages, deepening the relationship with his fellow seceders and developing plans for their collective future, for, as one account claimed, the schismatics had seceded upon "the impulse of conscience, without having any predetermined

[34]Much of this information is available in the memoirs published by his son, J.J. Evans.

[35]Ibid., p. 31f. See also A Brief Account of the Rev. J.H. Evans, M. A., in James H. Evans, Three Funeral Sermons (London, 1850) p. 2.

mode of operation." With the encouragement and financial backing of Mrs. Wall, Evans returned to London in December 1816.[36]

Although he developed no formal theological system, he did maintain certain theological views which were derived from the fruit of his personal spirituality.[37] These are best described in a letter dated December 2nd of that same year. Here, perhaps differing from some other Western schismatics, he denied advancing high Calvinistic principles. It was untrue, he argued, that to be a Calvinist was important. Far from it. He desired not to seek after Calvin, but the One Calvin followed.[38] Such claims to be following the dictates of Scripture, rather than those contained within the *Institutes*, reveal little about Evans' actual views, for it was a common plea in the defensive apologetic of high Calvinists who saw their creed as hewn from the rock of Scripture and not derived from human authority. Whatever his views on predestination, Evans certainly placed himself in even deeper water by making a number of unorthodox pronouncements on the nature of the Trinity.

Early in 1818 Evans claimed in a volume of *Dialogues*, that there was not one, but "three divine persons in the one true God." Later that same year, while accepting that there was "one God, [and] one mediator between God and man,"[39] he also stated his conviction

[36]Ibid., p. 34f.
[37]Ervine, p. 71.
[38]Ibid., p. 36f.
[39]James H. Evans, A Series of Dialogues on Important Subjects (London, 1819), p. 4.

that the origin of Christ's human nature was not coeval with that of man, but *prior* to it. Jesus, he argued, could not have been the *son of man*, as begotten in the day *man was created*, but merely a son of woman.[40] Such a view was short-lived, however, for by 1823 he had adopted a more or less orthodox view on the vexed question of the Trinity.[41] Having repented of his earlier cavalier opinions, he dismissed his earlier *Dialogues* as "subversive of the real deity of the son of God," and admitted that while under the wayward influence of the Schism he had even opposed the idea "that Jesus the man was God [created] by the indwelling of the Father."[42]

For the remainder of his life, Evans continued within the ranks of orthodox Nonconformity. In 1818, Henry Drummond became his new patron and built a Dissenting chapel for him in John Street, Holborn.[43] Their relationship continued until the late 1820s, when Drummond fell under the influence of Edward Irving and became a founder of his new movement. Evans quickly dismissed Irvingism as a new and dangerous "heresy,"[44] thus permanently rupturing his relationship with Drummond. He carried on with his ministry at John Street,

[40]John Overton, The Books of Genesis and Daniel Defended (London, 1820), p. 218.

[41]Letter, dated 22 April 1823, from Evans to the editor of the New Evangelical Magazine, May 1823, p. 145.

[42]James H. Evans, Letters to a Friend (London, 1826), pp. 15, 28.

[43]This was known as John Street chapel. It affiliated with the General Baptists and, in 1849, became the spiritual home of Baptist Noel after his secession from the Church.

[44]J.J. Evans, p. 96f. He also characterized the doctrines of John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren as "contrary to the spirit of Christ." See p. 97.

however, and, in later life, achieved a solid reputation within General Baptist circles.

Despite Evans' secession and his later prominence as a Nonconformist, his son, James Joyce Evans, was ordained into the Anglican ministry in 1842.[45] Evans, by now cured of the reckless sectarianism which dominated the Western seceders, responded to his son's decision with magnanimity and charity:

> The Lord knows with what joy of soul...I should behold you a...minister of His gospel...Nor would the feeling that you are in a position from which, with the most deliberate conviction of conscience, I have retired...destroy the reality of this joy.[46]

In 1847, Evans retired from John Street chapel. In the following year, he played an influential role in the decision of his friend and neighbour, the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, to secede from the Established Church. In the midst of his deliberations, Noel received a letter from Evans which stated that although it had been thirty-three years since he had been led to take a similar step, he had "never seen cause to regret it for five seconds," and was assured that he never would.[47]

When Evans died in late 1849, he was buried in Highgate cemetery, with over four-hundred members of his congregation in attendance.[48] Three years later, the *Christian Observer*, paying the warmest compliment possible to a Dissenter, wrote that Evans (in a phrase coined earlier by Dr. Johnson to describe Isaac Watts)

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[45] Al. Cant., 2:435.
[46] Letter from Evans to his son, 21 August 1842. Quoted in J.J. Evans, p. 255.
[47] Ibid., p. 390.
[48] B.M., 1850, p. 36.

was to be admired "in almost everything 'except his Nonconformity.'"[49]

George Bevan also left a considerable corpus of information about his role in the Schism. In 1817, he and George Baring abandoned their ministry at the Octagon chapel in Taunton, and in the following year he too, like Evans, published unorthodox views on the doctrine of the Trinity.[50] In a work based on M'Clean's tract on the sonship of Christ[51] and Gill's *Body of Divinity*,[52] he denied that the Father was *"the Godhead,"* that Jesus was "his begotten son," and that the existence of the Holy Spirit could be proven in Scripture.[53] It claimed also that his recent secession was partly based upon an unwillingness to subscribe to a doctrine which was "degrading to Christ;" for although the Anglican formularies claimed that Christ was equal to the Father, they demeaned him at the same time by claiming that he had been "derived *from* the Father."[54]

In 1819, the year of his death, Bevan published a defence of his new doctrines.[55] At the heart of his *apologia* was the desire to defend himself from a slanderous accusation by distancing himself from some words

[49]C.O., 1852, p. 790.

[50]George Bevan, [Anon.], God in Christ, in Two Letters (London, 1818). For a response see Anon., Human Deity Developed or, Familiar Remarks on a Pamphlet Entitled 'God in Christ' (London, 1818).

[51]M'Clean (1733-1812) was a well-known Baptist minister at Edinburgh. See The Works of Archibald M'Clean, ed. by W. Jones, 6 vols. (London, 1823).

[52]John Gill, A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, 3 vols. (London, 1769-70). Gill (1697-1771) was a popular Baptist minister at Horsley Down, Southwark.

[53]Bevan, God in Christ, letter 1, p. 1.

[54]Ibid., Letter 2, p. 41.

[55]George Bevan, A Ready Reply to a Pamphlet Entitled 'Human Deity Developed or, Familiar Remarks on a Pamphlet Entitled God in Christ' (London, 1819).

which had recently been ascribed to him in the religious press: "Believe in the common translation of the Bible, and believe a thousand errors." It was untrue, he claimed, that he had ever uttered such words; the story had only arisen "from misapprehension." Unfortunately, Bevan's rebuttal did little to redeem his tarnished reputation, especially in light of his continued advocacy of a highly unorthodox Trinitarian doctrine.[56]

In April of that year, the *Christian Observer* announced that it had received a letter from Bevan complaining that the journal had not "done justice to his sentiments" when it had suggested that he was a hyper-Calvinist and so virtually an antinomian. Bevan denied that he had ever preached, or held, the doctrine of imputed sanctification, or that of the eternal union of Christ and his Church (both typical marks of ultra-predestinarianism). Instead, he regarded the doctrine of practical sanctification to be both a command, and a duty.[57] He also denied that his secession had been influenced by the rational Dissenter (and alleged Unitarian) Michaijah Towgood,[58] by the Church's practice of communion, or by its teachings on authority, but was instead occasioned by his doubts about subscription.[59] He now admitted that he could not conscientiously affirm the Scriptural consistency of the Prayer Book, in

[56] Ibid., pp. 1, 9ff.
[57] C.O., 1819, p. 271.
[58] Michaijah Towgood (1700-1792) the noted Dissenting minister, was best known for his work, the Dissenting Gentleman's Letters, published in 1746-1748, a classic compendium of Nonconformist arguments.
[59] C.O., 1819, p. 271.

particular, the form of absolution in the visitation of the sick and the baptismal service, both of which appeared to be opposed to Scripture. Above all else, he objected to the notion of Royal Supremacy. "He appears," commented the *Christian Observer*, "to have abandoned the Church because his conscience would not allow him to subscribe to an Article which only affirms that ecclesiastics should, equally with others, be subject in *all causes*...to the laws of the realm, as administered by its civil governor, and not to any foreign jurisdiction."[60]

After this account, Bevan published no further works, and, unlike many of his fellow secederers, it appears that he made no attempt either to rejoin the Established Church, or to affiliate with one of the mainline Nonconformist bodies. Sadly, no record survives of his final days. He died on December 12, 1819, at Hampstead,[61] presumably still adhering to the beliefs which had led to his secession.

The spiritual odysseys of other members of the Schism are less clear. Mrs. Wall continued to hold to her high Calvinist teachings, always anxious to promote the teachings of 'personal religion' among the English aristocracy. Eventually, after the fragmentation of the Schism, her theological wanderings and her interest in the "novelties of doctrine," led her, together with Henry Drummond, to fall under the spell of Edward Irving.[62]

[60] Ibid., p. 272.
[61] Al. Cant., 1:253.
[62] Baring-Gould, p. 97.

In May 1817, George Baring preached at Salisbury to an audience so large that many were forced to use ladders to climb into the building through the windows. The extent of his high Calvinism is suggested by one anonymous account, which complained that he preached and prayed for the elect only and, in so doing, gave "great pain to the sober and humble minded," for his message seemed "destitute of Christian modesty and charity." The account went on plausibly to claim that the seceders drew their support only from the restless and discontented in the religious world--"those who are tossed about with every wind of doctrine"--and had little or no appeal to the "established believer."[63]

Another contemporary critic, William Henry Havergal, Baring's successor as curate at Durston, claimed that he "has espoused a modification of the Sabellian heresy." Havergal claimed to have "positive evidence" that Baring held that the Holy Spirit was not a party to the covenant of redemption, a conclusion which virtually denied the Divinity of the Eternal Spirit and was dangerously consistent with the theory of imputed sanctification that characterized hyper-Calvinism.[64]

During the summer of 1817, George Baring migrated from Taunton to Exeter, where he constructed a substan-

[63]From a letter from an anonymous clergyman to the Rev. J. Randall, dated 2 May 1817; contained in Charles Hole, The Life of William Whitmarsh Phelps, 2 vols. (London, 1871), 1:139.

[64]Letter from Havergal to Henry V. Tebbs, n.d., in Crane, p. 17.

tial Regency chapel in Bartholomew Street.[65] Here he achieved rapid popularity,[66] and his views became more apparent as he adopted many Baptist principles. These included, besides believers' baptism by immersion, the election of ministers, deacons and other office holders drawn entirely from the baptized members of the congregation, with no unbaptized person being eligible to serve in any manner.[67]

Baring, however, had not yet come to rest, and he soon moved on. In March, 1819, he left Exeter, and presented the charge at Bartholomew Street to John Mason, who was still serving where he had been left by Baring at the Octagon Chapel in Taunton. Mason was twenty-nine years old at the time, and his theological and doctrinal views closely resembled those of the seceders; eventually, however, he came to reject their high Calvinism. He then wrote to Baring offering to resign from the Chapel, but Baring, who was by then undergoing his own theological transformation, declined the offer and Mason remained at Exeter until his death in 1835. Baring himself eventually returned to the ministry of the Established Church.[68]

While Thomas Snow remained at Taunton, he seems to have propagated a decided doctrine of separatism, simi-

[65]Brockett, p. 165. The chapel, which cost £4,000 and was paid for mostly out of Baring's private resources, was opened on 16 August 1818. In order to avoid any future difficulties and doctrinal disputes, Baring retained ownership of the chapel in his own name, thus insuring his continued control over it.

[66]Baring-Gould, p. 96.

[67]Taken from the Church Minute Book now located in the Exeter Public Records Office. Quoted in Brockett, p. 165.

[68]Ibid., pp. 166, 96f.

lar to that advanced earlier by the Glasites and now being taught by his contemporaries, the Walkerites. Claiming that it was unscriptural for true Christians to unite with unbelievers in any act of worship, he was therefore willing to preach to the unconverted, but would only unite in full worship and fellowship with his own congregation.[69] Havergal reported that, in contrast to his fellow secederes, Snow was at least free of unorthodox speculations on the Trinity.[70] Before long, however, he abandoned the work at Taunton and, under the patronage of Mrs. Wall, migrated to Cheltenham, where he established a Dissenting chapel on Grosvenor Street.[71] In 1818, he broke into print in response to an attack on the Schism by John Simons[72] (a well-known Evangelical and a former mentor), by publishing a defence of the schismatics.[73]

Simons, Rector of St. Paul's, Cray, Kent, who had seen something of these events at close quarters, attacked the seceders' volatility and doctrinal incoherence. Their principles seemed to him vague and characteristically indeterminate: they had produced "no articles of their creed, nor any document or definition of doctrine whatever by which what they hold might be dis-

[69] Letter from William Henry Havergal to his mother, 1818, in Crane, p. 17. In 1819, the C.O. (p. 37), claimed that one of the seceders "has lately 'restrained prayer' in public, except only with the approved members of a carefully selected and small community." The separatists tendencies are here evident.

[70] Crane, p. 17f.

[71] Steven T. Blake, Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels, A.D. 733-1883 (Cheltenham, 1979), p. 9f.

[72] John Simons, A Letter to a Highly Respected Friend (London, 1818). See Al. Cant., 5:512.

[73] Thomas Snow, A Reply to a Letter written by the Rev. John Simons (London, 1818).

tinctly known." Their theology was mixed with "wild fancies and false unscriptural reasonings," some of which had been derived from the earlier heresies of Hutchinson and Dr. Crisp.[74] Snow emphatically denied these charges, claiming that Simons had "twisted" many of their doctrines. He dismissed the allegation of 'imputed sanctification' as "absolute nonsense," and, while describing the doctrine of the union between Christ and his Church as "vital," he claimed that he could not believe, as did some of the seceders, in the "absurd" notion of "an *actual union from eternity between Christ and his Church.*"[75]

By 1826, Snow had changed his position to a considerable extent and had issued an *apologia* for his earlier behaviour which sheds some retrospective light on the original Schism. He admitted that his secession was based upon "some ill-founded objections against infant baptism," and blamed these erroneous beliefs on the influence of a curate at Micheldever (whose identity is difficult to ascertain) who had insinuated them at a time when he was in "a state of distress" and highly vulnerable. His curate's objections to the Church had been carefully concealed prior to taking up his position, and had been all the more insidious because they only emerged over time. Although his objec-

[74]Simons, pp. iv, 67, 70. Tobias Crisp (1600-1643), third son of Ellis Crisp, the Sheriff of London, and an Anglican clergyman with Puritan leanings. He became an outspoken advocate of antinomianism in 1642, when he entered into a large public debate on the subject in London. Hutchinson was presumably John Hutchinson (1674-1737), the author of Moses' Principia, although this is uncertain.

[75]Thomas Snow, pp. 1, 41, 5, p. 66.

tions extended only to the Church's baptismal service, he came to believe that it would be disingenuous to continue within a communion which did not completely accord with his own peculiar doctrines.[76]

Snow was at pains to explain that his secession was the result of conscientious scruples concerning his subscription to the Anglican formularies, rather than from a collision with any external authority. There had been no disagreement with his ecclesiastical superiors, since he had only met with "favour and kindness" from his bishop; nor was his departure due to the blandishments of Dissenters, for he scarcely knew any. Indeed, he had possessed "every comfort" in his situation, and seceded only upon "the force of conscience, pressed upon by an erroneous apprehension on the subject of baptism and a consideration of the necessity of maintaining my integrity with the Judge of All." He was, furthermore, highly critical of the repeated misrepresentations of the seceders' views in the press.[77]

Snow then petitioned John Kaye, the Bishop of Bristol, to re-instate him into the Anglican ministry, claiming that he had become thoroughly convinced that his separation "originated in a misconception" of which he now repented. After full correspondence on the question of re-admittance with the Bishop of Winchester--in whose diocese he served during the Schism--he deposited in his Lordship's hand "the confession of his

[76] Thomas Snow, Two Letters From the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Bristol, John Kaye, to the Rev. Thomas Snow and His Reply to Each (Blandford, 1826). Quoted in John Bull, 24 July 1826, p. 237.

[77] Loc. cit.

error."[78] After further negotiations, which included the publication of his confession at the insistence of Kaye, Snow was duly readmitted into the Anglican fold, where he served in various livings until his retirement in 1860.[79]

This re-conversion to the Established Church was unquestionably influenced by the professional and financial difficulties encountered by Snow in the years following the Schism. Unlike his fellow schismatics he had abandoned all forms of religious employment in order to become an actor at Covent Garden under the name of Hargrave. There, after an extended period of "endless uncertainties and confusion" in this precarious position, the possibility of returning with his family to the Establishment, as a "quiet resting-place," gained increasing attractiveness.[80] Reinstatement allowed Snow to atone for his earlier errors, though these surely overshadowed his ministerial work for the remainder of his career.

After the outbreak of the Schism, Thomas Cowan remained in Bristol and, for the time being, attempted to continue within the ministry of the Established Church. In July 1817, however, his ministerial licence was suspended by the Bishop of Bristol as the result of undis-

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[78] Loc. cit.

[79] In 1833, Snow became Rector of Sutton-Waldron, Dorset. In the following year, he became Rector of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, London, and, in 1842, Vicar of Newton Valence, Hampshire, where he served until his retirement in 1860. Ironically, St. Dunstan's-in-the-West was the Evangelical parish of Richard Lloyd at the time of the Schism. Lloyd (see below) became one of the chief opponents of the seceders with the publication of his tract in 1818. See Al. Cant., 5:586.

[80] John Bull, p. 237.

closed 'irregularities,' and he quickly seceded. Later that same year, he published a defence of his behaviour which revealed a familiar story. For a considerable time, he, too had been uneasy about the Church's catechism and baptismal service.[81] After struggling with his conscience for nearly two years, he had nearly determined some ten months previously to leave the Church, but, as he described it:

> Swayed by some arguments, more especially the idea of curtailing my usefulness, I bowed to the authority of names and the influence of friends, 'having confidence in the flesh.' Thus have I gone on, uneasy, and yet afraid to move--cordially disliking many things, and yet, *upon the whole*, preferring her *mode* to any I had yet seen.[82]

Matters were precipitated, however, in July, 1817, when William Lort Mansel, the Bishop of Bristol, received a formal letter of complaint from a High Churchman who had been shocked by the conduct of a 7 a.m. service at which Cowan had officiated at St. Thomas.[83] As a result of the rubrical 'irregularities' observed in the service--and detailed in the complaint--the Bishop suspended Cowan's licence to minister within the diocese. Five specific charges were levelled against him: that he had not commenced the service "according to the prescribed form;" that he had omitted the absolution; that he had changed the lessons and read only the psalm which had been appointed for the evening service; that he read a verse of the second lesson twice with "peculiar emphasis;" and, that he curtailed the

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[81] Cowan.
[82] Ibid., p. 7.
[83] William Lort Mansel (1753-1820). See Ibid., pp. 8, 11.

service by leaving out several of the prayers, the Litany, and communion.[84]

On July 3rd, Cowan produced a detailed response to the charges which he sent to Mansel.[85] He denied the first charge and admitted to the second, but countered that it had been an "unintentional omission" which had not occurred before in his eighteen years of service. He then allowed to the third charge, but claimed that it occurred only under extenuating circumstances; admitted to the forth and fifth, but claimed that communion was always omitted--and the Litany generally--in Cathedral worship, and that the only prayers which had been left out were those offered for Parliament, for he believed that it had then been adjourned. Regarding the extra prayers for the King and Prince Regent, these were omitted "without any scruple," because of the pressure of time and because they were constantly being read at the other two services.[86]

Cowan waited impatiently for a reply from Mansel, who was in semi-permanent residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, but none was forthcoming. On July 22nd, he wrote again, unwisely admonishing the Bishop for his silence and for his apparent unwillingness to reconsider the matter. He conceded that he had long maintained objections to the Establishment which now forced him to conclude that he must leave it altogether. While the baptismal service was his chief objection, he admitted that had long held other painful, though less serious,

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[84] Ibid., p. 8ff.
[85] Ibid., p. 12ff.
[86] Ibid., p. 8f.

scruples including the "unscriptural" connection between Church and State. Somewhat contumaciously he then informed Mansel that his Lordship had now shown, through his silence, that the Establishment was as unscriptural in its practice as it was in its rubrics.[87]

Like many seceders before and after him, Cowan expressed dismay at the Church's unwillingness to exert discipline. This was notoriously evident in its admission to the Lord's Supper of the worldly, the thoughtless, the impious, and the pharisaic, and was equally evidenced in its indiscriminate use of the burial service, which, he now admitted, had occasionally led him to omit sections of the rubric when officiating over the remains of unbelievers.[88]

After his secession, Cowan exhibited no desire to affiliate with another religious denomination for the time being; however, on November 26, 1817, he was baptized by immersion by George Baring at Pithay Baptist Meeting,[89] and in 1819, acquired Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, an independent Baptist establishment which was later to experience some notoriety under the ministry of George Muller and Henry Craik, two of the early and most influential leaders of the Plymouth Brethren.[90]

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The ideological origins of the Western Schism are difficult to determine, primarily because of the seceders' frequent reluctance to publish full details of

[87] Ibid., p. 21.
[88] Ibid., pp. 24, 30.
[89] Fox, p. 110f.
[90] Bristol Mirror, 17 February 1838.

their views or to engage in theological debate. Unlike later movements, it does not seem to have been set in motion by the millennial expectations of the Napoleonic wars, and the absence of an apocalyptic dimension distinguishes it to some extent from the Irvingites, to which some of its leading members subsequently adhered.[91]

Unquestionably, one trigger mechanism was the sharp controversy over the doctrine of baptism launched by the High Church polemicist Richard Mant.[92] Mant's provocative Bampton Lectures in Oxford in 1812 brought the issue of baptismal regeneration into high salience and set off a debate which prefigured that over the Gorham case.[93] Mant had declared baptismal regeneration to be not only the "doctrine of the Bible," but also the doctrine of the Church of England, asserted in its formularies and taught by "the generality of the national clergy." He also rejected Evangelical ideas of conversion, asserting firmly that it was not by an act of conscience, but by the sprinkling of baptism that "we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and of the Holy Spirit."[94] This, he claimed, was

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[91]Proby, 1:293.

[92]See Ervine, p. 70f.

[93]Richard Mant, An Appeal to the Gospel (Oxford, 1812). Mant was Vicar of Coggeshall, Essex, at the time, and was made Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenoragh by Lord Liverpool in 1820. In 1823, he was translated to Down and Connor, where he remained until his death. In 1815, an extract of Mant's lectures was published, which included the most controversial portions of the work, including the sections on baptismal regeneration and spiritual conversion. See Richard Mant, Two Tracts (London, 1815). In 1817, a modified version of Mant's lectures appeared which admitted that Baptism had to be correctly received in order to be effective.

[94]Mant, An Appeal to the Gospel, p. 332f.

the doctrine of the Prayer Book, of Anglican teachers like the saintly Thomas Wilson, the early eighteenth-century Bishop of Sodor and Man, and of patristic tradition.[95] Mant also denounced the Calvinistic doctrine of election and predestination as being "irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and her Apostles."[96]

The reverberations of this proclamation were great, and several Evangelical champions sprang to the party's defence.[97] Thomas Biddulph, for one, forcefully argued that Mant's doctrine of baptismal regeneration was opposed to Scripture, to the Liturgy and Articles of the Church, and to the writings of the Marian Martyrs, the Reformers, and the greatest of the post-Reformation divines. Baptism was, he claimed, nothing more than "the outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace."[98] Another critic similarly dismissed Mant's claims as downright popery and "utterly at variance with with the doctrines of the Church of England." While admitting that divine efficacy did often accompany the outward and visible sign of baptism and was a vital part of the covenant relationship between God and his children, he nevertheless insisted that the

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[95]However, even Wilson, who was deeply admired by the Tractarians during the nineteenth century, could not bring himself to use the Burial rubric over a baptized parishioner who had died while intoxicated. See The Works Of The Right Reverend Father In God Thomas Wilson, ed. by C. Cruttwell, 2 vols. (Bath, 1781) 1:xli.

[96]Mant, An Appeal to the Gospel, p. 120.

[97]Including: John Scott, An Inquiry Into the Effects of Baptism (London, 1815); T.T. Biddulph, Baptism, A Seal of the Christian Covenant (London, 1816); H.C. O'Donnoghue, A Familiar and Practical Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the United Church of England and Ireland (London, 1816).

[98]T.T. Biddulph, Baptism, a Seal, Preface, p. 1.

saving, inward, and spiritual effects and grace of baptism were not universally granted but were only received, as the Article stated, by those "that receive baptism rightly." The sacrament was, therefore, "a means of grace which God has been pleased to honour to the conversion of souls to himself."[99] In spite of these and other Evangelical rejoinders to Mant's more extreme teachings, his claim to represent Anglican orthodoxy undoubtedly shook many Evangelicals--including the Western schismatics--and weakened the confidence with which some subscribed to the formularies and rubrics of the Church.

It was no doubt observed that Mant's Bampton Lectures brought him rapid preferment. In 1813, the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed him as his domestic chaplain, and, in 1820, he received an Irish bishopric. The *Christian Observer* complained that Mant's lectures, assiduously propagated by the Salop district Committee of the S.P.C.K. as an authoritative statement of Anglican teaching, had helped provoke the Schism.[100] They were certainly cited at some length by one of the chief seceders, Thomas Cowan, who accepted the force of Mant's claims, but not their truthfulness. "Dr. Mant and his coadjutors *have much to say for themselves*," he

[99]H.C. O'Donnoghue, A Familiar and Practical, p. 228ff

[100]The Salop District Committee of the S.P.C.K. was responsible for the publication of a work defending Mant and his claims. A request on behalf of the Committee to produce an extract of some nature was made to Mant by the Rev. Hugh Owen, of Shrewsbury, on 11 October 1813. The work eventually appeared under the title, Dr. Mant's Sermon on Regeneration Vindicated from the Remarks of T.T. Biddulph (Shrewsbury, 1816). See Walter-Bishop Mant, Memoirs of the Right Reverend Richard Mant (Dublin, 1857), p. 95.

conceded, being "argumentatively *right, but* theologically *wrong*."[101] Mant's arguments were clearly the catalysts, but not the reasons, which propelled Cowan and his fellow schismatics not into High Churchmanship, as Mant intended, but into secession from a Church which they believed retained far too many relics of its Popish past.

The negative side of the Schism is somewhat more easily ascertained than the positive. The *Christian Observer* took a strong stand against the seceders' ecclesiology and theology, and their instability. The only distinct principle behind the movement appeared to be "disaffection to the established religious order of this country." The high Calvinism of the seceders did not pass unnoticed and its connection to a separatist ecclesiology were hinted at. Among the "intolerant" principles of the schismatics were the notions that salvation comes through "a mere dead faith unproductive of works," that repentance is unnecessary, that divine grace is both "irresistible and indefectible," that election is "unconditional," that conversion is "instantaneous," and that sanctification is "imputed." These false teachings were "labouring to subvert the Establishment" with "malignant hostility."[102]

Much was understandably made of the fact that doctrinally the members of the Schism were often at odds with each other and changed their stance with bewildering speed. They seemed to epitomize the idea of private judgment carried to embarrassing and dangerous ex-

[101] Cowan, p. 21.
[102] C.O., 1819, p. 34.

tremes. Taken collectively, therefore, the Schism was seen not as an expression of the "Communion of Saints," but of "the individuality of Saints."[103] Indeed, one seceder was alleged to have told his flock not to expect that he would hold the same opinions in a month's time, for he was "continually advancing towards perfection."[104] Volatility and flux, therefore, characterized the theology of the secederes, whose views evolved rapidly, and then soon diverged again. They were, an Evangelical critic complained, "often as much separated from each other as from ourselves," rather like "a few frail and crazy barks launched forth into a boundless and tempestuous ocean, without rudder and compass."[105]

The secederes were, on the other hand, sometimes seen to be united in holding forms of ultra-Calvinism, or, rather, ultra-Predestinarianism. They allegedly carried their 'Calvinism' so far as to see the law in such a crude antithesis of the gospel that they were virtual antinomians, at least theoretically. These allegations, however, are not easily assessed for a variety of reasons. For one thing, the secederes published little, which made it hard to discover their true--and complete--tenets.[106] For another, besides being regularly in a state of individual mental flux, their views differed substantially one from another. Some were alleged to have abandoned baptism entirely, like the Quakers; others differed over the most Scriptural mode of its administration.

[103]Ibid., p. 36.
[104]Ibid. p. 37.
[105]Ibid., p. 31f.
[106]Simons, p. 28f.

Ingenuously, Cowan admitted in print that though his views on Baptism were close to those of the Particular Baptists around him in Bristol, he could not see his way to seeking believer's baptism at their hands, but would instead seek it from George Baring--even though he was in disagreement with *him* on one "highly important" point, and could not assent to become a member of his group.[107] Thomas Snow, when rebutting charges of antinomianism against the Western secederes in Bristol, was careful to state that the dangerous tenets which had been quoted, apparently verbatim, by his critic, "must have been furnished by persons whose ministry I have never habitually attended"--a disclaimer which suggests these opinions were changing fast, or that others in the circle may indeed have held such disturbing doctrines.[108]

There are strong signs of high Calvinism among some of the members of the group. Certainly Thomas Cowan ranked himself among the higher, rather than the lower, Calvinists when he came firmly to accept the idea of particular redemption--the notion that Christ's sacrifice was offered not for all, but only for the predestined elect--a tenet disavowed by moderate Calvinists who believed in what has been termed 'hypothetical universalism:' the idea that Christ's redeeming work potentially extended to all Christians. To hold otherwise, argued Cowan, was to allow that Christ acted in vain in shedding his blood uselessly for many who

[107] Cowan, p. 42f.
[108] Thomas Snow, A Reply to a Letter, p. 28.

were not included in the eternal covenant of grace, thus detracting from the sovereignty of God.

In Cowan's case, the disavowal of "general redemption" encouraged secession, for it seemed to him to be a doctrine plainly enunciated in the Anglican liturgy and in the Catechism, which both declared that Christ died "for all mankind." Furthermore, he found it offensive to celebrate Communion using the words of the rubric, which stated that "the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is shed for thee," when he administered to those who were apparently non-elect. At this point, Cowan's high Calvinism led on to separatism, for the corollary of his views pointed towards the idea that only the plainly regenerate should be allowed to partake of the sacrament--a view not sanctioned by the National Church by law established. Why, he asked, should believers and unbelievers be allowed promiscuously to attend the sacrament together? 'What God hath separated, let no man join together.'

Like others before and after him, Cowan also objected to the "indiscriminate use" of the burial service--parts of which he had long omitted in practice. He was prepared, if need be, to bury those not actively and visibly wicked, but not the thoroughly ungodly. He had the usual qualms about the baptismal rubric, with its implication that an infant was already being made 'regenerate' and brought in a real sense into the Covenant. For Cowan, infant baptism as administered by the Church of England was not Scriptural, but based on "*human tradition*, the *antiquity* of which could afford me

no satisfaction; as it still had only the authority of *man*, on which to rest."[109] He thus firmly rejected the appeal by Mant and others to Christian Antiquity. The corollary of the evangelical doctrine of conversion was adult baptism--believer's baptism, as practised by Baptists and others--which implied separation from the Establishment and its unscriptural liturgy. Here again, strong Calvinism, with its extremely sharp dichotomy between elect and reprobate, encouraged the separation of sheep from goats in ways not easily compatible with the pastoral universalism of a National Established Church, whose clergy assumed that they had an equal responsibility for all the members of a geographical parish.

The charge of antinomianism was frequently levelled at high (or hyper) Evangelical Calvinists, such as Robert Hawker (1753-1827) of Plymouth and his circle, who were a small, but much feared, element in the Evangelical ranks. The extent to which the Western seceders deserved the epithet is highly debatable. One of the most damning allegations of such teaching within the Schism was levelled by Joseph Cottle, who claimed that the perverted teaching of one schismatic, Arnold of Exeter, had convinced more than a hundred members a week to secede from a local parish. Arnold was said to have told his congregation:

> Good men preach the gospel sometimes, but then they preach that blasphemous doctrine of *sanctification*. I say that blasphemous doctrine of *sanctification*, and *repentance*, and *sorrow for sin*! What do they mean by sorrow for sin? Did not *Christ* feel sorrow for sin? What do *they* want

[109] Cowan, p. 32.

> with sorrow? There is no such thing in the Scriptures as Godly sorrow! And repentance--what do they mean by repentance? It never means sorrow for sin, but a turning from the *law* to the *gospel*! Do they mean to take the glory of Christ's sufferings from him? *Believe* and *rejoice* in all that we are called unto![110]

On the other hand, the *Christian Observer*, after scrutinizing the two publications of J.H. Evans, concluded that, on this showing, the charge of antinomianism was not proven, for they had not revealed "an absolute rejection of the practice of holiness."[111] Evans still regarded good works as evidence of saving grace and election into life, and Thomas Snow insisted that he believed the moral law to be "a rule of life."[112] However, his critic, John Simons, produced contrary evidence from the unpublished utterances of the seceders, which appeared to promote an ultra-Calvinist view of sanctification that encouraged speculative antinomianism by portraying not only Christ's righteousness but also his holiness as imputed to the elect. Like Hawker and other hyper-Calvinists, they denied that the believer was actually made more holy by a progressive work of sanctification in the heart. Any so-called 'good works' produced by the justified sinner were still held to be evil in God's sight, and to insist on their necessity was held to impugn the 'finished work' of Christ's atonement and detract from God's sovereign glory. Sins, even murder, committed by the elect, would not be held against them, for they were covered in the mantle of Christ's perfect holiness.

[110] Cottle, p. 41f.
[111] C.O., 1819, p. 39.
[112] Thomas Snow, A Reply to a Letter, p. 18f.

These charges were parried though not totally denied by Snow, who claimed that the law was written in the hearts of the elect, who would reject evil not because it was commanded by God, but freely and spontaneously out of a new principle of love to their Saviour. Other seceders many well have taken a more extreme position. In any case, there was more than enough here to alarm those moderate Evangelicals, who, like Thomas Scott, insisted on 'growth in grace' as the only true evidence of justification.[113]

The high Calvinist seceders were thus alarming because they pushed the accepted evangelical doctrines of grace to conclusions which could be argued on logic, but which were carefully avoided by the great mass of 'gospel clergymen'. The seceders were far less threatening on the question of the Trinity, where, as we have seen, some of them fell into what was apparently either Monarchianism, or Sabellianism:[114] in this they put themselves much more clearly out of court and were far more exposed to ridicule. The Trinitarian views of the Barings, for example, cut them off not only from the great mass of Anglicans, but even from many high Calvinist seceders, and served as a complicated diversion

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[113] See V.J. Charlesworth, Rowland Hill; His Life, Anecdotes and Pulpit Sayings (London, 1876), p. 62. Cf. Thomas Scott, A Treatise on Growth in Grace (London, 1795); John Scott, The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, (London, 1822), pp. 200-205.

[114] Sabellianism, or Patripassianism, is an alternative title for the Modalist form of Monarchianism, calling into question the integrity of Christ's body and thus verges towards Docetism.

from the primary theological case of the schismatics.

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The year 1819 was not a good time for clergymen to be seen undermining the established institutions of the nation. A recurrence of economic depression had produced alarming popular disturbances, including the 'massacre' at Peterloo, which provoked a massive counterattack by the forces of conservatism united behind the notorious Six Acts. Critics of the Western Schism, particularly Evangelicals, did not hesitate to set what was apparently a minor schism into an alarming context of nation-wide social dislocation.

Though the Schism had involved only a handful of clergymen, it excited a collective Evangelical response of great vigour and fury.[115] Leading figures of the party--including Charles Simeon, Hannah More, Henry Ryder, Daniel Wilson, William Marsh, and, of course, their organ, the *Christian Observer*--produced scathing attacks against the seceders which were much more acerbic than anything written by non-Evangelicals.

To Simeon, the Schism presented a grave threat to the promotion of 'vital religion.' In a letter to the Rev. T. Thompson in November 1815, he revealed his anxiety that "five pious young men," as he described the seceders, were "running into Huntington's and Dr. Hawker's principles," as well as leaving the Church.[116]

115 George Bugg, Spiritual Regeneration, Not Necessarily Connected With Baptism (Kettering, 1816); G. Notorious, Two Letters (London, 1816); T.T. Biddulph, Baptism, a Seal.

116 Quoted in William Carus, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A., 3rd ed. (London, 1848), p. 294.

Two years later, he lamented before the University that antinomian teachings "have been professed of late to a great extent; and many have been deceived by them." The seceders "are so occupied with contemplating what Christ has wrought out *for* them, that they cannot bestow a thought on what he has engaged *in* them."[117] In June 1830, the Archbishop of Tuam wrote asking for Simeon's counsel in regard to an eruption of antinomianism within his diocese.[118] Simeon responded by recalling the damaging effects of the Western seceders. These deluded individuals he wrote,

> ...under an idea of exalting Christ and His gospel, maintained doctrines altogether subversive of the gospel. In their own conduct indeed they were generally pretty correct,...but the scope of their tenets was to lull men asleep in sin: and such persons, if they possess a good measure of fluency and confidence, are sure to gain admirers and followers in every place. If they would listen to reason or Scripture, they might be easily made to see the erroneousness of their views: but they are deaf to counsel of any kind; nor will they regard authority: they even make the efforts of others to reclaim them an occasion of augmented zeal in propagating their errors.[119]

Hannah More regarded the Western Schism in much the same way. In her alarmist view, it was nothing less than a sign of the turbulent domestic currents of the day. She waxed eloquent against the seceders' restless search for "alarming novelties" and institutional change, dismissing them as "low, designing demagogues," "religious dogmatists," "factious assailants of the Church," and "adversaries of serious piety." In her conservative view, the Schism was a product of the

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[117] Charles Simeon, The True Test of Religion in the Soul (Cambridge, 1817), p. 18f.

[118] Letter of 25 June 1830, quoted in Ibid., p. 461ff

[119] Ibid., p. 464.

Jacobin spirit, founded on a form of "spiritual democracy" contemptuous of authority, impatient of subordination, and bent on dictatorship.[120] At the very least the seceders had dangerously divided Churchmen, causing much damage to the moral fabric of the nation:

> It has been the means of exciting a sort of spiritual vanity, of awakening a desire of departing from received opinions, in certain young persons ...It has increased the alienation of the lower orders from the Church; it has afforded to some who are not favourable to serious piety, a pretense for indiscriminately classifying together men of different views, character, and principles. Among the more respectable, it has stirred up a spirit of debate and controversy, by no means friendly to the cause of genuine Christianity.[121]

Might not the seceders' arguments, she warned, be used by infidels and radicals to provide the profane--those unfavourable to "serious piety"--with an excuse for rejecting spiritual overseers who did not suit their taste?[122]

Ecclesiological rebelliousness of this type seemed to be catching, and More feared that schismatic and antinomian teachings were no longer isolated within the West Country, but were beginning to appear in various provincial towns and villages throughout England.[123] Behind her anxiety, perhaps, lay knowledge of the much publicized progress of plebeian hyper-Calvinism among the followers of William Gadsby and, above all, William Huntington S.S. (Sinner Saved), which had shattered not only a number of moderate Calvinist Nonconformist con-

[120]Hannah More, Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners 2nd. ed. (London, 1819), pp. 179, 180f, 182, 144f. For a review see C.O., 1819, p. 668ff.

[121]More, p. 169f.

[122]Ibid., p. 170.

[123]Ibid., p. 171.

gregations, but also some Anglican ones, such as Thomas Robinson's at Leicester.[124] Through dissident high Calvinists like those of the Western Schism, it seemed possible that the contagion was about to spread inside the Church of England. Would not the "loose and careless" be confirmed in their impiety, she asked, when they saw their spiritual overseers not only deserting the altars of the Church, but also attacking her publicly, and setting up "a perpetual conflict" between Christian ministers? Plebeian Anglicans might well conclude that an Establishment which was so frequently assailed, which seemed in such need of continued vindication, and from which there were so many recent deserters, must be an "erroneous and unsound Church," with an uncertain, if not a false, Scriptural foundation.[125] As an exponent of 'practical piety' and simple 'heart religion,' she urged increased Christian charity and tolerance on all concerned. Rather than become overheated about small issues, religious people should focus their attention on those matters in which all 'vital' Christians were in agreement, and avert their gaze from any "inferior matters" which might not coincide with their own opinions.[126]

In 1815, Henry Ryder was appointed as the first Evangelical bishop to the See of Gloucester. Not surprisingly, given the proximity of the seceders, he was

[124] See Edward Thomas Vaughan, Some Account of the Reverend Thomas Robinson, M.A. (London, 1815), pp. 188-197; Peter Hall, A Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Robinson, M.A. (London, 1837), p. xxxvif.

[125] More, p. 178.

[126] Ibid., p. 189ff.

quick to join the chorus against the Schism.[127] In a farewell sermon before leaving his previous living, he characterized the disruption as an event of "no inconsiderable importance,"[128] and admonished his parishioners to adhere closely to the Church. On arriving in Gloucester he quickly denounced the Schism to his clergy as "one of the perversions" of which St. Paul had warned the early church,[129] and an "awful wresting of Scripture to the destruction of those who hear it."[130]

At much the same time, Daniel Wilson, the future Bishop of Calcutta, and one of the most influential Evangelicals of the period,[131] denounced the Schism as a "subversion" of the Church.[132] By 1818, however, he was far more cheerful, convinced that "the antinomian abomination" had spent itself, and that the debate surrounding it had actually imparted some lasting benefits upon the Church. Wilson was hopeful that the shock of the Schism had produced a tonic effect on the clergy and on the great Evangelical voluntary societies, producing a healthy upsurge of prayer meetings to call down a new spirit of revival in the nation. In both

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[127] Ryder was presented to the rectory of Lutterworth in 1801 and to the neighbouring parish of Claybrook in 1805. In 1812, he became Dean of Wells. Later, in 1824, he was translated to the see of Lichfield, where he remained until his death in 1836.

[128] Henry Ryder, A Farewell Sermon (Lutterworth, 1815), p. 18.

[129] Henry Ryder, Charge to the Clergy of Gloucester (Gloucester, 1816), p. 16.

[130] Ibid., p. 17.

[131] Wilson was first licensed to St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row in 1808 and remained there until 1824 when he was appointed as Vicar of St. Mary's, Islington. In 1832, he became the fifth Bishop of Calcutta.

[132] Quoted from a sermon by Wilson, c. 1818; cited in the Rev. Josiah Bateman, The Life of the Right Rev. Daniel Wilson, D.D., 2 vols. (London, 1860), 1:89.

London and Bristol, he remarked, "zealous efforts" were now being made to excite regard to the subject of 'vital faith.'[133] This may have been no more than rhetoric, though it is also probable that the Schism stabilized Evangelicalism by revealing in a lurid light the dangers of hyper-Calvinism and separatism. The whole episode could be used as an object lesson in the perils of extremism.

Not all prominent Evangelicals, however, took such a firm stance against the schismatics. William Marsh, who was both an ally of Simeon and a friend of Sir Thomas Baring, was one of the few Evangelical leaders to have been taken in by the Schism.[134] As late as January 1817, he responded to Baring's personal appeal by defending the schismatics against the attacks of their critics. "Perhaps they may have dropped expressions," he naively suggested, "which have been misunderstood; or, in their zeal to establish some grand point, they may have quoted texts which were not designed for that purpose." Marsh pleaded for the exercise of charity and tolerance: Christians "ought to be tender of each other's characters," and be prepared to accept differences of opinion on non-fundamental points, making especial allowances in cases of confusing and contradicting views. He concluded that much of the difference between the Evangelical clergy and the

[133] Ibid., p. 210.

[134] Marsh was the incumbent of St. Peter's, Colchester at the time of the Schism, a living to which he was presented by Simeon.

seceders was the result of either misunderstanding, or slanderous reporting.[135]

By 1821, however, long after the Schism had begun to recede from public scrutiny, Marsh became more openly critical. Perhaps reflecting his own dilemma, he wrote that the Schism, which he now referred to as an "adversary," had misled many Evangelicals, especially on the important issue of sanctification. They had gone sadly astray when they claimed not only to be justified in Christ, but to be immediately accounted completely holy, so that they felt no need to go on receiving out of His fullness.[136]

T.T. Biddulph, a prominent West Country Evangelical leader and a prolific writer, was the non-resident rector of Durston, Somerset, where George Baring was serving as curate.[137] Baring's secession, the establishment of his new congregation at the Octagon Chapel in Taunton, and his role in baptizing his fellow seceders, naturally made Biddulph anxious lest a large section of his parish be persuaded to follow their former curate into the ranks of 'unorthodox Dissent.' In order to counter this influence, he employed the capable William Henry Havergal as Baring's replacement,[138] and

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[135]Letter from Marsh to Thomas Baring; quoted in C. Marsh, The Life of the Rev. William Marsh, (London, 1867), pp. 116, 118.

[136]Ibid., p. 119.

[137]Thomas Tregenna Biddulph was the incumbent of both St. James', Bristol, and of Durston, Somerset, where he kept a Curate-in-charge.

[138]Havergal had just completed his studies at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, the bastion of early nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, and was ordained to the Curacy on 24 March 1816. He later became well-known for his contributions to the advancement of sacred music. See Hole, A Manual of English Church History, p. 391.

published a strong rebuttal against the doctrinal claims of Richard Mant in an attempt to distance himself and the Evangelical party from Mant's High Anglican doctrines, which were being misrepresented by the seceders.[139] Finally, he published his *Search After Truth*, an attack upon Baring and his companions, denouncing the seceders and reaffirming the value of the 'fixed' creed and liturgy of the Established Church.[140] This work was not intended to excite the "spirit of controversy," but to rebut the seceders' notions of eternal justification and imputed sanctification.[141] Biddulph dismissed the hyper-Calvinists' claims that the consciousness of believing is the only evidence necessary or possible to satisfy the soul of its spiritual safety, and, like Scott and others, insisted on real holiness as the evidence of election. He shared the view of Scott's famous treatise that 'growth in grace' was an essential mark of faith, and hotly denied the hypers' claim that sanctification is not a progressive work.

Evangelical attacks upon the Schism were no less vehement within the pages of the *Christian Observer*. In January 1818, the journal defended the teachings of the Evangelical party against the attempts of High Churchmen to associate them with the seceders' separatism, clerical 'irregularities,' and high Calvinism.

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[139] T.T. Biddulph, Baptism, a Seal.

[140] T.T. Biddulph, Search After Truth (Bristol, 1818)

[141] The doctrine of 'eternal justification' claimed that God justified the elect before all time. As the result, justification becomes merely the realization that we are already justified.

There was no group, it claimed, "more attached to the principles of the Church of England," than the Evangelicals. There had been nothing in their collective conduct to authorize suspicions. On the contrary, the Evangelicals had displayed a "zeal and earnestness" for the Church of England which many would do well to imitate. Although in a few cases this might nearly have bordered on enthusiasm, even that was far better than the "cold apathy and religious indifference" of many of their critics.[142] Five months later the *Christian Observer* seemed more more nervous, admitting that the Schism was a "very critical and distressing controversy" which was gaining ground, even though its doctrines appeared "almost unintelligible" to most Christians.[143] By early 1819, the tone was one of relief: the secederes were seen to be as much separated from one other as they were from the Church. Their ultra-Calvinism, it seemed clear, was too extreme to attract more than a handful of eccentrics.[144]

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Though the Schism moved off into Dissent, Dissenters seldom welcomed this addition to their ranks. In the aftermath of the Schism, a number of West Country Nonconformists joined with their Anglican counterparts in denouncing and criticizing its principal adherents in strong terms. Like Evangelicals, Dissenters had long feared that such secederes might take after the likes of William Huntington and the other hyper-Calvin-

[142] C.O., 1818, p. 12.
[143] Ibid., p. 382ff.
[144] Ibid., 1819, pp. 31f, 38.

ists in not only advancing strict doctrines, but in beginning to poach their congregations.[145]

John Ryland, Jr., the Baptist minister of Broadmead Chapel, Bristol, began the Dissenting counter-attack by claiming that antinomianism was threatening to destroy the universal church. As a moderate Calvinist, he coldly dismissed the Western schismatics for denying the "indefinite call of the gospel" and for explaining away "the invitations and exhortations of the New Testament."[146] Even John Walker considered their doctrines extreme. "I have been made sick at heart," he wrote, "by hearing of the blasphemous extravagances of expression and sentiment" into which the seceders have run. "I should turn away from them as heady and high-minded speculators."[147]

Of even greater interest was the attack by Robert Harkness Carne, a West Country evangelical who had himself seceded from the Church in 1820 on conscientious grounds, but found the Western schismatics far too volatile and heterodox to permit any welcoming gesture in

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[145] David Bogue and James Bennett, History of Dissenters, 1688-1808, 4 vols. (London, 1808-1812), 4:394ff.

[146] John Ryland, Serious Remarks on the Different Representations of the Evangelical Doctrine, (Bristol, 1818), p. 3.

[147] Quoted in Essays and Correspondence, Chiefly on Spiritual Subjects, by the Late John Walker, ed. by William Burton, 2 vols. (London, 1838), 2:251. See also 1:173, 260; 2:222, 239, 404, 407, 582.

that direction.[148] In his *apologia*, Carne perceived the Schism in biblical terms, as an exodus out of the house of bondage which had taken a wrong turn in the desert; instead of pressing forward towards the Land of Promise, it had fallen in the "wilderness through an evil heart of unbelief" and lapsed into bizarre unorthodoxy.[149] He was struck not only that so many unusually talented clergymen should have seceded from the Church, but still more by the way in which they had so often apostatized from the fundamental truths of the gospel. This phenomenon might well make every 'serious' clergyman wonder whether all conscientious seceders would share a similar fate.[150] Carne emphasized that the downfall of the Western schismatics did not come from their separation from the Church (of which he approved in principle), "for this was no more than the Establishment had done in separating from Rome," but from *pride;* "inflated with self-conceit" they often saw themselves in almost exclusive possession of the true gospel and in virtual opposition to all other churches. He was especially shocked at their doctrinal eccentricity; above all by their strange Trinitarian doctrines.

[148]Robert Harkness Carne, Reasons for Withdrawing From the National Establishment (London, 1820). Carne (1784-1844) had been a curate at Crediton, Drewsteignton, and Torbryon in succession, after which the bishop refused to renew his licence. He then moved to Berkshire where he served as a curate in a parish *without licence* for 12 months. In 1820, the corporation of Marazion elected him to a lectureship in the Anglican chapel, but he was again refused a licence by Dr. Pelham, who claimed that "the doctrines he holds are not those of the Church of England, nor are they, as I conceive, according to its discipline." Carne then seceded from the Church, and, after serving at Exeter, moved to Jersey. See D.N.B.; Brockett, p. 210.

[149]Carne, p. 75.

[150]Ibid., p. 75f.

Seceder and strong Calvinist though he was, he could not stomach the notion that sanctification was so complete at the moment of conversion that it totally inoculated the believer against the effects of sin. Nor could he accept the idea that forgiveness and pardon were unnecessary (since believers were already forgiven and pardoned) or that confession was gratuitous.[151]

High Churchmen had their own reasons for attacking the Schism. Suspicious of any form of religious 'enthusiasm,' and convinced that Dissent by its very nature encouraged ecclesiastical factiousness and splintering, High Churchmen saw the Schism as the predictable outcome of the rejection of episcopal authority, and an exaggerated claim to the right of private judgment. Such sentiments were echoed by Charles Daubeny,[152] who, in 1818, characterized Schism from the Church as "one of the crying sins of the present day,"[153] perpetuated by a "spurious philosophy" and "miscalled liberality" which threatened to undermine the life and stability of the Established--and Apostolic--Church.[154] Although the Church of England had separated from Rome, this was not an act of disobedient

[151] Ibid., pp. 79f, 81ff, 127ff.

[152] Daubeny was an advanced and polemical High Churchman, well known in the West Country for his schemes for church extension and known nationally for his defence of Apostolicity and priestly authority, and his controversy with Evangelicals. In 1804, he was appointed Archdeacon of Salisbury.

[153] Charles Daubeny, On the Nature, Progress and Consequences of Schism (London, 1818), p. vii. See also A Guide to the Church, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1804) 1:41-63; A Word in Season On the Nature of the Christian Church (Bath, 1817).

[154] Charles Daubeny, On the Nature, pp. vii, xiii.

schism based on the right of private judgment, but a true separation based on:

> the undoubted right which one independent branch of the Church of Christ has of separating from another branch of the same Church, whenever communion with that branch cannot be continued without sin. It was therefore a right exercised...in conformity with the deliberate wisdom of our national Church, in its *collective character*, as a spiritual society.[155]

But when separation based on private judgment occurs from a communion which is without sin, as in secession from the Church of England, it is schism which is condemned by Scripture.[156]

Old fashioned 'low and slow' clergyman were more alarmed by the schismatics' tendency toward fanaticism than by their challenge to Apostolicity. Richard Warner,[157] another influential West Country clergyman, was sufficiently aroused to publish four separate works attacking the seceders for advocating principles which were inconsistent with Scripture, reason, and tradition.[158] It was the high predestinarianism of the seceders that most incensed him. In rhetorical terms he described Calvinism as an advancing "black mist... blasting every spiritual joy, withering every amiable feeling, and poisoning every social and domestic chari-

[155] Ibid., p. 17.
[156] Ibid., p. 18f.
[157] Warner, incumbent of Great Chalfield, Wiltshire, and Norton-Saint-Philip's, Somerset, had previously been curate for over twenty-one years of St. James', Bath. His opposition to Calvinism and to the Evangelical party was well known, and, except for his opposition to Catholic Emancipation in 1829, he maintained a decided loyalty toward the Whigs.
[158] Richard Warner, Old Church of England Principles Opposed to the 'New Light', 3 vols. (Bath, 1817); Considerations on the Doctrines; All the Counsel of God (Bath, 1817); The Claims of the Church of England (Bath, 1819).

ty." If this were not halted, it would transform our understanding of God as a loving, benevolent being into one which characterized him as an "inexorable tyrant."[159] To stop the spread of this gloomy creed, he urged that bishops and examining chaplains should refuse to ordain any more Evangelicals.[160]

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Although there had been individual Evangelical departures from the Established Church prior to 1815, as we have seen, the Western Schism was unique in its collective nature; it was regarded as a disruption and not as a series of individual secessions. Its notoriety was compounded by the alleged antinomianism of its members, by the social prominence of some of its leading figures, and by the vehemence expressed by its critics from very different points of the ecclesiastical compass. It brought into high profile the conflict surrounding the identity of the Church of England, and the tensions between its Protestant and Catholic elements which were beginning to strain its comprehensiveness and call into doubt the principle of establishment.

In perspective, then, we can see the Schism as the precursor of the larger and even more disruptive issues which would plague the English Church in the following decades. In its separatism and high Calvinism, it prefigured the pronouncements of such Evangelical seceders as Henry Bulteel, J.C. Philpot, and William Tiptaft

159Richard Warner, All the Council of God, p. 19.
160Richard Warner, Old Church of England Principles, 1:viif.

during the 1830s. The Western seceders' reaction to the 'Popish' elements in the rubrics and the pronouncements of Richard Mant and his fellow High Churchmen, foreshadowed those raised in the secession of Baptist Noel and the Gorham case.

By 1818, the doctrinal restlessness of the individual seceders began either to diminish, or at least to turn in different directions. Although the principles of the Schism continued to spread, its leadership had by now began to split apart.[161] In December of that year, it was reported that at least one of the seceders' converts, T.R. Garnsey, had already abandoned the 'Baring party' and had returned to the Church of England; it is probable that he was not alone in his move back into Evangelical orthodoxy.[162]

In 1832, the Evangelical Robert Cox remarked in retrospect that the Schism had "perverted, discouraged, and staggered many," and "caused grief to us all." It must be said in conclusion, however, that it accomplished relatively little as a corporate body either in creating a lasting theological influence or in establishing an alternative form of piety to challenge that of the Evangelicals in the Church.[163] Within five years of the outbreak of the Schism, most of the se-

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[161] Letter from William Henry Havergal to his mother, 1818, in Crane, p. 18.

[162] Letter from William Henry Havergal to Henry V. Tebbs, December 1818, in loc. cit. Garnsey had been an Evangelical prior to his association with the schismatics. He was afterwards ordained in the Church of England and made an officer of the CMS, where he was accepted for service in Sierra Leone. See also Ibid., p. 28f.

[163] Robert Cox, Secession Considered (London, 1832), p. 21.

ceders--including George Baring, Thomas Baring, Drummond, and Snow--had either returned to the Church or had vanished from the religious scene altogether.

Of more lasting importance were the seceders' criticisms of the doctrines and practices of the Established Church, for these, when separated from their doctrinal eccentricities, reflected some of the concerns quietly expressed by some more moderate Evangelicals, but normally suppressed or held in check by ingrained loyalty to the Establishment, its liturgy, and its Articles. Its significance lay far less in the provision of any corporate alternative to the Church than in the doubts which it raised: it was more a negative than a positive influence. As we have seen, the doubts entertained by the seceders were not new, but in 1815-1818, they gained immeasurable publicity in the 'gospel world' because of their dramatically collective character. The Western schismatics and their critique of the Church was soon to be echoed by louder voices, as we will see in following chapters.

English Millennialism: Henry Drummond, Edward Irving, and the Albury 'Apostles,' c.1826-1832

It has been increasingly recognized that the late 1820s were a period of controversy and fragmentation in English Evangelicalism.[1] On the one side were the moderates represented by Clapham and the *Christian Observer*, eirenical in their theology, fearful of enthusiasm and emotionalism, given over largely to campaigns for moral and social reform and to optimistic missionary endeavours at home and abroad. On the other were sterner groups, deeply pessimistic about the 'signs of the times,' seized by millennial excitement and expectations and a desire to return to pure, radical 'Apostolic' practices, sometimes emphasizing the role of fresh, direct religious experience of the type described in Acts--even the imminent return of the 'gifts' of the Spirit recorded there. Those in the second broad category did not all think alike; there was restless movement among them, and a criss-cross of groupings and influences. This restlessness tore some lead-

[1]See David Newsome, The Parting of Friends (London, 1966), pp. 19; N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium, 3rd ed. (London 1970); E.R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago, 1970); Iain H. Murray, The Puritan Hope, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 185-206; W.H. Oliver, Prophets and Millennialists (Auckland, 1978); D.N. Hempton, 'Evangelicalism and Eschatology,' J.E.H., April 1980, pp. 179-194; T.C.F. Stunt, '"Trying the Spirits:" the Case of the Gloucestershire Clergyman (1831),' J.E.H., January 1988, pp. 95-105; and 'Geneva and British Evangelicals in the Early Nineteenth Century,' J.E.H., January 1981, pp. 35-46; J.F.C. Harrison, The Second Coming (London, 1979); D.W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (London, 1989), pp. 75-104.

ing Evangelicals, lay and clerical, away from the Church of England into new religious bodies.[2]

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Some form of millennial expectation has always existed in the Church of England, and indeed in the wider Christian tradition, though its strength has ebbed and flowed. It was not, initially, a major theme in the minds of the early Evangelicals, despite some excited hopes in the 1740s that the coincidental awakening in Wales, England, Scotland, and North America might presage the *parousia*. During much of the eighteenth century, 'vital Christianity' was largely absorbed with the work of evangelism and not given over to a great deal of speculation on 'latter things.'[3] The comparative stability of the political order in Britain--and on the Continent--did not encourage the sense of an imminent collapse of the existing order. On the whole, the spirit of evangelicalism was confident. The evangelistic 'means' needed to achieve the regeneration of the nation seemed to be obvious, and to be achieving the required result without the need for any apocalyptic intervention by God. Even in the 1820s, the leaders of the movement could proclaim with some assurance and self-congratulation that, while much remained to be done, much had been accomplished.

[2]See Appendix 1. This heightened interest in the study of prophecy was illustrated by the publication of over 100 books and at least 10 periodicals on the subject in England alone between 1800-1840. See H.H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren 1825-1850 (London, 1967), p. 12.

[3]Murray, p. 187.

At the same time, a number of recent political and religious undercurrents had begun profoundly to affect Evangelical thinking. The vast upheavals of the French Revolutionary era and the Napoleonic wars revealed that the world was in flux, and provoked a feeling that the tribulations of the present might be the prologue to a new age previously unimagined. The shocks of industrialization created deep unease. Doubts now arose about existing methods of spreading the gospel.[4] Despite the work of the Bible Society and other such evangelistic agencies, Christianity appeared to be moving into a period of relative decline, especially in the Church of England. Although evangelical Dissent was fast increasing, the Establishment appeared unwilling--or unable--to respond to the spiritual destitution of the great cities where populations were growing fast and where vice and godlessness remained largely unchecked. In the 1820s the Protestant Constitution came under siege: the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts appeared imminent; even more worrying to Tory Evangelicals, the clamour for Catholic Emancipation increased, making passage of some measure of relief increasingly likely. The sense of unease encouraged a heightened interest in Calvinism and a dissatisfaction with the simple, 'heart-religion' of a Hannah More, Simeon, or Wilberforce. A more dogmatic, systematic, speculative theology was felt necessary, if the solvent acids of

[4]Bebbington, p. 76f.

liberalism were to be resisted.

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In this climate of anxiety, the expectation of the personal return of Christ to earth to establish His millennial kingdom gripped many minds. Millennial speculation was no longer largely confined to a popular apocalyptic subculture inhabited by enthusiasts like Richard Brothers, James Bicheno, or Joanna Southcott: it became the subject of intense study by well-educated clergymen like Edward Bickersteth, Rector of Walton in Hertfordshire, a banker like Henry Drummond, or a scholar like G.S. Faber.[5] In 1829 it acquired a mouthpiece in the *Morning Watch*, financed by Drummond, which was followed by other millennial publications such as the *Watchman* and the *Expositor of Prophecy*.

For the most part, this Evangelical millennial fervour was contained within the Established Church. Yet there were latent tendencies within the prophetic movement which could easily carry its devotees into outright secession. In an important study of the prophetic mind in this period--*Prophets and Millennialists* (1978)--W.H. Oliver has analysed the important division between pre and post-millennialists; that is, between those, like Drummond and Edward Irving, who expected the personal Advent of Christ and the bodily resurrection of the Saints to precede the millennium (the period of one thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20:2-7 as the time of the reign of Christ and the saints over the earth), and those more theologically and ecclesio-

[5] See Hempton, p. 181f.

logically moderate Evangelicals who held that the millennium would be inaugurated by a spiritual intervention of Christ in the power of His Spirit, not by a bodily Advent which would follow the millennium.[6]

It is difficult to calculate exactly how many Evangelicals fell into each camp. Prior to the 1820s most Evangelicals were probably post-millennialists, as evidenced by the confidence of their movement, shown in their great missionary efforts and by campaigns such as that for the abolition of the slave trade. This soon began to change, however. By 1845, one Anglican clergyman estimated the number of clerical pre-millennialists in the Church at around seven hundred.[7] In 1851 Edward Bishop Elliott, author of the influential pre-millennial work *Horae Apocalypticae*, could look back with amazement on the change which had occurred during the previous seven years. "In the year 1844," he wrote, "the date of the first publication of my own work on the Apocalypse, so rapid had been the progress of these views in England, that instead of its appearing as a thing strange and half-heretical to hold them, as when Irving published his translation of Ben Ezra, the leaven had evidently now deeply penetrated the religious mind."[8] Four years on, the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* estimated that more than half of the

[6]The middle ground of the debate was held by the a-millennialists: those who believed that the millennial reign of Christ was the age of the church, from the resurrection of Christ to His Advent. The figure one thousand (as in one thousand years) was taken to be symbolic, not an actual length of time.

[7]This was Mourant Brock. See Murray, p. 197.

[8]Edward Bishop Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*, 4 vols., 4th ed. (London, 1851) 4:522.

Evangelicals now favoured pre-millennialist views.[9] In spite of this clear trend toward pre-millennialism, many Evangelicals (including Hugh McNeile, William Marsh, and Edward Bickersteth, to name just three) were highly fluid in their thinking on the subject; as the pronouncements of Drummond and Irving grew more extreme and as the 'gifts' appeared, they stepped back from the extreme pre-millennialist position.

Seen not in exegetical but in psychological terms, this important dichotomy in the prophetic tradition was essentially between optimists and pessimists. The files of the *Morning Watch* suggest that its contributors were not only pessimistic about the 'signs of the times' in the wider world of affairs, but were pessimistic about the state of the Evangelical movement itself. They had a very strong suspicion that the sometimes frenetic activism of many Evangelical leaders, obsessed by the use of human 'means'--such as Bible Societies, missionary campaigns, parliamentary lobbying--was useless and had been at the expense of the close study of the Word and the interior life of prayer which were the mark of true piety. Much Evangelical activity represented no more than the intrusion of the 'spirit of trade'--of shopkeepers, merchants, and the like--into the world of 'serious religion.' "The Religious World," wrote one correspondent:

> has taken it into its head that it is going to convert the heathen world, Jews, Infidels, and Papists, by means of books, tracts, and missionaries. It has been labouring at this work for above a quarter of a century; and annually prophesies, at all the annual meetings of all its societies,

[9]Sandeen, p. 40.

> and of all their provincial auxiliaries, its positive certainty of so doing, provided only the people will give them money enough; and that in the mean time, the world will get better and better every day. The Students of Prophecy have got a very perplexing mode of consulting the word of God as to future events, rather than speakers on platforms; and they have therein found that the world is not to be converted by any such means.[10]

The optimistic post-millennialists were not unduly alarmed by the 'signs of the times' provided by wars and social upheavals, for they saw these as opening up the way to further missionary triumphs. Social and political change often broke down traditional and customary barriers to the free flow of the gospel, opening the way to energetic missionizing. On the other hand the pessimistic pre-millennialists saw in the world about them the gathering darkness of catastrophe: they awaited the transformation of the earth by a miraculous, divine intervention--the mass conversion of the Jews; the descent of the Messiah himself from the heavens to judge and re-create. As Francis Newman, who had for a time fallen under the deep spell of the prophetic movement, put it succinctly in his *Phases of Faith*: "Those who stick closest to the Scripture do not shrink from saying, that 'it is not worth while trying to mend the world,' and stigmatize as 'political and worldly' such as pursue an opposite course."[11] The implication was that Evangelicalism was failing and would never achieve its self-appointed task of restoring the divine will to earth. The main split in Evangelicalism beginning in the late 1820s was between the optimistic post-

[10]*Morning Watch*, 1830, ii, p. 215.
[11]Francis William Newman, *Phases of Faith*, 6th ed. (London, 1860), p. 136.

millennialists, safely anchored in the present and inspired by a vision of the millennium which was an important continuation of the existing world, and those whose despair of contemporary society encouraged them to posit an almost complete caesura between the present and a transfigured future.[12]

The pre-millennial case, it can be suggested, had implications for Evangelical views of the Church of England and its establishment. There were many deeply establishmentarian Evangelical pre-millennialists--Edward Bickersteth and Lord Shaftesbury, for example--and many compromise positions between post and pre-millennialism. Of the seven hundred clerical Evangelicals labelled pre-millennialists in 1845, the hugh majority remained safely within the Established Church.[13] Many pre-millennialist clerics saw their task as calling the Church to a sense of her destiny, alerting the nation to the fate that awaited it, and preparing it for the Apocalypse to come. Yet the pessimism of the pre-millennialist about the future, and his distrust about the efficacy of institutional solutions to the evils of the present world, could lead also to a low view of visible churches. The existing churches were institutions without a future. They belonged to a 'dispensation' that had failed. From this gloomy premise it was not very difficult to draw the conclusion that the churches of the present day should be abandoned, like sinking hulks. The elect, the righteous remnant, should draw

[12]Oliver, p. 83.
[13]See Le Roy E. Froom, The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, 4 vols. (Washington, 1946-54), 3:706.

apart, to prepare for the new dispensation which was shortly to be ushered in. The Christian should live in a state of expectancy waiting for the imminent Second Coming.

The best known of such groups was the one which had evolved from the famous Albury Conferences on prophecy inaugurated in 1826 and held annually for five years. The Conferences were held at Albury Park, between Guilford and Dorking, country home of the banker and MP, Henry Drummond, whom we have already encountered as an active member of the Western Schism. The erratic Drummond had by now gone over to pre-millennialist pessimism. He was a high Tory deeply disturbed by the Reform Bill crisis, and still more by the 'apostasy' of Protestant England in conceding Catholic Emancipation in 1829, a move which, in his view, had virtually separated Church and State.

Much, however, had happened since the Western Schism. By the early 1820s, most of the Western seceders had returned, at least for the time being, to some degree of Anglican conformity. In 1822, Henry Drummond attended a service at Percy Chapel, a proprietary chapel in London, where he heard the young Irish Evangelical Hugh McNeile, later the well-known Dean of Ripon, and responded to his eloquent preaching by immediately offering him the vacant living of Albury adjoining his country estate in Surrey.[14] McNeile must have been pleased to receive such a magnanimous offer, for Drummond was one of the most influential, if oddest, lay

[14]D.N.B.

figures in the Evangelical world.[15] Intellectually powerful, Drummond was also personally engaging and generous to a fault. At the same time he managed, with aristocratic idiosyncrasy, to inspire controversy wherever he landed. There is no shortage of contemporary comment on his unusual, colourful personality. His ally Edward Irving admitted his "propensity to wit and argument."[16] Carlyle, who knew him well, commented on his "insatiable love of shining and figuring," which rendered his life "a restless inconsistency."[17] Drummond, Carlyle thought, was an eccentric who did much harm by leading poor Irving astray.[18] He was recognized to be an extraordinary amalgam of the religious enthusiast with the ultra-conservative: his son-in-law described him as "a real old Tory," with an "unswerving fidelity to the Crown and to the constitution."[19] Though in many ways despairing of the existing Church of England he "was always ready to defend the purity and catholicity of her doctrines, and to support her as

[15] See Rowland Davenport, Albury Apostles, 2nd ed. (London, 1973); Robert Lee Lively, Jr., 'The Catholic Apostolic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: A Comparative Study of Two Minority Millenarian Groups in Nineteenth Century England,' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1977); Stunt, 'Geneva and British Evangelicals,' pp. 35-46.

[16] Northumberland MSS, Drummond Papers, Alnwick Castle, C/9/18, letter from Irving to Drummond, 4 May 1833.

[17] Davenport, p. 17f.

[18] James Anthony Froude, ed. Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle, 2 vols. (London, 1881), 1:297f, 312. See also Margaret O. Oliphant, The Life of Edward Irving, 6th ed. (London, c.1900), p. 203.

[19] Speeches in Parliament and Some Miscellaneous Pamphlets of the Late Henry Drummond, Esq., ed. by Lord Lovaine, 2 vols. (London, 1860), 1:vi.

the national symbol of the recognition by this country of the duty and service she owes to God."[20]

Drummond was born at the Grange, near Alresford, Hampshire, on December 5th, 1786, the son of Henry Drummond, a well-known London banker.[21] He was well connected politically through his mother, the daughter of Pitt's friend and Scottish ally, Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville. When Mrs. Drummond was widowed in 1794, she remarried eight years later and left England for India. Henry, now safely at Harrow, was placed into the care of his famous grandfather, through whom he obtained access to the inner circles of the Tory party and became a favourite of Pitt.[22] In 1807 he married Lady Harriet Hay, eldest daughter of the ninth Earl of Kinnoul,[23] and, three years later, entered Parliament for the first time as representative for Plympton Erle.[24] For a time he was also High Sheriff of Surrey. Despite a good deal of eccentricity in politics as well as religion, he commanded respect, and left his mark on his age in conventional as well as unconventional ways--not least by founding the Drummond chair in political economy at Oxford in 1825.[25]

It appears from a comment made in mid-life that Drummond embraced the teachings of 'serious religion'

[20] Ibid., 1:vif.
[21] G.M., April 1860, p. 413f; Davenport, pp. 15-20. The Drummond Bank was patronized by many prominent people, including George III. See Drummond's Speeches, 1:iv.
[22] D.N.B.
[23] G.M., 1860, p. 413f.
[24] Gerrit P. Judd. IV, Members of Parliament 1734-1832 2nd ed. (Hamden, 1972), p. 178. Drummond served as MP for West Surrey between 1847-1860.
[25] See Boyd Hilton. The Age of Atonement (Oxford, 1988), pp. 42-48.

at a very early age. "There was never a time," he wrote, "when I did otherwise than believe every word of the Bible, in its plain literal meaning."[26] In 1815, as we have seen, he was taken in, albeit temporarily, by the Calvinistic speculations of the Western seceders.[27] Two years later, in the words of a contemporary observer, he became "satiated with the empty frivolities of the fashionable world;"[28] he soon broke up his hunting establishment and sold off his ancestral estates. He then departed on an extended tour of the Holy Land; *en route*, however, he was (providentially as he came to regard it) diverted to Geneva, the home of Calvin and Calvinism, where he quickly offered his assistance to Robert Haldane, now active in the city.

With the reopening of the Continent to British travellers after the defeat of Napoleon, Evangelicals had been understandably attracted to Geneva, where a religious revival was under way.[29] Haldane, who had launched extensive missionary work in his native Scotland, had come to Geneva the previous year to work for the conversion of students at the University;[30] never far from controversy, however, he had quickly become embroiled in a local dispute over State intrusion into the doctrines and affairs of the Established Church,[31]

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[26] Quoted in Davenport, p. 14.

[27] See Chapter Four.

[28] Alexander Haldane, Memories of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthey, and of His Brother, James Alexander Haldane (London, 1852), p. 446. This account was later incorporated into Drummond's entry in the D.N.B.

[29] See Stunt, 'Geneva and British Evangelicals.'

[30] E.H. Broadbent, The Pilgrim Church, 3rd ed. (London, 1945), p. 302; and Stunt, 'Geneva and British Evangelicals,' p. 35ff.

[31] For an account of this work see the C.O., 1826, pp. 693-709.

and had encouraged the evangelical clergy of Geneva openly to resist the authorities.[32] In June 1817, when Haldane was preparing to return to Britain, Henry Drummond quickly agreed to carry on Haldane's work, and threw his considerable energy into a cause that he believed would restore the City of Calvin to its former orthodoxy and spiritual glory.[33] His campaign, bolstered by his great wealth and sharpened by dogmatic zeal, insured that the local authorities could no longer ignore the situation. Predictably, Drummond was soon summoned to appear before the Council of State to explain his disruptive and no doubt illegal behaviour. Facing probable imprisonment, Drummond instead fled into France where he continued his campaign from a distance.[34] The subsequent secession of the Genevan evangelicals from the State Church, David Bebbington has suggested, may have prepared Drummond and others ultimately to contemplate the same step. The pure milk of Calvinism became for Drummond the ideal of a primitive, Apostolic Christianity.[35] In his hands, as in those of John Walker and the Western seceders, Calvinist asceticism and its rigorous distinction between the world of nature and that of grace, encouraged separatism. "I saw also in the history of the church," declared a speaker expressing Drummond's own views, "that in proportion she became Arminian she relapsed into the

[32]D.N.B.
[33]Haldane, pp. 446 and 450.
[34]Ibid., p. 448.
[35]Bebbington, p. 77.

world, and that in proportion she became Calvinistic she came out of the world."[36]

After some months in the midst of the Swiss controversy Drummond returned to England where, in 1819, he joined forces with Haldane and Sir Thomas Baring in founding the Continental Society--a pan-evangelical organization established to "reform both the Socinian tendencies of the Protestant denominations and those suffering under Popish Christianity" in Europe.[37] Baring was elected as the Society's first President with Drummond assisting, first as a member of its Central Committee, and later as a Vice-President.[38] Drummond was also responsible, through his considerable donations, for ensuring the Society's financial well-being--a cause which led to the enlistment of a number of his former associates from the Western Schism, including Sir Thomas Baring, George Baring, James Harington Evans, and Thomas Snow. It also attracted the support of other well-known Evangelicals, including James Alexander Haldane, William Marsh, Robert Harry Inglis, Rowland Hill, Charles Simeon, Thomas Kelly, Hugh McNeile, and William Wilberforce, and the Baptist Dr. Ryland.[39] So dominant was Drummond in the affairs of the Society that he eventually secured places on its Central Com-

[36]Henry Drummond, Dialogues on Prophecy, 3 vols. (London, 1828-9), 1:212.

[37]See First Report of the Continental Society For the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge (London, 1819), p. 5f; Haldane, p. 463. The Society was later renamed the European Society; it eventually merged into the Foreign Aid Society.

[38]Baring continued as President until 1827, when, although continuing to provide generous financial support, he mysteriously withdrew from the Society. See Nineteenth Report, p. 93.

[39]See Fourth Report.

mittee for his friends, and soon-to-be fellow 'Apostles,' Edward Irving and Spencer Perceval, the son of the assassinated Evangelical Prime Minister.[40] He also succeeded in imposing his pre-millennialist pessimism upon the Society; in 1830 a resolution moved by Drummond was carried stating: "That this Meeting, impressed with the thought that the day of labour is far spent, and must soon close...do recognize the great duty and privilege of raising the cry throughout apostate Christendom, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye not be partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'"[41]

In late 1825, Drummond was alarmed by the wild speculation then taking place in Latin American mining shares, and began "to direct attention to the events connected with the close of the Christian dispensation."[42] The insecurities of the commercial and financial world intensified his growing pessimism about the state of the world. In the following year, he was introduced to the study of Biblical prophecy through Lewis Way, a London lawyer who had become an evangelist. This transformation in his religious thinking not only marked his introduction into the early stages of the English prophetic movement, but also his final rejection of mainstream Claphamite Evangelicalism. As he later explained, he had already come to believe that

[40] In 1825 and 1826 respectively.
[41] Quoted in Froom, 3:447.
[42] Henry Drummond, Abstract Principles of Revealed Religion (London, 1845), p. iii.

all religious systems:

> were perceived more or less to pervert or to overlook some important points; but it was not until the year 1826, when Mr. Lewis Way informed me that the majority of what was called the religious world disbelieved that the Jews were to be restored to their own land, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was to return and reign in person on this earth, that I had the remotest idea of the mass of infidelity which lurked under the guise of what was called evangelical religion.[43]

As a high 'Church and State' Tory, Drummond's adherence to the prophetic movement was inspired, in no small measure, like that of other political conservatives, by the 'Constitutional Revolution' of 1828-32. He denounced proposals granting concessions to Catholics as an abrogation of Britain's divinely inspired responsibility as a highly favoured Christian nation to oppose the apostasy of Rome, and as a violation of the unity of Church and State.[44] His opposition to religious and political reform reflected his strongly-held notions of authority, paternalism, and the maintenance of a strict and hierarchical social order. In 1829 he published anonymously a letter he had written to the King urging him to refuse his assent to the repeal of the Test Act,[45] followed, two years later, by the publication of another work opposing passage of the Reform Bill.[46] So opposed had Drummond become to reform that he began to see the issues in terms of complete--and

[43]Quoted in Davenport, p. 14.
[44]Drummond, Dialogues on Prophecy, 2:250ff.
[45]A Tory of the Old School [Henry Drummond], A Letter to the King Against Repeal of the Test Act by a tory of the Old School, 1829, in Drummond's Speeches, 2:39-59.
[46]Henry Drummond, Reform Not a New Constitution, 1831, in Drummond's Speeches, 2:77-118.

irretrievable--polarization. In 1832, he warned every believer who would listen:

> It is no longer a question between Whig and Tory, but between constitution and no constitution, between order and anarchy. It is no longer a question between this or that *form* of Christianity, but between Religion and Infidelity, between Christ and Antichrist.[47]

Drummond continued to remain in many ways an old-fashioned Tory paternalist, emphasizing the need for authority in Church and State and the duty of superiors to protect their dependents in recognition of their social obedience. He strongly expressed traditional notions of social hierarchy, of organic links holding the various layers of the hierarchy together, and of the divinely ordained nature of society. But he had by now added to these paternalist views a potentially radical ecclesiastical theory in which theology and politics cohered together in what W.H. Oliver has described as the theory of the 'Apostate nation:' the British, he now held, were a people which had been chosen by God, but had rejected the spiritual duties which accompanied their elect status, and had wickedly abandoned the divine commission.[48]

An important corollary to the advent of this theory was the notion that normative--and moderate--Evangelicals had lost their spiritual purity and direction. Ordinary Evangelicals had apostatized. Drummond believed this implicitly; unlike most pre-millennialists, however, he carried his pessimism to the point of secession. As pressure rose to enact political and reli-

[47]Morning Watch, 1832, p. 237.
[48]Oliver, p. 108.

gious reform--generally favoured by the moderates of the '*Christian Observer* school'--conservative, pre-millennialist Evangelicals became convinced that their efforts to extend the Revival were under siege; concessions to the forces of liberalism were beginning to destroy the religious purity of the nation. "The Evangelicals in Britain," Drummond declared in 1828, "assuming that their Bible and Missionary Societies are going to convert the world, can never believe that the Churches of England and Scotland, and this Pharasaic and Infidel nation, will, because she has been most highly honoured, be the first to feel the weighty hand of the Lord's vengeance."[49] They would soon discover their mistake. Britain had been displaced from God's favour because her Church had succumbed to the world. While "this land has been more favoured than any spot on the whole earth with the number of preachers of God's word," and while it has been "selected by Jehovah to be His witness against the Popish Apostasy," it had squandered its talents and would soon be called to judgment. The "*peril* of the *last days*," he added, would not be caused by the openly profane, but by serious minded professed Christians--often professed Evangelicals--"those who are lovers of their own institutions, and of wealth; boasters of their charitable, and missionary exploits; lovers of expediency rather than of principle; laying false accusations; speaking

[49]Henry Drummond, A Defence of the Students of Prophecy (London, 1828), p. 50.

against the plain letter of God's word; and yet having the form, circumstance, and profession of godliness."[50]

He also attacked the Evangelicals for denying "the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as it was taught by our Reformers; calling the expression of Luther in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and cited by Mr. Irving in his sermons on the Last Days, as antinomian."[51] Their adulteration of the full gospel of predestination failed to offer the comfort to believers which was a main purpose of God's revealed Word. Their clergy:

> Preach justification by faith only...in words; but observe how it turns out in fact. They will not allow the poor sinner to take immediate assurance of his salvation, but expect of him a probation of doubt and uncertainty, of difficulty and perplexity, before they will permit him to have confidence before God...The people...as permitteth not assurance of faith from the very first and onwards, are put upon the rock and torture of inward uncertainty and fear, and led to count and rest upon the number of their inward spiritualities...the state of the Christian Church...is exceedingly to be deplored...I warn all men to give no heed to such unsafe, uncertain, and false teaching; but to receive, through faith, the grace of God, which hath appeared unto you, bringing salvation.[52]

Nor was Drummond alone in expressing such concerns. Irving too saw the future in the darkest prospect. As early as 1825 he informed the Continental Society that the church, far from being on the threshold of a new era of blessing, was about to enter "a series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities" foreshadowing Christ's imminent Advent.[53] The present Gentile (New Testament) dispensation, he warned, was

[50]Ibid., p. 115f.
[51]Morning Watch, 1829, p. 266.
[52]Ibid., p. 644.
[53]Quoted in Murray, p. 189.

about to burst forth with great vitality and fill the earth with the millennial blessedness, after which the Lord would return. Post-millennial Evangelicals, such as those connected to the *Christian Observer*, who believed that Christ's return would occur at some indefinite point in time, had been deluded by a false theology which deprived Christians of comfort and spiritual power:

> When the great Scriptural doctrine of Christ's second Advent is thus removed to an indefinite distance of future time, not only is its present influence in keeping alive and awake all the fruits of the Spirit, wholly lost; but also most insufficient, and I may say, false views of the doctrine of a future state are introduced, which are attended with the most prejudicial effects upon the soul.[54]

Believers should live as if Christ might return at any moment. Such a situation would endow the church (or at least its righteous remnant) with boldness and zeal to proclaim and live out its message with a new hope: the Advent hope.

The principal mouthpiece for pre-millennialist opposition to this advance of liberalism and reform was, however, the *Morning Watch*. Financed by Drummond and edited by the Evangelical seceder John Tudor, this short-lived (1829-1833) quarterly was unequivocal in its condemnations of the liberalizing tendencies of the Evangelical movement and the Church. While intended to advance the views of the prophetic movement at large, it was instead dominated by Drummond's pronounced high Calvinism and opposition to creeping liberalism. In the first volume, he rounded on the Evangelical press

[54]Aben Ezra [Edward Irving], The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty, 2 vols. (London, 1827). 1:liv.

and clergy, and denounced their adherence to moderate forms of Calvinism. The *Christian Observer*, with its low, utilitarian tone, has sold out to the liberal obsession with change, 'reform,' and 'improvement,' much of which was inspired by the spirit of shop-keeping Nonconformity:

> The increasing zeal for popular instruction is mistaken for the actual progress of improvement... There is...much of ill-supported pretence, much secret infidelity, more of negligence and indifference, and a still greater abundance of sectarian pride, mixed up with all the low cunning and base rapcour which the spirit of schism can inspire.[55]

In high Tory language, the editors of the *Christian Observer* were denounced for favouring such schemes as the founding of the non-sectarian London University and a liberal system of education; they were seen as in tune with the radical, demagogic Whiggery of Lord Brougham. Evangelical ministers were lashed for their appalling blindness to the plain meaning of God's Word:

> The Evangelical clergy have been telling the people that the Lord Jesus was not to return to this earth until after the whole world was converted; that Bibles, and tracts, and missionaries, were to convert it: they have denied that the Christian dispensation was to close in judgments, as did the Jewish; and they are utterly unable to see the finger of God in any one of the transactions now passing in Europe. The priesthood of Britain, as were the priesthood of Jerusalem, are drunk, not with wine, but with delusion; they have a moral incapacity to believe God's word; they say that *earth* means *heaven*; that the *age to come* means *age that is past*; that the *throne of* David means *Englishmen's hearts*; that *Jews returning to their own land* means *Christians going to heaven*; with a thousand other dishonest perversions, which are proofs indisputable of disbelief--that is, of infidelity--in the plain meaning of plain words.[56]

[55] Morning Watch, 1829, p. 244.
[56] C.O., 1831, p. 745.

The capital charge against the *Christian Observer* however was that it had "become so deeply imbued with Liberalism, which is but a modified Infidelity," and thus had "leaned much more to the infidel than to the high-church party in the country."[57] The more conservative *Record*, on the other hand, was praised by the pre-millennialists for standing against the rise of liberalism and infidelity, and for upholding the true principles of a Christian State and society.[58] There was thus a strong strain of outraged Toryism in this wing of the prophetic movement. Political outrage and disillusion fuelled the millennial sense of impending doom.

Broadsides like these surely must have gone some way in furthering the estrangement between Albury and moderate Evangelicalism. Without such support and backing, the prophetic movement began to be cut off from its primary source of new recruits, and each new attack in the pages of the *Christian Observer* contributed to its further isolation, further detaching it from its Anglican roots and separating it from the Evangelical mainstream.

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Drummond's ecclesiology was equally curious and eclectic. It combined a strict hierarchical view of social order, high Toryism, a determined Protestantism, high Church ingredients, and a belief in the pre-millennial Advent of Christ. Hierarchy was a mark of an ordered society; so also was it a characteristic of the

[57] Morning Watch, 1832, p. 235f.
[58] Ibid., p. 234ff.

Church. As the Church was part of the divinely given order, so its welfare should be the first object of the Christian king.[59] Indeed it was impossible to imagine a state existing "without a religion of some sort being united to it." The ordained minister, far from being dispensed with (as by some high Calvinist secederes), was elevated by Drummond as the "one who has a right to speak with authority in the name of his Master."[60] The Catholic estimates of baptism and the Eucharist were seen by him as nearer the truth than the notion that these sacraments "are mere signs, as held by all the Dissenters, and by most of the Church of England Evangelicals."[61] Drummond also approved of the Christian year, "the various anniversaries which were instituted by the first Christians, in commemoration of the different important events."[62] By 1828 he urged that "the Popish practice of praying from a liturgy...without preaching, is nearer being a proper ceremonial for God's house, than making it a mere preaching house without prayer, as it is generally considered now."[63] Already he foreshadowed the hierarchy of the Catholic Apostolic Church in speaking of ministers, pastors, bishops, and angels and their functions. The date of Drummond's writings on this theme clearly prove that the subsequent movement of the Catholic Apostolic Church into hierarchy and high ritualism was not an attempt to mimic Tractarianism, but a parallel move-

[59] Oliver, p. 112.
[60] Henry Drummond, Social Duties on Christian Principles (London, 1830), pp. 155, 121.
[61] Drummond, A Defence of the Students, p. 57f.
[62] Drummond, Dialogues on Prophecy, 1:349.
[63] Drummond, A Defence of the Students, p. 58.

ment.[64] This development is not without a certain irony when we consider the ardent anti-Popery of the prophetic movement. The two movements differed, however, in several important respects. Tractarians saw the true Church lurking behind the corrupt Establishment, while Drummond saw it in the post-adventist Church of the millennium and in the contemporary remnant which would be its nucleus. Tractarians saw salvation occurring in a Church which was in, but not of, the world, while Drummond saw the Church and the world as always interpenetrating. Tractarians also placed the invisible and visible Church in a much closer relationship than Drummond and his followers, who, like other Evangelicals, saw the two as more distinct, often competing, bodies.[65]

Much of this teaching was set out in Drummond's three volume work *Dialogues on Prophecy*, published in 1828-29, as were his views on the Church-State connection.[66] "The church must rise; the State and she are no longer one" was a statement repeatedly asserted.[67] The church should be thought of as a perfect society and not dependent on the State for its continuance or prosperity. The establishment and endowment of the church "is not an act on its part, but on the part of the kingdom who [sic] establishes it; the kingdom comes into the church, but the church does not go forth to

[64]Oliver, p. 112. For a full discussion of the liturgy of the Catholic Apostolic Church see Kenneth W. Stevenson, 'The Catholic Apostolic Eucharist' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 1975).

[65]Ibid., pp. 112, 113, 118.

[66]See also Henry Drummond, Discourses on the True Definition of the Church (London, 1858).

[67]Drummond, Dialogues on Prophecy, 3:463.

take the kingdom."[68] In this relationship, all the benefits are conferred upon the church and all the obligations upon the State. Moreover, it is a relationship between the State and two churches: at the centre is the invisible church of the elect, and surrounding it is the visible Church of England. The State stands guard over both.[69]

While in some ways Drummond's ecclesiology resembled that expressed by John Walker and the other high Calvinist seceders, it also differed in two important aspects: in its high Toryism and its determined Erastianism. Drummond believed that he had found in the remnant of God's true people in Britain not only true religion, but also true politics. This remnant "reverence the vicegerent of the only King of kings;" they:

> will be found to have a place in that kingdom in this earth, which shall be under One absolute autocrat; with a church and state inseparably united; with a Priest on a throne; where there shall be no toleration, no republicanism, no liberalism; and where those who say that the people are the only source of legitimate power, shall be held accursed; while many who have been worshipping idols set up in their own hearts, and refusing to have this Man rule over them, and trying by societies to establish a millennium without him, shall be cast out.[70]

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The details of Edward Irving's ministry and complex pre-millennialism are much better known and can be briefly summarized. In 1822, after being ordained into the Scottish Kirk, he moved to London to take charge of the little chapel in Hatton Garden. As his biographer in the *Dictionary of National Biography* claimed, "Byron

[68] Ibid., 2:240.
[69] Oliver, p. 115.
[70] Drummond, Social Duties, p. 160f.

scarcely leapt into fame with more suddenness than Irving." Tall and handsome, authoritarian, and with a powerful gift for oratory, he possessed an intense pulpit passion which attracted large and wealthy congregations.[71] One of the unfortunate consequences of this sudden rise to fame was its reinforcement of Irving's own sense of prophetic status and authority, fanned by his entourage of flatterers and fanatics--including Drummond, who had an extraordinary capacity to spot new religious talent and associate with it.

The first meeting between the two occurred in November 1825, while Drummond was chairing a meeting at J.H. Evans' John Street Baptist Church.[72] Irving was unimpressed by Drummond and quickly dismissed the eccentric politician as shallow and superficial. "Henry Drummond was in the chair," he remarked, "he is in all chairs--I fear for him. His words are more witty than spiritual; his manner is *spiritual*, not grave."[73] Unperturbed, Drummond aggressively pursued the popular evangelist, especially after Irving began preaching on the 'second Advent' in the following month.[74] Before long, according to Thomas Carlyle, Irving's earlier reservations about Drummond begin to yield, and their occasional encounters soon developed into a close association, strengthened by their mutual involvement in

[71] Stewart J. Brown, Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland (Oxford, 1982), p. 214. See also James Fleming, The Life and Writings of the Rev. Edward Irving, M.A. (London, 1923).

[72] A Baptist establishment in Holborn built for Evans by Drummond in the aftermath of the Western Schism.

[73] Diary entry for 21 November 1825, cited in Oliphant, p. 176.

[74] Andrew Landale Drummond, Edward Irving And His Circle (London, 1938), p. 127; Murray, p. 189.

the Continental Society.[75] In the following year, Drummond was instrumental in introducing Irving to the theological works of the Chilean Jesuit Lacunza.[76]

Lacunza's notable apocalyptic work, *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, had an extraordinary impact on the religious world, Protestant as well as Catholic.[77] After reading it Irving deepened his interest in the study of Biblical prophecy,[78] and, despite his initial lack of Spanish, quickly resolved to pursue the subject and to translate Lacunza's book into English, bringing it successfully to publication in 1827.[79]

Accompanying Irving's interest in the area of unfulfilled biblical prophecy was his growing opposition to the political and religious reforms of the day. During the debate over the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts he joined Drummond in writing an impassioned plea to the King urging him not to assent to any plan which would undermine the cause of national Christianity.[80] The passage of such a act would open offices of trust, magistracy, judgment, and legislation

[75] Washington Wilks, Edward Irving: An Ecclesiastical and Literary Biography (London, 1854), p. 186.

[76] Lacunza left for Italy when the Jesuits were expelled from Chile in 1767. His work on prophecy was circulated in manuscript form under the pen-name Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, and was only published after his death. Irving read a Spanish copy of the published work. Lively, p. 61.

[77] Juna Josafat Ben-Ezra [Manuel Lacunza Y Diaz], Venida del Mesias en gloria y majestad (Mejico, 1825).

[78] As well as through recent contact with Samuel Taylor Coleridge and James Hatley Frere. See Oliphant, p. 104f; Oliver, pp. 99, 106f; Sandeen, p. 16.

[79] Aben Ezra, [Edward Irving], The Coming of Messiah.

[80] Edward Irving, A Letter to the King, On the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Laws (London, 1828).

to men "who profess no faith in God, nor in the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom Kings reign, and princes decree justice." By granting his assent to such a plan, the King would "sign away the charter of his kingdom" as a Christian nation.[81]

In 1829, moved by the far more threatening attack on the old established order represented by Catholic Emancipation, Irving published a lengthy account of the relationship between Church and State.[82] Once again, he saw political change as an irreparable breach in the old British constitution, all but destroying its standing as a Christian nation. He called desperately for action by the monarch for the divine appointment of those "lieutenants of God" as he called them, who reigned in order not merely to uphold civil policy, but to maintain true religion, and to suppress idolatry and superstition. Though these 'lieutenants' were to "keep to that place and might not usurp anything that pertains...to the offices that are merely ecclesiastical, ...or any part of the power of the spiritual keys, which our Master gave to the Apostles, and to their true successors," Irving's expectations for them were very high. The magistrate:

> hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled and ministered, and observed.[83]

[81] Ibid., p. 3f.
[82] Edward Irving, The Church and State Responsible to Christ, And to One Another (London, 1829).
[83] Ibid., p. v.

He dismissed as sheer heresy the notion advanced by "the modern innovations of schismatics and politicians," that the magistrate obtains his power from the people and not from God. So too was any call for disestablishment. The mischief of such doctrines was that "they look upon the people as if they were not Christ's" and "upon Christ as if he were not the Prince of the kings of the earth...and thus they are guilty of the most deadly schism, in separating the government of nations from the government of Christ."[84] The connection between Church and State therefore:

> is necessary for the well being of both...a mutual acknowledgment...of the common stem out of which they grow. For the State to establish the Church, is an act of homage unto Christ; for the Church to be established, and to help the State with its instruction, prayer, and faith, is an act of dutifulness unto the magistrate, and unto Christ whom he represents. It is not, therefore, a matter of convenience nor of expediency, but a matter of absolute and peremptory duty.[85]

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Irving's speculative interest in unfulfilled biblical prophecy--as well as his conservative opposition to reform--was advanced through his involvement in the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews.[86] The Jew Society, as it became known, had been founded primarily by Dissenters in 1809; however, in 1815, it was taken over by Evangelicals. Membership was then supposedly restricted to Churchmen,[87] although

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[84] Ibid., p. vi.
[85] Ibid., p. 567.
[86] See H.H. Norris, The Origin, Progress and Existing Circumstances of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (London, 1825); Sandeen, pp. 9-12; Wilks, p. 187. See also 'The Christian Dispensation Miraculous,' Jewish Expositor, February 1831.
[87] Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians (Cambridge, 1961), p. 342.

both Sir Thomas Baring (who was then elected President) and Henry Drummond (who was elected Vice-President in 1823) continued to belong to the Society after the outbreak of the Western Schism.[88]

In a sermon preached before the Society in May 1826, Hugh McNeile drew an obvious and compelling parallel between the interests of the prophetic movement and those connected with the conversion of the Jews.[89] During the following summer, Lewis Way, together with James Hatley Frere and Irving, formed the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy which began meeting occasionally in London to study the issue of the immediate fulfillment of prophecy.[90] To these gatherings Way invited numerous members of the Jew Society, including Drummond. Finding London too noisy for the quiet study required for by the task, the meetings were soon transferred--at Drummond's suggestion--to his magnificent country home at Albury, Surrey, where the relationship between unfulfilled prophecy and the restoration of the Jews to their homeland was hotly debated. To advance the investigation, Way suggested that Drummond convene a formal conference to study the subject of unfulfilled prophecy in greater depth.[91] Never one to hesitate in matters of religion or politics, Drum-

[88]See Sarah Kochav, 'Britain and the Holy Land. Prophecy, the Evangelical Movement, and the Conversion and Restoration of the Jews 1790-1845' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1989), pp. 63, 70, 160; Ford K. Brown, pp. 356, 360. Apparently Edward Irving was never a member of the Society, although he certainly shared its interests. See Oliphant, p. 372f.

[89]Hugh McNeile, A Sermon (London, 1826).

[90]Lively, p. 49.

[91]Edward Miller, The History and Doctrines of Irvingism, 2 vols. (London, 1878), 1:36.

mond immediately set about organizing the first of the celebrated Albury Conferences, which was held during November, 1826.[92]

Drummond intended the first Conference to be a pan-evangelical affair involving both clergy and laymen. Invitations were sent to many notable Evangelicals throughout England, Scotland and Ireland, and some thirty to forty attended, of whom about two thirds were in orders (mostly Anglicans, with some Dissenters and Scottish Presbyterians).[93] Among the best-known of those attending were (in addition to Drummond and Irving) Daniel Wilson, the future Bishop of Calcutta; Joseph Wolff, the itinerant traveller and evangelist; William Marsh, the well-known incumbent of St. Peter's, Colchester, and associate of Charles Simeon; James Alexander Haldane, the brother of Robert Haldane; Lord Mandeville (later Duke of Manchester); and Hugh McNeile, who, in his capacity as Rector of Albury, chaired the Conference.[94] Both William Wilberforce and Thomas Chalmers received invitations, but declined to attend.[95]

[92]Ibid., 1:36f; Davenport, pp. 21-28.
[93]A.L. Drummond, p. 133; Davenport, pp. 22f.
[94]A.L. Drummond, p. 133; Miller, 1:37. Others in attendance included: G. Beckett, W. Bryon, Dr. H.T. Bruder, T.W. Cole, W. Dodswark, W. Dow, Charles S. Hawtray, J. Hawtray, H.B. MaClean, Dr. Okely, H.J. Owen, G.W. Phillips, Mr. Probyn, J. Simons, Robert Storey, James Haldane Stewart, James Stratten, Edward T. Vaughan, R. Wolfe, R. Wolfe, Jr., J. White, D. Wildson, the Hon. John James Strutt (later Baron Rayleigh), John Bayford, T. Borthwick, William Cuninghame, James Hatley Frere, Capt. G. Gambier, W. Leach, Lt. Malden, Spencer Perceval, E. Simon, a Mr. Staples, R. Sumner, and John Tudor. See also James Hews Bransby, Evans' Sketch of the Various Denominations of the Christian World, 18th ed. (London, 1841), p. 288f; Sandeen, p. 19f.
[95]Miller, 1:44.

The first Albury Conference lasted for eight days, and examined seven major topics.[96] Extensive notes of the discussions were kept by Drummond as secretary, and published by Irving in the following year in his *Preliminary Discourse to the Work of Ben Ezra*. Drummond also produced an account of the proceedings of the Conference,[97] in which he listed six major points of biblical chronology on which there had been complete unanimity:

> 1) That the present Christian dispensation is to be "terminated by judgments" ending in the destruction of the visible Church and polity.
>
> 2) That during the time of these judgments, the Jews will be restored to the Holy Land.
>
> 3) These judgments will fall primarily, if not exclusively, upon Christendom, especially on "that part of the Church of God which has been most highly favoured, and is therefore most deeply responsible." (e.g. Protestant Evangelicals).
>
> 4) The termination of these judgments is to be succeeded by the Millennium, "a period of universal blessedness."
>
> 5) The second Advent of the Messiah will either precede, or take place at, the commencement of the Millennium.
>
> 6) That a great period of 1260 years commenced in the reign of Justinian, and terminated at the French Revolution; and that the vials of the Apocalypse began then to be poured out.[98]

Despite Drummond's claim that these propositions were held unanimously, disagreements within the prophe-

[96] Including the doctrine of the Holy Spirit concerning the time of the Gentiles; the duties of Christian ministers and laymen connected with this; the present and future condition of the Jews, and the Christian duty towards them; the prophetic visions and numbers of Daniel and the Apocalypse; the doctrine concerning the future Advent of Christ, and the duties of the Church and world arising from it. See also Miller, 1:37f.

[97] Drummond, Dialogues on Prophecy. This work provided a record of the first four Albury Conferences.

[98] Ibid., 3:ii-iii.

tic 'parliament' quickly began to surface. By mid-1827 Drummond had concluded that "some of the people [who had attended] last year had not been very faithful" to the teachings of the movement, and he consulted with Irving to determine who should be invited to the second Conference.[99] Divisions increased as the declarations of subsequent Conferences became less and less restrained and soon developed to create a major three-way split within Evangelicalism as a whole.[100]

All in all, five Albury Conferences were held between 1826 and 1830.[101] During the second Conference, attendance reached its highest level, while in each subsequent year, as the prophetic speculations became more and more extreme, and perhaps as London's fashionable society began to lose interest in the issue of biblical prophecy, numbers steadily declined. In the spring of 1830, reports reached London of the outbreak of miraculous healings and other related spiritual phenomena in the west of Scotland. In order to consider these reports the final Conference was held not in No-

[99] Quoted in Davenport, p. 25.

[100] In 1832, McNeile attempted to differentiate the three distinct positions in terms of divergent views of the 'gifts:' 1) God has seen fit completely to discontinue the 'gifts,' which had been bestowed upon the primitive church only because its infant state required extraordinary assistance; however as it grew and gained comparative security, God weaned the church by degree from such 'miraculous' aids. 2) The *manifestations* of the Spirit are just as much the inheritance of the Church as are the *characteristics* of the Spirit. Furthermore, there can be no church without the Holy Ghost dwelling within it. 3) There is, at this time, an actual revival of at least two of the 'miraculous gifts'--speaking in tongues, and prophesying. See Hugh McNeile, Miracles and Spiritual Gifts (London, 1832), p. xff.

[101] H.C. Whitley, Blinded Eagle. An Introduction to the Life and Teaching of Edward Irving (London, 1955), p. 41.

vember but in July 1830, in response to an emergency summons.[102] Subsequently, Drummond and Irving decided that the Conferences had outlived their purpose and that the debate should be shifted to another, less formal, setting: Irving's establishment at Regent Square.

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Irving's interest in the study of prophecy, as well as the date of the first Albury Conference, closely paralleled the onset of the alleged slide into Trinitarian heresy which eventually resulted in his being removed as a minister of the Kirk.[103] The factors which led to this breach were complex, often unclear, and extended over several years; however, it appears that the foundation for the break lay in a sermon Irving preached before a society concerned with the distribution of gospel Tracts in 1827. According to Mrs. Oliphant, some of those present believed that Irving had claimed during this address that the human nature of Christ was "identical with all human nature."[104] This accusation was immediately set upon by one Henry Cole, who undertook to expose Irving's alleged heresy. After attending an evening service at Irving's Church, Cole confronted the exhausted preacher and accused him of maintaining unorthodox views on Christology. Having received an unsatisfactory response, he then wrote--and quickly published--a scathing attack on Irving, accus-

[102] Davenport, p. 27.
[103] See C. Gordon Strachan, The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving (London, 1973), p. 13.
[104] Oliphant, p. 220f.

ing him of promoting false and dangerous Trinitarian doctrines.[105]

Irving ignored Cole's accusations. To make matters worse, during a tour of Scotland in the following year he foolishly called upon John Macleod Campbell, who himself was about to be tried by the Kirk on charges of doctrinal heresy.[106] This meeting soon became public knowledge and served to confirm the growing suspicions of the unsoundness of Irving's theology. By the time his sermons on the Trinity were finally published in late 1828,[107] polite whispers were being transformed into open speculation.[108] A further work on the nature of Christ did little to redeem his soiled reputation.[109]

Although enthusiastically defended in print by Drummond, Irving soon found himself embroiled in a controversy within his own spiritual constituency. In December 1830, the Scots Presbytery of London (under whose jurisdiction Irving, as minister of the National Scotch Church, Regent Square, served) initiated action

[105] Henry Cole, A Letter to the Rev. Edward Irving (London, 1827).

[106] Stewart J. Brown, p. 214f.

[107] Edward Irving, Sermons, Lectures and Occasional Discourses, vol. 1, The Doctrine of the Incarnation Opened in Six Sermons (London, 1828).

[108] See James Haldane, A Refutation of the Heretical Doctrine promulgated by the Rev. Edward Irving (Edinburgh, 1828); Layman [Henry Drummond], Candid Examination of the Controversy Between Messrs. Irving, A. Thomson, and J. Haldane (London, 1829); James Haldane, Answer to Mr. Henry Drummond's Defence of the Heretical Doctrine Promulgated by Mr. Irving (Edinburgh, 1830); Layman [Henry Drummond], Supplement to the Candid Examination of the Controversy (London, 1830); James Haldane, Reply to Mr. Henry Drummond's Supplement to the Candid Examination (Edinburgh, 1830).

[109] Edward Irving, The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord's Human Nature (London, 1830).

against him on grounds that he taught that Christ had been a sinner. Irving responded to the charge by simply withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the London Presbytery and the case died a quiet death.

Outbreaks of the 'miraculous gifts' then began to occur, first at Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, then at a private residence in London (see below), and finally, on October 30th, 1831, within the vestry at Regent Square.[110] On the following Sunday--and with Irving's tacit approval--outbursts of tongues and prophecy repeatedly interrupted public worship; when Irving firmly refused to suppress them at the insistence of the trustees, a split appeared between the two.

A formal complaint against Irving was filed by the trustees with the Presbytery of London, which responded by offering to proceed in upholding the trustees' interests if, in turn, the trustees would agree once again to submit to its authority and concur in its previous condemnation of Irving on Trinitarian grounds. This scheme was warmly received by the trustees, who were now all too willing to submit to the Presbytery's demands.

Irving's trial opened in late April 1832, and he was quickly condemned and locked out of his Church. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland then took action against him on the grounds of Christological heresy, and, in the following March, he was found guilty by the Presbytery of Annan and deposed from the ministry of the Kirk.[111] He then gathered the remaind-

[110]Strachan, p. 13.
[111]Ibid., p. 14.

er of his followers, which now numbered about eight-hundred, into a new body, which would soon become known as the Catholic Apostolic Church.[112]

At first, Irving's followers were compelled to gather in a small, dilapidated room in Gray's Inn Road, which at other times of the week was occupied by none other than the dreaded Socialist Robert Owen.[113] After some months of this humiliating co-habitation, Irving succeeded in securing a house in Newman Street with a picture gallery large enough to assemble his entire following. The room was then fitted up with pews and galleries in traditional form, though at the front he built a large platform capable of containing some fifty people. On its various levels were seats for (in descending order) the six 'elders' and the 'angel,' the seven 'prophets,' and the seven 'deacons.' The 'angel,' or chief pastor (Irving), ordered the service, with the preaching and expounding generally being done by the elders in order, the Prophets speaking as utterances came upon them.[114] In December 1832, John Bate Cardale was called as the first apostle in the Church, followed, during the following September, by Henry Drummond.[115] Before long, separate, but dependent congregations were being formed by two Evangelical clerical seceders from the Church of England: the Irishman Nicholas Armstrong, and H.J. Owen of Park Chap-

[112] D.N.B.
[113] Oliphant, p. 369.
[114] Ibid., p. 381f.
[115] D.N.B. A.L. Drummond (p. 232) placed Henry Drummond's ordination as apostle one year earlier. Ordination was vested solely in the apostles; however, as the last apostle died in 1901, the Church's permanence was impossible.

el, Chelsea.[116] Yet another body was organized by the Rev. Mr. Miller, minister of Bishopsgate Independent Chapel.[117] Tragically, Irving did not live long enough to act out the final scene of the drama, dying of consumption in December 1834.[118] Whether he continued in his assurance that the 'gifts' had truly returned remains uncertain.[119] The administrative centre of the Church was soon transferred to Albury, where Drummond financed the construction of a new cathedral and chapter house for its use. It was Cardale who was to develop the liturgical and devotional life of the Catholic Apostolic Church by inspired borrowing from ancient liturgies--mostly of the Eastern Church--developing the 'Catholic' strain in the new body.[120]

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The various positions taken by Evangelicals on the issue of prophecy and the return of the 'gifts' created what Clyde Ervine has termed "by far the most bitter and far-reaching conflict that divided the Anglican Evangelical clergy," and sharply changed the ethos of the party during the late 1820s.[121] The divisions which ensued can be seen in the views on the subject expressed by several well-known Evangelicals. Edward

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[116] A.L. Drummond, p. 231; Oliphant, p. 371.
[117] A.L. Drummond, p. 231.
[118] Strachan., p. 14.
[119] See Lively (p 74f) for a discussion of this point
[120] See J. Lancaster, 'John Bate Cardale, Pillar of Apostles: a Quest for Catholicity' (Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrews University, 1978); John Bate Cardale, Readings Upon the Liturgy and Other Divine Offices of the Church, 2 vols. (London, 1848-1878).
[121] W.J.C. Ervine, 'Doctrine and Diplomacy: Some Aspects of the Life and Thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797-1837,' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1979), p. 277.

Bickersteth, a major figure in the prophetic movement, took a moderate position on the question of the return of the 'gifts.'[122] Early in his ministry he had accepted the standard post-millennialist line, looking forward to the gradual conversion of the world by the spread of missions and a larger blessing on the ordinary means of grace.[123] His shift to pre-millennialism no doubt paralleled that of many other Evangelicals. Around 1814 he became interested in the conversion of the Jews, possibly through the influence of the Scottish layman, William Cuninghame of Lainshaw.[124] His first work on prophecy, which advanced a post-millennialist position, was published in 1824;[125] four years later, shaken by the imminent passage of Catholic emancipation ("I fear that we have displeased God, and may expect tokens of his displeasure") and the outbreak of the Bristol riots ("The Lord is shaking these kingdoms"),[126] his certitude about the improvement of the world began to diminish. At the same time, he remained anxious lest the issue of prophecy begin to dominate the minds of immature and impressionable believers. As he wrote while travelling in England in March 1828:

> I find the prophetic question doing injury to some. Men get full of their own views, and press them as all-essential, and speak as positively as if futurity were as open to them as what is past; and then others publicly speak against them; and

[122] T.R. Birks, ed. Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, Late Rector of Watton, Herts., 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1852), 2:44.
[123] Birks, 1:42.
[124] See Oliver, p. 90.
[125] Edward Bickersteth, Practical Remarks on Prophecies (London, 1824).
[126] Birks, 1:421; 2:17.

> so the dividing spirit of the age increases and spreads.[127]

Three years later, writing to his wife from the Midlands about missions, Bickersteth expressed a similar alarm:

> Things are in a most dead and cold state here... The good men are all afloat on prophesying and the immediate work of the Lord is disregarded for the uncertain future. These things ought not to be so. But I think any one who has known this place for the last seven or eight years might have foreboded all we now see.[128]

Nevertheless, his own personal views were moving closer to pre-millennialism. When the outbreak of 'tongues' occurred in Irving's Regent Square congregation, Bickersteth attended a service to witness the spectacle for himself. "It did not appear to me," he regretfully remarked, "as a real work of the Spirit. I was depressed by it, as a delusion on the minds of eminent Christians."[129] In August of the same year, he preached four sermons on the subject of prophecy which were quickly published and which document his new pre-millennialist positions.[130] Moreover, the fourth edition of his *Practical Remarks on Prophecy* (1835) was revised in favour of the pre-millennialist argument. Other publications followed, written in an attempt to "quiet the minds of those Christians who were in danger of forsaking plain and immediate duties for the path of

[127] Ibid., 1:420f.
[128] Ibid., 2:43.
[129] Edward Bickersteth, Journal Entry for 1 April 1832, Cited in Ibid., p. 338.
[130] Edward Bickersteth, Preparedness for the Day of Christ Urged on all Christians (London, 1833).

thorny and doubtful speculation."[131] He remained on the fringes of the prophetic movement in the years to come. While pessimistic to a degree, he did not entirely abandon his sense of spiritual optimism or his long-standing interest in missions.

As the course of the prophetic movement became increasingly eccentric, Hugh McNeile, too, found himself precariously placed between his loyalty to his patron and his doubts over the direction of Drummond's theology. Two earlier publications, *The Times of the Gentiles* (1828) and *Popular Lectures on the Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (delivered in 1827 and published in 1830) had taken a line close to the arguments of the Albury set, of which he was a member. It appears also that he continued to chair the Albury Conferences until their discontinuance in 1830. Nevertheless certain doubts remained. In late 1830 he began to oppose Drummond's efforts to organize private prayer meetings at his home, for "he would not suffer laymen to pray in his presence."[132] Sensing his growing unease over the direction of the prophetic movement, Drummond instead urged McNeile to seek personal experience of the 'gifts' and to judge for himself. McNeile consented to this appeal; it merely served, however, to further his growing sense of disquiet about the work. Once when a woman spoke in an unknown tongue during a meeting at Drummond's house, McNeile quickly objected:

[131] Birks, 2:43. See Edward Bickersteth, Practical Remarks on the Prophecies (London, 1824); Practical Remarks on the Prophecies, in A Scripture Help, 12th ed. (London, 1825); The Coming of Christ, in The Book of Private Devotions (London, 1839).

[132] Davenport, p. 70.

it was not of God, he firmly insisted, for it involved a rejection of the biblical injunction concerning women teaching in Church.[133] At the same time, McNeile continued publicly to speak out in support of the 'gifts.' In March 1831, he wrote to the *Christian Observer* defending their reappearance. "The miraculous gifts of healing and speaking in unknown tongues," he claimed, "are a regular part of the Christian dispensation, and ...nothing but our want of faith prevents our using them." Any position contradicting this would "render the Epistles useless to us." On the other hand, although the 'gifts' have been in the 'Church of Christ' "*in some measure,...neither the one nor the other are or have been in the Church according to the full dimensions of the Apostolical description.*"[134] McNeile's relationship with his patron--and with the prophetic movement itself--continued to deteriorate, however, and was finally severed over Drummond's decision to secede once again from the Church of England.

Drummond later explained how this decision came about. In March 1832, shortly before the expulsion of Irving from Regent Square, he visited London in a determined frame of mind:

> the situation was not one which admitted of half-measures; if I believed that the Holy Ghost was now speaking in the Church, I must also believe that all who openly rejected Him were in fatal error. I had been in treaty for the purchase of a pew in Trinity Church, Chelsea; but finding that the minister there preached against the work of the Holy Spirit, I withdrew from it. I then saw the use, or rather the necessity, of the voice of the Spirit, and the Lord's object in sending it--

[133] Loc. cit. He equated Drummond's home with the Church

[134] C.O., March 1831, p. 154. Emphasis added.

> namely, for the building up of a Church in holiness, in order to be prepared to meet Him whose speedy appearance we had all at Albury unanimously professed to accept.[135]

The obvious course was to unite with Irving and his work at Regent Square. Perhaps because he considered Irving's claims to the Apostolic ministry to be invalid, or perhaps because of his characteristic independence, Drummond instead chose a alternative path, albeit temporary. Prior to his returning to Albury in July 1832, he wrote to McNeile (who was by this time preaching publicly at Albury against the 'gifts') "to tell him how much I regretted that it was impossible for me to remain in the Church if he persisted in preaching against the work of the Lord and against all who believed in it...I valued the ordinances of a Christian church, and knew the spiritual danger I incurred in abstaining myself from them; but that it would be impossible for me to attend to hear the work of the Holy Spirit attacked."[136] While their exchanges were marked by a sense of "kindness and courtesy," the breach between the two men was now complete. Some twenty members of the Albury congregation were persuaded to secede with Drummond and to meet at his home on Sundays to pray for the gifts of the Spirit.[137] Before long, faced with an increasing number of new adherents, the group began to pray for a sympathetic minister who would come and relieve them from their virtual self-excommunication from the sacrament of Holy Communion. Their prayers were answered on December 26th, 1832,

[135]Quoted in Davenport, p. 71.
[136]Ibid., p. 72.
[137]Loc. cit.

when it was revealed prophetically that Drummond was to be ordained by Cardale (the first 'Apostle') as an 'angel' (bishop) in the Church.[138] In this way the blossoming Catholic Apostolic Church was first given organization at Albury.

Sometime during 1832 McNeile abandoned the prophetic movement altogether. This break was finalized with the publication, two years later, of a volume of impassioned letters to his friend Spencer Perceval urging him not to secede from the Establishment and become an 'Apostle' in the Catholic Apostolic Church.[139] Having been so close to the movement in its early phase, he felt himself qualified to pronounce judgment on it. Referring especially to Drummond and Irving, he cautioned: "there were men" whose constraining motive was "perverted religion." These

> Filled with admiration of the predicted holiness and beauty of the *perfected* Church of Christ, at the second Advent of her Lord, and looking at this truth alone, to the neglect of present duties arising out of other portions of Holy Scripture; [they] have become impatient of human infirmity, and determined to have a holy company even now. Forgetful of what manner of spirit they are themselves, they have hastily seceded from the militant and imperfect Church in which they were baptized, gone into diverse excesses of extravagant excitement, and denounced all who will not go with them.[140]

In the same year McNeile resigned as incumbent of Albury to become Perpetual Curate at St. Jude's, Liverpool, where, in addition to his activities as leader of militant Protestantism, he became one of the most vo-

[138] Ibid., p. 80.
[139] Hugh McNeile, Letters to a Friend (London, 1834)
[140] Ibid., p. ix-x.

ciferous advocates for the principle of establishment.[141]

William Marsh was another well-known Evangelical whose interest in the conversion of the Jews coincided with his interest in the study of prophecy.[142] In 1829, probably uneasy over the extreme tendencies of the Albury Conferences, and wishing to provide a more theologically moderate alternative, he convened his own annual gatherings at his home in Colchester, attracting clergy and laymen from all parts of the country. Other meetings were apparently held in Oxford, Plymouth, and Bristol.[143] When Marsh took up the incumbency of St. Thomas', Birmingham later that same year, his interest in prophecy quickly led to his acquisition of the sobriquet 'Millennial Marsh;' by 1834, however, his dislike of the theological excesses being advanced by Drummond and Irving erupted into open conflict, and, like a number of other Evangelicals, he began to condemn the miraculous appearance of the 'gifts' as being no more than a "plausible delusion" which had "beguiled" many innocent believers.[144] Marsh eventually published his own statement on the subject, which took a moderate line between the various extremes.[145]

Among the most vociferous and unyielding of the critics of Irving and his circle was Baptist Noel, the

[141] See Chapter One.
[142] C. Marsh, The Life of the Rev. William Marsh, 6th ed. (London, 1867), p. 91.
[143] Ibid., p. 139.
[144] Ibid., p. 184f.
[145] William Marsh, A few Plain Thoughts on Prophecy (Colchester, 1840). See also Passages from Letters by a Clergyman on Jewish, Prophetical and Scriptural Subjects (London, 1845).

influential Minister of St. John's, Bedford Row. Noel remained a keen post-millennialist, despite the contrary position taken by his elder brother Gerald, who was an ardent pre-millennialist. Noel, a Whiggish reformer and protagonist of city missions, worked intensively for the improvement of society as it existed. His encounter with the prophetic movement in its extreme form was accentuated in the spring of 1831 by his association with John Bate Cardale, a long-standing member of St. John's and a prominent London lawyer, with offices on Bedford Row across from Noel's Chapel.

In about 1830, Cardale developed a keen interest in the study of prophecy, and in September of that year travelled to Scotland to examine the reports of a supposed outbreak of tongues,[146] returning convinced that the reports were true. In the following month he opened his home for weekly prayer meetings for the so-called "outpouring of the spirit."[147] On April 30th, 1831, his wife, Mrs. Emma Cardale, began speaking in tongues. Baptist Noel was invited to sanction the 'miracle' and the assemblies in which it had taken place by witnessing the tongues at first hand. He not only declined but began to preach publicly against the utterances,[148] and thereafter published a thinly-veiled

[146] A detailed statement of the case of Miss Fancourt appeared in the C.O., November 1830, p. 708ff.

[147] D.N.B.

[148] Loc. cit. See also W.H.B. Proby, Annals of the 'Low Church' Party in England, 2 vols. (London, 1888) 1:337.

attack on Irving, denouncing pre-millennialism and predictions of Christ's imminent Advent.[149]

Noel was not alone among prominent Evangelicals in condemning the Albury circle.[150] Charles Simeon was equally anxious to distance himself and his party from the excesses of Irvingism. The brunt of his attack fell--like so many previous attacks on Evangelical secceders--on the volatility and changeableness of the victims of the 'prophetic fever.' In his opinion their speculations were weak-brained fancy and wild speculation, diverting Christians away from far more important biblical truths and from the propagation of 'vital religion.' In February 1830, he complained that the millennial craze was one "in which no two of its advocates agree, and which, as adding to the honour of God, or the happiness of the redeemed, does not weigh so much as the mere dust upon the balance." It fills believers "only with vain conceits, intoxicates the imagination, alienates the brethren from each other, and, *by being unduly urged upon the minds of humble Christians*, is doing the devil's work by wholesale."[151] Some seven months later, he added:

> My complaint is, not that they study prophecy, to whatever it may relate; but, that they give it an undue measure of their attention, (making all the wonders of redemption itself almost secondary to their views of Christ's personal reign on earth),

[149]Baptist W. Noel, Remarks on the Revival of Miraculous Powers in the Church (London, 1831). For a response, see Thomas Boys, The Suppressed Evidence (London, 1832).

[150]See also Anon., Modern Fanaticism Unveiled (London, 1831); and, Anon., Try the Spirits (London, 1831).

[151]Letter of 19 February 1830, quoted in William Carus, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A., 3rd ed. (London, 1848), p. 460.

> and that they press this their favourite subject with an undue zeal upon the attention of the religious public; making (as Mr. D. has done) a love to all the great principles of the gospel no better than *idolatry* in comparison of it, and *declaring the reception of their views essential to the salvation of the soul.*[152]

In 1832, Simeon curtly dismissed the Albury circle as "brain-sick enthusiasts," whose sentiments were not worthy of controverting.[153]

The *Christian Observer*, never one to ignore salient issues, at first exhibited a certain receptivity toward the prophetic movement. In 1829, it described Irving in terms of cautious respect:

> Mr Irving is no trimmer and his talents are equal to his courage: so that where he is right, he is nobly right; and where he is wrong, proportionably wrong. He gives no quarter to any man of any party; he graduates only for the extremes of heat and cold, frost and fever; all measure, all qualification he instinctively rejects.[154]

This qualified praise was soon swept away by the appearance of the 'gifts.' The "spirit of fanaticism has been busily at work; dreams, miracles, and the most absurd pretences to the gift of tongues, have been urged ...to prove doctrines most mischievous, extravagant, and unscriptural."[155] Could any believer in his right mind accept that this "compound of fraud and folly" had truly been produced by the work of the divine spirit?[156]

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The impact of the English prophetic movement upon the larger arena of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism

[152]Letter of 17 September 1830, quoted in Ibid., p. 460n.
[153]Quoted in Proby, 1:338.
[154]C.O., 1829, p. 289.
[155]Ibid., 1830, p. 708.
[156]Ibid., p. 782.

is difficult to calculate. Both Drummond and Irving, the movement's two dominant personalities, came to believe that since Apostolic days, but especially in modern times, the church had lost its zeal, descending into a degenerate state. So too had the Evangelical Revival on whose spirituality they had drawn. In this belief they were not alone. In their quest for a return of the church to the purity and zeal of the Apostolic dispensation, however, Drummond and Irving travelled to much greater extremes than most of the other Evangelical secederes. The Sandemanians and Walkerites, for example, were content to implement what they saw as a clear and workable Apostolic model for the church, which had been neglected for centuries. Drummond and Irving, on the other hand, made a virtual *tabula rasa* of the past. The Christian dispensation had virtually failed; a totally new one lay ahead and was to be fulfilled through the genesis of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Those who had been divinely entrusted with the duty of protecting the church's purity and teachings had failed utterly; God was thus compelled to reject the dispensation of the Gentiles and usher in a new Christian Advent. The emergence of the 'gifts' within this new Advent confirmed the glorious restoration of God's Church to the limits of its Apostolic purity and power.[157]

While a considerable number of Evangelicals accepted the pre-millennialist argument, only a handful fully embraced the 'gifts' as genuine;[158] even fewer

[157]See Miller, 2:21f.
[158]See Hempton, p. 193.

joined Drummond and Cardale in seceding from the Established Church. In fact, no more than five or six Evangelical clergymen abandoned either the Church of England or the Scottish Kirk for the Catholic Apostolic Church; moreover, in spite of the accession of a small number of wealthy and influential laymen into the leadership ranks of the new body, and in spite of the addition to those members of the congregation who accompanied Irving when he was expelled from Regent Square and those who accompanied Drummond when he seceded from the parish Church at Albury, relatively few laymen were recruited from the Established Church.[159] Why was this?

Firstly, it was due to the perceived extremism and theological unsoundness of the prophetic movement and its teachings. While many Evangelicals accepted the Irvingites' pre-millennialist dogmas, the overwhelming majority of Evangelicals could not countenance the supposed return of the gifts. This, above all else, proved the major stumbling block preventing a great rush of Evangelical seceders into the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Secondly, the esoteric and eclectic 'high church' and 'Catholic' practices of the Catholic Apostolic Church were a major deterrent, preventing any significant secession of Recordites (the most likely source of recruits) out of the Church of England, for, though they shared with Drummond and Irving a deep fear of liberalism, the Recordites perceived themselves as the vehement upholders of Protestantism and the opponents

[159]See Appendix 1.

of all that smelt of 'Popery.' The Catholic Apostolic Church, as it rapidly developed, looked altogether too eccentric a body, with its blend of Calvinist, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, charismatic, and millennial ingredients.

A third factor was that, for all his eloquence, Irving was temperamentally unsuited to lead a major religious movement, while Drummond, on the other hand, was dismissed by most Evangelicals as a wealthy extremist with a dubious past as a former Western Schismatic.

The new cause was also damaged by internal controversy. Drummond and a number of the 'Apostles' rounded on Irving shortly before his death, not because they rejected his teachings or because they disputed his divine call to the position of 'angel,' but because they fell out over the delicate issue of the exercise of their newly appointed 'Apostolic' authority. It had become a question of who had been Divinely appointed to lead the Church, Irving or the Apostles?[160]

As a result, the Catholic Apostolic Church was unable to attract, through clerical and lay secessions, the level of support its leaders had expected from the ranks of the English and Scottish Establishments. This factor played an important role in limiting its success. But this does not fully explain how the Catholic Apostolic Church succeeded in attracting sizable congregations to its seven London churches, as well as drawing not inconsiderable numbers elsewhere in Britain and overseas during the mid-nineteenth century. No

[160]See Davenport, p. 89f.

doubt a number of those who initially filled the pews of the Church were Evangelicals who came out of curiosity; when satisfied, they either remained or moved on. A good number of these early converts may also have been attracted from evangelical Dissent. Some proselytizing success must also have been achieved, attracting those who could not be lured into the less rigid and dogmatic services of the Established Church. The social and denominational profile of the early converts to the Catholic Apostolic Church still remains to be studied; when it is, it may shed much needed light on the trends within English Evangelicalism during this volatile period.

Irving's early demise deprived the prophetic movement of its most mesmeric figure--but it very likely also prevented a major public split between its leading personalities. Nevertheless, despite the retreat of Drummond and Irving into the eccentric confines of their new beliefs, their case appeared sufficiently important to elicit a vigorous response from prominent Evangelicals, as well as to entice a small number of secessions from the Church of England. Despite its limited success, the English prophetic movement contributed to the general unease and partial fragmentation of the larger Evangelical movement during the late 1820s and early 1830s. Moreover, when its repercussions upon the wider circle of Evangelicalism are considered--especially in Ireland, a theme which will be addressed in the following chapter--it is clear that the Albury 'Apostles' also served as an important cata-

lyst for further outbreaks of theological extremism elsewhere, and encouraged a considerably larger group of Evangelical seceders to abandon the Church. The legacy of Drummond and Irving extended far beyond the events at Albury.