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

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Irish Millennialism: John Nelson Darby and the Origins of the Christian Brethren, c.1825-1832

While the English prophetic movement coalesced around Henry Drummond and Edward Irving at Albury, a similar outburst of millennial speculation occurred among Dublin's troubled Evangelicals. The political situation was more tense in Ireland than on the mainland, as the prospect of Catholic emancipation drew ever closer. Though it had long remained an 'open question' in the Cabinet, Catholic relief bills passed through the Commons in 1821 and--more far-reaching--in 1825, only to be defeated in the Lords. Lord Liverpool's retirement in 1827, and his replacement by the 'Protestant' Canning, showed that government neutrality on the issue was not likely to last much longer.[1] In 1823, Catholic grass-roots organization in Ireland was renewed with Daniel O'Connell's militant Catholic Association. The future of the Protestant ascendancy seemed dark. In such a threatening situation it was hardly surprising that pre-millennialism gained an especial foothold in Ireland, with its attempt to equate the Roman Church with the 'man of sin' in prophecy. As David Hempton has observed, it is striking to note the number of prophetical writers who were educated at Trinity College, Dublin, or who had strong Irish links.[2] The imminent expectation of nationalistic Catholic rebellion drove many devout Protestants to an unusually close study of the 'signs of the times.'

[1]See Norman Gash, Aristocracy and People, 3rd ed. (London, 1983), p. 126ff.

[2]See David Hempton, 'Evangelicals and Eschatology,' J.E.H., Vol. 31. No. 2, April 1980, p. 184f.

In an unsettled atmosphere still stirred by John Walker's extreme Calvinistic and separatist teachings, a new religious party arose, dedicated, like Walker's, to restoring the Christian faith and practice to its Apostolic purity and theological soundness. Although the origins of the Christian Brethren movement were rooted in the Church of England, its followers quickly came to reject the moderation of the Evangelical consensus: no fewer than fifteen Evangelical clergymen seceded into the Brethren during its early years, in addition to a large body of laymen.[3] These seceders took over a number of the more extreme evangelical teachings then current, modifying them in eclectic fashion to suit their own purposes in what became the Brethren's own unique formulation of doctrine.[4]

An important initial influence in the history of the Brethren was another of those devout, wealthy and formidable ladies who have often made their mark on Evangelical history. Theodosia Powerscourt, a wealthy Anglo-Irish aristocrat, like many of her fashionable contemporaries, had fallen under the influence of 'ser-

[3]See Appendix 1.

[4]This chapter will build on the growing body of scholarship on the origins of the Brethren. See Anon., Plymouth Brethrenism: Its Ecclesiastical and Doctrinal Teachings; With a Sketch of its History, 2nd ed. (London, 1874); James Grant, The Plymouth Brethren: Their History and Heresies (London, 1875); George T. Stokes, 'John Nelson Darby,' Contemporary Review, October 1885, pp. 537-552; William Blair Neatby, A History of the Plymouth Brethren (London, 1901); Thomas Stewart Veitch, The Story of the Brethren Movement (London, c.1920); Hy. Pickering, Chief Men Among the Brethren, 2nd ed. (London, 1931); Harold H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren (London, 1967); F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement (Exeter, 1968); David Brady, The Christian Brethren Archive in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (Firenze, 1988).

ious religion.' She was the widowed second wife of Richard Wingfield, Fifth Viscount Powerscourt,[5] the daughter of the Hon. Hugh Howard, and the niece of William Howard, the Third Earl of Wicklow.[6] In about 1826, Lady Powerscourt developed an intense interest in the study of unfulfilled biblical propnecy and in the reappearance of the 'gifts,' or powers of the Spirit. She began attending Edward Irving's congregation when in London and, although rejecting his odd Trinitarian notions, entered enthusiastically into his movement to arouse an urgent adventist concern in gospel circles. On her return, she organized small meetings at her country home in Ireland, inviting interested acquaintances to explore the theme under the guidance of Robert Daly, the influential Evangelical Rector of Powerscourt, and her entrusted confidant.[7]

[5]Described as "an Irish nobleman deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of his countrymen." See W.D. Killen, The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland, 2 vols. (London, 1875), 2:416.

[6]Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, 10th edition (London, 1980), p. 2173; Mervyn Edward, Seventh Viscount Powerscourt, Muniments of the Ancient Saron Family of Wingfield (London, 1894), p. 44; Robert Daly, Letters and Papers By the Late Theodosia A. Viscountess Powerscourt (Dublin, 1838); Viscount Powerscourt, A Description and History of Powerscourt (London, 1903). Her stepson, the Hon. and Rev. W. Wingfield, married the daughter of Thomas Kelly. See E.M., February 1856, p. 69.

[7]Mrs. Hamilton Madden, Memoir of the Late Right Rev. Robert Daly, D.D., Lord Bishop of Cashel (London, 1875), p. 149. Powerscourt was one of the most influential parishes in Ireland, comprising a population of some 2,000 Protestants. See D.H. Atkinson, The Church of Ireland (New Haven, 1971), p. 133.

Later in 1826, Lady Powerscourt attended the first Albury Conference,[8] responding so enthusiastically to the various sessions that Irving and Henry Drummond suggested that she convene a series of similar conferences in Ireland. This she immediately set about organizing, and the first of the Powerscourt Conferences was held in the autumn of 1827 at her magnificent country estate near Bray, Co. Wicklow.[9] To this gathering she invited over four hundred Evangelicals (Churchmen and Dissenters) from all over England, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as from the surrounding areas, entertaining them for a week of study and speculation in the grand style.[10]

As at Albury, the focus of the Conference was the study of unfulfilled prophecy. Although such controversial issues as the return of the 'gifts' were of secondary interest, they sometimes overshadowed the proceedings. Morning and evening sessions were organized in such a way as to cover a wide variety of top-

[8] Ibid., p. 150; Stokes, p. 543; Pickering, p. 20. Other accounts ignore Lady Powerscourt's presence at the Albury Conference(s); for example: James Hews Bransby, Evans' Sketch of the Various Denominations of the Christian World, 18th ed. (London, 1841), p. 288f; Andrew Landale Drummond, Edward Irving and His Circle (London, 1938), p. 133; Edward Miller, The History and Doctrines of Irvingism, 2 vols. (London, 1878), 1:37ff; E.R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago, 1970), p. 34f.

[9] H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 150. Newton was incorrect in stating that the first Conference was held in 1831, as was the editor of Darby's letters. See B.W. Newton, Answers to the Questions Considered at a Meeting Held in Plymouth, 2nd ed. (Plymouth, 1847), p. i; Letters of John Nelson Darby, ed. by J.A. Trench, 3 vols. (London, 1886), 1:6.

[10] H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 150; Ian H. Murray, The Puritan Hope, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh, 1984), p. 199. Darby, J.G. Bellett, B.W. Newton, Percy Hall, Henry Craik, and George Muller (all early adherents of the Brethren) attended one or more Conferences.

ics, with a new one being introduced each day.[11] Daly was employed to chair the sessions, and, in keeping with his own theological moderation, he consistently attempted to direct the discussions away from their natural tendency toward theological extremism.[12] In spite of these efforts, the strong pre-millennialist tendencies of those in attendance prevailed, and the sessions increasingly dwelt upon the expectation of Christ's expeditious return to earth and the preceding--or accompanying--restoration of the 'gifts.'

By 1831, the discussions exhibited a clear commitment both to high Calvinism and to pre-millennialism.[13] Even more worrying to the 'moderates' was the Conference's emerging anti-Erastianism. National religious establishments, some separatists claimed, were not, like the early Churches, "united on the ground of belonging to Christ," but on a dangerously contrary principle: "to receive the world, and call it by the name of Christ." The Established Church debarred many true believers who could not accept various "unscriptural enactments" of the State; thus it "cut off many followers of Jesus who have stumbled at the enforcement of things not enjoined by God." In a national church, membership was given equally to the godly and the unregenerate. Those who attended the services of an established church did not gather together in true Christian fellowship but assembled with the world: even at the communion table, the elect met with the unworthy and

[11]Loc. cit.; Darby's Letters, 1:8.
[12]H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 150.
[13]Newton, pp. 6, 69-81.

the unsaved. State churches were inimical to the free, charismatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By allowing only the clergy appointed by man and not by God to speak during the service, they hindered "the free course of the Spirit."[14]

Views like these soon began to isolate the Conferences from mainstream Evangelicalism. Most 'gospel clergymen' were opposed to (or indifferent about) premillennialism and were firmly attached to the Church; very few shared the intense enthusiasm for speculation about unfulfilled prophecy and Christ's imminent return shown by Drummond, Irving, Lady Powerscourt, and some of the more outspoken leaders of the prophetic movement. By 1832, if not earlier, the Rector of Powerscourt began to be alarmed lest such "strange doctrines" should undermine the faith of his parishioners and perhaps set off another mass secession from the Church.[15]

The stance of the moderate majority was well illustrated by Peter Roe, the Evangelical incumbent of Kilkenny, who, in his diary entry for September 29th, 1832, after a week in residence at the Powerscourt Conference, concluded that it had been an unprofitable exercise. Many of the subjects debated were obscure and difficult, extravagant assertions were made, dogmas quite opposed to each other were maintained with the greatest pertinacity, and the duty of seeking for miraculous gifts, "was strongly insisted upon."[16] Daly felt compelled publicly to rebuke those who advanced

[14] Ibid., p. 15.
[15] H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 151.
[16] Samuel Madden, Memoir of the Life of the Late Peter Roe, A.M. (Dublin, 1842), p. 445.

these unsound views, and announced dramatically in the last session that at Powerscourt he had experienced a more awful sense of accumulated evil then ever before.[17]

Rumours of these tensions and divisions in the movement soon began to circulate amongst religious circles in both Ireland and England. In response, John Nelson Darby, curate of the adjoining parish of Calary and the emerging leader of the Irish premillennialists, wrote a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Christian Herald*, attempting to deny that the recent Conference had lapsed either into theological extremism or into open conflict. Allowing that there existed a variety of views on certain matters, he disingenuously claimed that there was but one instance of contention during the entire Conference (when someone made reference to the reception of the 'gifts'), and even this had not affected the gathering: on the contrary, it had been perhaps the most profitable topic of all, allowing for the full elucidation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. All "defective and erroneous" opinions, he concluded, had quickly been silenced by "Scriptural light."[18]

Far from calming anxiety, Darby's letter only exacerbated the increasingly tense situation. In the following year, errant prophetical and separatist opinions continued to surface, forcing Daly, in 1833, like Hugh McNeile his counterpart at Albury, to withdraw al-

[17]H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 153f.
[18]Letter from Darby to the editor of the Christian Herald, n.d., quoted in Darby's Letters, 1:61.

together from leadership and participation in the Conferences and the prophetic movement.

In spite of their close and long association, Lady Powerscourt eventually disregarded the warnings of her Rector and continued to be drawn deeper into the prophetic movement until her premature death in 1836. Of considerable influence upon her views at this time was George Muller, a German immigrant who had become a Baptist minister of some kind in the West of England, and who was later known as the founder of the celebrated Ashley Down Orphan Home near Bristol.[19] In 1833 Muller travelled to Ireland to attend the Powerscourt Conference, where his teachings on the removal of all religious tests and subscriptions, as well as his desire to unify all believers in some kind of 'Apostolic union,' held great sway with her Ladyship. Consequently, she invited Muller to stay on at Powerscourt House to establish a regular meeting for worship and the breaking of bread which would be open to all believers. At about this time, he apparently severed his ties with the Baptists and amalgamated the Powerscourt gathering with the Aungier Street meeting in Dublin (see below), forming the first recognizable body of the Brethren.[20]

This marked the end of Lady Powerscourt's association with the Church. Her secession was a painful blow to Daly and to the other 'moderates' who had hoped that

[19] E.H. Broadbent, The Pilgrim Church (London, 1945), pp. 360-368.

[20] Stokes (p. 544) claims that Muller had become the leader of the English Separatist movement, a body which was perhaps connected with Walker or Darby.

she might remain within the Establishment.[21] To Irish Evangelicalism as a whole, it was of considerable importance, for although Lady Powerscourt was the only member of Daly's parish to secede, her example proved instrumental in encouraging other leading Irish Evangelical families to follow suit and associate with the Brethren.[22] Nonetheless her Ladyship and Daly appeared to have remained on warm personal terms. In her funeral sermon, Daly described her secession in kindly terms, seeing it as activated by a desire for holiness and perfect purity.[23] Had she lived longer, Lady Powerscourt might have become one of the leading figures in the development of the Brethren movement, following in the footsteps of other noted aristocratic women such as the Countess of Huntingdon or Lady Glenorchy; however, her death, at the age of thirty-six, precluded any contribution beyond her work in organizing the various Conferences and in hosting Irving during his visit to Ireland in the summer of 1830, when she introduced him to a number of influential Evangelicals.[24]

Some uncertainty remains as to how long the Powerscourt Conferences continued. Daly's biographer states that they were held annually for three or four years.[25] Another account claims that her Ladyship was unable to use Powerscourt House after 1833, apparently

[21]An Old Pensioner [Mrs. Hamilton Madden], Personal Recollections of the Right Rev. Robert Daly, D.D. (Dublin, 1872), p. 23.

[22]Walter Alison Phillips, History of the Church of Ireland From the Earliest Times to the Present Day, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1933), 3:352.

[23]H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 157f.

[24]Mrs. Oliphant, The Life of Edward Irving 6th ed. (London, c.1900), pp. 299-302.

[25]H. Madden, Memoir of Robert Daly, p. 151.

because her stepson (and heir to the title) had come of age. The Conferences were then allegedly transferred to Dublin, where they continued to be held until the time of her death.[26] It has also been suggested that Daly's withdrawal in 1833 signalled the end of the work;[27] however, some have claimed that they continued at least until September 1838, some two years after Lady Powerscourt's death.[28] This assertion is based upon the personal testimony of one James Butler Stoney, an 1834 convert to Brethrenism, which allegedly described the 1838 Conference in some detail.

Stoney's account claimed that John Synge occupied the chair at the Conference, and that Darby consistently spoke last at the various sessions, often for hours at a time, touching upon all that had previously been said.[29] Also in attendance were a number of unidentified Anglican clergymen, several Irvingites, and a number of early leaders of the Brethren, including G.V. Wigram, Percy Hall, and J.G. Bellett. How the Conference was organized a full two years after Lady Powerscourt's death is not explained, and raises some doubt as to how, if it occurred at all, it was held away from Powerscourt House.

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One of the most vociferous exponents of anti-Erastian sentiments within the Powerscourt Conferences was

[26]Coad, p. 109f.
[27]Stokes, p. 543.
[28]Neatby, p. p. 39.
[29]Synge was described as "a solitary man," who remained close to the Brethren, but continued to attend the Established Church. See T.C.F. Stunt, 'John Synge and the Early Brethren,' Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal, 1976, pp. 39-62.

John Nelson Darby.[30] Although now celebrated as the most dominant personality within the early history of the Brethren, he was a little known Irish Anglican curate at the time the Powerscourt Conferences were first organized. In spite of this early obscurity, he exercised a powerful and unsettling influence upon the atmosphere of the Conferences, and helped bring about the gradual modification of their theological, eschatological, and ecclesiological views. Like Wesley, Darby was also responsible for transforming a fledgling movement into an international denomination: by the time of his death in 1882, some forty volumes of writings and over fifteen hundred assemblies around the world testified to his strength of personality, his organizing abilities, and his powerful attraction as a religious leader.[31]

Like many of his contemporaries within the Irish Evangelical movement, Darby had attended Trinity College, Dublin, graduating as a Classics Gold Medalist in 1819.[32] After first pursuing a career at the Irish Bar, he was ordained to the curacy at Calary in late 1825;[33] however, only a short time passed before his loyalty to the Church began to diminish. He began to question what he regarded as its unscriptural Erastianism, and its ordained ministry. He objected to its secularity and the absence of spiritual purity in its leaders and members. He was not alone in his concern,

[30]J.N. Darby (1800-1882) was godson of Lord Nelson.

[31]Coad, p. 106.

[32]D.N.B.

[33]As deacon; priest in early 1826, both services performed by William Magee.

echoing, as we have seen, the feelings of many other Evangelicals in Ireland and the West of England who were growing dissatisfied with the state of the Church. Critical and negative feelings promoted the emergence of more positive ones by way of reaction, and prepared the way for a new openness to alternative--and more radical--forms of ecclesiology, which seemed more spiritual then those provided by a moribund Anglican Establishment.[34]

The development of Darby's strong anti-Erastianism can be traced to two events which occurred shortly after his ordination. William Magee, the Archbishop of Dublin, with many of his diocesan clergy, had become alarmed over the possibility that the Tory government of Lord Liverpool might enact some measure of Catholic emancipation.[35] Magee dismissed with contempt the notion that a religious establishment possessed any interest distinct from the State as "a sort of incorporated craft, seeking its own ends through the power of its temporal associate."[36] He decried the claim that religion was a concern between the individual and his God over which the civil magistrate had no control. Starting from the axiom that sovereignty in any state was indivisible, Magee asserted that the Sovereign could never support a system that maintained "a spiritual supremacy independent of civil government," for he

[34]Grant, p. 5.

[35]For information on Magee see 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), pp. 250-312.

[36]William Magee, A Charge Delivered at His Triennial and Metropolitan Visitation (Dublin, 1827), p. 4.

could admit no authority above his own. He also rounded on Roman apologists who attempted to distinguish between spiritual and temporal in the case of sovereign power.[37] Such bold Erastian claims outraged Darby, for they failed to address the historical origins and traditions of Anglicanism and opened the door for detrimental State intrusion. Darby considered the supremacy of Christ and His church to be a spiritual supremacy independent of the civil government, as exemplified by Jesus' assertion before Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world.[38]

Of more immediate concern to Darby was Magee's subsequent decision to require all new converts from Catholicism to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the English sovereign.[39] This demand produced great unrest among those who (like Darby) were involved in the Home Mission, an Evangelical work which was then gaining some six to eight hundred new converts from Rome each week within the diocese.[40] Here the Evangelicals' Erastianism collided with their commitment to evangelism in disturbing fashion.

Darby's objections to this new requirement were pragmatic and principled: in demanding that all converts to Protestantism substitute an allegiance to the Crown in place of their former allegiance to the Pope,

[37] Ibid., p. 29f.
[38] See Neatby, p. 16.
[39] See J.N. Darby, Disestablishment--Disendowment (Dublin, 1869), p. 4.
[40] J.N. Darby, Considerations Addressed to the Archbishop of Dublin and the Clergy Who Signed the Petition to the House of Commons For Protection, 1827, p. 1. This work was later published in The Collected Writings of J.N. Darby, ed. by William Kelly, 32 vols. (London, 1867-83), 1:1-29.

he saw the Church as confusing the issue of spiritual conversion with that of political domination. Of course, to the Ulster-born Magee and to other like-minded individuals, the two issues could not be separated; to Darby, however, it compelled a substitution of the despotic authority of Crown for Pope, which, even for those willing to abandon Catholicism, was highly provocative. As Darby bitterly complained, the work of the Home Mission "instantly ceased."[41]

By this episode Darby became convinced that the Church had been reduced to little more than a branch of the civil service. He soon realized that in his effort to combat the abuses of Erastianism, he would receive little help from Evangelicals, for by their preoccupation with evangelism they tended to ignore the institutional life of the Church and its theoretical position vis-a-vis the State.[42] Thus, he must act unilaterally: in 1827 he produced a short essay on the nature of the Church, circulating it privately in and around Dublin.[43]

After objecting to the civil intrusion contained within Magee's *Charge*, Darby assured readers that he would never dissent from the Church of England.[44] He then proceeded to offer his own definition of the invisible church. It was a congregation of souls redeemed out of the world by God, manifest in the flesh, and knit together by the band of their common faith. Because of its divine heritage, its interests and cons-

[41]Loc. cit.
[42]Stokes, p. 540.
[43]J.N. Darby, Considerations Addressed.
[44]Ibid., 1:1.

titution were heavenly and not worldly.[45] When encumbered by the bonds of Erastianism, the church was unable to exert its missionary function by active exertions, confining its clergy within the bounds of the secular social order whose interests they were obliged to uphold and defend.[46] This was tragically the case in Ireland. Rather than encouraging Catholics to join the Church, the imposition of the oaths of supremacy upon Protestant converts made "the admission into the Establishment a necessary condition" of salvation and redemption. Such a measure was analogous to the conduct which had long ago created such difficulties at Antioch over the admission of the Gentiles to the primitive church, and put a stumbling-block in the path of weak believers.[47]

Darby's small tract provoked little reaction within the diocese. He therefore had it published in revised form, believing that a public appeal might succeed where quiet efforts had failed.[48] In this edition, he argued that the establishment of religion gave both to the life of the State and the Church, "a character which many discerned to be short of that which was acceptable to God."[49] Operating as a rival to Dissent, the Church of England was not committed to the principle of communion among believers, and so was uncommitted to the principle of fellowship and brother-

[45]Ibid., 1:8.
[46]Ibid., 1:16f.
[47]Ibid., 1:27.
[48]J.N. Darby, Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ (Dublin, 1828).
[49]Ibid., p. 32.

hood among real Christians.[50] As long as men prided themselves on being of this or that denomination they were anti-Christian. Though this tract contained strong signs of incipient separatism, it contained no admonition to its readers to leave the Established Church, whose numerous shortcomings Darby carefully avoided mentioning, concluding rather evasively that the work of reformation must remain the work of the Spirit.[51]

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If Darby's anti-Erastianism was fed by disquiet at the secularity of the Established Church, annoyance at the highhandedness of his Diocesan, and alarm at the prospect of government by Whig sceptics or infidels, his theological views were shaped, at least in part, by three independent religious movements then prevalent in and around Dublin: the Walkerites, the Kellyites, and the prophetic movement advanced most notably by Irving and Lady Powerscourt.

The Walkerite group, formed--as we have seen--at the time of Walker's secession in 1804, had always maintained as one of its chief aims the enticement of Evangelicals out of the Church. While much energy and activity was invested in such 'sheep stealing,' this policy met with limited success. But if numerically weak, the Walkerites nevertheless enjoyed considerable success in diffusing their ideas in the intense and restless world of Irish Evangelicalism, especially their high Calvinism, their rejection of the idea of

[50] Ibid., p. 33.
[51] Ibid., p. 47.

ordination and an appointed ministry, and, most notably, their militant and exclusivist separatism, which barred all but their own members from sharing fellowship. So strict was their determination to withdraw from spiritual contact with the world that Walker even refused to sing hymns or pray with those outside his own connection; such promiscuous association with the ungodly was an abomination to the Lord. Each of these Walkerite characteristics were to find close parallels in Darby's teachings and to become doctrinal foundations of the Brethren.[52]

Another likely influence was the connection formed around Thomas Kelly. Though the Kellyites were moderate Calvinists,[53] rejecting Walker's strong predestinarianism, strict separatism, and practice of closed worship, they nevertheless shared his anti-Erastianism and his rejection of ordination and an appointed ministry. It was probably from Kelly that Darby adopted the practice of formulating a prearranged plan which set forth the names of those who would speak at the various services, for such an arrangement, which was quickly standardized within the Brethren, does not appear within other Irish religious movements of the day. The early Brethren also exhibited resemblances--which were

[52]See James Godkin, Ireland and Her Churches (London, 1867), p. 209.

[53]Apparently Walker and Kelly met to consider cooperating in their efforts; however, this broke down over the proposition, which Kelly rejected, that John Wesley was in hell. See Neatby, p. 27.

noted by contemporary Evangelical observers--with the Western Schismatics.[54]

The historian of the Brethren, W.B. Neatby, is correct in the strictest sense in seeing no clear, linear descent of the Darbyites from Walker or Kelly and their respective connections.[55] Darby himself had powerful views of his own: he was a creative religious leader rather than a follower. However, it must be recognized that during the 1820s, Dublin's Evangelical movement had been mesmerized for a time by Walker's dynamic and powerful personality. The 'serious' world of Dublin Protestantism was marked by intense debates, many close personal relationships, and contact with the *alma mater* of so many ultra-Evangelicals, Trinity College. It would be surprising if the early Brethren, many of whom had grown up in the shadow of Walker and Kelly, had not learned of their highly publicized campaign to restore the 'brotherhood' of the Apostolic era, or imbibed a portion of their unusual ecclesiological views.

As Darby grew increasingly disillusioned with the Church it is likely that he too, consciously or not, drew inspiration from predecessors who had set up a vision of the primitive, Apostolic church in sharp contrast to the corruptions of the Irish Church and the laxity of the Evangelical world. Echoes of Walker's extreme separatism can all too often be seen in the

[54]See Miller, 2:203; Anon., Plymouth Brethrenism, p. 5; 'The Plymouth Brethren,' E.R., May 1839, p. 572. For a review of this work see the Inquirer, October 1839.

[55]Ibid., p. 28.

continual and highly disruptive argument over the issue of 'open' or 'closed' communion, which recurs throughout the history of the Brethren and which has led to repeated schisms. In the absence of firmer evidence, this element in the spiritual genealogy of Brethrenism must admittedly remain speculative, though the parallels between these various contemporary movements cannot be ignored.

The third influence upon the development of Darby's doctrinal system originated out of the rise of the prophetic movement, which was in its zenith during the late 1820s.[56] Though two leaders of the early Brethren--A.N. Groves and Henry Craik--were reading Irving as early as 1826,[57] it is difficult to establish exactly when Darby became interested in eschatology. Most probably, this new preoccupation coincided with the interest in Irving and his theories which arose within the Powerscourt circle sometime around 1826; it was certainly advanced when Darby attended the first of the Powerscourt Conferences during the following year.[58] Early in 1828, Darby's friend, J.G. Bellett, travelled to London, where his own views on the subject of unfulfilled prophecy were, as he put it, "greatly enlarged" through contact with Drummond and the Albury set; when Bellett wrote to Darby to announce this development in his thinking, Darby replied that his own mind and soul

[56] See Henry Groves, Darbyism: its Rise and Development, (London, 1866).
[57] Coad, p. 19.
[58] Stokes, p. 544.

had already "travelled rapidly" in a similar direction.[59]

Once involved in the prophetic movement, Darby took little time to establish himself in a position of dominance over those less dogmatic and articulate than himself, including his clerical neighbour Robert Daly (though Daly eventually fled from the movement under the onslaught of Darby's anti-Erastian and anti-clerical declarations). The willingly captive audience at Powerscourt provided Darby with a magnificent opportunity to win influential devotees and to perfect his rapidly developing eschatology.

Darby's understanding of the millennial system was original. It divided the second coming of Christ into two distinct and separate parts: first, His secret Advent (or Rapture) in which the saints will be instantly removed from the earth, thus sparing them from the pain of the seven year Tribulation; secondly, His coming in splendour in the presence of the saints to rule over the earth after the Tribulation.[60] This serial interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy has been labelled 'dispensationalism,' in that it divides biblical history into well-defined time periods, or dispensations, into which God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished in that period, to which men respond in faith or unbelief.[61] Its world-wide influence has been immense. Among those who absorbed Darby's teaching was

[59]Neatby, p. 12.
[60]D.W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (London, 1989), p. 86.
[61]Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, eds., New Dictionary of Theology (Leicester, 1988), p. 200.

Henry Moorhouse, a Brethren evangelist, who, in turn, influenced the American D.L. Moody, probably the most esteemed evangelist of the late nineteenth century. Still more momentous was Darby's impact on C.I. Scofield, whose *Reference Bible* has ensured the acceptance of Darby's pre-millennialism throughout much of the evangelical world, especially in the contemporary United States.[62]

Many of the salient features of Darby's complex premillennialist scheme can be found in Irving: the expectation of impending judgments upon Christendom, the imminence of Christ's Advent, and His consequent millennial reign on earth.[63] At the same time, there were elaborations and variations. As at Albury, but to a greater extent, Darby believed that the prophecies contained in Scripture would be fulfilled after the Rapture. No event of Scriptural prophecy would precede this, including the seven year Tribulation. The church is a mystery of which only Paul speaks; Christ's mystical body will be completed only at the Rapture. Those converted before Christ's first coming or after His second are not part of His church: "the assertion that His mystical body is the universal family of the redeemed," Darby concluded, "is unscriptural; all the declaration is founded on this gross and unscriptural error, that all the saved belong to the church."[64] As the church was corrupt, and as the Advent was impending, its redemption was not God's immediate intention.

[62]Murray, p. 198.
[63]Ibid., p. 200.
[64]J.N. Darby, Collected Writings, Prophetic, vol. 4, p. 534.

Thus, condemnation of the church was not intended to encourage its transformation; rather believers should strive to escape from its certain downfall and await Jesus' imminent arrival.[65] "I believe from Scripture that the ruin is without remedy," Darby claimed, "that the professing church will be cut off."[66] The church thus belongs to a failed dispensation; God's method is not to restore a dispensation but to usher in a new one; hence the next great event in history will not be a reformation--to attempt one would be to fail--but the Advent of Christ. Thus, to embark on bold missionary expeditions or to expect the conversion of the Jews in this dispensation were seen as positive delusions.[67]

The evolution of Darby's premillennial system can be traced back to at least 1831. During the Powers-court Conference that year, he began to ponder such questions as: "What light does Scripture throw on present events, and their moral character? What is next to be looked for and expected? Is there a prospect of a revival of Apostolic churches before the coming of Christ?"[68] By 1840 his thinking on these was fully developed, as evidenced by his prophetical lectures at Geneva, in which he claimed:

> What we are about to consider will tend to shew that, instead of permitting ourselves to hope for a continued progress of good, we must expect a progress of evil; and that the hope of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord before the exercise of His judgment, and the consummation of this judgment on earth, is delusive...Truly Christendom has become completely corrupted; the

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[65]Murray, p. 200.
[66]J.N. Darby, Collected Writings, Ecclesiastical, vol. 3, p. 417.
[67]Murray, p. 201.
[68]Darby's Letters, 1:8.

> dispensation of the Gentiles has been found unfaithful: can it be restored? No! impossible. As the Jewish dispensation was cut off, the Christian dispensation will be also.[69]

As Ian Murray has argued, this teaching denounced as presumption and error the expectation that the Church will claim vast numbers of new converts from all corners of the earth. Believers were to look not to the fulfillment of God's kingdom by spiritual labour on earth, but to Christ's imminent Advent. Nevertheless, Darby infused his followers with hope; not, however, the hope of the Puritans which expected the spread of the gospel on earth *and* Christ's glorious appearing, but the hope of His second Advent only.[70] As in the case of Irvingism, this pre-millennial teaching encouraged profound changes in the outlook of Evangelical thought. It was pessimistic; it discouraged believers from becoming involved in the 'real world' of science, politics, and business; it dismissed overseas missions and it minimized the importance of the visible church. Most important for this study, it encouraged separatism, for it encouraged the conviction that the English Church was an irremediably fallen institution, without a future, which could be safely ignored. As Darby wrote in 1833, "I do feel that the ignorance and narrowness of the Church of England will be what will be judged for all this, and the judgment is at hand, lingereth not. The Lord have mercy on many in it--dear saints."[71] In regard to Ireland he claimed, "there

[69]J.N. Darby, Collected Writings, Prophetical, vol. 1, pp. 471, 486.
[70]Murray, p. 202.
[71]Darby's Letters, 1:19.

will be an entirely new state of things in a year or two. The country will, I doubt not, be practically separated from England, probably entirely."[72] During the same year, he predicted the imminent downfall of the English Establishment under the dual onslaught of liberalism and Catholicism:

> I have no doubt at all in saying that the present arrangements (ecclesiastical I mean) of the country, will not last a year, and that the result of the arrangements which will follow, will be to put the country under the direct dominion of Infidelity and Popery, and of the Pope or Primate of Rome *in the close.*[73]

Some ten years later, his tune had not altered. "I am deeply convinced," he wrote, "that the testimony is urgently demanded in England, and I think that I must return to work here, that at least a testimony may be borne by the grace of God, before Puseyism possess the country, and whilst religious liberty remains to us, which I do not think will last too long."[74]

Given such deep pessimism, it perhaps comes as no surprise that Darby firmly denounced the English prophetic movement's infatuation with the 'gifts,' for these, he claimed, in advancing his own unique brand of pre-millennialism, had disappeared with the Apostolic age and would only return with Christ's Advent.[75]

Among the curious similarities between Darby and Irving was their adherence to certain 'higher' doctrines, not universally accepted by their followers. Both held to paedobaptism. Both saw the Church as a universal, Apostolic, and prophetic body. Both were

[72] Ibid., 1:23.
[73] Christian Witness, 1834, p. 28.
[74] Darby's Letters, 1:66.
[75] Coad, p. 376.

inclined towards asceticism. In a critique of Newman's *Apologia*, for instance, Darby admitted that at one early stage, while looking for the ideal Church and "governed by a morbid imagination," he thought much of Rome and its professed sanctity, catholicity, and antiquity.[76] In retrospect, he saw himself as a Tractarian before the onset of the Oxford Movement:

> I knew it [Puseyism] and walked in it years before Dr. Newman...and when Dr. Pusey was not heard of. I fasted in Lent so as to be weak in body at the end of it; ate no meat on weekdays; nothing till evening on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, then a little bread, or nothing; observed strictly the weekly fasts, too. I went to my clergyman always if I wished to take the sacrament, that he might judge of the matter. I held apostolic succession fully, and the channels of grace to be there only. I held thus Luther and Calvin and their followers to be outside...I searched with earnest diligence into the evidences of Apostolic succession in England, and just saved their validity for myself and my conscience. The union of Church and State I held to be Babylonish, that the Church ought to govern itself, and that she was in bondage, but was the Church.[77]

To what extent (and why) Darby moved away from such teachings remains unclear. Neatby claims that he passed through some "great crisis of belief" in about 1825, which may have led to his decision to seek ordination in the Church,[78] yet this experience apparently strengthened his interest in asceticism. While serving as Curate at Calary, he made his home in a peasant's hut on a lofty upland a thousand feet above the sea: here he is said to have lived the life of an ancient anchorite, wearing clothes of the meanest kind and so neglecting his personal appearance that he often re-

[76]J.N. Darby, Analysis of Dr. Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London, 1866), p. 2.
[77]Ibid., p. 19f.
[78]Neatby, p. 14.

sembled a beggar.[79] Francis Newman sharply described him at this time: "a fallen cheek, a bloodshot eye, crippled limbs resting on crutches, a seldom shaved beard, a shabby suit of clothes and a generally neglected person, drew at first pity, with wonder to see such a figure in a drawing-room."[80] He worked with burning intensity, striving to instil a sense of the impending Advent in his flock. Darby's resemblance to the model of the 'holy man' of Roman spirituality even led his Catholic parishioners to speculate whether one of the old Irish saints might have been resurrected in their midst.[81]

Nor was Darby alone in his asceticism among the early Brethren. Lady Powerscourt herself, though remaining a *grande dame*, also maintained her own mountain retreat high above Powerscourt House, to which she would escape to pray and meditate. John Parnell, later the second Lord Congleton, in spite of a personal fortune of some £1,200 a year, took a house in Teignmouth of which the rent was £12, furnished it with wooden chairs and a plain deal table, steel forks and pewter tea-spoons, and wholly dispensed with carpets (indeed the whole subject of carpets seems to have become the mark of true spirituality within the early movement, for other prominent adherents eagerly followed Parnell's example).[82]

[79]Stokes, p. 544.
[80]Francis William Newman, *Phases of Faith*, 6th ed. (London, 1860), p. 17.
[81]Stokes, p. 544.
[82]Neatby, p. 41.

In spite of his subsequent movement away from such asceticism, Darby remained, in the words of his friend Bellett, "a very exact Churchman," who took his stand at precisely that point where Evangelicalism and High Churchmanship often meet in their anti-Erastianism.[83]

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Shortly after the publication of Darby's tract, suggestions that he might be happier outside the confines of the Church began to be heard; instead, late in 1828, he simply resigned from his curacy without formally seceding.[84] To those who raised the question, Darby made it abundantly clear that he had resigned neither from the ministry of God's Word nor from the care of souls. He had no intention of joining one of the Dissenting bodies, and was, as yet (and characteristically) his own church.[85] At the same time, Darby seems to have set about organizing his own religious gatherings in Dublin and elsewhere,[86] which were known as the 'Separatists'--a title they shared with Walker's connection, although it remains uncertain whether the two bodies ever established formal ties.[87]

This anomalous state of affairs continued until about 1833, when the introduction of a new system of Irish education brought about the final break in Darby's tenuous adherence to the Church.[88] A salient feature of this system involved Anglican cooperation with

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[83]Loc. cit.
[84]Neatby, p. 17.
[85]W.G. Turner, John Nelson Darby (London, 1926), pp. 17f, 21.
[86]Miller, 2:203.
[87]Loc. cit.; Stokes, p. 544.
[88]Stokes (p. 550) suggest 1833; Neatby (p. 17f), 1834.

Catholicism. Darby was so outraged by this that he wrote to Richard Whately, the liberal Archbishop of Dublin, characterizing the new plan as "anti-Scriptural," and an "unholy marriage between infidelity and Popery." He also took the opportunity to accuse Whatley of Sabellianism.[89] Receiving no satisfaction, he then formally resigned from the Churcn. In subsequent years, he issued a number of statements explaining his behaviour. One in particular, clearly revealed his opposition to the Church of England and its attendant parochial structure:

> I find no such thing as a National Church in Scripture. Is the Church...God's assembly in England?...Her constitution is worldly, because she contemplates...the population, not the saints. The man who would say that the Church...is a gathering of saints must be...very odd...It was not the details of the sacramental and priestly system which drove me from the Establishment...It was that I was looking for the body of Christ (which was not there, but perhaps in all the parish not one converted person).[90]

At the time of his secession, Darby at least still regarded the Church as an effective barrier against Popery, but the Oxford Movement soon convinced him that it was instead for many fast becoming the road to Rome.[91] Two years before his death, he added that it was above all the Church's absence of unity and discipline which had driven him from her ranks: if Churchmen wished to have blasphemers at the Lord's table, "they will not have me."[92]

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[89] Turner, p. 65f; Coad, p. 31.
[90] Quoted in Turner, p. 18.
[91] J.N. Darby, The Notion of a Clergyman Dispensationally the Sin Against the Holy Ghost, in Collected Writings, 1:54f.
[92] J.N. Darby, On Ecclesiastical Independency (London, 1880), p. 6.

Darby's doctrine of the church was slow to emerge and unclear. It was also, as we have seen, intrinsically tied to his eschatology. He rejected the principle of a national church in favour of an elect, gathered body; the church was to be seen as the sum total of believers in any locality.[93] There was to be no set ministry for administering the sacraments or for preaching, as choosing ministers was unscriptural.[94] Moreover, the church could not be defined by the parochial boundaries imposed by the corrupt Church of England, which was "a confusion established by man,"[95] for it was God who called the elect into the Church and the universal priesthood, not the State.[96] In each of these utterances, however, Darby resisted moving beyond the idealistic and theoretical, for, after all, he believed that the Advent was at hand, rendering such detailed formulation unnecessary. When Christ failed to return during the mid-1840s as Darby had expected, however, his difficulties in formulating a clear and workable ecclesiology compounded the internal strife and divisions which were to mark the subsequent history of

[93] J.N. Darby, On the Formation of Churches, c.1840, in Collected Writings, 1:211-237.

[94] Ibid., p. 233f.

[95] J.N. Darby, A Glance at Various Ecclesiastical Principles, in Collected Writings, 2:33f. See also 'Parochial Arrangements Destructive of Order in the Church,' Christian Witness, July 1834.

[96] J.N. Darby, Who is a Priest and What is a Priest?, in Collected Writings, 10:331ff. See also Darby, Disestablishment, p. 3; What is the Church?, in Collected Writings, 3:551-603; The Church--What is it? (London, 1887).

the Brethren movement.[97]

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It was one thing for an Evangelical clergyman to evolve a new doctrinal system and theory of the church: it was quite another to gain, as Darby did, large numbers of fellow Anglicans to his cause. A seed-bed of his movement was the same unsettled Irish Evangelical world which had spawned the Walkerites and Kellyites. During the 1790s, a number of small--and apparently unconnected--religious gatherings were being convened in middle class homes in Dublin and elsewhere. As early as 1794, an Alderman Hutton opened his home in Luson Street, Dublin, one evening a week, "wishing to afford the fashionable folk in the south portion of the city an opportunity of hearing the gospel." Thomas Kelly performed the ministerial duties for this body, and even John Law, the Bishop of Elphin, lent it his support and sometimes his attendance.[98] Around the same time, Wilmott House, a large family home outside Dublin, was opened to preachers from the Church, the Methodists, the Moravians, and other bodies.[99] The Scottish evangelical James Alexander Haldane, who visited Dublin in 1804, claimed that there were small bands meeting throughout the City, closed to those not sharing their particular views, and receiving the Lord's Supper at an hour when it was not publicly adminis-

[97]See Coad, p. 119n.

[98]E.M., February 1856, p. 64. This gathering eventually led to the founding of a chapel in York Street, Dublin.

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

tered. Impressed, he took the practice back to Scotland where he undertook to establish a similar movement.[100]

During the 1820s, these so-called 'drawing-room meetings' for prayer and study of the Scriptures became quite the rage with 'serious' minds. Many of those drawn to such meetings had been influenced by Walker's separatist teachings, and were disgusted with the political Protestantism of the day and what seemed a sacrilegious use of the Holy Communion as a mere test for office-bearers.[101] The group established by George Muller at Powerscourt House and those formed around Darby provide further examples of such gatherings. Yet another was described by the Quaker Joseph John Gurney, who had been invited to dine at the home of Dublin lawyer John Henry North: here, after dinner, a sermon was preached and then, to Gurney's surprise, the entire company dropped to their knees to pray. Others were organized in Dublin by William Russell, grandfather of the Crimean War correspondent, together with Thomas Parnell, an evangelist known for his tract distribution.[102] Yet another was grouped around Richard Pope, to which, in 1828, Anthony Norris Groves (a West Country dentist turned missionary and perhaps the first to advance Brethren principles) was invited to preach.[103]

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[100] Alexander Haldane, Memoirs of the Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of His Brother James Alexander Haldane (London, 1852), pp. 235, 342.

[101] Stokes, p. 542. See also Neatby, pp. 1-24. Broadbent (p. 349) argues that such meetings were also becoming popular in England.

[102] J.B. Atkins, Life of Sir William Howard Russell, 2 vols. (London, 1911), 1:6-7. 'Tract' Parnell was the elder brother of C.S. Parnell's grandfather.

[103] Ibid., p. 220.

These small groups gathering for Bible readings and prayer sessions, and eschewing card playing and other such 'worldly' amusements, became a feature of 'respectable' Dublin society at this time.[104] Their proliferation owed something to the revival of family worship among Evangelicals which had brought personal religion out of the Church and into the home.[105] The restless idealism of these devotional groups led Irish Evangelicals to begin to look beyond the confines of the Establishment for spiritual nourishment and expression. The dissatisfaction of Dublin Evangelicals with the state of their own Church, and their need for voluntary association in different activities outside it, were caused in part by a conviction that the structures of the Established Religion were rigid and immobile, hindering church extension, preventing the formation of new parishes where needed. There was also anxiety at the exclusion of Evangelical clergy from many hostile parishes or even dioceses. This Evangelical party--which was prosperous, lay-dominated, gathered into coteries outside the control of the hierarchy, often bitterly critical of the worldliness of the Irish Church and its clergy--had an ethos which predisposed it to respond to the separatist call of the Brethren movement. The Evangelicals were to be the seed-bed of the movement.

[104] Joseph Bevan Braithwaite, Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney, 2 vols. (Norwich, 1855), 1:326f.

[105] Charles Smyth, The Church and the Nation (London, 1962), p. 137ff; Simeon and Church Order, (Cambridge, 1940), p. 16ff.

Perhaps the most significant cradle of Brethrenism was the gathering which met in Aungier Street, Dublin, a consolidation of a number of smaller, local, religious meetings. Few details remain of its services and ministry. Some of the smaller groups which eventually joined the Aungier Street gathering (including that group meeting at the home of Francis Hutchinson at Fitzwilliam Square), had developed a set order of service. After their amalgamation into the larger meeting, this developed further. The duty of teaching and exhortation was shared by all, though prayer was restricted to the care of two or three who were regarded as elders. Soon the new group came to reject any form of appointed (or recognized) eldership, and all its services were free and unstructured to allow more easy and direct access to the presence of God through the Spirit.[106]

Prior to their amalgamation into the so-called "meeting of the discontented"[107] at Aungier Street, no single one of these smaller gatherings could be identified as holding a special pre-eminence over the others. Although sharing doctrinal points, each grouping served its particular function within its own unique constituency. As in Irvingism, many were composed of well-to-do adherents--'refugees from the aristocracy' as they were called--who no longer wished to remain associated with the Church, but were unwilling to accept either the lowered social standing attached to Protestant Dis-

[106] See Neatby, Ibid., p. 35f.
[107] H. Madden, Personal Recollections of Robert Daly, p. 23.

sent or to sanction its inherent democracy. Instead, they were drawn to the autocratic leadership of an Irving or a Darby, in a spiritual environment receptive to new expressions of ultra-Evangelical doctrine and devotion.

The early founders of the Brethren were bound by many common ties. All had some connection with Dublin and its dynamic, but discontented, Evangelical movement, and most had attended one or more of the Powerscourt Conferences. A number were old friends, or, like Darby and Bellett, had been associated in a previous work. Several, including Bellett, B.W. Newton, and Groves, had long-standing West Country connections.[108] Many had been educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and most had been raised within Anglican Evangelicalism.

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The Brethren's teachings soon spread to England. The movement first took root at Oxford and then branched out through the work of a handful of individuals to two important West Country locations: Bristol and Plymouth. As in Ireland, small groups, unconnected and unaware of each another, but with similar concerns and similar objections to the Established religion, began meeting in England about this time. In about 1831, for example, J.G. Bellett was staying with friends in rural Somerset where he was asked to give an account of the new Irish movement. Present that evening was the daughter of a local clergyman, who, after hearing Bellett's remarks, exclaimed with surprise that the tenets

[108] G.H. Long, Anthony Norris Groves, Saint and Pioneer (London, 1939).

of the Brethren were precisely those which she had recently developed on her own, and which, until now, she believed were held by no one else. A local couple, together with her mother, revealed that they too had also been meeting in the simplicity of the Brethren's ways for some time, worshipping and breaking bread in private, unaware of other like-minded souls in England or Ireland.[109]

The early connection between Oxford and the Brethren movement is of some importance, for it not only established a number of relationships which served the movement in significant ways, but also, through its extremism and its encouragement of secession from the Church, it added to the spiritual unrest which, as we will see, later contributed to the outbreak of the Oxford Movement.

The link between Oxford and Brethrenism was forged by Darby's friendship with Francis Newman, younger brother of the more famous John Henry Newman. Newman had enjoyed an academic career of some distinction at Oxford, taking a double first in mathematics and classics in 1826, and being elected soon afterwards to a Fellowship at Balliol. In the following year, he accepted a lucrative offer to become the private tutor to the children of Edward Pennefather, outside Dublin.[110] Coincidentally, Pennefather was also the brother-in-law of John Nelson Darby, who had already established himself as the spiritual master of the Pennefather house-

[109] Quoted from Bellett, in Neatby, p. 25.

[110] Pennefather (1774-1847) was a leading Irish jurist who was later to become Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and a Privy Councilor. See D.N.B.

hold, which deferred to him on all matters theological and doctrinal.[111] It was into this highly-charged family atmosphere that the impressionable Newman was plunged on his arrival in Ireland.[112]

It is perhaps not surprising that Darby quickly gained an immense sway over his new acquaintance. In Darby, Newman saw a man defiantly putting into practice the principles to which others were merely giving lip service.[113] Though at first put off by Darby's extremism and eccentricities, Newman fell under the spell of his sharply formed opinions, his forceful separatism, and his relentless logic. Darby's personal magnetism was intensified by the 'unflinching consistency' of his principles, whose simple coherence could well impress those who were disturbed by the intellectual and spiritual confusion of the religious world at this critical juncture. Darby simply dismissed human learning and took with intense literalness the words of the New Testament, which he saw as a clear guide for all the issues of the day. When Darby was asked by Newman, "but do you really think that *no* part of the New Testament may have been temporary in its object?," Darby gave an emphatic *no*: all was to be judged by the Scriptural Word. "For the first time," wrote Newman, "I saw a man earnestly turning into reality the principles which others confessed with their lips only."[114] By his extraordinary blend of tenderness and inflexible

[111]Darby was then in residence at the Pennefather's recovering from an injury to his leg. See Turner, p. 27; Sandeen, p. 32.
[112]Stokes, p. 545f.
[113]Newman, p. 17f.
[114]Ibid., p. 18f.

certitude he displayed (in a remarkable resemblance to Newman's brother John Henry, albeit with a determined Protestant slant) "a wonderful power of bending other minds to his own, and even stamping upon them the tones of his voice and all sorts of slavish imitation." Thus, Newman began to ask what Darby would say about this or that, and, but for occasional weaknesses which warned him of Darby's infallibility, would almost have accepted him as an apostle commissioned to reveal the very mind of God.[115]

Under Darby's influence, Newman came to reject all human creeds, all articles of faith, and all councils and synods, and made Scripture alone his source of revelation and truth.[116] In late 1827 he wrote to his Oxford friend C.P. Golightly of the impact of Darby's pre-millennial faith upon him:

> How strong is the contest when I turn to the new friends God has given me! They in turn exhibit the gospel in its *simplicity*...One thing I see; that I have of late been led astray by the false dream that God intended this world to be otherwise than a scene of suffering: an error which obscured my view of the true nature of Christ's Kingdom, and led me to pay to passing political events ten times the attention they deserved.[117]

At around the same time he met Anthony Groves, whose piety and spiritual devotion inflamed him with the greatest admiration, judging immediately that this was a man whom he should "rejoice to aid or serve."[118]

In 1829, Newman returned to Oxford and immediately invited Darby to visit him. Eager to seize such an op-

[115] Ibid., p. 20f.
[116] Stokes, pp. 546 and 549.
[117] Quoted in R.W. Greaves, 'Golightly to Newman, 1824-1845,' J.E.H, 1958, p. 210.
[118] Newman, p. 24.

portunity, Darby quickly accepted, reaching Oxford in the following year.[119] Here, he immediately assumed the place of a father-confessor to a series of undergraduates, who accepted him as if a known and long-trusted friend. His insight into character and his striking mixture of tenderness and austerity gave him a remarkable psychological ascendancy over his followers, who flocked to him for secret closetings. Francis Newman, witnessing this spectacle, began to see the prospect of so considerable a movement of mind as might lead many in the same direction that he himself had travelled: in no other way, he concluded, could a new, pure, and effective spiritual movement be launched.[120]

As it happened, the timing of Darby's visit to Oxford could hardly have been more propitious, for many serious-minded young men were then beginning to experience an increased sense of anxiety over the Church's growing secularization. Questions over the revival of its flagging spirituality were frequently being raised, and the 'Constitutional revolution' of 1828-1832 was dawning, worrying many about the consequences for both Church and State. Protestant alternatives to the questions now beginning to be raised by the emerging leaders of the Oxford Movement were urgently required. Darby and his followers were all too willing to suggest such alternatives, and their efforts in offering a Protestant response to John Henry Newman's influential ministry at St. Mary's--and later to the *Tracts* them-

[119] Ibid., p. 28.
[120] Loc. cit.

selves--did not go unrewarded.

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The progress of the Brethren in the West Country of England was made possible by the involvement of a number of like-minded, talented, and decidedly committed individuals. Among them was George Muller, Groves' brother-in-law,[121] who had introduced a number of innovations into his ministry in the West Country. The establishment of a weekly communion service and the abandonment of pew rents were not especially remarkable; altogether more startling was his refusal of a stated salary and the demand that Christians should not save money. Muller also adopted an open ministry in certain meetings, allowing any member of the body to exhort or teach the rest.[122] These unusual innovations--now also being implemented within the so-called 'drawing-room gatherings' in Dublin--soon became standard practice among the Brethren. Through Muller, the Brethren established a lasting presence in Bristol.

Benjamin Wiles Newton was a native of Plymouth and, since 1824, a member (later Fellow) of Exeter College, Oxford, where he was tutored privately by Francis Newman.[123] Although raised a Quaker, Newton was converted to 'serious religion' in 1827 through contact

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[121]See Edward Kennaway Groves, George Muller and His Successors (Bristol, 1906); William Henry Harding, The Life of George Muller (London, 1914); R. Morris, Faith, Prayer, and Work (London, 1866); George Muller, A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings, With George Muller, Minister of Christ (Bristol, 1837); Arthur T. Pierson, George Muller of Bristol (London, 1899); Frederick G. Warne, George Muller: The Modern Apostle of Faith (London, 1898).

[122]Neatby, p. 54.

[123]Rowdon, p. 60.

with Henry Bulteel, also a native of Plymouth, Fellow of Exeter since 1823, and a determined Calvinist.[124] Bulteel soon introduced Newton to the ministry of the celebrated hyper-Calvinist, Robert Hawker of Plymouth,[125] and Newton appears to have adopted similar doctrines.[126] At much the same time, he also became friends with John Hill, the Evangelical Vice-Principal at St. Edmund Hall; so unfavourable was Hill's Calvinism viewed in the University, however, that Newton, like other Oxford Evangelicals, was ostracized, and forced to abandon all hope of College preferment. When Francis Newman returned to Oxford in 1828, he introduced the subject of unfulfilled prophecy, a question he had heard discussed by Darby and the Powerscourt circle. Newton was so captivated by this new topic that he convened a series of meetings in his rooms to discuss it.[127]

Bulteel also introduced Newton to George Vicesimus Wigram, then an undergraduate at Queen's and the son of a wealthy merchant from London and Wexford.[128] Wigram had embarked on a military career: in 1824, however, he passed through a spiritual crisis which caused him to abandon the military, and he enrolled at Oxford two years later intent on taking orders in the Church.[129]

[124] See Chapter Seven.
[125] Rowdon, pp. 61, 63. See also Bransby, p. 305.
[126] See Ibid., p. 62.
[127] Ibid., p. 62f.
[128] Loc. cit.
[129] 1805-1879, younger brother of Sir James Wigram, the Vice-Chancellor, and Joseph Cotton Wigram, the Bishop of Rochester. His father, Sir Robert Wigram, was a merchant and shipbuilder in London and Wexford and later became M.P. for Fowey and Wexford. See D.N.B.; Pickering, p. 41f.

Through contact with Newton and James Harris he came to accept the high Calvinistic doctrines which were then percolating in the Evangelical milieu.

In 1829, Newton deepened his friendship with James Lampen Harris, who had preceded him as a Fellow of Exeter. Like his cousin Bulteel, Newton was a native of Plymouth, and an Etonian, and had married the daughter of the prominent Evangelical, Legh Richmond. He had been ordained in 1816, and, ten years later, had been presented to the perpetual curacy of Plymstock, a village on the outskirts of Plymouth.[130] In 1829, when he visited Oxford to cast his vote in the celebrated Parliamentary election following the passage of Catholic emancipation, he was met by Newton and introduced to his Evangelical circle. At St. Edmund Hall, he met the well-known Evangelical William 'Millennial' Marsh, also in Oxford for the election, and the two spent some time discussing the issue of unfulfilled prophecy.[131]

These three--Wigram, Newton, and Harris--soon banded together in what would become the primary force behind the establishment of Brethrenism in Plymouth--the third and most important point of the denomination's geographic and spiritual bases. In 1830, Wigram, who was apparently refused ordination by Blomfield due to his Evangelical convictions,[132] moved to Plymouth where he devoted himself to writing biblical

[130]Charles William Boase, Register of the Rectors and Fellows, Scholars, Exhibitioners, and Bible Clerks of Exeter College, Oxford (Oxford, 1879), p. 121.
[131]Rowdon, p. 64.
[132]Ibid., p. 74.

study texts.[133] During the following year, he established a new congregation in the disused Providence Chapel, which attracted a number of local Evangelical clergy to its services and served as the centre of the Brethren's important work in the area.[134] Newton was greatly influenced by Bulteel's celebrated University sermon preached at St. Mary's on February 6th, 1831, later describing the occasion as "the turning point of all my life."[135] He quickly abandoned all thoughts of Anglican ordination. While Harris returned to his congregation, he decided, in 1832, to resign his living and to secede from the Church. In this critical year of the Reform Bill, he published two works which disclosed what were by now standard objections to the Church: rejection of indiscriminate infant baptism, the baptismal service and other passages in the Church's Liturgy, and of an establishment which allowed State control over Canon law and subverted all effective ecclesiastical discipline.[136] He regarded the true Church as a "congregation of faithful men" and as an "assembly of believers united in fellowship," which excluded those who had made a merely nominal profession of faith. A true gospel church was one so set apart

[133]See Anon., The Englishman's Greek Concordance to the New Testament (London, 1839).
[134]Rowdon, p. 76.
[135]Ibid., p. 66.
[136]J.H. Harris, Address to the Parishioners of Plymstock (Plymouth, 1832), pp. 3ff, 11ff. For the moderate Evangelical response see Robert Cox, Secession Considered (London, 1832); A Clergyman [T.H. Ley], A Letter to the Late Perpetual Curate of Plymstock, (Devonport, 1832).

that the world could easily recognize its absolute distinctiveness.[137]

During his visit to Oxford in 1830, Darby had been persuaded by Newton to continue on to Plymouth, where his ministry could be extended to like-minded believers meeting in similar fashion to the Dublin Brethren.[138] Plymouth was now notorious as the centre of extreme Calvinistic theology in England, thanks to the presence of Robert Hawker, deemed by alarmed moderate Evangelicals to be "the great patron and apostle of antinomianism."[139] Through his numerous publications and his work with two influential religious societies,[140] Hawker was at the centre of a hyper-Calvinist network which extended to many places, especially in the West Country, where, according to one contemporary account, it made "alarming progress" during the late 1820s.[141]

When Darby arrived in Plymouth, he thus alighted in a place which was in many ways already well disposed towards ultra-Evangelicalism. He was quickly introduced to Captain Percy Francis Hall (son of Charles Hall, the Dean of Christ Church), a former naval officer who was engaged in itinerant preaching in the area. Hall was then brought to meet Wigram, Harris, and a number of other like-minded men, and quickly became

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[137]J.L. Harris, What is a Church? or, Reasons for Withdrawing from the Ministry of the Establishment (Plymouth, 1832), p. 4ff.

[138]Grant (p. 8) claims that Darby first visited Plymouth in 1832 or 1833; however, this date is clearly too late.

[139]Joseph Cottle, Strictures on the Plymouth Antinomians, 2nd ed. (London, 1824), pp. 4, 11.

[140]The Great Western Society for Dispersing Religious Tracts and the Corpus Christi Society.

[141]Cottle, p. 45.

aligned with the new movement, serving a vital role in its early growth in Plymouth. From Hall, the nascent movement also gained support for its anti-Erastian tendencies, for he strongly rejected submission to rulers and service on the bench of magistrates.

The final addition to the Plymouth group was Henry Borlase, a Cornishman and a Cambridge man, who, in 1830, had been ordained to the curacy of St. Keyne, Cornwall, where he remained until his secession two years later.[142] In 1833, he published a typical *apologia* for his secession, which revealed his premillennialist tendencies and accused the Church, in no uncertain terms, of open apostasy.[143]

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By now the Brethren had coalesced into a recognizable religious movement which had begun to function in its three primary locations: Dublin, Bristol, and Plymouth. In the early 1830s, theological and doctrinal positions of the movement, though still developing, became increasingly identifiable. Most distinctive was the teaching on the church and its ministry--not surprisingly, since the lack of spiritual discipline within the Church of England had been a primary cause for the emergence of the Brethren and for its continued appeal.[144]

In the 1830s, the Whig assault on the revenues of the Irish Church confirmed Darby's earlier criticism of

[142] D.N.B.

[143] Henry Borlase, Reasons for Withdrawing from the Ministry of the Church of England (Plymouth, 1833), p. 32.

[144] See T.C.F. Stunt, 'Two Nineteenth Century Movements,' Evangelical Quarterly, 37, No. 4, 1965, p. 221.

the dangers inherent in Erastianism. The Brethren now moved swiftly in a radical spiritual direction, rejecting the Apostolic succession, the historic creeds,[145] and the principle of paedobaptism (although Darby and a few others continued to adhere to it, apparently without serious objection from others).[146] They repudiated any form of fixed ministry or formal ministerial training, private pews, preaching to the non-elect, congregations selecting their own ministers, the specifying of any level--or form--of monetary contributions, voting on spiritual matters, and the laying down of any confession as a test of communion.[147]

More positively, the Brethren pushed to radical lengths the idea of the 'priesthood of all believers,' and called every follower of the new movement (at least in theory) to an equal share in its ministry and leadership. Such a spiritual gathering was regarded as the one true assembly of God, meeting around the spiritual person of Jesus,[148] as the Apostles had done in New Testament days. This assembly they saw not as brought together by human will, but as gathered by Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.[149] No humanly appointed minister was therefore required, since they met together under Divine presidency, in fulfilment of Jesus' promise in Matthew 18:20.[150] Moreover, each be-

[145] E.R., May 1839, p. 577f.
[146] Anon., Plymouth Brethrenism, p. 8n. See also Rowdon, p. 271f.
[147] E.R., May 1839, p. 576f.
[148] See Thomas Croskery, Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines (London, 1879), p. viif.
[149] Miller, 2:203.
[150] Which read: "Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them."

liever was capable of receiving inspiration directly from the Holy Spirit, for each had been called to the priesthood--a theory of inspiration which held some similarities to that advanced by the Quakers.[151]

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Darby's ecclesiology of the 'gathered,' combined with his strict doctrine of separatism, was clearly based upon the view that separation from the non-elect, or from those who differed from true believers on some point of disputable doctrine, was not schismatical, but a Christian imperative founded on Scripture. As he asked the readers of the *Christian Witness*, in reference to both the Church of England and the Dissenting bodies:

> ...does anyone doubt they are seeking worldly power as others to keep it? The path of the saints is most simple; their portion is heavenly; to be not of the world, as Christ is not of the world; to be clear from all their plans...If the saint knows *his* intrinsically, his path is very clear, to wit the spirit of separation from the world, through the knowledge of death, and power, and glory, and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ...and hence growing positive separation from them all.[152]

In defending the practice of believers meeting together in private to break bread, Darby retorted that it was not schism, but "schism only from what is worldly, which is a Christian's duty." When referring to these gatherings, he was reluctant to use the term 'church;' Christians should meet together, he claimed, "not leaning upon ministry or assuming any thing, or pretending to set up churches, but simply (upon the ground that 'where two or three are gathered together, there is

[151]Miller, 2:202ff.
[152]Christian Witness, 1834, p. 29.

Christ in the midst of them,') as individuals, merely separating from present evil."[153] While such teachings were successful in leading many Brethren to leave the Church of England, they were also to prove (perhaps because Darby had failed to work out their practical implications in terms of administering a growing denomination) the cause of endless explosive disputes and schisms which rocked the Brethren movement itself, almost from its inception.[154]

In March 1836, as he was departing overseas, Groves wrote to Darby questioning his strict separatism and commenting on the harm which it was inflicting upon the fledgling movement. He implored him to denounce these extreme teachings, but without success. His attempt provided a glimpse into the internal divisions within the early movement, foreshadowing the even deeper divisions which would soon divide it over the so-called 'Bethesda Question.' Groves asked:

> Was not the principle we laid down as to separation from all existing bodies at the outset, this: that we felt ourselves bound to separate from all individuals and systems, *so far* as they required us to do what our consciences would not allow, or restrained us from doing what our consciences required, and no further? And were we not as free to join and act with any individual, or body of individuals, as they were free *not* to require us to do what our consciences did *not* allow, or prevent our doing what they did? And in this freedom did we not feel brethren should *not* force liberty

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[153] Loc. cit.

[154] See J.N. Darby, On the Apostasy, in Collected Writings, 1:174-191; The Apostasy of the Successive? Dispensations, in Ibid., 1:192-202; Henry Borlase, 'Separation from Apostasy not Schism,' Christian Witness, 1834, pp. 174-191.

> on those who were bound, nor withhold freedom from those who were free?[155]

At the heart of this comment is Groves' belief that in his determination to separate from the bondage of the Church, Darby was creating a narrow and constrictive sect. The generous and missionary-minded Groves fretted at the negativism of the Darbyites and their proneness to find fault in other churches:

> Some will not have me hold communion with the Scots, because their views are not satisfactory about the Lord's Supper; others with you, because of your views about baptism; others with the Church...because of her thoughts about ministry. I receive them all, and join with them...Nor shall I ever feel separation from the good for the sake of the evil, to be my way of witnessing against it, till I see infinitely clearer than I do now, that it is God's.[156]

Groves warned Darby that his extremism would cause the movement to be dismissed by outsiders as disputatious, narrow-minded, schismatical, and doctrinaire. If it travelled a step or two further, it would begin to exhibit the same evils as the system from which it professed to have separated, for its basis of union was daily becoming one of formal doctrine and opinion more than life and love. It would be known by its negativism: more by what it witnessed against than what it witnessed for; it would become an introverted, self-regarding sect just as the Walkerites and Glasites.[157] Groves rejected Darby's pessimism and devoted his life largely to Indian missions. He was saddened that a

[155]Groves to Darby, letter dated 10 March 1836, quoted in Henry Groves, p. 10. See also Letter from Groves to Darby, in Mrs. Groves, Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves (London, 1856), Appendix G.

[156]Mrs. Groves, p. 535f.

[157]Groves to Darby, letter dated 10 March 1836, quoted in Groves, Darbyism, p. 9.

movement of small, informal assemblies, 'without connexion' with one another, and 'dependant upon the energy of individuals,' was developing into a 'centralized organization.' The Brethren's original principle of communion, Groves concluded, had been the possession of the common life of the family of God, and nothing had changed this. If Darby persisted in excluding those outside his own small circle from fellowship, the most "narrow-minded and bigoted" would begin to rule over the body, because their consciences would not give way to others. Into this position some little flocks were rapidly degenerating.[158]

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These warnings were all too prophetic, and the later history of the Brethren was scarred by tragic controversy and division, the product of its ever increasing separatism and sectarianism. Such a position was founded on Darby's conviction that the movement was the true assembly of God, holding exclusive possession of the Spirit, and meeting round the person of Christ.[159] And what was there in Britain, he argued, to challenge this claim by offering a purer, more Scriptural alternative? Archbishop Magee's *Charge* and a long series of Whig Erastian acts had proved conclusively that the Church of England was not the true body of Christ, but irredeemably corrupt and secularized. This was no Church of the Apostles. Nor was the English Church redeemed by the presence of Evangelicals within it: their weak-minded reluctance to address such thorny issues as

[158] Ibid., p. 10f.
[159] Croskery, p. viif.

Church order and discipline only proved their complicity in the corruption of the body to which they belonged.[160]

[160]Stokes, p. 540.

The Oxford Seceders

Though Oxford, home of Wesley's famous Holy Club, is regarded as the cradle of the Evangelical Revival, Cambridge is generally credited with the nurture of the movement's celebrated second generation, the *alma mater* of well-known leaders such as William Wilberforce, Rowland Hill, John Venn, Isaac Milner, and Legh Richmond.[1] Above all, Cambridge was the University of Charles Simeon, Fellow of King's College and incumbent of Holy Trinity Church who, through his preaching and his celebrated 'conversation parties,' did more to advance 'serious religion' between 1782 and 1836 than any other university figure.[2]

During the 1820s, the spiritual and intellectual focus of the movement began to shift back to Oxford, to which, significantly, some of the sons of the Clapham Sect (and other Evangelical families) were sent to be educated.[3] Wilberforce sent his three younger sons to Oxford primarily because he had become disillusioned with the low state of Cambridge society (borne out by the disastrous career of his eldest son William at Trinity) and the indiscipline and irregularity of college life. He had also been favourably impressed by Edward Hawkins, Tutor (later Provost) of Oriel College,

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[1]See V.H.H. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge (London, 1964), pp. 222-254.

[2]See William Carus, Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A. (London, 1847); Charles Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (Cambridge, 1940); Hugh Evans Hopkins, Charles Simeon of Cambridge (London, 1977).

[3]With some notable exceptions, including Francis Close, George Cornelius Gorham, Thomas Macaulay, Baptist Noel, and Henry Thornton.

to whom he entrusted his sons.[4] For similar reasons, Hannah More also transferred her emotional loyalties to Oxford at about the same time. In 1818 she wrote anxiously to her friend Marianne Thornton about the "contagious atmosphere" of Cambridge society which awaited young Henry Thornton, who was about to go up to Trinity, adding:

> I am much changed with respect to the two Universities. I used greatly to prefer Cambridge, but this summer I have had so much intercourse with men of talents and piety from Oxford that I believe not only that the general discipline there is much stricter but in two or three Colleges religion is in more esteem.[5]

Oxford, conservative, orthodox, and suspicious of reform, was slowly awakening from a long period of spiritual and intellectual lethargy, evidenced by the re-introduction of the teaching of Aristotle and Butler, and the study of logic.[6] It was a bastion of the Protestant Constitution in Church and State, a pillar of the establishment in the broadest sense, and a privileged oracle of the *ancien régime* looking to the State to preserve and maintain its exclusive rights. Once again its Professors lectured and its students were expected to work and, increasingly, to be examined.[7] In

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[4]David Newsome, The Parting of Friends (London, 1966), pp. 57-62. Robert Wilberforce matriculated in 1820, Samuel in 1823; and Henry in 1826. Other Evangelical 'sons' at Oxford at the time included William Gladstone (Christ Church, 1828); Henry Manning (Balliol, 1827); and the Ryders: Dudley (Christ Church, 1818), Henry, George, Thomas, and Richard (Oriel, 1821, 1828, 1833, and 1840 respectively), and William (Exeter, 1831).

[5]Quoted in E.M. Forster, Marianne Thornton (London, 1956), p. 78.

[6]See Essays by the Late Mark Pattison, ed. by Henry Nettleship, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1889), 1:462ff.

[7]See W.R. Ward, Victorian Oxford (London, 1965), pp. xiii-20.

matters of religion, it was much the same. The Anglican monopoly was fiercely defended on all fronts, subscription to the Articles was twice required (at matriculation and upon taking a degree),[8] and Dissent was stridently opposed.[9]

The intense political and religious excitement at Oxford accompanying the 'constitutional revolution' of 1828-1832, gave rise to what has often been characterized as a golden age, enlivened by political intrigue, spiritual richness, and uncertainty. It was a time for the cult of personality and intense hero-worship, passionate friendships, and fierce enmities.[10] The atmosphere was perhaps best captured by Dean Church, whose impression as an undergraduate and young don was of an Oxford which resembled Florence in the age of Savonarola; with its nicknames, 'Puseyites,' and 'Neomaniacs,' and 'High and Dry,' counterparts to the *Piagnoni* and *Arrabbiati*. Like a Renaissance city-state, Oxford teemed with polemical vitality. It was:

> as proud and jealous of its own ways as Athens or Florence; and like them had its quaint fashions of polity; its democratic Convocation and its oligarchy; its social ranks; its discipline, severe in theory and usually lax in fact; its self-governed bodies and corporations within itself; its facul-

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[8]At Cambridge, subscription was required only at taking a degree, thus allowing conscientious Dissenters to matriculate but compelling them to leave without taking a degree.

[9]See Edward Tatham, Letters to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke on Politics (Oxford, 1791), p. 92ff; James Hinton, A Vindication of the Dissenters in Oxford (London, 1792); B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians (London, 1971), p. 164; John Petty, The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion (London, 1880), p. 231; Oxford Chronicle, 12 September 1829; Alan Crossley, ed. A History of the County of Oxford, 11 vols. (Oxford, 1979), 4:255; MSS Topographical Oxfordshire, c. 300, f. 386, B.L.O.

[10]See Newsome, p. 63.

> ties and colleges, like the guilds and 'arts' of Florence; its internal rivalries and discords; its 'sects' and factions. Like these, too, it professed a special recognition of the supremacy of religion; it claimed to be the home of worship and religious training...to be eminently the guardian of 'true religion and sound learning;' and therefore it was eminently the place where religion should be recalled to its purity and strength, and also the place where there ought to be the most vigilant jealousy against the perversions and corruptions of religion.[11]

Of the diverse manifestations of this effervescence, the Oxford Movement is the most obvious and the best chronicled. Yet those at the other end of the Anglican spectrum, the Oxford Evangelicals, were also experiencing conflicts, both external and internal, which exerted an influence not only upon Evangelicalism at large, but also on the Oxford Movement itself.

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Though overshadowed in Oxford by High Churchmanship,[12] Evangelicalism nevertheless made its presence felt in the University during the 1820s. Although one observer claimed that it was then the dominant religious force in Oxford,[13] and others have minimized its

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[11] R.W. Church, The Oxford Movement, 3rd ed. (London, 1892), p. 160f.

[12] Such tensions had been in existence for many years. See Nehemiah Curnock, ed. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, 8 vols. (London, 1938), pp. 1-5; Green, p. 202f.

[13] W. Tuckwell, Reminiscences of Oxford (London, 1900), p. 227.

influence or dismissed it altogether,[14] the true strength of the group in Oxford during the 1820s lies somewhere in between.[15] Nowhere was its influence, whether strong or moderate, more obvious than at St. Edmund Hall, which was recognized as the centre of the movement within the University,[16] a reputation which had been gained by a continuous succession of Evangelical Vice-Principals.[17] During the 1820s, it was joined by Wadham, especially after the election of Benjamin Parsons Symons as Sub-Warden, who secured the election of several Evangelical Fellows in his forty year tenure

[14]Green (p. 215f) has argued that by the 1830s Evangelicalism had become a matter of theological sympathies rather than a distinctive party, and that there is little to suggest that it presented a positive lead in the heated religious atmosphere of the time. Newsome has claimed (pp. 8, 57) that Oxford was overwhelmingly weighed on the side of the opposite tradition. More severely, Thomas Mozley has commented on the very low status of Evangelicalism in the University during the 1820s; it "could not show a single man who combined scholarship, intellect, and address in a considerable degree." See Thomas Mozley, Reminiscences Chiefly of Oriel College and the Oxford Movement, 2 vols. (London, 1882), 1:23f, 98.

[15]Ward (p. 75) argued that the Oxford Evangelicals increased in influence during the 1820s. For a comprehensive examination of of Oxford Evangelicalism see J.S. Reynolds, The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735-1871, 2nd ed. (Appleford, 1975).

[16]See Thomas Mozley, 1:23, 241-246; Richard Hill, *Pietas Oxoniensis*: or, a Full and Impartial Account of the Expulsion of Six Students from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford (London, 1768); Thomas Nowell, An Answer to a Pamphlet, Entitled *Pietas Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1768).

[17]Including Isaac Crouch (1783-1806), Daniel Wilson (1807-1812), and John Hill (1812--1851). See W.E. Gladstone, Gleanings of Past Years, 7 vols. (London, 1879), 7:211f; W. Tuckwell, Pre-Tractarian Oxford (London, 1909), p. 8; Thomas Mozley, 1:242; Reynolds, pp. 58-76.

of office;[18] Worcester, especially through the influence of Richard Cotton, Provost in 1839;[19] and Exeter, which, through its close West Country connections, had links with the high Calvinism of that region--most notably through the election of four well-known West Country Evangelicals as Fellows between 1800-1826. Two of them, H.B. Bulteel and his cousin J.L. Harris, though old Etonians, were also youthful attenders at the hyper-Calvinist preaching of Robert Hawker at Plymouth.[20] Beyond these strongholds, there was a recognizable Evangelical presence at a number of other Colleges during

[18]Sub-Warden in 1823; Warden in 1831, a position he retained for forty years, during which time he secured the election of a number of Evangelicals as College Fellows, including Thomas Griffiths, Thomas Vores, and Robert Walker. In so doing, he developed the College's reputation as the centre of Evangelicalism in the University after 1830. He is also alleged to have arranged evening prayers at such a time as to prevent undergraduates from hearing Newman preach at St. Mary's (after abdicating from Evangelicalism in the late 1820s). James Harington Evans, the intellectual leader of the Western Schism, was also an undergraduate and Fellow at Wadham between 1799-1810. See Reynolds, pp. 93f, 102f, 166, 169, 184f; Green, p. 215f.

[19]Who was elected Fellow in 1816, Provost in 1839, and Vice-Chancellor in 1852. He was the brother-in-law of Edward Pusey and was one of the promoters of the Martyrs Memorial in 1841. Other Evangelical Fellows at Worcester included Robert Bush, William Knight, J.C. Philpot, and Henry Wilkerson. See John William Burgon, Lives of Twelve Good Men, 2 vols. (London, 1888), 2:71-92; Lilian M. Quiller Couch, Reminiscences of Oxford (Oxford, 1892), p. 208; Green, p. 215; Ward, pp. 122f, 138; Reynolds, pp. 162, 165, 173f, 180, and 186.

[20]John David Macbride (1800-1813, Principal of Magdalen Hall, 1813-1868), Henry Bellenden Bulteel (1823-1829), James Lampen Harris (1815-1829), and Benjamin Wiles Newton (1826-1832). All except Macbride would soon secede from the Established Church. F.D. Maurice, whose religious views at the time suggested a certain openness to Evangelicalism, came up to read theology at Exeter in 1830. By 1837, Exeter had fallen heavily under the spell of Tractarianism. See W.K. Stride, Exeter College (London, 1900), pp. 134, 166; Reynolds, pp. 70, 97, 176; John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 2 vols. (London, 1905), 1:54f; Newsome, p. 196.

the 1820s, including Oriel, with the zealous Culling Eardley, and University, with the mercurial Richard Waldo Sibthorp.[21]

Outside the University, the Evangelicals' spiritual centre, according to Gladstone, was located at the parish Church of St. Ebbe's,[22] where Henry Bulteel had been appointed as Curate in 1826.[23] Before being converted to 'serious religion,' Bulteel had been one of "the most rollicking and rowdy" undergraduates of his day, earning a certain reputation for his antics and his prowess on the Isis as stroke in the winning Brase-

[21]Smith matriculated in 1823, and was later known as a champion of ultra-Protestantism in the West Country and an outspoken critic of Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter. See Al. Ox., 4:1311. Sibthorp matriculated in 1809, later becoming well-known as Curate to Baptist Noel at St. John's, Bedford Row, and for his numerous secessions into--and out of--Roman Catholicism. See Ibid., 4:1295. In Michaelmas 1828, Gladstone recorded that "a new party--hearers apparently of Mr. Bulteel at St. Ebbe's" had developed at Christ Church. See Entry of 15 November 1828, in M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew, eds. The Gladstone Diaries, 11 vols. (Oxford 1968-90), 1:211. See also Quiller Couch, p. 329; Wemyss Reid, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone (London, 1899), p. 103f.

[22]William E. Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement: Its Parentage, Progress and Issue,' British Quarterly Review, July 1879, p. 8.

[23]See H.H. Rowdon, 'Secession From the Established Church in the Early Nineteenth Century,' V.E., (London, 1964), p. 80f. William Hanbury was the pluralist Rector of St. Ebbe's and of Great Harborough, Warwickshire. Shortly after his appointment at St. Ebbe's in 1806, he suffered a complete mental breakdown. See MSS Oxford Diocesan c. 428, f. 38; b. 14, f. 35v, O.R.O. Thereafter, the parish was served by a succession of curates, appointed on the vestry's (or their predecessors') recommendation. This situation continued until 1868. See MSS d.d. Parish Oxford St. Ebbe's, e I, s.a. 1816; d I, s.a. 1825, O.R.O. The curate was relatively well-paid: in 1818, he received £70/year plus surplice fees of £10. See MSS Oxford Diocesan, b. 14, f. 38, O.R.O.

nose boat of 1822.[24] But soon he became not only "incurably enthusiastic" in his religious views,[25] but, according to Gladstone and Newman, the most influential Evangelical in Oxford during the late 1820s and early 30s,[26] attracting so many non-parishioners--often undergraduates--to his services at St. Ebbe's that plans were soon underway to build a gallery along the north side of the Church.[27]

Hitherto 'serious religion' in Oxford had reflected the national tone of Evangelical piety in its moderation: it was firmly attached to Church and establishment, and 'regular' patterns of worship and evangelism; careful to avoid over-cordial relationships with orthodox Dissent which might compromise the authority of the Establishment; and mild in its Calvinism. By its moderation and regularity the movement attracted--if only temporarily--a number of influential Oxford undergraduates, though many of these were soon to abandon 'serious religion' either for High Churchmanship or even for Rome.

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[24]See John Buchan, Brasenose College (London, 1898), p. 97. See also A.C. Downer, A Century of Evangelical Religion in Oxford (London, 1938), p. 12; Stride, p. 166f; Charles William Boase, Register of the Rectors and Fellows, Scholars, Exhibitioners, and Bible Clerks of Exeter College, Oxford (Oxford, 1879), p. 124.

[25]According to Edward Copleston, Provost of Oriel. See Ward, p. 17.

[26]Gladstone, Gleanings of Past Years, 5:29; and, Letter of Newman, 14 March 1830, in Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman, ed. by Anne Mozley, 2 vols. (London, 1891), 1:226.

[27]The Church had been completely rebuilt in 1816; however, during the next ten years the parish increased to over 3,000. Bulteel and the Churchwardens responded to this in 1827 by petitioning the Bishop of Oxford to permit the erection of this gallery, to be paid for by voluntary subscriptions. See MSS Oxford Diocesan, c. 435, p. 503; c. 2170, no. 9, O.R.O.

During this same period, however, Evangelicalism in Oxford, as elsewhere, began to undergo profound changes.[28] The great leaders of its celebrated second generation were quickly passing from the scene and the party was unable to win those who should have been their natural successors: the sons of Wilberforce and Ryder, Gladstone, Manning, Newman, and others. To make matters worse, this transition occurred at the precise moment when the tensions between Church and State and conservatives and liberals, was heating up. Evangelicals spoke with a divided voice on the emotive political issues of the day. A distinct cleavage opened up between the mildly reformist 'Claphamites,' whose views were expressed in the *Christian Observer*, and the more fiercely Tory 'Recordites.' The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the passage of Catholic Emancipation (and the subsequent Parliamentary election contest in Oxford between Robert Harry Inglis and Robert Peel), the Great Reform Bill, and the debate over mandatory subscription at the University, split and demoralized the Evangelicals, thus rendering them incapable of tak-

[28]Thomas Mozley (1:107) claimed that the Evangelical party was then undergoing "a rapid decomposition."

ing a lead.[29] As David Newsome has argued, the situation cried out for effective leadership, so that any party which championed the cause of the Church against liberalism and secular intrusion with sufficient militancy would be likely to attract large numbers--especially of the young men ardent for a crusade--to fight under its banner.[30]

The constitutional crisis of 1828-32 seem to have accentuated a process of fragmentation in the Evangelical camp which had already become visible in the mid-1820s in the sharp internal Apocrypha controversy which divided the Bible Society. The moderate Clapham-Cambridge consensus which had dominated Evangelicalism since the 1790s showed signs of disintegration. There was dissatisfaction with the degree of accommodation to the polite 'world' shown by those such as the Clapham group and Simeon. The more rigorist *Record*, taken over in 1828 by Alexander Haldane, offered a sterner, more dogmatic evangelicalism, which set its face hard against liberalism and compromise. Millennial excite-

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[29]Subscription was a particularly emotive issue with the C.O., which objected to any requirement which profaned sacred things and encouraged "bigotry, Popery, and intolerance." They could not accept the High Churchmen's belief (championed by Bishop Phillpotts) that the youth subscribes first, and learns to understand what he has subscribed afterwards. Culling Eardley, who had subscribed to the Articles upon matriculating at Oriel, refused to subscribe a second time and consequently left Oxford without a degree. How effective subscription was is questionable. Francis Newman remarked that, despite compulsory subscription, not one in five Oxford undergraduate "seemed to have any religious convictions at all: the elder residents seldom or never showed sympathy with the doctrines that pervade that formula." See C.O., 1831, p. 614f; 1832, p. 88; 1833, pp. iii, 323; 1834, pp. 258, 323; 1835, p. 520; Ward, p. 202; Francis William Newman, Phases of Faith, 6th ed. (London, 1860), p. 3.

[30]Newsome, p. 10.

ments, always simmering below the surface, broke out in dramatic forms, notably in Irvingism. As a result, the Evangelical movement began to fragment into four more or less distinct--and increasingly separate--camps during the late 1820s: the old moderates of the '*Christian Observer* school',[31] the strongly anti-Catholic (and anti-liberal) '*Recordites*',[32] the hyper-Calvinists whose organ later became the *Gospel Standard*,[33] and the millennialists whose extreme notions were advanced in the *Morning Watch*.[34] Thus, the work of Wilberforce, Hannah More, and others to establish a moderate Evangelical consensus and to transform 'serious religion' into the attractive and respectable faith of the middle and upper classes, and Simeon's tireless efforts to ensure its adherence to clerical 'regularity' and loyalty to the National Church, were now being challenged by fragmentation and extremism inside their own party.

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The effects of these great upheavals in Church and State and within Evangelicalism were soon evident in Oxford. As Hurrell Froude wrote, the Oxford Evangelicals had begun to pull in "different ways with mare's-nests of their own."[35] Gladstone observed the appear-

[31] Including John Bird and Charles Richard Sumner, Baptist Noel, and Daniel Wilson. The C.O. had been published since 1802.

[32] Including Hugh McNeile, Hugh Stowell, and Francis Close. The Record was first published in January 1828.

[33] Including Henry Bulteel, J.C. Philpot, and William Tiptaft. The Strict and Particular Baptist journal, the Gospel Standard, was first published in 1837.

[34] Including Henry Drummond, Edward Irving, and John Nelson Darby. The Morning Watch was first published in 1829.

[35] Quoted in Newman's Letters, 1:455.

ance of "a score or two of young men...nestled together in St. Edmund Hall," who "belonged to a school of ultra-Calvinism, which lay far in advance of the ordinary Evangelical tenets."[36] Thomas Mozley sadly chronicled the 1829 secession of a dozen or so young Oxford men from the Church: whether or not they left as the result of Catholic emancipation is not clear, but all these unidentified secederers agreed that the Church was incurably wrong and doomed.[37] Nor was Oxford immune from the influences of the 'prophetic fever' which had already infected Albury and much of London.[38] Newman produced the first of his two essays on miracles in 1826.[39] In the Michaelmas term 1829, he met twice a week with a number of other Oriel men to discuss the issue of prophecy. Was Napoleon or was the Pope the Antichrist? "It was everywhere held to be of vital importance to have a right understanding of this question."[40]

Perhaps predictably, before long another catalytic influence was introduced into this unsettled and volatile atmosphere: the Irish Evangelical-millennialist John Nelson Darby, who conveniently arrived in Oxford early in 1830.[41] As we have seen, so successful was

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[36]Gladstone, Gleanings of Past Years, 7:211f.
[37]See Thomas Mozley, 1:175f.
[38]See W.H. Oliver, Prophets and Millennialists (Auckland and Oxford, 1978), p. 142ff.
[39]See J.H. Newman, Two Essays on Scriptural Miracles and On Ecclesiastical, 2nd ed. (London, 1870).
[40]Thomas Mozley, 1:176; J.H. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, (London, 1879), p. 23, and Appendix; Letter of W. Tiptaft, 16 November 1831, in J.H. Philpot, The Secederers, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (London, 1931), 1:50.
[41]F.W. Newman, p. 28; and Chapter Six. See also MSS St. Edmund Hall 67/8, The Revd. John Hill's Diary, pp. 7a, 7b, and 29a, B.L.O., which places Darby in Oxford during May, June, and December 1830.

Darby in provoking and agitating the local religious scene that at least three Oxford Evangelicals--J.L. Harris, B.W. Newton, and G.V. Wigram--soon abandoned Anglicanism for the greener pastures of the fledgling Brethren movement.

Nor did the spiritual atmosphere at St. Ebbe's remain unaffected by the changes--local and otherwise--in Evangelicalism. Bulteel, with his Hawkerite leanings and personal impetuosity, rapidly became the local champion of the 'ultra-Calvinist school'. So successful was he in propagating these new doctrines that, in late 1827, his two Churchwardens, William Albutt and John Chaundry, were compelled to write to Charles Lloyd, the High Church Bishop of Oxford (allegedly on behalf of the parishioners), protesting against his extreme teachings, his failure to maintain discipline, and his assumption of the right to appoint one of the Churchwardens.[42] Their charge of indiscipline was based upon a number of claims: Bulteel had deprived the parishioners of their pews in order to accommodate favourable members of the University, Dissenters, and those who lived outside the parish (he even filled the reading desk with undergraduates); he had allowed "quarreling, swearing, and indecencies of several kinds" to take place during a recent meeting of the vestry; he had employed extempore prayer, expositions of Scripture, and a final extempore prayer during many

[42]See MSS Records of Oxford City Parishes, d.d., Parish Oxford St. Ebbe's, b. I. pp. 25-28, O.R.O. According to John Hill, Albutt, a local tailor, was Bulteel's chief opponent. His service as Churchwarden, however, lasted only two years (1826-1827). See Hill's Diary, 67/6, pp. 117b, 118a.

vestry meetings; and he had permitted a local chimney-sweep to pray extempore in the Sunday school.[43]

After summoning Bulteel for an explanation, Bishop Lloyd penned a lengthy reply to the Churchwardens stating his unwillingness to rule on matters of doctrine, allowing "it to the character of every clergyman to believe that he has not opposed the Articles and formularies of his Church." Only when these charges were substantiated by definite and positive proof, would he be persuaded to act. It appears that Bulteel assured Lloyd that all such 'irregularities' had occurred without his sanction or approval--a claim backed up by a petition presented to the Bishop by a group of Bulteel's supporters, who represented to his Lordship that the signatories were all parishioners in good standing. Upon investigation, however, Lloyd discovered that among the petitioners were a number of Dissenters, Dissenting ministers, and even, allegedly, the most abandoned prostitutes and immoral characters in Oxford. This revelation did little to advance Bulteel's already tenuous standing in the Diocese; however, he was left

[43]MSS Records of Oxford City Parishes, d.d., Parish Oxford St. Ebbe's, b. I. pp. 25-28, O.R.O.

unmolested for the moment and allowed to continue with his ministry at St. Ebbe's.[44]

Unfortunately, the tension between Bulteel and his Churchwardens did not end there, for in early May 1828, his chief opponent, Albutt, petitioned the Hebdomadal Board to prevent undergraduates from attending parish churches, "on the plea that they prevent the parishioners from coming."[45] When the Vice-Chancellor read out the petition at a meeting of the Heads of Houses, "many violent things were said by several against Bulteel."[46] "Heterodox--insane" was how the Principal of St. Edmund Hall characterized Bulteel, according to his Vice Principal.[47] On May 11th, Albutt attempted, on the Vice-Chancellor's personal authority, to prevent mem-

[44]Loc. cit. The Bishop also refused to rule on the question of whether Bulteel had the right to appoint one of the Churchwardens; however, when Bulteel appeared before the Archdeacon's visitation at St. Mary's in June 1828, his plea on this question was denied. William Baker has argued that Lloyd's inaction in this matter was not merely the result of innate conservatism. Rather, throughout 1828 and 1829, his attention was divided between his duties as Regius Professor of Divinity and the pressing demands of Parliamentary politics, such as the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and Catholic Emancipation. See William F. Baker, Beyond Port and Prejudice, Charles Lloyd of Oxford, 1784-1829 (Orono, Maine, 1981), p. 168. Perhaps equally important, Lloyd was seriously ill during almost all of May 1829 (when Bulteel's case was being debated by the Hebdomadal Board), dying on the 31st.

[45]See Hill's Diary, 67/6, p. 115b.

[46]Loc. cit.

[47]Hill received this account of the meeting from the Principal. Afterwards, Hill called on Bulteel and together the two prayed over the matter. Bulteel "goes on in simple faith," he wrote. See Ibid., pp. 115b., 116b. Hill also refers to a petition with 146 names attached, a copy of which was sent to the Bishop and another to the Vice-Chancellor, on the subject of the charges against Bulteel. It remains unclear, however, whether this petition favoured--or opposed--Bulteel, or even if it is the same petition mentioned earlier by Lloyd.

bers of the University from attending St. Ebbe's, and to take the names of those who tried to attend. When Bulteel called upon him the following day, however, the Vice-Chancellor admitted that he had acted incorrectly in authorizing Albutt to act in such a manner.[48] When, in a subsequent meeting of the Hebdomadal Board, the Vice-Chancellor revealed to the members what had occurred, he met with a serious reprimand from several of the more liberal Heads, especially Richard Whatley, the Principal of St. Alban Hall, and Philip Shuttleworth, the Warden of New College. He then abandoned the scheme, and refused to see Albutt when he called, or to receive his list of offending undergraduates.[49] The attempt to forbid undergraduates from attending Bulteel's services thus proved counterproductive, as is often the case with prohibitions of the kind; it simply gave Bulteel added publicity, as well as the appearance of being a martyr to the vindictiveness of gerontocratic Heads of House. As B.W. Newton later recalled, for student rebels:

> It was a wonderful movement: it roused and even terrified the University, and the authorities tried to put it down, forbidding attendance at St. Ebbe's Church, and ordering the names to be taken of those who persisted. My name was the first![50]

Given such local opposition--and attendant publicity--it is not surprising that Bulteel became increasingly extreme in his pronouncements. He even opened

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[48] Ibid., p. 117b.

[49] Loc. cit. Hill responded to this victory in characteristic fashion. "God has mercifully turned the counsel of the opponents of the gospel into foolishment," he wrote.

[50] From a memorandum from B.W. Newton dated June 1885, quoted in H.H. Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren 1825-1850 (London, 1967), p. 61.

his pulpit to the notorious John Nelson Darby, who, while staying in Oxford on a number of occasions, harangued the congregation with his peculiar notions of a new Jerusalem.[51] Here at St. Ebbe's was a fiery Evangelical counterpart to Newman's equally seductive but more tranquil preaching at St. Mary's, of which he had become Vicar in 1828. And Bulteel did not disappoint his enthusiastic audiences: his passion and intensity at St. Ebbe's was intoxicating. As Gladstone, who often sat under his preaching while an undergraduate at Christ Church between 1828-1831, described the work, "the flame was at white heat."[52] Bulteel's friend, J.C. Philpot, the high Calvinist Fellow of Worcester, thus summarized the impact of this extraordinary character:

> Bulteel had for some years embraced the doctrines of grace, and preached them with much fervour of mind and strength of expression. This was a new sound at the learned University, and a thing almost unheard of, that a Fellow and Tutor of one of the Colleges...should embrace so thoroughly and above all proclaim so boldly, the obnoxious doctrines of the Calvinistic creed. His Church was crowded with hearers, and among them were seen many of the University students, and now and then a master of arts, myself being one of them, some of whom became his attached and regular hearers.[53]

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The mounting tension surrounding Bulteel's highly-charged ministry reached a climax on February 6th 1831. The occasion was his delivery of the weekly University

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[51] In December 1830, for example, he preached from Romans 11:22, a significant text on the world's rejection of the gentile church, which had potentially separatists' implications, as he undoubtedly pointed out. See Hill's Diary, 67/8, p. 29a.

[52] Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement,' p. 8.

[53] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, 3rd ed. (Leicester, 1972), p. 43.

sermon at St. Mary's.[54] The atmosphere which greeted him as he ascended the pulpit was electric: it was claimed that no larger audience had ever been assembled in the University Church.[55] These sensation-seekers were not disappointed by what they heard.

In a lengthy and emotional diatribe, Bulteel advanced without inhibition his extreme notions concerning free grace and the evils which desolated the Church. In what appeared to be a flagrantly antinomian declaration, he stated that the punishment and guilt of sin had been removed from believers because their sin had been completely hidden from the sight of God;[56] and that they were, consequently, not only free from sin but actually unable to sin.[57] He followed this with a Jeremiad against the Anglican clergy, who were dismissed as men of pleasure, indulging in such vices as the theatre, dances, balls, card playing, horse racing and hunting; as habitual gamblers, drunkards, misers, gluttons, fornicators, adulterers, or worse.[58] In particular, Bulteel indicted Heads of House for their lax and indiscriminate provision of testimonials for profligate undergraduates seeking ordination--a charge

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[54]Who, in preaching the University sermon, was performing a duty which, in rotation, fell upon all resident M.A.s in Holy Orders. See the Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 5 February 1831.

[55]See Edward Burton, Remarks Upon a Sermon Preached at St. Mary's on Sunday, February 6, 1831 (Oxford, 1831), p. 3; G.V. Cox, Recollections of Oxford (London, 1868), p. 244.

[56]Henry Bulteel, A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, 6th ed. (Oxford, 1831), p. 17. In this edition, Bulteel added a new preface and sequel defending his doctrinal positions and charging that Richard Bagot, the Bishop of Oxford, was attempting to remove him from his curacy.

[57]Ibid., p. 24f.

[58]Ibid., p. 45f.

which, although acknowledged by some,[59] was destined to annoy more.[60] Bulteel declared that testimonials attesting that a young man has behaved himself:

> *honestly, piously,* and *soberly*...have been given to men notorious for nothing so much in their day as profaneness, debauchers, and all kinds of riotous living; and on the other hand I also know for a certainty, that these testimonials have been withheld from piety, honesty, and sobriety, for no other reason than that they have happened to be accompanied with a profession of the Grace Articles of the Church of England.[61]

The reaction of both town and gown to such claims was one of intense excitement. The *Oxford Herald* printed a lengthy extract of the sermon on its front page, because its contents had been "so much talked of and so much exaggerated."[62] A local observer noted that "the discourse drew forth much discussion, being watched with extreme interest by all sections of the Church."[63] Gladstone responded with a mixture of emotions, perhaps reflecting the confusion experienced by other young and impressionable Oxford Evangelicals. In his diary he recorded:

> ...a long letter home, giving an account of Bulteel's extraordinary sermon. It must rouse many and various feelings. God grant it may all work

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[59] Cox, p. 244. The Rector of Exeter College, for example, exclaimed in response: "Well, I must say I quailed, for indeed it is true: you all know that we do have young men brought to be qualified for ordination, and we have to sign the papers declaring that they are called by the Holy Ghost, some of them ungodly young men." Quoted in Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren, p. 67.

[60] This same charge was also advanced by Bulteel's friend J.C. Philpot upon the latter's secession from the Church in 1835. See J.C. Philpot, A Letter to the Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, 6th ed. (London, 1835).

[61] Bulteel, A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, p. 46f.

[62] Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 19 February 1831.

[63] James Moore, Pictorial and Historical Gossiping Guide to Oxford (Oxford, 1882), p. 19.

> for good. May my proud heart never lose one jot of the truth of God through its prejudices and passions, and may all their strongholds be cast down, and may there be an absorption of my will in the will of God and a perfect prostration of my soul before him, through the one and only Mediator. But after having heard the remarkable sermon of this remarkable man, I cannot but still remember the words of St. Paul, (in reference to the extent of redemption) For as by the disobedience of one *the* many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one shall *the many* be made righteous.[64]

Bulteel opportunistically pressed for publication of the entire sermon, and it quickly ran through at least six editions.[65] It did not go unanswered, and among Bulteel's numerous critics was no less a personage than Dr. Edward Burton, Regius Professor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, and Chaplain to Richard Bagot, the new Bishop of Oxford. Temperamentally unsuited to the cut and thrust of religious polemic, Burton made a feeble attempt to counter Bulteel's charges by accusing him of confounding justification with salvation,[66] and by claiming that the basis of English Reformed theology was inherently Lutheran--and not Calvinist--a charge which did little to advance his own reputation as a scholar and theologian, or to counter

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[64] From Romans 5:19. Entry of 6 February 1831, in Gladstone, Diaries, 1:343. Two days later, Gladstone wrote an anonymous letter to Bulteel. See Entry of 8 February 1831, in loc. cit.

[65] It was published on 15 February 1831. See Entry of 15 February 1831, in Ibid., 1:344.

[66] Burton, p. 21. For a response see Bulteel, A Reply to Dr. Burton's Remarks (Oxford, 1831).

Bulteel--his critics acknowledging that the appearance of Burton's work had done little to aid their cause.[67]

The public controversy escalated, producing a flurry of pamphlets by well-known Churchmen of varying doctrinal persuasions.[68] The Evangelical Daniel Wilson, soon to become Bishop of Calcutta, alleged that "the very essence of antinomianism lies concealed" in Bulteel's declarations,[69] though he regarded Burton's comments as even "more deadening and fatal."[70] The *Christian Observer* compared Bulteel with two prominent alleged antinomians, William Huntington and Thomas Baring, and expressed concern lest such distortions of the doctrines spread further.[71] John Nelson Darby, who was visiting Oxford at the time,[72] strongly defended Bulteel and criticized Burton's claim about the nature of

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[67]Burton, pp. 12, 23f. Gladstone remarked after reading Burton's pamphlet: "I much like some [points] and am much grieved at others." See Entry of 18 February 1831, in Gladstone, Diaries, 1:345. Other critics were less kind. See British Critic, vol. X, 1831, pp. 454-461; Oxoniensis [W.J. Irons], Strictures on the Rev. Mr. Bulteel's Sermon and on the Rev. Dr. Burton's Remarks (Oxford, 1831), p. 3; Peter Hall, Congregational Reform, According to the Liturgy of the Church of England (London, 1835), p. 212; and Cox, p. 244.

[68]J.R. Barber, A Letter to the Rev. H.B. Bulteel (London, 1831); Oxoniensis; Edward Burton, One Reason for Not Entering Into Controversy With An Anonymous Author of Strictures (Oxford, 1831); and, Philippus Anti-Osiander, A Friendly Letter, Addressed to the Rev. Mr. Bulteel, in Consideration of His Late University Sermon (Oxford, 1831).

[69]Daniel Wilson, The Character of the Good Man as a Christian Minister, a Sermon Occasioned by the Death of the Rev. Basil Woodd, M.A., to Which are Subjoined Notes on the Controversy Between the Professor of Divinity at Oxford and the Rev. Mr. Bulteel (London, 1831), p. 32n.

[70]Ibid., p. 69.

[71]C.O., 1831, p. 300. See also pp. 392ff, 688.

[72]F. Roy Coad, A History of the Brethren Movement (Exeter, 1968), p. 63.

the Articles.[73] Other lesser controversialists entered the fray.[74] All this brought Bulteel's high Calvinist doctrine and scorching critique of the Established Church into national prominence.

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The following May, Bulteel suggested to William Tiptaft, the Vicar of nearby Sutton Courtenay, that the two should embark on a preaching tour of the West Country, "not confining themselves to Church of England places of worship, but to proclaim the gospel wherever the door might be opened in chapels, rooms, private houses, or the open air."[75] The reasons for making such a tour at this particular moment remain uncertain. Perhaps it was a means of escape from the unrelenting public pressure produced by Bulteel's sermon? What is clear is that Bulteel had now come firmly to object to the "enormous abuses, wicked government, and unscriptural system" of the National Church.[76] He considered himself to have crossed a Rubicon in his career, expecting never to preach again within the walls of St. Ebbe's, for he was certain that on hearing of his 'irregular' proceedings in the West Country, the Bishop would swiftly deprive him of his curacy. He did not doubt that his behaviour was Scriptural and Apostolic:

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[73] Oudies [John Nelson Darby], The Doctrine of the Church of England at the time of the Reformation, of the Reformation Itself, of Scripture, and of the Church of Rome, Briefly Compared With the Remarks of the Regius Professor of Divinity (Oxford, 1831).

[74] See Philippus Anti-Osiander; Oxoniensis.

[75] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 44. Their tour received extensive coverage in both Oxford and West Country papers. See Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 30 July 1831; Woolmer's Exeter Gazette, July 1830.

[76] Bulteel, A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, p. 55.

if he were deprived, his punishment would indicate not his own turpitude, but deep moral corruption in the Church to which he belonged.[77]

Tiptaft was equally confident that their tour would reflect a return to Apostolic purity and vigour. "We shall preach in churches, chapels, barns, rooms, or in the open air," he proclaimed, and we shall "give great offence. But it is a glorious work to preach the everlasting gospel. It is the very purpose for which I was ordained."[78] During their itinerations, he added:

> Very many, both rich and poor, wondered how we dared preach everywhere and anywhere, and they wanted to know what our diocesans will say. I have heard nothing from mine, although I am sure he knows of it. Bulteel...I do not think...has heard from his Bishop. We are both indifferent to how our diocesans may act. If they turn us out of the Church of England, we shall see our way clear; for we both think that if a mother ever had a daughter, our Established Church is one of Rome's. Bulteel can easily be removed; but they will find difficulty in removing me, as I am an incumbent. I think they will be afraid in interfering with Bulteel, as his name is so well-known, and the poor Establishment is tottering to its very basis.[79]

Despite these anxieties, Bulteel and Tiptaft, on their two-month journey throughout Wiltshire, Somerset, and Devon, glowed with an evangelistic fervour reminiscent of a Wesley or a Rowland Hill, and were greeted by scenes of triumph and turbulence reminiscent of the eighteenth-century revival. They delighted in the catalytic effect which their preaching had in the parishes upon which they descended. It was a source of great satisfaction to Tiptaft that their arrival divided congregations and parishes, embroiled clergymen friendly

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[77] Loc. cit.
[78] Ibid., p. 45.
[79] Quoted in Ibid., p. 51.

to their cause in altercations with ecclesiastical authority, and stirred up the public. These scenes of excitement, it seemed, were almost reminiscent of the Acts of the Apostles. As Tiptaft wrote:

> We...have almost every evening...been preaching ...in Church, chapel, or the open air. We have, almost in every instance, asked for the Church, and if refused, preached in the chapel or open air...I need not say that our conduct excited surprise. We have many hearers. The places of worship are generally much crowded; people come from far to hear us, and invite us to come and preach to them...Many think we have no right to preach in Dissenting chapels; but it is not forbidden, either by the Canons or the word of God, for the latter is altogether in our favour. I believe the Lord is with us, and makes us instruments in exciting a great inquiry into spiritual things...We bring, I am glad to say, a reproach upon all that receive us, particularly those who open their Churches to us after having preached in the chapels in the neighbourhood. Some say we are mad; some, that we are beside ourselves; some cry out, 'My Lord Bishop, restrain them,' and some wish us God speed; but the generality wonder at our conduct. We are both willing to be turned out of the Establishment for preaching the gospel... Many seemed opposed to us at first, who afterwards support us, acknowledging they cannot say a word against us, for the work may be of God.[80]

Not surprisingly, their mission generated national as well as local publicity.[81] It also aroused the wrath of the local clergy, who repeatedly attempted to silence the two itinerants. When they preached in and around Plymouth, the heartland of the hyper-Calvinists, for instance, Tiptaft observed with pleasure "the great annoyance of the Church clergy," who not only demanded action from the Bishop of Exeter but contemplated setting the two evangelists in the stocks.[82] During their

[80]Letter of 11 June 1831, quoted in Ibid., p. 46f. Tiptaft later wrote that on one part of the tour they preached 15 nights out of 18 in the open air. Letter of 27 July, in Ibid., p. 49.

[81]See comment to this effect in Jackson's Oxford Journal, 13 August 1831.

[82]J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 49.

second night in Exeter, a constable and a magistrate warned them that they were committing a breach of the peace; they refused to obey any authority, however, unless backed by a written document or removed by force.[83] The constable and magistrate, in turn, dared not inhibit them for fear of the crowds.[84]

The Bishop of Exeter at the time was the formidable High Churchman Henry Phillpotts, whose application of episcopal discipline was probably unmatched by any of his colleagues on the Bench. Of all bishops he was the least likely to ignore--or forgive--the 'invasion' of his diocese by ordained clergymen intent on itinerancy and disruption. Such a challenge to the provocative pair soon developed. One aggravated incumbent who sought counsel on the possibility of legal prosecution received a confident reply from the rising ecclesiastical lawyer Stephen Lushington, who advised: "the conduct imputed to these gentlemen is clearly a gross violation of the ecclesiastical law, and if proved, must be followed by punishment."[85] Exhibiting his customary adroitness and keen capacity for ecclesiastical law, Phillpotts urged the Churchwardens to prosecute, but warned that they would "do well to call a vestry, and to receive the authority of that vestry, *in order to indemnify themselves*, and *to justify a rate for the expenses of the suit*." Such expenses would, he shrewdly added, "be awarded against the offenders, if they be

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[83] Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 30 July 1831.
[84] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 50.
[85] Bulteel, A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, p. 61.

convicted."[86] It appears that Phillpotts then took the matter into his own hands, pressing for the case to be pursued in the courts,[87] but as the Churchwardens refused to sanction such a scheme, the matter was eventually dropped.[88] Reports of Bulteel's 'irregular' behaviour soon filtered back to the Bishop of Oxford, however, who was in a much stronger position to discipline an errant curate for breaching ecclesiastical order.

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During his three month absence, Bulteel had entrusted St. Ebbe's to the Hon. and Rev. Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton of Oriel, another of the Oxford 'ultras.'[89] To aid in this work, he also engaged a number of local Evangelicals, including John Hill, G.W. Phillips, and a Mr. Armstrong (who was unlicensed by the Bishop) to preach when Brenton was committed elsewhere.[90] Tiptaft returned to Sutton Courtenay on July 15th, while Bulteel remained in Devon preaching in and around Plymouth[91] for another fortnight.[92] Several days after returning to St. Ebbe's, Bulteel received a letter from Bishop Bagot inquiring into the conduct of

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[86] See loc. cit.

[87] Non., 19 April, 1848, p. 268f.

[88] James Shore, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, M.A., by Himself (London, 1849), p. 23.

[89] As revealed in the register of baptisms, funerals, and marriages, St. Ebbe's parish. For a description of Brenton see Thomas Mozley, 2:117-119.

[90] Hill's Diary, 67/8, pp. 41a-51b. On 4 June, Armstrong was informed by the Churchwardens that he would be prohibited from preaching at St. Ebbe's in the future because he was unlicensed.

[91] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 49.

[92] He returned on 30 July. See Hill's Diary, 67/8, p 52a.

his parish during his absence.[93] Believing that no offence had been committed, Bulteel made no attempt to conceal his numerous 'irregularities.' Consequently, his licence was revoked on August 9th, 1831, on the grounds that he had, on various occasions, preached both in the open air and in Dissenting meeting-houses.[94]

This news was received by Bulteel as an irrelevance, for he now considered himself to be in miserable bondage to an evil Establishment.[95] For all his extremism, he was not without support in the University, and gained some sympathy as a martyr to High Church bigotry. John Hill, for one, the Calvinistic Vice-Principal at St. Edmund Hall, poured out his grief into his diary, bewailing:

> Deeply grieved this day--Bulteel has received notice from the Bishop of the withdrawal of his licence as Curate of St. Ebbe's. Thus Oxford is destitute of a single faithful preacher in any Church among a population of 20,000.[96]

More surprisingly, Hurrell Froude went around for days muttering "poor Bulteel!"; he was convinced that the errant Calvinist had shown exemplary spiritual humility by marrying a local housekeeper in order to chasten his earthly affections and to show how Christians ought to

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[93] Reynolds, p. 98.

[94] MSS Oxford Diocesan, d. 109, fol. 26, O.R.O. See also letter from Bulteel to the editor of Jackson's Oxford Journal, 20 August 1831; Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 20 August 1831.

[95] Henry Bulteel, An Address Delivered on the Opening of a Free Episcopal Church, in the City of Exeter, on the 26th of September, 1844 (Oxford, 1844), p. 14. Bulteel's separatist sentiments even extended to his characterization of the abuse his sermon had received as validating its spiritual truthfulness. See A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, p. 1.

[96] Hill's Diary, 67/8, p. 54b.

live.[97] Gladstone too was struck with regret. He confided to his diary, "Poor Bulteel has lost his Church for preaching in the open air: pity that he should have acted so: and pity that it should be found necessary to make such an example of a man of God. May He overrule all to the glory of his name."[98]

Bulteel was quick to capitalize on these sympathies and eager to provoke a further local crisis. On the Sunday morning following the revocation of his licence, he appeared at the vestry at St. Ebbe's at the beginning of the service, in the presence of the Churchwardens and officiating minister, in order to protest at his mistreatment. He then announced to the assembled congregation that divine service would be held that evening in his garden at six o'clock.[99] When the appointed hour arrived, over a thousand curious supporters gathered in Bulteel's (and his adjoining neighbours') gardens in Pembroke Street, to be told that, in preaching throughout the West Country, the two had "merely followed the plain command of the Lord,"

[97]Nor was Froude's faith in Bulteel shaken when it turned out that the pastry-cook's sister was still young, accomplished, rather good-looking, not at all dowdy, and that she had a good fortune of her own! See Thomas Mozley, 1:228. Eleanor Bulteel (nèe Sadler) died in Plymouth 25 September 1878, age 88. See Boase, p. 216. Bulteel was later denounced by Froude in a reference. See Richard Hurrell Froude, Remains, 4 vols. (London, 1838-39), 1:252.

[98]Entry of 14 August 1831, in Gladstone, Diaries, 1:374. See also Morley, 1:58.

[99]See Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 20 August 1831; Jackson's Oxford Journal, 20 August 1831; Anon. [James Charles Stafford], An Earnest Persuasive to Unity (Oxford, 1840), p. 28f. Bulteel's successor at St. Ebbe's was the well-known Evangelical William Weldon Champneys (1807-1875). See MSS Records of Oxford City Parishes d.d. Parish Oxford St. Ebbe's c. 17, O.R.O.

had done nothing contrary to the Word of God, and had not broken any Canon of the Church. Episcopal censure was brushed aside by an appeal to the higher call of evangelistic necessity: it was the duty of a bishop to promote by all means in his power the preaching of the gospel, not to prevent it.[100] The revocation of his ministerial licence, Bulteel claimed, was an "iniquitous and tyrannical proceeding," which true believers would recognize as the "act of an officer of the Church Antichrist."[101] Dramatically, he then tore up a prohibition from Bishop Bagot forbidding his further ministry in the Diocese.[102] Bulteel later softened his words a little, however, suggesting that Bagot had not been a *willing* agent but had been forced on by the pressure of others in Oxford and elsewhere until he was almost obliged, in self-defence, to act.[103]

Bulteel then turned his mind to the question of his continued relationship with what he now castigated as the 'Church Antichrist.' He concluded that he might conceivably remain in the Church in order to protest against her iniquities, since the root of the problem lay within her evil constitution.[104] He now began styling himself "the outcast minister of Christ." His relationship with the Anglican Establishment did not

[100] Moore, p. 15.
[101] Oxford University, City, and County Herald, 20 August 1831. Bulteel was attacked in print by a former admirer in the following week's paper. See Ibid., 27 August 1831.
[102] James Moore, Earlier and Later Nonconformity in Oxford (Oxford, 1875), p. 14f.
[103] Bulteel, A Sermon on 1 Cor. 2:12, pp. 3, 60.
[104] Bulteel, An Address Delivered, p. 14.

last, however, and he finally seceded during the autumn of 1831.[105]

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In the months following the revocation of his licence, Bulteel embarked upon a highly erratic and unsettled course. Some of his time was spent preaching for Tiptaft at Sutton Courtenay, or in the open air at Abingdon, where he attracted large audiences.[106] In October 1831, he spent a week with members of the Albury circle in London, returning to Oxford not only satisfied by the genuineness of the miracles of healing and tongues but (more remarkably for an erstwhile high Calvinist) convinced by the doctrine of general redemption.[107] He was full of expectation that a similar work would soon commence within his own congregation;[108] and so it did, for miraculous manifestations soon appeared in Oxford,[109] Bulteel's two young children being the first to receive the gift of tongues.[110] Their father was quick to relate these unusual 'gifts' of the Spirit to his own case, treating them as a divine response to his "having been cast out by one of the chief officers of a carnal Church."[111]

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[105] Cox, p. 248.

[106] Which numbered between two and three thousand. See J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 52; J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:60.

[107] Hill's Diary, 67/8, p. 64b. One account claims that a congregation of the Catholic Apostolic Church was recorded in St. Clement's in Oxford in 1826. It did not, however, survive for long. In 1874, another body gathered in a room behind No. 114 High Street. See Crossley, p. 423f; Moore, Earlier and Later, p. 14.

[108] Henry Bulteel, The Doctrine of the Miraculous Interferences of Jesus on Behalf of Believers, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1832), p. 31.

[109] In October 1831. Ibid., p. 30.

[110] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 54.

[111] Bulteel, The Doctrine of the Miraculous, p. 30.

Bulteel now published a lengthy defence of his new position[112] which set forth two possible explanations for the reappearance of the 'gifts:' that they had always remained in the Church, available for the use of believers, but had been ignored; or that they had now reappeared after a period of absence. Either possibility appeared consistent with the promises made in Scripture. As evidence of the current revival of the 'gifts,' he cited a number of specific cases of 'miraculous' healings, several of which were within his own congregation: Charlotte Charisere, Mary Sadler (his sister-in-law), Elizabeth Sawdy,[113] a Mr. Barnes, and Alice Seary.[114] Each had been touched, he claimed, by a "supernatural power, put forth by our Lord Jesus Christ in direct answer to the prayer of faith."[115] Bulteel also began to advance a new position on baptism, arguing that sprinkling was unscriptural;[116] however, he was less certain about abandoning the practice of paedobaptism, and, although inclined to baptize his own children, he determined that he would not do so until receiving a plain command from God.[117]

Of more significance perhaps than Bulteel's conversion to pre-millennialism was his subsequent renunciation of the high Calvinistic doctrines for which he

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[112] Loc. cit.
[113] Ibid., pp. 30-34. See also Morning Watch, (London, 1832), 5:218-221.
[114] Bulteel, The Doctrine of the Miraculous, p. 34f.
[115] Ibid., p. 35.
[116] Ibid., p. 38.
[117] Ibid., p. 38f.

had so passionately argued in his University sermon.[118] In their place he now embraced not merely moderate Arminianism, but universal redemption and pardon--changes which quickly resulted in his ostracism by the Oxford high Calvinists.[119] B.W. Newton, for example, who had become an 'ultra' through Bulteel's influence at Exeter College,[120] and who had been informally prepared for ordination by Francis Newman,[121] was so disgusted by this change in his friend's views that he abandoned Oxford for Plymouth, never to return.[122] Likewise William Tiptaft, who soon painfully admitted:

> My old friend Bulteel and I can now have no communion. He holds the doctrine of universal pardon, is now distinguished for universal charity, and accuses God's children, who hold the doctrine of particular redemption, as having a bad spirit. Christ was accused of having one, and so must his household.[123]

Nor were Newton and Tiptaft alone in their denunciation of Bulteel's new doctrines. On August 19th 1833, John Nelson Darby wrote in a letter to a friend:

> What is poor [Bulteel] doing at Oxford? I love that man, much erred as I think he has. Oh how little we have of the Spirit, to baffle the plans and devices and snares of Satan!...But the positive work of the enemy I do think most manifest as Irving's, but where was the energy to keep it out?[124]

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[118] Anon. The Unknown Tongues!! or, the Reverend Edward Irving Arraigned at the Bar of the Scriptures of Truth, and Found 'Guilty,' to Which is Added, a Letter, by the Rev. H.B. Bulteel, M.A., 6th ed. (London, 1832), p. 31.

[119] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 53f.

[120] T.C.F. Stunt, 'John Henry Newman and the Evangelicals,' J.E.H., 1970, p. 70.

[121] E.R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago, 1970), p. 30. Through Newman, Newton developed his interest in prophecy.

[122] Coad, p. 63.

[123] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 66.

[124] Letters of John Nelson Darby, ed. by J.A. Trench, 3 vols. (London, 1886), 1:28.

Bulteel's religious volatility continued to reveal itself following the outbreak of the 'gifts' in his Oxford congregation. In early 1832, he embraced the idea of believers' baptism, being baptized by immersion by the younger James Hinton at his chapel in St. Clement's, Oxford, on February 12th.[125]

By the following May, Bulteel had grown exhausted by the prophetic movement and announced to John Hill that he had rejected all such teaching.[126] He then set about building a meeting-house (known in Oxford as Adullam Chapel)[127] on Commercial Road at the bottom of Littlegate, behind Pembroke College, and within the boundaries of St. Ebbe's parish, costing some £4,000.[128] Here he propagated his new Baptist views before a substantial congregation (soon known as 'Bulteelers'),[129] who travelled in from every part of the County and from adjoining shires.[130] In this phase of his spiritual journey, Bulteel held many doctrines in common with the emerging Christian Brethren movement, with which he maintained close personal and spiritual

[125]Anon. [William Palmer], A Hard Nut to Crack, or a Word in Season for Mr. Bulteel (Oxford, 1831), p. 7; Bulteel, The Doctrine of the Miraculous, p. 38f. Moore (Earlier and Later, p. 14) claims that Hinton had seceded from New Road Baptist chapel in 1824 and opened a small chapel in George Street, St. Clement's. In 1826, Hinton became an Irvingite, but only for a short time. Thus, he had much in common with Bulteel.

[126]Hill's Diary, 67/9, p. 64b.

[127]The term Adullam was taken from Genesis 38:12.

[128]Designed by William Fisher and seating 800, it was, for many years, the largest Nonconformist chapel in Oxford. See Moore, Pictorial and Historical, p. 15; Crossley, p. 418. It was registered as a Dissenting meeting-house on 1 June 1832. See MSS Oxford Diocesan, c. 645, f. 201, O.R.O.

[129]Cox, 244n.

[130]Moore, Earlier and Later, p. 15.

ties, especially when its focus was transferred from Dublin and Oxford to his home town of Plymouth.[131]

These new twists and turns of Bulteel's odyssey produced yet another Oxford war of pamphlets.[132] One pamphlet, by the learned High Churchman William Palmer of Worcester College, attacked Bulteel for labouring under "a spirit of delusion and error."[133] Bulteel's refusal to respond to these charges (his friend James Hinton did so on his behalf), incited Palmer to publish yet another vigorous attack encouraging believers to ignore Bulteel's teachings and to refuse him access to their homes, until "he is able to prove that he is not a false prophet."[134] Not surprisingly Palmer made much of Bulteel's changes of doctrinal opinion, which he thought suggested unusual instability: what could one make of a man who had appeared as a Calvinist, an antinomian, a Paedobaptist, a Puritan, a Seceder, an Arminian, and was now a sort of mongrel Baptist?[135] Next month, might he not be a Quaker, a Socinian, an Infidel, or a Papist? Could Bulteel provide any security that his creed would not differ next Sunday from what it is now?[136] Palmer also mocked reports that Bulteel declared himself "the *only true minister of God in Ox-*

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[131] D.N.B. How closely tied he was to the movement remains unclear. About 1840, the Oxford Brethren seceded from Bulteel's body and began meeting in a house in Queen Street. See Anon., Miscellaneous Newspaper Cutting, 26 November 1874, No. G.A. Oxon. 4*x* 271, B.L.O.

[132] Palmer, A Hard Nut; James Hinton, A Nut Cracker (Oxford, 1832); and, Anon. [William Palmer], At Him Again! Or a Fox Without a Tail, Being Another Word for Mr. Bulteel (Oxford 1832).

[133] Palmer, A Hard Nut, p. 8ff.

[134] Palmer, At Him Again, p. 4.

[135] Ibid., p. 6.

[136] Ibid., p. 6f.

ford" and threatened "*eternal damnation* to all who refused to embrace the very opinions which he himself gave up immediately afterwards."[137]

Though Bulteel's ultra-Protestantism changed its form from time to time, it did not vanish: in 1841 he published an attack on the Oxford Movement and upon Anglican subscription to the Articles, the latter of which, in light of its inherent inconsistency, he dismissed as hypocritical.[138] Three years later, in a pan-evangelical spirit, he preached at the opening of a new Congregationalist chapel in Summertown, north Oxford, which had been erected to check the spread of Tractarianism.[139] In the same year, he helped open in Exeter the second congregation of the Free Church of England, a Protestant body composed of Evangelical seceders from the Establishment.[140] In an address, which was quickly published,[141] he claimed that the Articles, Canons, and Parliamentary enactments which established and regulated the Church brought the Anglican clergy into "a complete state of bondage."[142] This was due to the "original sin" of establishment, which had granted to the State important rights and powers intended by God for His Church.[143] In the Free Church, he saw a body in competition with the Establishment, which would

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[137] Ibid., p. 7.

[138] Henry Bulteel, To All that Love Truth and Consistency (Oxford, 1841).

[139] See William Henry Summers, History of Congregational Churches, (Newbury, 1905) p. 256; Crossley, p. 422. In the following year Bulteel produced a popular skit against the Tractarians. See Anon. [Henry Bulteel], Oxford Argo (London, 1845).

[140] See Chapter Eight.

[141] Bulteel, An Address Delivered.

[142] Ibid., p. 3.

[143] Ibid., p. 14.

allow those who were conscientiously attached to Episcopal government yet who objected to the abuses of the Church, to separate into a purer form of Episcopacy.[144]

Bulteel then called on Evangelical clergymen to secede from the Establishment and affiliate with the new Church. Until they did, they could not help to stem the rising torrent of Puseyism, for, ensnared in the trammels of a Laodician state church, Evangelicals could do little to resist its ascendancy: they remained shackled to a Liturgy which still countenanced relics of a popish past. Was it not hypocritical, for example, to preach against the errors of baptismal regeneration, while, in the next moment, thanking God for regenerating the infant just baptized with the Holy Spirit? Inconsistencies like these damaged Evangelicals' witness and rendered their testimony "null and void." If they seceded *en masse* from the Establishment and affiliated with this new Episcopal body, their testimony against Tractarianism would acquire a "two-fold power."[145] Apostolic succession, if desired, could be secured from the bishops in America, or, preferably, by one (or more) clergymen from the new Church being elected to serve as bishops.[146] Bulteel also praised Exeter as an ideal location for such a body. The recent high-handedness of Bishop Phillpotts who had "deprived more clergymen of their licences," and "pronounced more Ecclesiastical censures," than perhaps all other Bishops combined, was the living embodiment of

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[144]Ibid., p. 15ff.
[145]Ibid., p. 19f.
[146]Ibid., p. 23ff.

everything which was wrong in Anglicanism: it seemed likely that his vendetta against Evangelicals, if continued, would drive many more into the Free Church.[147]

The details of Bulteel's subsequent ministry are sketchy, but it appears that he eventually affiliated with the 'Darbyite' faction within the Brethren movement, either at Oxford,[148] or at his native Plymouth,[149] to which he moved in about 1846,[150] and where he lived for the last twenty years of his life.[151] Although Bulteel subsided into comparative obscurity, the long-term effects of his colourful ministry, his Uni-

[147] Ibid., p. 26.

[148] Darby found sympathizers in Oxford as early as the summer of 1827. See Napoleon Noel, The History of the Brethren, 2 vols. (Denver, 1836), 1:22, 24. Around 1840, the Oxford body affiliated with Bulteel's congregation at Adullam Chapel. This union did not persevere however. In 1869 and 1872, the leader of the Brethren in Oxford was a former minister of Bulteel's chapel. By 1875, the Brethren were meeting in Paradise Square. See Crossley, p. 423; Moore, Earlier and Later, p. 15; MSS Oxford Diocesan c. 645, f. 172, O.R.O. In March 1877, the Brethren built a chapel at 3 New Inn Hall Street, at a cost of £1,500, which continued in use until 1964. See Crossley, p. 423; Moore, Pictorial and Historical, p. 15; Kelly's Directory of Oxford, 1964, p. A18.

[149] Hy Pickering, Chief Men Among the Brethren, 2nd ed. (London and Glasgow, 1931), p. 119; Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren, p. 69.

[150] D.N.B.

[151] G.M., February 1867, p. 258.

versity sermon, his preaching tour, and his subsequent deprivation did not cease.[152]

It is highly probable that his Jeremiads on the state of Anglicanism contributed to the unease felt by many Evangelicals about the Erastian character of the Establishment and its pronounced clericalism. Through his temporary flirtation with Irvingism, Bulteel also brought the prophetic movement into high profile at a time when the leaders of the Brethren were formulating their own unique theological response to the alleged return of the 'gifts.' Furthermore, it is quite likely that his preaching tour of the West Country sowed more seeds of the high Calvinism which would soon be harvested by Darby and his followers when they focused

[152] In the 1851 census, his former chapel was referred to as Adullam Particular Baptist Chapel, Willoughby Willey, Minister, with an average morning and evening congregation of between five and six hundred. See Kate Tiller, ed. Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire 1851. The Oxfordshire Record Society, vol. 55, (Oxford, 1987), p. 77. Within a few years, however, Willey, lacking Bulteel's personal force and private means, proved unable to hold the congregation together at the unendowed chapel. See Anon., Miscellaneous Newspaper Cutting, 26 November 1874, No. G.A. Oxon. 4*x* 270, B.L.O. In 1858, the congregation was dissolved; four years later, the chapel was taken over by the Methodist Free Church of Oxford, who moved from Paradise Square. See New Road Baptist Chapel Church Book, 1838-1866, s.a. 1858; Moore, Earlier and Later, pp. 16, 30. In 1868, it was re-purchased by the remnants of the Bulteelers who, under Alexander Macfarlane of Spurgeon's College, Camberwell, had started meetings in the Chequers Sale Room in the High Street (moving, in the following year, to the former Quaker meeting-room in Pusey Lane, St.Giles'). In 1869, the renovated chapel was re-opened by Charles Spurgeon. See Moore, Earlier and Later, p. 14. The congregation was now known as the Tabernacle Baptist Society. See Webster's Oxford Directory (Oxford, 1869), p. 207. It was later described as Particular Baptist and remained so until it was finally closed in 1937. See Crossley, p. 419; Reynolds, p. 98f.

their ministerial efforts on Plymouth and the surrounding environs.[153]

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The reverberations of the Bulteel affair in the unsettled religious atmosphere of Oxford were heightened by the accompanying secessions of his two high Calvinist friends, William Tiptaft and J.C. Philpot.[154] Tiptaft, a Cambridge graduate from a Rutland farming family, arrived in the area in 1829 when he was presented to the living of Sutton Courtenay, near Oxford, then in the diocese of Salisbury, where he remained until his secession in November 1831.[155]

His adhesion to high Calvinism came about as the direct consequence of a meeting with Philpot--then a Fellow of Worcester--in the spring of 1829. During the following months, a revolution took place in his spiritual views, and he was gradually led to accept the doctrines of predestination and election.[156] As a result, when he was appointed to preach the Christmas eve service at nearby St. Helen's, Abingdon, some months after his arrival at Sutton Courtenay, he was determined to preach a 'new' gospel not previously heard in that place.

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[153] Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren, p. 69.

[154] Much of what we now know about Tiptaft (1803-1864) is found in two sources: his *Letters*, which were published in 1871, and in Philpot's *Memoir* of 1867. Ordained at Wells in March 1826 to the curacy of Treborough, Somerset, he was soon converted to the tenets of 'serious religion.' In January 1828, he was appointed curate at Stogumber. See Anon., [W.C. Clayton and S.L. Philpot], Letters of the Late Joseph Charles Philpot, With a Brief Memoir of His Life and Labours (London, 1871).

[155] See Al. Cant., 6:196; J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft.

[156] Ibid., p. 19f.

This notorious sermon, preached before the mayor, the local corporation, and approximately five thousand members of the congregation,[157] was intended to provoke.[158] Christ came, Tiptaft triumphantly announced, to save a *peculiar* people;[159] there was nothing that any man could do to recommend himself to God.[160] His chosen people are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who cannot commit sin,[161] for to them has been imputed God's holiness.[162] Tiptaft left no room for human volition in the process of justification or sanctification: if the Lord required even a single good thought of believers, no man would be saved and all would be damned.[163]

Tiptaft's antinomian leanings were unmistakable, and he was quickly censured and ostracized, not least by his former Evangelical friends who were frightened by what they considered his "new and extravagant tenets." The local clergy, except for his friend Philpot who held identical views, also turned their backs upon him.[164] The spiritual union between the two increased during the following autumn, when Philpot spent several months in residence with Tiptaft recovering from a severe illness.[165]

The most significant of Tiptaft's numerous critics was Joseph Hewlett, the High Church Headmaster of Ab-

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[157] Ibid., p. 22ff.
[158] William Tiptaft, A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of St. Helen, Abingdon, on Christmas Day, 1829, at the Appointment of the Masters and Governors of Christ's Hospital (Abingdon, 1830).
[159] Ibid., p. 8.
[160] Ibid., p. 10.
[161] Ibid., p. 15.
[162] Ibid., p. 17.
[163] Ibid., p. 22.
[164] Philpot's Letters, p. 21.
[165] Ibid., p. 21f.

ingdon Grammar School.[166] Hewlett, who later turned to writing novels, preached a vicious response to Tiptaft, again at St. Helen's, on December 27th, refuting his doctrines of particular redemption and double predestination.[167] He then published his sermon. Tiptaft, highly incensed by Hewlett's misrepresentations, dismissed his opponent as "a wine bibber, a great card player, and a fox hunter," and quickly published his own sermon. Local people, he claimed, would certainly side with him and not with Hewlett.[168]

During the following year, as Tiptaft continued to advance his 'doctrines of grace', his commitment to the Church of England--and its civil connection--began to diminish. On March 14th 1831, he confessed:

> At this present time my conscience is not very easy about the Church Establishment. I neither like the system nor the forms or ceremonies, particularly the baptismal service and the catechism ...In the baptismal service we thank God in the surplice for regenerating children, and then put on the black gown, go into the pulpit, and tell them in plain terms that they were not born again. Our Liturgy makes every baptized person a member of the true church...And the catechism is so full of errors that I am sure no one with a glimmering of light will teach children it.[169]

Shortly thereafter, he added: "I consider the riches of the national Church are a great cause of her corruptions. Take them away, and then who would belong to

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[166] Hewlett's career at Abingdon was dismissed in the D.N.B as "a failure."

[167] See Anon. [Joseph Hewlett], A Sermon Preached at Abingdon, on Sunday, December 27, 1829 (Abingdon, 1830). See also Anon., The Calm Observer; Or Remarks on the Sermons Lately Preached in the Parish Church of St. Helen, Abingdon, by the Rev. W. Tiptaft, Vicar of Sutton, and J. Hewlett, Head Master of the Grammar School, Abingdon (Abingdon, 1830).

[168] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 24.

[169] Quoted in Ibid., p. 36.

her?...How very different are the ministers of the present day from those in Paul's day."[170]

After returning from his preaching tour, Tiptaft grew began to consider seriously whether he could conscientiously remain within the church, especially after Bulteel had been removed from his curacy. By late October, he had nearly concluded that he should secede. "I am harassed in my mind about leaving the Church," he wrote, "for I find I cannot hold my living and a good conscience too...I believe it to be an unholy system... I cannot read the baptismal and burial services...What I shall do if I leave it, I know not... We must suffer with Christ before we reign with him."[171] By November 10th, his hesitancy had ceased, and he wrote a long letter to Thomas Burgess, the Bishop of Salisbury, announcing that he was resigning his living--worth some £140 per year--and seceding from the Church.

Tiptaft's letter was published on the last day of November, and produced a considerable sensation.[172] Three-thousand copies of the first edition were sold almost immediately,[173] and demand continued to be so great that eight subsequent editions were published, not including the full accounts which appeared in various newspapers and an edition published surreptitiously by a Southampton bookseller.[174] A number of replies

[170]Quoted in Ibid., p. 44f.
[171]Letter of 25 October 1831, quoted in Ibid., p. 54f.
[172]William Tiptaft, A Letter Addressed to the Bishop of Salisbury, 2nd ed. (Abingdon, 1831).
[173]J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 64f.
[174]J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:61.

soon appeared as well, which stirred up the controversy.[175]

The furore accompanying Tiptaft's secession was heightened by his fourteen provocative objections to various aspects of established religion, some of which coincided uncomfortably with those levelled by radicals like John Wade, author of the notorious *Black Book*. In his *Letter*, he objected to the order of confirmation; the service for King Charles the Martyr; to the expression, '*our most religious* and gracious King,' within the service for Parliament; the practice of so-called 'open communion;' the form of solemnization of marriage; the service for the churching of women; private patronage; the absence of ministerial training and ecclesiastical discipline; bishops sitting in Parliament and maintaining grand lifestyles; and to the oaths, subscriptions, and declarations required at ordination, especially that relating to the *Prayer Book*.[176] Nor could he see any prospect of an improvement as long as the Church's revenues were so immense, providing "so strong an inducement for ungodly and worldly-minded men to enter the ministry."[177]

Within two weeks of his secession, Tiptaft purchased a small piece of land in Abingdon for £105, upon which he established a Strict Baptist chapel. Another chapel in Sutton Courtenay, which could accommodate

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[175]A Member of the Church of England, A Brief Reply to the Reverend Mr. Tiptaft's Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury (Reading, 1831); and, Peter Hall, A Candid and Respectful Letter to the Rev. William Tiptaft (Salisbury, 1832). See also Rowland Hill, A Letter (Manchester and London, 1835).

[176]Tiptaft, A Letter Addressed, pp. 3-8.

[177]Ibid., p. 9f.

three to four-hundred, was made available for his use until construction of his new building was completed, and he preached twice--without licence--at the Anglican Church in Wallingford, where he had received appeals from the congregation to become their new minister.[178] He also preached before a large crowd at a chapel in Reading, at the Baptist chapel belonging to Roger Hitchcock in Devizes, and at the chapel in Trowbridge belonging to the ultra-Calvinist John Warburton, the so-called 'Lancashire Weaver.'[179]

Construction of Tiptaft's new chapel was begun immediately, and it was opened on March 25th, 1832, Hitchcock and Warburton preaching to large crowds,[180] many of whom were drawn from the local Independent chapel.[181] Hitchcock was a strict Baptist of uncertain theological leanings who had seceded from the Established Church in 1826; Warburton, on the other hand, was a well-known Dissenter of decided antinomian views.[182] The opening, which should have been a gala affair, was sadly marred by the shadow of ecclesiastical censure, for the Bishop of Salisbury was threatening prosecution on the grounds that Tiptaft still remained in Holy Orders, and as such remained culpable of itinerating and preaching doctrines "inconsistent with

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[178] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 59f; Summers, p. 224.

[179] Ibid., p. 64.

[180] Ibid., p. 65.

[181] Summers, p. 221. The Congregational minister, William Wilkins, although described as "a strong Calvinist," was often greeted by the seceders with the words: "oh, sir, you are in the dark! quite in the dark!" Many of the seceders, however, eventually returned to his ministry.

[182] See John Warburton, Mercies of a Covenant God (London, 1837).

the principles of the Established Church," in direct violation of the Canons. If he did not desist from such 'irregular' practices, the Bishop warned, legal proceedings would be commenced against him.[183]

Tiptaft expressed surprise at the Bishop's demand, and again disavowed his connection with the Church. "If you still claim me as a minister of your Establishment," he wrote, "I beg again to renounce my connexion with it; and if it be necessary for me to go through any form of dismissal according to the laws of the land, of which I am perfectly ignorant, I am willing to submit to it."[184] Tiptaft's secession had thus raised an important legal issue--the right of a seceding clergyman to take up another form of ministry--which was to gain far greater prominence in the Shore case during the 1840s, discussed below.

On March 22nd, Tiptaft was informed by the Bishop's secretary that he appeared to have a mistaken idea of the effect of his secession, for this was an act which of itself did not operate as a renunciation of Holy Orders, nor exonerate him from the observance of the ecclesiastical law, as it applied to the clergy. In fact, no authority existed which was competent to accept, or give effect to, such a renunciation.[185] Again Tiptaft offered to go through any form of dismissal which would formally sever his connections with the Church. If no such form was available, he assured the

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[183] Letter of 14 March 1832, quoted in William Tiptaft, Two Letters Addressed to the Bishop of Salisbury (Abingdon, 1832), p. 7.

[184] Letter of 19 March 1832, quoted in Ibid., p. 8.

[185] Letter of 22 March 1832, quoted in Ibid., p. 13f.

Bishop that he intended to proceed exactly as he had done since his secession, until coerced "by the mighty and alarming power of the ecclesiastical court" to cease.[186]

Apparently deterred by the publicity which would result from such a prosecution, the Bishop's secretary quickly replied that his Lordship had no desire to proceed against Tiptaft on account of his religious opinions, but wished merely to prevent his "violating the law by preaching in unconsecrated places." He reiterated, however, that a clergyman could not "by aid of any authority legally or effectually" renounce his orders or his connection with the Church. Consequently, Tiptaft was, and would hereafter be, "bound not to offend against the laws of that Church," notwithstanding his alleged secession from it.[187] One of these laws stated that ministers should not preach in unconsecrated places; since Tiptaft had declared his intention to violate this ordinance, the Bishop would be compelled to enforce its observance by the usual proceedings.[188]

Incensed by such heavy-handed behaviour, Tiptaft quickly published the entire correspondence, believing that this would expose the Church's corruptions in dramatic fashion.[189] The effects of this were twofold. It immediately paralyzed the efforts of Bishop Burgess to silence him, and no further correspondence was re-

[186]Letter of 27 March 1832, quoted in Ibid., p. 15.

[187]Letter of 2 April 1832, quoted in Ibid., p. 22f.

[188]Loc. cit.

[189]Tiptaft, Two Letters Addressed.

ceived by Tiptaft on the matter.[190] It also increased public sympathy for his fledgling ministry.[191] In July 1832, Tiptaft was baptized by immersion by his friend and fellow seceder, Roger Hitchcock, at his chapel at Devizes.[192] While his Abingdon ministry continued to grow and mature, he soon became torn between his work in the local body and his itinerant ministry:

> Some think my work is to go from place to place, preaching as I go, but I cannot say so, though I am sometimes inclined to think so. I have repeated invitations to go out to preach, but I scarcely know how to answer, and I cannot get an answer from God to satisfy my mind on these occasions; others...condemn me for going away, as I am still so well attended in my own chapel. My hearers think I neglect them, and leave the few sheep in the wilderness; so I am in a strait.[193]

Such invitations were influenced by his reputation as a martyr to episcopal power, for he was now an object of much public attention.[194] His ministry had clearly become one of some local and national reputation, and it seems to have encouraged the secessions of at least three other Evangelicals from the Church. Two of these occurred in the summer of 1833, and the third, that of John Kay, curate of Cranford, near Kettering, Northamptonshire, occurred during the following summer.[195]

Tiptaft remained at Abingdon until his death in 1864. In this he was joined by Kay, who laboured beside him until his own death in 1860. Besides Kay were

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[190] J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 67ff.
[191] Ibid., p. 73.
[192] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:341.
[193] Quoted in J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 83.
[194] The Anglican Peter Hall, for example, claimed that Tiptaft preached in Wiltshire and Somerset during 1835, "with considerable power and effect." See Hall, Congregational Reform, p. 212.
[195] See J.C. Philpot, William Tiptaft, p. 90ff.

numerous other friends and helpers aiding and supporting him as he developed and exercised a substantial itinerant ministry throughout England. Perhaps most important of these was Philpot, who not only followed Tiptaft's example in seceding from the Church, but remained a trusted associate until the very end, in what his son later described as "a beautiful friendship."[196]

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The secession of Joseph Charles Philpot was as sensational as that of his two friends.[197] He was the son of Charles Philpot (1760-1823), Rector of Ripple and St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Dover, and was educated at Merchant Taylor's and St. Paul's before matriculating at Worcester College, Oxford in 1821. Soon after arriving at Oxford, he became friendly with Francis and John Henry Newman, and Blanco White, the Spanish theologian and poet.[198]

Completing his undergraduate course in the autumn of 1824,[199] Philpot remained at Oxford, earning a comfortable living by taking pupils and anticipating a college fellowship in due course.[200] Together with the elder Newman, Edward Pusey, Hurrell Froude, Frederick Oakeley, and others--he took part in the graduate theology courses organized and taught by Charles Lloyd, then Regius Professor of Divinity.[201] Lloyd's enthusi-

[196] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:1.
[197] In addition to the two volumes already cited, see also S.F. Paul, The Seceders, vol. 3 (Letchworth, 1960)
[198] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:17ff.
[199] Philpot's Letters, p. 12.
[200] Letter of 1869, quoted in J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:19.
[201] Ibid., 1:15f.

asm for the study of Catholicism, which he believed had been neglected by modern Anglican theologians, was not, however, shared by Philpot,[202] who remained somewhat indifferent to spiritual things, and was, at least in his own retrospective view, not "living an immoral life, but still utterly dead in sin, looking forward to prospects in life...and knowing as well as caring absolutely nothing spiritually for the things of God."[203]

In the spring of 1826 he took up an unexpected and lucrative offer to become private tutor to the two sons of Edward Pennefather in County Wicklow, Ireland. Although reluctant to leave Oxford, he was enticed by the salary; much to his surprise he spent the next eighteen months very happy and comfortable.[204]

On his arrival in Ireland, as he later confessed, he "knew nothing experimentally of the things of God," but through "a very great trial and affliction" (his unrequited love for the Pennefather's daughter), he began to be drawn to the 'doctrines of grace'--a change undoubtedly influenced by his new domestic environment, for the Pennefather household, under the spiritual supervision of John Nelson Darby, the recently appointed curate of the nearby parish of Calary and the brother of Mrs. Pennefather, was strongly Evangelical, high Calvinist, and, increasingly, separatist.[205]

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[202] Ibid., 1:16.
[203] Philpot's Letters, p. 16.
[204] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:20. It was in the Pennefather household that Francis Newman would succeed Philpot as tutor in the following year (See Chapter Six).
[205] Ibid., 1:20f; 3:71.

These teachings were soon imbibed by Philpot, who later described his residence with the Pennefathers as the "most important event" of his life, for it was here that he underwent a classic Evangelical conversion experience.[206] So intense was the grief generated by Philpot's romantic 'trial,' however, that in the early spring of 1827, he abruptly resigned his position and returned to Oxford, where, in the meantime, he had been elected to a fellowship at Worcester.[207] On returning to his old College, his change in character and conduct was so marked that "everyone took notice,"[208] including Dr. Whittington Landon, the Provost of Worcester, who warned him that his religious views, if maintained, would debar him from holding a College office.[209] His tutorial career thus abruptly terminated, Philpot took up parish ministry as the only work for which he was qualified.

He had no great difficulty in finding a suitable position within the Church. He was ordained--together with Edward Pusey--on June 1st, 1828, by Bishop Lloyd, to the perpetual curacy of Stadhampton, a village seven miles south of Oxford. For a time, he continued to reside in his College rooms, where, in November 1828, he and Henry Bisse, another College member, future seced-

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[206] Philpot's Letters, p. 15.

[207] Ibid., p. 13. He was replaced at the Pennefathers by F.W. Newman.

[208] Ibid., p. 15.

[209] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:28. Landon (1758-1838) was a 'high and dry Tory' who resisted Chancellor's Wellington's suggestions for University reform. In 1796, he was elected Provost of Worcester, and, between 1802-1806, Vice-Chancellor. He was succeeded as Provost by the Evangelical Richard Cotton. See G.M., 1839, pt. 1, p. 212; Cox, pp. 187-190.

er, and a former curate of St. Ebbe's, got into trouble with the authorities at Worcester for "having exposition and prayer in the Common Room at a party of their friends."[210] Warned yet again that such behaviour made him ineligible for College office, Philpot then moved into private rooms at Stadhampton, where his pastoral energy and preaching soon filled the Church to overflowing, drawing in a congregation which travelled to hear him from no less than eighteen neighbouring parishes.[211] Besides preaching, he also held regular prayer meetings and lectures, appointed visitors to distribute gospel tracts, raised a fund to buy coal and other necessities for the poor, and purchased large quantities of flannel and calico to make into clothes for those in need.[212]

In the spring of 1829, William Tiptaft was instituted into the nearby parish of Sutton Courtenay. Here he soon met his neighbour Philpot at a local clerical meeting of Evangelicals, on the pattern of the Elland and Eclectic Societies, whose members gathered monthly for worship and mutual edification.[213] Philpot soon discovered that his new neighbour was not fully instructed in the tenets of high Calvinism, and he quickly raised the question of particular redemption.[214] When Philpot fell ill during the following winter, Tip-

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[210] Hill's Diary, 67/7, p. 20a. Bisse was then rejected as a candidate for the College bursarship. The provost subsequently refused to provide a testimonial for him to the Bishop of Salisbury for his taking the living at Kennington. He later seceded from the Church and became a particular baptist.

[211] J.H. Philpot, The Secederś, 1:32, 3:303.

[212] Philpot's Letters, p. 18.

[213] Ibid., p. 19.

[214] Loc. cit.

taft nursed him back to health while the two resided at Sutton Courtenay.[215] During his lengthy convalescence, Philpot employed Charles Brenton, an Evangelical clergyman of the same theological bent,[216] a close friend of Tiptaft's[217] who had officiated for Bulteel at St. Ebbe's during his preaching tour,[218] to officiate at Stadhampton.[219] In the spring, Philpot traveled to the south coast to be near his widowed mother. He was invited to preach at various Dissenting meeting-houses in the area; however, as Bulteel's licence had recently been withdrawn by the Bishop over similar 'irregularities,' and as Philpot was reluctant to abandon his curacy at Stadhampton, he refused to accept without clearer Providential guidance.[220] when news of Bulteel's proposal to build a new chapel in Oxford reached him, Philpot remarked that if it was founded on right principles he would be willing to contribute £5, which was as much as he could afford.[221] When Bulteel then embraced Irvingism, Philpot, perhaps suspecting that it was only a temporary aberration, counselled Tiptaft, who was greatly disturbed by the whole affair, not to be overtly concerned.[222] Nor was Philpot greatly bothered when Tiptaft seceded from the Church, concurring with his friend that where there was no genuine spiritual experience, there was no genuine faith.[223]

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[215] Ibid., p. 21f.
[216] Ibid., pp. 24, 33.
[217] Ibid., p. 34.
[218] Christopher Sykes, Two Studies in Virtue (London, 1953), p. 33f.
[219] Philpot's Letters, p. 22.
[220] Letter of Philpot, quoted in Ibid., p. 25.
[221] Ibid., p. 25f.
[222] Letter of Philpot, quoted in Ibid., p. 32.
[223] Ibid., p. 33f.

In late 1831, Philpot was required to return to Stadhampton, for Brenton had also decided to secede.[224] Brenton, it seems, had developed strong objections to the burial rubric, and, only a few weeks after Tiptaft's secession (when required to read the service over an unrepentant blackguard), he instead seceded.[225] He then established a small chapel at Bath which affiliated with the Plymouth Brethren.[226]

Philpot resumed his Stadhampton ministry, unimpaired in his fellowship with Tiptaft, but increasingly unsure about his own status within the Church.[227] This unease was heightened after a lengthy conversation with John Warburton,[228] and was furthered by the critical remarks received from local Churchmen over his continued fellowship with Tiptaft and his public denunciations of the local fox-hunting clergy. During 1833, Philpot significantly refused to send the children from his parish to be confirmed, dismissing the ceremony as unscriptural.[229]

In the autumn of that year, yet another local Evangelical seceded from the Church. This was Thomas Husband, incumbent of Appleford, near Abingdon, who had been on intimate terms with both Philpot and Tiptaft for some time and professed the same views of election.[230] His secession,[231] like Tiptaft's some two

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[224] Ibid., p. 35.
[225] L.C.L. Brenton, A Sermon on Revelations XIV:13. (Oxford, 1831).
[226] William Blair Neatby, A History of the Plymouth Brethren (London, 1901), p. 177.
[227] Philpot's Letters, p. 36.
[228] Ibid., p. 36.
[229] Ibid., p. 37.
[230] Loc. cit.

years earlier, intensified Philpot's own doubts about the propriety of remaining within the Church.[232] By October 1833, he was writing that his connection with the Establishment would likely be broken, for he was expecting to be put out of his curacy by the bishop at any moment.[233] No imposition of episcopal discipline was made, however, and, except for a simple reprimand from the bishop (presumably over the question of confirmation), he was left alone to continue in his parish ministry.[234]

By March 1835, Philpot was determined to leave the Church without delay, and gave public notice of his intention to resign from his curacy and secede, for he could no longer "continue in evil that good may come"[235] --an announcement which was received "as if a thunderbolt had dropped in the congregation." Some of his people gathered the next day and offered to build a chapel for him if he would consent to remain in the parish, but he was not so inclined.[236]

Since Philpot was no longer a communicant member of the Church of England, he could no longer retain his College fellowship. Accordingly, he wrote to Dr. Landon, resigning in sensational style, and stating--in no uncertain terms--his reasons for seceding from the Church. The letter, which was highly provocative, was

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[231] He licensed his house at Appleford and began preaching there. See J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:96.
[232] Philpot's Letters, p. 38.
[233] Loc. cit.
[234] Ibid., p. 40.
[235] Ibid., p. 45.
[236] Ibid., p. 46.

quickly published and rapidly went through no less than at least seventeen editions.[237]

In a Jeremiad against the Church of England resembling that advanced earlier by Bulteel, Philpot accused it of possessing a deplorably "corrupt and worldly system" which he could no longer condone.[238] He lambasted Royal Supremacy, episcopal luxury and pomp, the abuses of the patronage system by politicians and worldly Churchmen, the system of tithes, the capriciousness of the ecclesiastical courts: in short, "all that mass of evil which has sprung out of a worldly and wealthy establishment." Like Bulteel, he denounced with especial warmth Heads of Houses who provided testimonials for profligate undergraduates.[239]

Nor did the Evangelical clergy escape censure. Philpot saw them as willing tools of a corrupt establishment, taking tithes from poor farmers and resorting to legal means to enforce their payment. They were rounded on for exacting burial and other fees from the poor, while riding throughout the countryside in their carriages. In a vigorous assertion of the voluntary principle, he argued that the fiscal exactions of the Church were unscriptural, for the New Testament authorized no other payment to ministers but the free and voluntary offerings of truly spiritual people.[240]

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[237] J.C. Philpot, A Letter to the Provost. See also J.W. Peters, A Few Words on the Sinful Position of the Evangelical Clergy in the Church of England (London, 1835).

[238] J.C. Philpot, A Letter to the Provost, p. 8.

[239] Ibid., p. 10ff.

[240] Ibid., p. 10.

To the sixth edition of his letter Philpot attached a preface which went even further in its denunciation of the Church and the party to which he had belonged. Like many other secederers, he was separating himself not only from the Church of England but from the ranks of Evangelical clergy within it. Evangelicals were now declared to be "bound up in a system, which, in principle and practice, is opposed to the word of God, and to the operations of the spirit on the hearts of the elect." They were either "ignorant of the nature of Christ's spiritual kingdom and of a true gospel church," or "blinded by pride, covetousness, unbelief, [or] love of ease." He urged his former colleagues to follow the example of saintly predecessors like Toplady, Romaine, Newton, and Hawker (three of them significantly high Calvinists), who had lived and died in the Church's communion without falling into corruption.[241] Distancing himself firmly from political opponents of the Establishment, he renounced any union with "political Dissenters, radicals, papists, socinians, and infidels," who aimed at disestablishment by compulsion.[242]

For Philpot, it was more the unscriptural nature of establishment--"contrary to the New Testament, and in opposition to the revealed will of God"--which drew his censure, than its place as in the exploitative system of Old Corruption.[243] A state church was incompatible with his separatist vision of God's people as a

[241] Ibid., p. ii.
[242] Ibid., p. iii.
[243] Loc. cit.

chosen remnant, gathered out of a "fallen and apostate world," baptized by immersion and formed into churches as "visible societies separate from the ungodly."[244] On this assumption, where was the Scriptural warrant for a national church supported by tithes wrung from the farmer, and by rates levied by the householder? The hypocrisy which a state church encouraged "destroys every mark of a spiritual dispensation and denies every gospel doctrine." There could be no such thing as a truly national and inclusive church: God's true people were, according to Scripture, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [and] a peculiar people," not a part of the world, but gathered and separated from it.[245]

In his open separatism Philpot resembled other, earlier seceders, especially John Walker, John Nelson Darby, and Henry Bulteel, from whom he may well have quarried his views. In 1858 he advised an American friend:

> As you cannot hear the pure gospel, and have no confidence in the ministers by whom you are surrounded, I think you do well to be separate from them...It must be a very trying path for you to walk in, as it must bring down upon your head much reproach and misrepresentation. But if you are favoured with the testimony of God in your own conscience, and have some manifestations of His presence, it will amply make up for any reproach that may assail you.[246]

It did not worry Philpot that his friends and predecessors had been vilified and disowned, and had ended up in obscure chapels with few followers. The ecclesiology of high Calvinist separatism could easily come to

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[244] Ibid., p. iiif.
[245] Ibid., p. ivf.
[246] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 3:101.

terms with unpopularity, for it was axiomatic that the elect were few and that the marks of a true believer included the necessity of suffering for Christ's sake and being hated by the world.[247] Philpot's mother quietly suffered over his secession, but this was borne with equanimity.[248] In an another rejection of earthly treasure, Philpot even sold off his treasured theological library.[249]

Released from parochial duties, Philpot was free to respond to the numerous invitations he received to come and preach the 'doctrines of grace.' The first pulpit he entered after his secession was among the Strict Baptists of Allington, Wiltshire, a connection he maintained for many years.[250] On April 2nd, 1835, Martha Taman of Stadhampton registered her rooms in the home of Mary Webb as a Dissenting meeting-house, with J.C. Philpot as minister.[251] On September 13th, Philpot was baptized by immersion by John Warburton at Trowbridge.[252] Thereafter, he became the leader of a high Calvinist connection known as the 'Hypers' which met on King Street, Jericho, in Oxford.[253] Later, he became minister of two Strict Baptist chapels at Oakham and Stamford, where he remained until he retired in 1864. For a number of years, Philpot was also a leading contributor to (and, in 1849, the sole editor of) the *Gospel Standard*, a journal produced by a number of

[247]See Philpot's Letters, p. 551.
[248]J.H. Philpot, The Secederes, 3:68.
[249]Philpot's Letters, p. 51.
[250]J.H. Philpot, The Secederes, 3:11.
[251]MSS Oxford Diocesan, c. 646 f. 11, O.R.O.
[252]Philpot's Letters, p. 53.
[253]Perhaps in Partnership with Bulteel. See Moore, Earlier and Later, p. 15.

leading Particular Baptists. Though his friendship with Tiptaft remained intimate until the latter's death (they were also related by marriage: Mrs. Philpot was Tiptaft's niece), he eventually came to denounce Bulteel as a tragic castaway who had fallen "into a place where two seas met--the sea of experimental Calvinism and the sea of Arminian Irvingism."[254]

The Tiptaft-Philpot secession was on a small scale, but it nevertheless had powerful reverberations, partly because it was part of a larger drift of disaffected Evangelical clergy into Calvinistic Dissent. In a pamphlet exchange with Charles Jerram, the Evangelical incumbent of nearby Whitney, Philpot claimed that between forty and fifty Evangelical clergymen, unconnected with each other and in different parts of England, had in fact seceded from the Church during the past five or six years, implying that more would soon follow.[255]

The seceders, however, were too *outré* to attract many clerical followers. Their strong language in controversy was unattractive. Their denunciation of the Establishment at a time when it was under attack from irreligious Radicals and political Dissenters weakened their cause. They were also tarred with charges of antinomianism--an allegation which they vehemently de-

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[254] Philpot's Letters, p. 67.

[255] See Charles Jerram, Secession From the Church of England Considered in a Letter to a Friend (London, 1836); J.C. Philpot, Secession From the Church of England Defended (London, 1836). The five seceders were Philpot, Tiptaft, John William Peters, William Morshead, George V. Wigram. Cf. J.C. Philpot, The Heir of Heaven Walking in Darkness, and the Heir of Hell Walking in Light (London, 1837); Presbyter, Remarks on A Sermon (Stamford, 1837).

nied: Philpot's son later recalled that next to being called a mystic, nothing exasperated his father more than to be accused of antinomianism,[256] from which he carefully distanced himself. In Philpot's view, antinomianism was "the hydra of our professing day, the damning sin of Calvinists, as self-righteousness is of Arminians."[257] Elsewhere, he declared that "God has no antinomians in His family--that is, in the bad sense of the word. He has no loose, licentious, reckless characters who 'continue in sin that grace may abound.'"[258]

Yet Philpot's hyper-Calvinism still made him suspect as a 'theoretical antinomian,' for he frequently endorsed the teachings of such celebrated antinomians as Robert Hawker, who he referred to as a "saint,"[259] and the "immortal" William Huntington who was one of his two favourite authors.[260] In 1860, he wrote:

> You know very well that my heart has always been much with the real Huntingtonians. I say 'real' because I have no union with the mere nominal followers of Mr. Huntington. There is, or rather was, a blessed life, feeling, and savour in those who were partakers of the same grace and spirit as the blessed coalheaver.[261]

Perhaps most damaging of all was Philpot's (and Tiptaft's) close association with John Warburton, whose antinomian leanings, although not widely known outside Particular Baptist circles, were nevertheless influential at the time. They were also impossible to disguise. In a work first published in 1837, the second

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[256] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 1:121.
[257] Philpot's Letters, p. 145.
[258] J.C. Philpot, Early Sermons, 4 vols. (London, 1906), 1:6.
[259] J.H. Philpot, The Seceders, 2:269.
[260] Ibid., 3:186f. See also 1:108, 305; 2:131, 170, 240, 282; 3:207ff, 211.
[261] Quoted in Philpot's Letters, p. 294.

edition of which contained a preface by Philpot, Warburton cheerfully accepted the label, admitting, "I am one of those antinomians. Blessed be God! he has delivered me from that law."[262] Despite the sensationalism which they had attracted at the time, these secessions left little lasting direct influence outside the ministry of the Strict and Particular Baptists, or such Protestant bodies as the Irvingites and the Plymouth Brethren, in whose formation they played a part.

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The indirect importance of the secession in and around Oxford, however, was probably much greater. As with earlier schisms--the Walkerites or Western Schism--the controversies surrounding individual secessions brought into high relief some of the submerged difficulties of Evangelicals within the Established Church. Not only did the seceders draw attention to odd problems like the burial and baptismal rubrics, they also gave voice to discontents about a Church-State connection which seemed to hinder evangelism and the propagation of the gospel. What gave their position particular resonance in the early 1830s was that its critique of establishment as an agency of political corruption and worldliness coincided with that of many radicals, such as John Wade, whose *Black Book, or Corruption Unmasked* (1820-23) came out with additions in 1831, 1832, and 1835, exposing nepotism, pluralism, and worldliness in the Church with a wealth of (often inaccurate) detail. The shock of anti-establishment sermons like those

[262] John Warburton, Mercies, 2nd ed. (London, 1878), p. 23.

of Bulteel or Philpot must have been considerable, given the panic about the future of the Church which gripped the clergy during the reform crisis.

It is likely too that the Oxford secessions accelerated the disintegration of Anglican Evangelicalism into distinct subgroupings. The very existence of Bulteelism--as suggested above--was in some respects evidence that all was not well with the party of Wilberforce, Simeon, and Daniel Wilson. Although not many clergy made their exit with Philpot and Tiptaft, their propaganda on behalf of an open, confident, thoroughgoing high Calvinism, and their critique of the compromises and accommodations to 'the world' made by many Evangelical clergy, increased the divisions within the gospel world, especially between those who still followed the moderate *Christian Observer* and those who read the more rigoristic *Record*.

In Oxford itself, the secessions did much to weaken the attraction of Evangelical religion for serious-minded undergraduates. John Hill, at St. Edmund Hall, bemoaned the lack of leadership for the cause in the University and the demoralization which had set in after Bulteel's spectacular departure. On New Year's day 1832 he confided gloomily to his diary:

> *The state of this place and neighbourhood is humbling.* In the University, little, very little, goes on which betokens any outpouring of the Spirit of God. Not one minister fully preaching and living the gospel in charge of any one of the parishes in Oxford. Bulteel, Tiptaft, Brenton, have deserted the English Church. Lambert my Co-Secretary in the Church Missionary Society, has left it and the Church of England--Newton, my Co-Secretary in the Jews Society, is on the verge of doing the

> same. I have scarcely a friend left in Oxford who is not altogether like-minded.[263]

In the same year, Daniel Wilson, soon to sail off to Calcutta to take up his new bishopric, showed his concern at the dangers of the extremism among the youthful elite of the party. After a large clerical breakfast in London he warned the young men in attendance against taking up new notions, instead of the good *old* notions of the great men of former times, such as Cecil, Newton, Henry Martyn, Thomas Scott, etc. He then cautioned them to keep to the Church. Wilson noted with alarm how among young extremists attachment to the Church was held up as a sign of "party spirit."[264]

The loss to Oxford Evangelicalism--as David Newsome has shown in his *Parting of Friends*--was gain to Oxford High Churchmanship. The loss of initiative by Evangelicals in favour of the new, revived High Anglicanism of the Tractarians had many causes, but it is difficult not to see the extremism of Bulteel and his allies as a major precipitant. In the intense atmosphere of Oxford Common Rooms the extraordinary odyssey of College Fellows like Bulteel and Philpot showed the spectacle of Calvinism--perhaps Protestantism itself?--running a natural course towards anarchy. Here were the unacceptable end-products of evangelical 'enthusiasm,' coupled with those of a Calvinist system, whose ruthless division of material into elect and reprobate appeared to contain the seeds of separatism. Ironically, the aims of Bulteelers and Tractarians were often

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[263] Hill's Diary, 67/9, pp. 2b, 3a.
[264] From an account by Henry Wilberforce, quoted in Newsome, p. 13.

similar: both aimed to resist ungodly Erastianism and rekindle primitive purity and fervour in the church; both high Calvinism and Tractarianism fostered a rejection of the Anglican *via media* which led their stronger exponents into secession.

Between the Oxford high Calvinists and the Tractarians there was a relationship more close than has perhaps been realized.[265] At the time of Bulteel's appointment as Curate of St. Ebbe's in 1826, John Henry Newman could still be regarded as an Evangelical, if only marginally. Converted to some form of Calvinism at the age of fifteen, he retained this belief until he was twenty-one (around 1821), after which "it gradually faded away."[266] This early phase in Newman's theological development had been influenced especially by his reading of Thomas Scott, the well-known Evangelical biblical commentator, while still an undergraduate at Trinity. Newman lauded Scott as "the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul." It was Scott "who first planted deep in my mind that fundamental truth of religion," and I came to admire "his resolute opposition to antinomianism."[267]

The extremism of Bulteel, close at hand in Oxford, however, came to seem more representative of the true

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[265] For some insight on this point see Yngve Brilioth, The Anglican Revival (London, 1925); R.W. Greaves, 'Golightly and Newman, 1824-1845,' J.E.H., 1958, pp. 209-228; John E. Linnan, 'The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman, 1816-1826,' 2 vols. (Th.D. thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 1965); Stunt, pp. 65-74.

[266] J.H. Newman, *Apologia*, p. 4.

[267] Ibid., p. 4f.

Evangelical spirit to Newman and his friends than the moderation of Scott and his generation. Moreover, Bulteel was not the only example of high or hyper-Calvinism which Newman had cause to observe. He joined the Bible Society in Oxford in 1824 upon taking up his curacy at St. Clement's, and became friendly with James Hinton, the local Baptist minister and friend of Bulteel.[268] On occasion, he also met socially with the likes of John Hill and Bulteel.[269] He also had a vivid insight into the mind of high Calvinism through his mercurial brother Francis, who, between 1827 and 1830, while tutoring at the Pennefather's in Ireland, had also fallen under the spell of John Nelson Darby, and, in the belief of a direct communication from the Spirit, had rushed off to Baghdad to convert Islam.[270] Newman also became friendly with William ('Millennial') Marsh, whose animated influence in prophecy had made him somewhat notorious.[271] In 1830, in a small but significant *cause celebre*, Newman was removed from being secretary of the Oxford Committee of the Church Missionary Society because of his attack upon its loose attachment to Church principles and its association with the high

[268] Newman's Letters, 1:84ff.
[269] Hill's Diary, 67/6, pp. 22b, 56a.
[270] Francis assisted John in his parish work at Littlemore as late as 1830. See William Robbins, The Newman Brothers (London, 1966), p. 32f.
[271] M. Ward, Young Mr. Newman (London, 1948), p. 127f.

Calvinism of the Bulteelers.[272] He was, significantly, replaced by none other than J.C. Philpot.[273] For Newman, the displeasing vision of Bulteel seems to have replaced the fragrant memory of Scott. Seen in the intense atmosphere of Oxford in the late 1820s and 1830s, Evangelicalism could be seen as given over to eccentricity, waywardness, and irregularity; it could also be seen as high or hyper in its Calvinism, antinomian in its tendencies, and extremely ambivalent about, if not actively disloyal to, the Church of England. Through the writings of the Oxford Movement and its later chroniclers, this ungenerous view of Evangelicalism has been transmitted to posterity. Bulteel and his coadjutors have much to answer for.

[272] For Newman's explanation of this affair see A Master of Arts [J.H. Newman], Suggestions Respectfully Offered to Individual Resident Clergymen of the University in Behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in The Via Media, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (London, 1877), 2:3-10. For an excellent analysis of this case see Stunt. See also M. Ward, p. 176ff; Newman's Letters, 1:223-6, 1:215-226; Hill's Diary, 67/7, pp. 73a, 73b, 79a.

[273] Stunt, p. 73f.

Evangelicals and Tractarians: the Secession of Baptist W. Noel and the Gorham Affair

The 1840s rank as one of the most embattled periods of Anglican history. In 1842 Baptist Noel wrote with feeling: "Our lot is cast in a day of strife...In this eternal chaos of opinion or shock of minds, hostile pamphlets fly about us as thick as wintry sleet."[1] Church leaders were worried about the emergence of more sharply defined parties in the Church and--like W.F. Hook and F.D. Maurice--began to protest about their development,[2] or, like W.J. Conybeare in his celebrated article on 'Church Parties' in the *Edinburgh Review*, chronicled their course with fascination.[3]

The Evangelical party (if such it can be called) felt the tension acutely. Tractarianism was ascendent, at least in Oxford, and becoming more extreme. The Rome-ward drift of its advanced elements became increasingly apparent after the crisis over Tract 90 and Newman's withdrawal to Littlemore. Evangelical 'vital religion' seemed to be increasingly under siege, charged with indifference to Episcopacy and with propagating spiritual individualism and ecclesiastical anarchy.[4] Evangelicals watched with astonishment as advanced Tractarians denounced the English Reformers, and

[1]B.W. Noel, Christian Missions to Heathen Nations (London, 1842), p. 296f.

[2]See W.F. Hook, Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Ripon, on the State of Parties in the Church of England (London, 1841); F.D. Maurice, Reasons for Not Joining a Party in the Church of England (London, 1841).

[3]W.J. Coneybeare, 'Church Parties,' Edinburgh Review, October 1853, pp. 273-342.

[4]See Herbert Clegg, 'Evangelicals and Tractarians,' Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, June 1966, pp. 111-153; September 1966, pp. 237-294; June 1967, pp. 127-178.

they observed with sorrow the defection of many of their sons into the new movement.

The 1840s raised a succession of highly disturbing issues: Newman's secession to Rome in 1845, the Maynooth crisis in the same year, and the long-drawn out Gorham affair.[5] In Scotland the explosive Disruption of 1843 showed a Reformed and Established Church faced by an acute crisis over the issue of lay 'intrusion.' This led Thomas Chalmers, the great exponent of church establishment, to secede from the Kirk, and provided Evangelicals south of the Border with a painful example of the dangers inherent in Erastianism.

In addition to these controversies there was the growing realization of the logistical and pastoral crisis facing the Church as a result of rapid population growth and massive urbanization. The radical demands of Owenism and Chartism forced Churchmen to face up to the acute problem of de-Christianization in the cities, and led some to wonder whether the creaking machinery of the Established Church was capable of meeting a critical situation.

In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, pastoral optimism had, on the whole, characterized Evangelicalism. The rapid growth of voluntary societies like the Bible Society, and the extension of bridgeheads at Oxford and Cambridge, seemed to indicate a continuous expansion of influence. Now, as population soared and the extent of urbanization became apparent, it seemed once again that the supply of 'gospel

[5] See J.C.S. Nias, Gorham and the Bishop of Exeter (London, 1951).

teaching' was far behind the demands created by the 'spiritual destitution' of the cities. To some, new expedients--quasi-regular expedients like street-preaching, or lay-preaching and visitation--seemed called for, as in the days of Whitefield and Wesley.

Thus the secession of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Wriothesley Noel, perhaps the most influential 'gospel minister' of his generation, was a severe blow to Evangelical hopes, as well as to the Church's defence of its civil connection, producing, as one contemporary exclaimed, an "explosion" in the religious world.[6]

Noel was one of the acknowledged leaders of the Evangelical party.[7] He was a Chaplain to Queen Victoria,[8] a co-founder of the Evangelical Alliance,[9] the prolific author of scores of religious works which, especially during the 1840s, sold in enormous quantities,[10] and one of the most eminent preachers in London.[11] An anonymous description of the most prominent clergy in London in 1844 characterized him as "so well

[6]L.C.L. Brenton, A Sermon on Rev. XIV:13 (London, 1849), p. 37. See also K.R. Short, 'Baptist Wriothesley Noel,' Baptist Quarterly, 1963, pp. 389-411; D.W. Bebbington, 'The Life of Baptist Noel: Its Setting and Significance,' Baptist Quarterly, 1972, pp. 389-411.

[7]See John Dix, Pen and Ink Sketches of Poets, Preachers, and Politicians (London, 1846), p. 245. Dix claimed that Noel was so popular that the Royal family ventured to his Chapel *incognito* in order to hear him preach.

[8]B.W. Noel was appointed Chaplain by Melbourne in August 1841 during the final weeks of the Whig ministry, as reward for his opposition to the Corn Laws. See MSS Doc. DE 1797/1/ 86/2, Leicester County Record Office.

[9]Frederic Boase, Modern English Biography (Truro, 1897), p. 1159.

[10]By 1848, nine of his published works had sold over 108,000 copies, making him one of the most popular religious authors of his time. See B.W. Noel, Sermons Preached at the Chapels Royal (London, 1848), p. 299.

[11]Baptist Messenger, 1873, p. 55.

known as to require no comment," and remarked that he was "uniformly consulted" on all important matters by the Evangelical party.[12] Not surprisingly, Noel's departure from the Church was seen as the leading ecclesiastical event of the year,[13] causing almost as much sensation as had Newman's secession three years earlier.[14] Noel's departure from the Church, remarked Daniel Wilson simply, was an "earthquake."[15]

Noel was born in 1798 into a household which combined Whig politics, Evangelical religion, aristocratic unconventionality, and strong-mindedness in a potent blend. He was the sixteenth child and eleventh son of Sir Gerard Noel, Bart., an eccentric Whig politician,[16] and the former Lady Diana Middleton, only child of the Evangelical Admiral Charles Middleton, First Lord of the Admiralty, who had been raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Barham. Diana succeeded to the title upon the death of her father in 1813 and was afterwards known as Lady Barham.[17] Charles Noel, Baptist's elder brother, succeeded to the barony upon his mother's death in 1823 and, in 1841, was created the Earl of Gainsborough.[18]

[12] See MSS Add C. 290, 1844, B.L.O.
[13] Baptist Reporter, February 1849, p. 45.
[14] C.S. Horne, Nonconformity in the XIXth Century (London, 1905), p. 123; L.E. Elliott-Binns, Religion in the Victorian Era (London, 1963), p. 462.
[15] See Josiah Bateman, The Life of the Right Rev. Daniel Wilson, D.D., 2 vols. (London, 1860), 2:358.
[16] Sir Gerard (1759-1838) was MP for Maidstone (1784-1788), and Rutland (1788-1808, 1814-1838). He had a well-deserved reputation for extravagance and eccentricity. See Sidney Noel, Ernest Noel (London, 1932)
[17] D.N.B.
[18] E.F. Noel, Some Letters and Records of the Noel Family (London, 1910), pp. 25, 28, 32.

The influence of Noel's Evangelical mother was particularly significant upon his spiritual development and clerical career. Through her wide and influential circle of Evangelical friends and relations at Barham Court at Teston, Kent, he gained the acquaintance of many leading politicians and religious figures. Her example was of particular significance to his lifelong dedication to the 'catholic spirit' of pan-evangelical cooperation, for Lady Barham took a view of denominational barriers which was unusually relaxed and eirenical for her time. This attitude was exemplified during the final years of her life by her establishment of a Calvinistic 'connexion' of small chapels on the Gower peninsula of South Wales.[19] It is also very likely that it was through his mother's influence that Baptist Noel became a passionate advocate of Christian unity, an attitude which, as we will see, strongly influenced his secession from the Church. From his eccentric father, he acquired a liberal spirit and an affinity to Whig politics that led to his espousal of a variety of reforming causes, and gave him access to circles of political power often closed to Evangelicals.[20]

In 1810, Noel was enrolled at Westminster,[21] and in 1817, as pensioner at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was created M.A. in 1821.[22] After Cambridge,

[19] For details of this see A.N. Jones, Gower Memories of William Griffiths (Aberayron, 1957).
[20] Noel was also related to the Evangelical Whig M.P. Sir George Grey.
[21] The Record of Old Westminsters, 2 vols., (London, 1928), 2:693.
[22] Al. Cant., 4:557.

he settled on a career at the bar in 1821,[23] but, two years later, against the wishes of his family,[24] he abandoned his legal work and entered the ministry as Curate of Cossington, Leicestershire. In 1827 he acquired the lease of St. John's Chapel, Bedford Row, a proprietary chapel of some reputation within Evangelical circles, where, over the next twenty-one years, he established a ministry of international reputation.[25]

Though a powerful preacher, Noel's wider reputation came with his emergence as a prolific religious author, whose many publications put forward his strong views on a number of contemporary issues. Despite his aristocratic lineage, Noel was neither a high establishmentarian nor a Tory, but a vigorously reformist Whig. In 1828 (the year of the repeal of the Test Acts) he published an early tract entitled *Protestant Unity in Fundamental Doctrines*, which set out his belief that the primary unifying force in the Christian world was not attachment to a particular church or denomination, but to the vital religion of the Bible. In 1844 he stressed again that the unity described in Scripture was no agreement in "external forms of minor opinions," but a union of hearts in faith, love, and *action*--a belief that led him, not surprisingly to a militant support for the interdenominational work of the London City Mission. Noel was nothing if not a

[23]The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, 2 vols., (Lincoln's Inn, 1896), 2:93.

[24]See Letter of 23 May 1823 from Noel's brother, Francis, regarding the family's unfavourable reaction to this decision. Noel Family Papers in the possession of Capt. Gerard Noel.

[25]D.N.B.

resolute pan-evangelical. He was scornful of the sternly Anglican Church Pastoral Aid Society, and a vehement supporter of the London City Mission's use of laymen--many of them Nonconformists--for the mission of evangelizing the great cities.[26] Noel saw cooperation between Dissenters and Anglicans in missionary work as a natural extension of the pan-evangelicalism of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Such attitudes, however, were not embraced by all Evangelicals. In 1839 Noel, in supporting the London City Mission, was accused by the conservative *Record* of supporting what was "in effect a Dissenting Society."[27] He countered such charges by stressing the cooperative nature of the Mission. He made it clear that he was far less concerned with the denominational make-up of the London City Mission than with its effectiveness as an urban agency of conversion. His opponents, he countered, could not "*sketch, much less form,* a Church Society which could send either lay agents or curates to these perishing creatures."[28] As this exchange shows, Noel was already regarded by his conservative colleagues as closer to Dissent than he should have been. Already, he saw the imperatives of evangelism as far higher than those of strict Churchmanship.

In politics Noel distanced himself significantly from the Tory paternalist wing of the Evangelical world. His was a strong meliorist Whiggery; he believed in progress and activism: "Let others be wedded

[26]Donald M. Lewis, Lighten their Darkness, (New York), 1986, p. 55.
[27]Record, 4 February 1839.
[28]Ibid., 11 February 1839.

to the past," he wrote in 1842, "we live in the past, the present, and the future."[29] Nor did he allow his strong belief in human depravity to dampen his belief that much human misery was the result not of the Fall, but of human ignorance and deprivation. "Poverty, famine, disease, terror, strife, and premature death are much more inflicted by ourselves than by the necessity of our condition as men."[30]

Though Noel attacked Robert Owen and Socialism in conventional terms as un-Christian,[31] he was intensely interested in the plight of the poor. In 1840 he conducted a public inquiry into the condition of elementary schools in several major cities.[32] He was one of the comparatively few clergymen--among a host of Non-conformist ministers--publicly to attack the Corn Laws as they stood in 1841: his *Plea for the Poor*, which ran through at least twenty-nine editions, urged a low fixed duty on corn instead of the sliding scale, in order to produce a steady price.[33] Unlike many Evangelicals in country parishes, Noel's concern for the 'condition of England question' was based on his first hand experience of working conditions in the great cities, strengthened by the flow of reports about human misery which came in from the London City Mission missionaries.[34] Though not an avowed exponent of Free Trade, Noel was an exponent of economic liberalism. Thus he

[29] B.W. Noel, Christian Missions, p. 306.
[30] Ibid., p. 301.
[31] B.W. Noel, What is Christianity? (London, 1840), in Lectures Against Socialism (London, 1840).
[32] D.N.B.
[33] B.W. Noel, A Plea for the Poor (London, 1841).
[34] Ibid., p. 5.

was convinced that tariff reduction would do far more than alms-giving to raise the living standards of poor people.

Such views delighted his Whig friends and won him a chaplaincy to the Queen from the outgoing Whig administration;[35] his arguments were also, allegedly, used by Lord John Russell very effectively in the ensuing election campaign.[36] At the same time, however, they incensed many conservative Churchmen and alienated Noel from the increasingly Tory mainstream of Anglican Evangelicalism.[37] It is already possible to see in Noel's stance on social issues some of the attitudes which were later to lead him out of the Established Church. His commitment to economic liberalism was capable of being extended to 'free trade in religion' and hence to Nonconformist Voluntaryism. His warm espousal of interdenominational city evangelism already separated him from some of his Evangelical Tory brethren and brought him into close contact with London Dissenters. Noel was a progressive and a pragmatist, for whom the immediate alleviation of social--and spiritual--problems counted far more than any adherence to tradition. He distanced himself firmly from the nostalgic politics of high Toryism. "Let those who read [sic] with impassioned fondness the days of the bard and the baron, dream on of feudal fealty and chivalrous devotion to

[35] Bebbington, p. 394.
[36] *Record*, 7 March 1842.
[37] See B.W. Noel's Obituary, *Baptist Messenger*, 1873, p. 55f. See also *Quarterly Review*, 1841, p. 504f; *C.O.*, 1841, p. 572.

the altar and the throne," he wrote in 1842. "Thanks be to God, those days will not return."[38]

His views on establishment took time to evolve, however. The rise of the disestablishment campaign in the early 1830s led to the first of Noel's numerous publications on the Church's civil connection.[39] At this stage he warmly defended its link to the State on two grounds: its consistent opposition to the "unbridled licence of fanaticism," and its provision for secular and religious education:[40] claims which bore some resemblance to Thomas Arnold's *Principles of Church Reform,* published in the previous year. But this eulogy of establishment soon gave way to more contentious views.

The reasons for this change in Noel's attitude toward the Establishment were primarily pragmatic. First-hand experience of the industrial city suggested to him that the dead hand of establishment paralyzed any serious attempt to meet London's 'spiritual destitution.' The enormousness of the task was such that it could not be met by the Established Church alone: cooperation with Dissent in such organizations as the London City Mission was essential, yet it was being "repelled at every step" by the religious hierarchy, while the acute need to found new parishes--or to for-

[38] B.W. Noel, Christian Missions, p. 305.
[39] B.W. Noel, An Established Religion, in The Important Influence (London, 1837). This was extracted from a sermon he preached in 1832.
[40] Ibid., p. 1.

tify existing ones--was hindered by insurmountable Parliamentary obstacles.[41]

This urgent sense of need led Noel to publish a vigorous letter he had recently written to Bishop Blomfield criticizing the Church's ineffectiveness in meeting the spiritual needs of the metropolis.[42] His *State of the Metropolis Considered*, published in 1835, is a classic--and neglected--statement of that perception of 'spiritual destitution' in the great cities which electrified many Anglicans in the turbulent 1840s. The argument was pursued with rhetorical passion combined with the attention to statistical detail which was becoming fashionable in the Benthamite era. With anger Noel pointed out to Blomfield that while England sent out missionaries to Africa and the East, in London 518,000 souls--enough to populate six English counties--"within reach of hundreds of Christian ministers, and thousands of intelligent Christian laymen with wealth and leisure, are almost entirely overlooked!" In Blomfield's Diocese there were now parishes in which one clergyman was responsible for 46,000, 68,000, and even 103,000 souls.[43] Noel vividly described the plight of London's poor in Mayhew's world of gin-palaces, prostitution, and mendicants. Significantly he quoted Thomas Chalmers' *Civic Economy* to support his claim that a population like this could only be reached by a series of 'aggressive' efforts. If the masses did not come to

[41] Letter from Noel to David Nasmith, 8 April 1835; quoted in John Campbell, Memoirs of David Nasmith (London, 1844), p. 303f.

[42] B.W. Noel, The State of the Metropolis Considered, 2nd ed. (London, 1835).

[43] Ibid., pp. 12, 26.

the Church, the Church must go out to meet them. More Church schools must be erected. The absurd laws still preventing the subdivision of parishes and the easy building of new Churches must be repealed. A great army of curates must be mustered to help penetrate the dense rookeries. Even more radical measures were necessary. Noel warmly urged the acceptance of street-preaching--so clearly sanctioned in the New Testament--as an essential to the Church's mission: "we must seek for them wherever they are congregated: if we have not buildings within which to gather them, we must preach to them in the open air."[44] No doubt to the alarm of Blomfield, Noel here commended the example of famous clerical 'irregulars' of the past--Whitefield and Rowland Hill, as well as present-day Dissenting itinerants.[45] Like a Wesley or a Whitefield, Noel pressed home the pragmatic argument from necessity. Were such actions 'irregular?' "I would answer, that there are times in which an inflexible adherence to rule may become foolish, or criminal." Would Nelson have won at Copenhagen if he had obeyed the Admiralty rule-book? "Whitefield would never have ranked among the greatest benefactors of mankind, if he had not dared to be irregular."[46] In the end, necessity has no law: "*Christ must be preached to perishing sinners*. Before this necessity, all forms, however venerable--all rules, however salutary, must give way."[47] Noel ended by urging Blomfield, a rubrical High Churchman, to send out any-

[44]Ibid., p. 43.
[45]Ibid., p. 46ff.
[46]Ibid., p. 54f.
[47]Ibid., p. 70.

one--layman, Methodist, or Congregational missionary--who would save the myriad of souls destitute of the gospel. "While we are yielding to our indolence, cherishing our dignity, or punctiliously adhering to modern usage, they are passing into eternity untaught in that excellent knowledge, to obtain which we must, if real Christians, be willing to part with all things."[48] This was the language of Wesley himself, but applied now not to the countryside, but to the great Victorian cities. In Noel's view the endowments, rules and traditions of the Church were subordinate to the 'one thing needful': saving souls. The apparatus of establishment was primarily to be judged by the same standard: pastoral and evangelistic utility. He was already prepared so to judge it; consequently, he began to see that establishment was often a hindrance.

His proposals met with a mixed response. His statistics were repeatedly cited by Evangelicals in sermons, articles, and lectures, while his pamphlet aroused the attention of evangelical Dissent and did much to facilitate the founding of the pan-evangelical London City Mission, in which he played an important role.[49] On the other hand, the *Christian Observer*, while expressing its admiration of many of his points, could not accept his recommendation of open-air preaching, which was unsuitable to the British climate and temperament: its employment by the Irvingites had demonstrated that "such a plan was not for edification;" likewise the peculiar experience of a Wesley or a

[48]Ibid., pp. 70, 55.
[49]Lewis, pp. 50, 62f.

Whitefield.[50] Some shrewd observers even began to predict, towards the end of 1835, that Noel had become a "great deal too liberal for the Church" and would not last long within its pale.[51] In response to such speculation Noel felt obliged to admit publicly that "the time might come" when he "may deem it necessary" to secede from the Establishment; though adding quickly that this time had not yet occurred, nor did he see it as imminent.[52]

In the following year, Noel offered qualified support for Blomfield's Church extension campaign,[53] contributing £60 to the cause,[54] but stated his conviction that the plan would only succeed if accompanied by pan-evangelical cooperation. Only when all "ingenuous and unjust" attacks upon Dissent were laid aside would the Church of England regain "a wholesome and Christ-like ascendancy."[55] These ideas were firmly rejected by Blomfield, who responded by attacking Noel in the Lords over his advocacy of intimate cooperation with Dissent in any "promiscuous interchange of pulpits." Any such action would demean the principle of a national church,

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[50] C.O., 1836, p. 251f.

[51] See John Dix, Pen Portraits; or Pen-Pictures of...Eminent British Preachers (Boston, 1854), p. 75.

[52] Ibid., p. 79.

[53] B.W. Noel, The Spiritual Claims of the Metropolis (London, 1836).

[54] Ibid., p. 21. His brother, Leland, contributed £40. Newman claimed that the Evangelicals raised £150,000 for Blomfield's campaign. See Letter to R.H. Froude, 17 January 1836, in Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman, ed. by Anne Mozley, 2 vols. (London, 1891), 2:154.

[55] Ibid., p. 12.

and would not benefit the Church of England, but would transform it into an ecclesiastical "Noah's ark."[56]

Over the next few years, Noel became increasingly exasperated over the Church's reluctance to promote wholesale Church extension. He turned from attempting to goad his Diocesan to action, to demanding action from the government. Writing directly to Melbourne in 1839, he set out in detail an account of the effects of the Church's failure to provide spiritual instruction, one of the most serious--in this year of Chartist activity--being increased social unrest.[57] Nonetheless, for all his advocacy of aggressive evangelism and greater pan-evangelical cooperation, Noel could not see his way clear to support the demands of Liberationists to disendow the Church and to introduce voluntarism. Such action, he argued, would be inapplicable and ineffective, leaving millions ignorant of spiritual truth and free to disturb the country and to ruin themselves.[58]

Noel denounced the partisans of disestablishment as a small and noisy pressure group unrepresentative of the majority of Dissenters, who were not unfriendly to the Church.[59] The Liberationists were not likely to get very far, for the only tactics open to them were to agitate on the Church Rate issue, or to try to influence Parliamentary elections by "harangues on the hus-

[56] C.O., 1837, p. 236. The Christian Observer concurred with Blomfield.

[57] B.W. Noel, A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Melbourne On Church Extension (London, 1839), p. 21.

[58] Ibid., p. 20f.

[59] Ibid., p. 22f.

tings." Since few real Christians would participate in such unseemly demagoguery, the disestablishment campaign would be staffed by reprobates: if they eventually prevailed, it would be no victory for Christianity, but for "unbridled immorality, for ostentatious irreligion, and for exulting lawlessness amongst all the worst subjects of the land."[60]

Disestablishment, Noel concluded, would be a disaster. How could it be stopped? The best response to the Liberationists was Church extension achieved through a hugh increase in State funding. If the State wished to preserve the Church it must actively promote the saving of souls and the provision of moral instruction: the very *raison d'être* of a national church. Since the existence of a religious establishment created "obstacles to the spread of religion by other means," its maintenance therefore involved an obligation on the part of the State to supply the destitute with spiritual instruction.[61]

While rejecting voluntarism and disestablishment, Noel, like many of his prominent Whig friends, eagerly supported the concurrent endowment of evangelical Dissent. "Common funds should be employed in the service of all," he argued, with each denomination receiving "similar aid from the State." This would not be aiding those who opposed the Church, as High Churchmen claimed, but those who are fighting in alliance with the Church against ungodliness and superstition.[62]

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[60] Ibid., p. 23.
[61] Ibid., p. 26f.
[62] Ibid., p. 27ff.

Underlying Noel's belief that joint action by Anglicans and Dissenters was the only means to stem the tide of popular infidelity was his heart-felt commitment to Christian unity. His first important work on the subject appeared in 1837 and achieved instant success, running through at least thirty-four editions in its first year alone.[63] In it, Noel encouraged all believers to lay aside thorny points of doctrine (such as infant baptism, church polity, and establishment), and focus on points of unity. Churchmen and Dissenters should join together in one profession, and become increasingly "candid, tolerant, and brotherly," while granting to everyone the right of private judgment.[64]

Though these suggestions were welcomed by many evangelical Nonconformists,[65] they were predictably attacked by High Churchmen as promoting falsehoods which, if carried into practice, would annihilate the distinctively Catholic precepts of the Church.[66] Noel was accused of advancing views on baptism which were un-Anglican,[67] of bringing the principle of Apostolicity into disrespect, of supporting secession,[68] and of promoting a false liberality that was indistinguishable from latitudinarianism. Rather than promoting true Christian

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[63]B.W. Noel, The Unity of the Church (London, 1837).

[64]Ibid., p. 14.

[65]See Christianus Episcopus, The Moderator Between the Hon. B.W. Noel and 'Clericus Surriensis' (London, 1838).

[66]Clericus Surriensis [John Courtney], An Earnest Protest (London, 1837), pp. 3, 7. Cf. M.A., A Letter to the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel (London, 1837). See also Schism [J. Hoppus], An Examination of the Principles Contained in the Hon. B.W. Noel's Tract 'On the Unity of the Church' (London, 1838).

[67]Ibid, p. 13.

[68]Ibid., p. 38.

unity towards the core of Catholicity, he was labouring to destroy it.[69] Noel was told that he should secede from the Establishment; then and only then could he attack it with a consistency impossible for him to maintain while he earned his bread as a priest in the State Church.[70] No doubt such attacks began to play on his mind as he considered his own future within the Church.

Noel quickly responded to this criticism--and to the high ecclesiology of the Oxford Tracts, which were still appearing--by publishing a defence of his work on Christian unity.[71] By this time he had perceived the significance of the Oxford Movement and its threat to the principle of Protestant ecumenism which he had been proclaiming. He began a long and restless pursuit against Tractarianism, which he saw as a "serious offence against Christ."[72] He rejected their claim that Nonconformists should be excluded from Christian unity not so much because they dissented from the Establishment (for Tractarians were themselves Nonconformists when in Scotland), but because they dissented from Episcopacy.[73] While accepting the Scriptural basis for Episcopacy, which, when rightly administered he considered an excellent form of church government, Noel denied that it was set out in the New Testament as the exclusive form of Christian polity.[74] Unity therefore

[69] A Layman, Anti-Schism (London, 1838), p. 3.
[70] Ibid., p. 12f.
[71] B.W. Noel, A Defence of a Tract Entitled, 'The Unity of the Church' (London, 1837). For a later account of Noel's views on Christian unity see the introduction to John Howe, Christian Union (London, 1839).
[72] B.W. Noel, A Defence of a Tract, p. 6.
[73] Ibid., p. 4.
[74] Ibid., p. 5.

should rest not on adherence to a single form of government, but on a consensual acceptance of the primary doctrines of the gospel: a steady adherence to fundamental truths, with a charitable construction of minor errors.[75]

The 'mischievous' doctrine of baptismal regeneration also came under Noel's repeated attack. In a six-week period, stretching from December 11th, 1842 to January 22nd 1843 (and foreshadowing the Gorham crisis), he delivered thirteen different sermons on the subject, denigrating it as a Popish survival and as an unscriptural doctrine which was rejected by the Articles.[76] Whatever regeneration did occur, he argued, it preceded rather than accompanied baptism.[77] Thus, Evangelicals must stand firm against its imposition by Tractarians. They should not allow themselves to be depressed by High Church propaganda on this issue, and should not consider abandoning the Church as long as it still maintained the fundamental truth of the gospel in its formularies, while it continued to hold many faithful followers, and while it did not compel them actively to "*maintain falsehood or to commit wrong.*" If, on the other hand, like the Protestant Reformers, some Evangelicals were expelled from the Church, they could still serve God as well within the ranks of Protestant Dissent.[78]

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[75]Ibid., p. 30.
[76]Pulpit: 42:423-470; 43:10-156.
[77]Ibid., 43:31f.
[78]Quoted in Church and State Gazette, 2 March 1849.

The secession of Noel's unstable curate, Richard Waldo Sibthorp, to Rome in 1843 accelerated Noel's bitter opposition to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as well as to Tractarianism itself.[79] The Tract writer's sole aim, he alleged, was the complete "unprotestantising" of the Church of England, for they hold the doctrine of justification by faith to be a "hateful,...unchristian, and poisonous heresy."[80] True believers should resist the errors of baptismal regeneration, justification by the reception of the Lord's supper, the eucharistic sacrifice, and the elevation of the priesthood, and should especially protest against the universal schism (e.g. Popery) of which these doctrines are the source.[81] Noel surprisingly urged Parliament to support Archbishop Whateley's petition calling for the reinstatement of Convocation, which might set up barriers against the creeping Romanism now infiltrating the Church. This course had its dangers, he recognized, for it might not restore spiritual unity to the Church but destroy it, for it could just as likely lead to the ejection of either the Tractarians or the Evangelicals, in a manner reminiscent of the convulsions in Scotland which were then producing the great Disruption.[82]

During 1844, Noel published another plea for Christian unity and pan-evangelical cooperation,[83] and

[79] Pulpit, 43:48. Cf. B.W. Noel, Protestant Thoughts in Rhyme (London, 1845).
[80] Pulpit, 44:39.
[81] Ibid., 44:29.
[82] Ibid., 44:30.
[83] B.W. Noel, The Doctrine of the Word of God Respecting Union Among Christians (London, 1844). See review in C.O., 1844, p. 81.

felt the need to issue another public denial that he was planning to secede from the Church and, like an English Chalmers, organize a rival Episcopal body. Readers of his scathing condemnation of State intrusion into the affairs of the Scottish Kirk might well have seen Noel as a potential leader of an English Disruption.[84] Speculation over the imminence of a group secession was aided by an advertisement which brazenly appeared on the front page of the *Record* in February 1844. This read:

> To Episcopalians attached to the glorious doctrines of the Reformation--It being in contemplation to form an Episcopal Church separate from the State, with a revised Liturgy, all who are favourable to this object are earnestly requested to communicate, by letter, with B.O., 2, Featherstone-buildings, Holborn, London.[85]

Suggestions that Noel himself had undertaken to organize just such an Evangelical exodus were quietly circulated. To make matters worse, an anonymous letter was sent to a number of Evangelical students at an unnamed college, encouraging them to secede from the Church and join a "new Society," described as "another Episcopal Church, not connected with the State," over which newly elected bishops would be placed.[86] In a speech before the annual conference of the London City Mission, Noel denied authorship of either document or any knowledge of the author's identity. He still protested that he loved the Evangelical clergy and laity more dearly than any other body, as the "regiment of Christ's army" to

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[84] See B.W. Noel, The Case of the Free Church of Scotland (London, 1844).

[85] *Record*, 8 February 1844; Christian Remembrancer, 1844, p. 303

[86] See Speech of B.W. Noel, London City Mission Magazine, 1844, p. 90f.

which he had been providentially assigned. Nor did he mean to leave the Church to the Tractarians; this would only serve to play into the hands of his opponents and undermine true religion in the nation.[87]

The outbreak of the Scottish Disruption in 1843 exerted more influence upon Noel's views on the connection between Church and State than perhaps any other issue; to Noel this was the "great religious event of our day."[88] He saw the cause of non-intrusion as a highly reasonable principle which had Apostolic authority behind it: state intrusion, on the other hand, was "nothing less than tyranny,"[89] and hampered the Church by unscriptural constraints and party influence. He noted that as a result of provocative intrusion within the Scottish Establishment between 1734 and 1834, six-hundred Nonconformist chapels had been constructed, while only sixty-three had been built by the Kirk during the same period.[90] The veto law--or the Church's prerogative to reject unsatisfactory nominations--had produced great spiritual benefits,[91] and, if it was abolished, the outcry would soon sweep away the Establishment.[92]

The Disruption placed Noel and the English Evangelicals in a delicate situation. While they supported the establishment principle, they also recognized that some of the other issues which seemed to be at stake--

[87] Loc. cit. The advertisement may have been placed by James Shore, or by his London Committee (see Chapter 9).
[88] B.W. Noel, The Case of the Free Church, p. 94.
[89] Ibid., p. 4ff.
[90] Ibid., p. 11.
[91] See Ibid., p. 20.
[92] Ibid., p. 33f.

the right of private judgment, spiritual liberty, and freedom from civil intrusion--could not be surrendered at any cost. They regretted deeply that religious issues like these had to be contended for in the courts and in Parliament. Yet many English Evangelicals made it clear that, if a similarly painful situation were to develop south of the Border, they would be just as willing as their Scottish counterparts to resist in order to preserve the Church's spiritual liberty and independence.

Noel offered vociferous support for the seceders, often in the face of stiff opposition from respected Evangelical contemporaries.[93] Two years before, he declared, the ministers of the Free Church had been honoured and loved: what had they done since to forfeit that approval? "They were then ministers of Christ, are they less so now?"[94] Their sacrifice of worldly comforts in order to maintain their principles demanded universal respect.[95] Under similar circumstances, Noel warned, the English Evangelicals would no doubt be compelled to take the same step. But their condition was very different. In Scotland, the seceders' ground was that they were required actively to do wrong; here, no clergyman was placed under such compulsion. Secession was therefore unnecessary.[96]

As long as English Evangelicals were permitted to preach the gospel and fulfil their pastoral obliga-

[93] See Hugh McNeile, Speech (Edinburgh, 1844), p. 5; C. Hutcheson, Tidings from the Mountains (London, 1845), p. 52.
[94] Ibid., p. 89f.
[95] Ibid., p. 90f.
[96] Ibid., p. 92.

tions, it was incumbent upon them to seek the improvement of the Church from within. The recent proposals for the formation of a Free Episcopal Church were, therefore, altogether premature and hasty. Admittedly, the increasing dissemination of Tractarian errors, the occasional acts of "ecclesiastical despotism," and the absence of a representative assembly such as Convocation through which the Church could drastically reform itself, were great evils, but were there not equal errors in other bodies? And would not a new Free Episcopal Church be liable to errors as great as those within the Establishment?[97]

At the same time, Noel also became embroiled in another Church-State conflict closer to home: the controversy surrounding the proposed increase in the Maynooth Grant. It soon became clear that Noel's enthusiasm for concurrent endowment did not extend to the endowment of a Roman seminary. At the heart of his objection lay the belief that the continued State maintenance of the College at Maynooth would permanently strengthen endowment of Irish--and perhaps English--Catholicism.[98] He angrily pointed out the inconsistency of the proposal, for the State had repeatedly refused to provide support for orthodox Dissent (it had refused a request by Chalmers for two hundred new Scottish Churches), and even for the Established Church of England (Sir Robert Inglis' motion for Church extension

[97] Ibid., p. 92f.

[98] B.W. Noel, The Proposed Increase in the Grant to Maynooth (London, 1845), p. 10f. See also: The Morning Sermon, in Sermons Preached by Eminent Divines (London, 1847).

had been rejected by Peel's government).[99] As the only rational principle for the establishment of religion was that State funds should be employed for advancing 'public truth,' there was no reason for the government to vote additional sums for the diffusion of 'public falsehood.'[100] Rather than support the extension of Irish Romanism, the State should consider the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Protestant Church, for even though Parliament would not legislate in favour of true religion, it was certainly bound not to legislate against it; if Parliament felt that it was imprudent to support the truth alone, let it leave both truth and error unsupported.[101] Noel prophesied that if the State persisted in this plan, it would seal the doom of religious Establishments throughout Britain.[102]

The degree of Noel's commitment to the disestablishment of the Irish Church remains uncertain.[103] Some parties took him at his word and and scrutinized the plan accordingly.[104] One prominent Dissenter, Thomas Price, perhaps speaking for many outside the Church, remarked hopefully that the appearance of such a suggestion from such a respected Churchman was a significant straw in the wind, promising the future slackening of Anglican Evangelical support for establishment. "The Church question," he predicted, "is obviously becoming the question of the times."[105]

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[99] See B.W. Noel, The Proposed Increase, p. 38f.
[100] Ibid., p. 45.
[101] B.W. Noel, The Catholic Claims Considered (Dublin, 1845), pp. 15, 25.
[102] Ibid., p. 25.
[103] As suggested by Short, p. 56.
[104] C.O., 1845, p. 510.
[105] Thomas Price, E.R., 1845, p. 312.

In about 1847, Noel began to develop serious personal doubts about remaining within the Church. That summer, he toured the Continent in order to examine at first hand the results of the 1845 secession in Switzerland and the subsequent formation of the Evangelical Free Church of the Canton De Vaud.[106] His inspection convinced him that the Swiss Establishment had become "hopelessly corrupt:"[107] he had difficulty disguising his admiration for the seceders and their newly organized body.[108]

By mid-November 1848, rumours about Noel's continuation within the Church began circulating freely in religious circles in London. On Sunday, November 19th, a correspondent from the *Times* appeared at St. John's, eager to substantiate these stories. Although the Chapel was so crowded that it was barely possible to obtain even standing room, those who came out of curiosity were sorely disappointed for Noel did not touch on the subject of his own secession.[109] Within several days, however, speculation about his impending secession began to appear in print.[110] During the same week, Noel finally announced his intentions to the heads of families attending St. John's. Many Churchmen must be aware, he began, particularly after reading his tract on the Scottish Disruption, that he had harboured doubts for some time about the propriety of a civil connection of religion. He had struggled against these

[106] See B.W. Noel, Notes of a Tour in Switzerland in the Summer of 1847 (London, 1848), p. 245f.
[107] Ibid., p. 95ff.
[108] Ibid., p. 127ff.
[109] Times, 28 November 1848, p. 5.
[110] Non., 22 November 1848, p. 895.

pressures, had read the best works on both sides of the argument, and had carefully studied the Scriptures. Being in a proprietary chapel, he had at first flattered himself that he had little personally to do with the question, but eventually he came to believe that a man was responsible for the sins of his communion.[111] He had, therefore, concluded that he must leave the Church.

Emotional appeals were made by Noel's distressed flock encouraging him to reconsider. The continued prosperity of St. John's depended on him. It was pointed out that without his continued leadership, nine hundred children would be scattered from schools organized by the Chapel, £700-900 a year in collections for various charities would be lost, numerous societies for the relief of the poor would be broken up, and a very large congregation would be scattered.[112] Unmoved by such appeals, Noel responded sternly that duty "was above and beyond everything." The question of leaving the Church had been so deeply considered by him that it was now impossible to turn back. At the same time, until his actual departure, he would reveal no motive for seceding, nor disclose how he had arrived at his decision.[113]

Because of his desire to find a suitable successor, Noel's intention was to continue at St. John's un-

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[111] Letter from J.P. Bacon to Dr. Patton, 24 November 1848, New York Independent. Quoted from Non., 7 February 1849, p. 98f. See also Baptist Reporter, March 1849, p. 122f.

[112] Non., 7 February 1849, p. 99; 6 December 1848, p. 928.

[113] Non., 7 February 1849, p. 99.

til the following summer. As soon as news of his secession began to leak out, however, Blomfield summoned him for an immediate interview.[114] The Bishop's inclination was peremptorily to forbid Noel from officiating within the Diocese; however, as he firmly refused to submit to such a ban, Blomfield granted him some days to withdraw in grace.[115] On November 26th, during his morning sermon at St. John's, Noel announced his resignation to the congregation, informing them that Blomfield had ruled that he could not remain beyond the following Sunday.[116] The Evangelical press violently criticized Blomfield for heavy-handedness,[117] but Noel rushed to his defence. The public had been entirely misinformed with respect to the Bishop, he wrote to the *Christian Times*: he himself had always experienced forbearance and courtesy from Blomfield, who in his trying situation, had simply done his duty, showing a personal kindness for which he was deeply indebted.[118]

Noel's final appearance at St. John's had all the excitement and drama surrounding the farewell speech of a distinguished politician. When the Chapel's doors were opened, confusion ruled, as crowds rushed in and took forcible possession of private pews.[119] Those who came expecting a scathing denunciation of the Church,

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[114]Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, History of the Free Churches of England, 1688-1891 (London, 1891), p. 509.

[115]Loc. cit. See also Baptist Messenger, 1873, p. 56; Times, 1 December 1848, p. 5.

[116]Pulpit, 54:455.

[117]Christian Times, 5 December 1848.

[118]Clotworthy Gilmour, A Reply to the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Wriothesley Noel's Essay on the Union of Church and State (London, 1849), p. 12.

[119]John Dix, Pen Portraits, p. 80.

however, were to be disappointed: Noel's sermon was commonplace, free from any attack on the Church, and containing few references to his secession or any attempt to influence the congregation to follow him.[120] He was not, it was clear, setting himself up as an English Chalmers. He reiterated that a thorough account of his position would soon be published, and that he would say nothing more on the point at this time.[121] In seceding, he was following what he believed to be God's call, acting only out of duty, with reluctance, and after considerable delay.[122]

A number of complications accompanied Noel's secession. The unanticipated speed of his departure made the task of locating a suitable successor more difficult. The Chapel's lease, still held by Daniel Wilson, now Bishop of Calcutta, required renegotiation. Pressure for a public statement mounted; even his own family questioned the soundness of his decision.[123] The congregation at St. John's was split in its response to the situation. Several incensed individuals drew up and circulated a petition to be sent to the Queen, calling for a thorough reform of the canonical defects of the Church, its discipline, its formularies, and its services.[124] Perhaps most threatening of all was the possibility that Noel--like James Shore--might be prosecuted in the ecclesiastical courts if he attempted to

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[120] B.W. Noel, The Substance of Two Sermons (London, 1848).
[121] Pulpit, 54:436.
[122] Ibid., 54:483.
[123] See Leicester County Record Office, MSS DE 1797/1/102/6.
[124] Record, 5 February 1849.

preach or officiate outside the confines of the Established Church.[125]

Thomas Dealtry, the Archdeacon of Calcutta, was in England on furlough and consented to officiate temporarily at St. John's. In order to stabilize the situation, he quickly stepped in and admonished the congregation to hold fast to the Church[126]--a plea which unquestionably helped persuade many not to join Noel in seceding.[127] Shortly thereafter, Noel formally inquired of Blomfield about the likelihood of his being prosecuted for officiating outside the Church, informing him that he now regarded himself to be a Dissenter, that he had so registered before a magistrate, that he had preached for Thomas Binney--and had received communion--at the Weigh House Chapel.[128] He remained ready to do "any other proper and lawful act" which Blomfield might suggest by which he could publicly declare his dissent; however, his Lordship should understand that he had no intention of ceasing to be a minister nor to preach. If the Canon restricting such activity remained in force, he would rather suffer any length of imprisonment for preaching the gospel than

[125]A violation of the 76th Canon--the same grounds then being employed by Phillpotts to prosecute James Shore in the ecclesiastical courts.

[126]*Pulpit*, 54:486. Dealtry (1796-1861) returned to India in the following year and subsequently became Bishop of Madras.

[127]One account suggest that only around 20 members of St. John's seceded with Noel. See Bateman, 2:184; however, John Dix (*Pen Portraits*, p. 82) argued that it was "a considerable number." In either case, it appears that a wholesale secession of the large congregation did not occur.

[128]B.W. Noel, *A Letter to the Bishop of London on the Clergy Relief Bill* (London, 1849). See also *E.R.*, 1849, p. 782.

purchase an exemption, either by declaring that he was no minister, or by ceasing to preach.[129]

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During the final days of 1848, Noel published a major defence of his secession, his *Essay on the Union of Church and State*. Well over six-hundred pages long, it was one of the most detailed and impassioned attacks ever made upon the Church of England and its civil connection.[130] In spite of its wordiness and numerous repetitions, its timing and sensational publicity--aided by Noel's popularity--all insured a complete sell-out of the first edition on the day of publication.[131]

Noel clearly intended his *Essay* to be an Evangelical manifesto on the Church and its established position. It was divided into three parts dealing with the principles of the union of the Church with the State, the effects of that union, and the most advantageous means of promoting a national religious revival. Its arguments focused on two primary questions: does Scripture sanction the Church's connection with a secular State, and does it allow ministers to be supported and supervised by the civil powers?[132]

Noel condemned the Church's civil connection as opposed by Scripture, by the constitution, and by util-

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[129] B.W. Noel, A Letter to the Bishop of London.

[130] It appeared during the same month as Macaulay's History of England, the Glasgow Post claiming that "their respective works have been more extensively read, and...more rapidly sold, than those perhaps of any living author." See Baptist Reporter, 1849, p. 340; Church and State Gazette, 3 January 1849, p. 3.

[131] Presbyter, An Examination of the Record's Twelve Articles on Mr. Noel's Work (London, 1849) p. 10.

[132] B.W. Noel, Essay on the Union of Church and State (London, 1848), p. 10.

ity.[133] An ethically mixed Parliament, composed of men of "high principle or of no principle," was unfit to rule upon the spiritual affairs of the nation;[134] to entrust such responsibility to this unchristian body was a ridiculous bonding of the Church with the world.[135] Noel regarded the civil maintenance of clergy as a violation of Scripture;[136] he dismissed Royal Supremacy as treasonable, unprincipled, absurd, and mischievous;[137] and he rounded on the patronage system which trampled down the rights of the Churches in the choice of pastors, permitting the ungodly to nominate the ungodly.[138]

Noel blamed the legally constituted formulae of the Church for the continuation of various 'unsound' doctrines. Among these was the practice of infant baptism, which he now saw as opposed by Scripture,[139] the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which he now believed was endorsed by the *Prayer Book* and required of the clergy,[140] and the confirmation service, which vitiated Anglican claims to purity because it allowed reprobates to receive communion.[141] Noel not only conceded that Bishop Phillpotts was correct in his interpretation of the sixteenth and twenty-seventh Articles on baptism, but--even more surprisingly--blamed the Angli-

[133] Ibid., p. 13.
[134] Ibid., p. 20.
[135] Ibid., p. 24.
[136] Ibid., p. 94f.
[137] Ibid., pp. 180, 250.
[138] Ibid., p. 239.
[139] Ibid., p. 207f.
[140] Ibid., p. 439f.
[141] Ibid., p. 487.

can Reformers for misapprehending the true nature of baptism.[142]

The Church's civil connection, Noel concluded, was doomed, condemned by reason and religion, by Scripture and experience. Why should it be allowed to continue to injure the nation? Its main principles were unsound; worst of all, it grieved and quenched the Spirit.[143] Citing authorities on both side of the issue, Noel predicted that disestablishment would bring great improvement in the spiritual life of the nation, and make England the foremost in Godliness and virtue.[144]

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The appearance of Noel's *Essay* produced a predictable response from the various religious parties of the day. Tractarians and staunch Churchmen denounced its disloyalty and 'unsound' ecclesiology; Evangelicals, though often sympathetic to its author and to many of his arguments, objected to disestablishment and to the end of State maintenance of the clergy, while Dissenters and Liberationists rejoiced at the capture of such a celebrated and titled seceder.

The most frantic response came from the High Church organ, the *Church and State Gazette*, which regarded Noel's praise for Nonconformity as an acceptance of the principles of the regicide fanatics of the Commonwealth.[145] The *Christian Remembrancer* saw Noel's

[142] Ibid., p. 439.
[143] Ibid., p. 627f.
[144] Ibid., p. 628f. In support were Hooker, Warburton, Chalmers, McNeile, Gladstone and Birks; opposed were Dick, Graham, Ballantyne, Conder, Wardlaw, Vinet and Gasparin.
[145] Church and State Gazette, 2 March 1849, p. 125.

secession in more contemporary political terms as a great encouragement to Chartist democrats.[146] The *English Churchman* affected to welcome his departure: it would show the remainder of his Evangelical colleagues that their position in the Church was equally untenable and, with luck, encourage them to secede with him *en bloc,* leaving the Church of England to the real Anglicans.[147]

Evangelicals were understandably deeply perturbed by the defection of one of their best known and most talented leaders. Their reactions were ambivalent: though loyal to the Church they often conceded that it needed reform, and were as anxious as Noel about the threat from Tractarianism and the Church's consequent Rome-ward drift. Two obscure ultra-Protestants were able to fit the episode into the time-honoured mythology of the Jesuit conspiracy, claiming that Noel was in fact a Jesuit in disguise, bent on the internal subversion of the Church of England.[148] Others tried to rebut his criticisms of the Church, like Tilson Marsh (son of William 'Millennial' Marsh), who defended the principle of establishment by Old Testament precedent.[149] The *Record* put on a brave face, and declared magisterially that Noel's secession was "probably not a subject of regret":--but rather diminished the force of this assertion by publishing no less than twelve arti-

[146] Christian Remembrancer, 1849, p. 298.
[147] See Non., 20 December 1848, p. 966.
[148] John Teodor and Dobrogost DeChylinski, The Misfortunes of Baptist W. Noel (London, 1851), p. 3.
[149] W. Tilson Marsh, The Church and the State (London, 1849). William Marsh (p. ix) denounced Noel's secession and his rejection of establishment.

cles denouncing his unsoundness and defending the Church's civil connection.[150] The *Christian Observer* simply ignored the whole matter, neither mentioning his secession nor reviewing his *Essay*.

Noel received a number of personal appeals from Evangelicals urging him to reconsider his decision. One, from a friend of his brother Gerard, expressed deep grief over his secession and stressed the gap which it had left in the front ranks of the Evangelical party:

> I have always considered you as the most important member of the Evangelical...party, a party of uncalculated importance to stay the plague of ultra-high and Tractarian views and doctrines...Your popularity, your birth and high connections make the bishops afraid of you--they dare not silence you as they have done other men...God forbid that I should say anything against Dissenters--but what good can *you* do among them? And what can be your motives?...Is it because the Church is in bondage to the State? But what Church is not in bondage? On this very ground alone...I am and will be a Church...man...Be content...with that blessed liberty until He comes, and use the great talents and advantages He has given you in the position He has placed you...What you are going to do is just what the Tractarians wish. They always maintain...one extreme is sure to lead to Rome and the other to a wandering, unsettled path of Dissent.[151]

On hearing of Noel's secession, the prominent Evangelical Edward Bickersteth immediately wrote an impassioned appeal urging his old friend to change his mind:

> Oh my beloved Noel, how I have been destroyed by your letter to [Daniel] Wilson which he has shown me...I sympathize with your conflicts and...griefs ...[however] I firmly believe you are leaving the scriptural for the unscriptural...and will...lay up many sorrows for yourself and others...led by you. I have directed Seely to send you Birks'

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[150] Record, 13 August 1849; 28 December 1848-5 February 1849. For a review see Presbyter.

[151] Anon. Letter, 2 December 1848. Leicester County Record Office MSS No. DE 1797/1, 86.

> *Christian State*...which has entirely convinced me that opposition to the union of Church and State ...is anti-christian lawlessness and brings down God's wrath on a country. His answers to Vinet and Wardlaw are, in my views, conclusive.[152]

Bickersteth did not conceal his conviction that he saw Satan at work in Noel's secession. "Most humbly, most earnestly, most affectionately" he implored him to pause and take counsel with his respected elders. Bickersteth had returned late the previous night from York and had been unable to sleep, as thoughts of Noel's secession continually raced through his mind. Pondering on the blow this would inflict upon 'vital religion' and the Evangelical Alliance, he felt himself entirely "overwhelmed."[153]

Elsewhere many 'serious' evangelicals greeted the news with more equanimity.[154] Excited Liberationists described Noel in triumphant terms as the "great ecclesiastical reformer of the nineteenth century," the "modern Luther,"[155] the "solitary patriarch,"[156] and even as "a martyr,"[157] although the *Nonconformist*, while acknowledging his secession as a great aid to its campaign,[158] dismissed his *Essay* in rather grudging

[152]Edward Bickersteth, letter to Noel of 17 November 1848. Leicester County Record Office MSS DE 1797/1, No. 87. See A. Vinet, An Essay on the Profession of Personal Religious Conviction, and Upon the Separation of Church and State, Considered (London, 1843); Ralph Wardlaw, National Church Establishments Examined (London, 1839).

[153]Bickersteth, letter to B.W. Noel.

[154]Baptist Reporter, February 1849, p. 45.

[155]Non., 24 January 1849, p. 58.

[156]A Friend, Religious Life in the Established Church (London, 1849), p. xf.

[157]Brenton, p. 38. Cf. North British Review, X, November 1848-February 1849, p. 350. For the Dissenting response see E.M., 1849, p. 139; and B.M., 1849, p. 159.

[158]Non., 6 December 1848, p. 929. Cf. Baptist Reporter, February 1849, p. 46.

terms as unoriginal and too impersonal.[159] Less politically-minded Dissenters, on the other hand, expressed bewilderment as to why it had taken him so long to abandon the Church. Moreover, some disapproved of his anti-paedobaptist leanings: Independents judged them to be provocative and doctrinally objectionable, and considered his entry into the baptismal controversy reckless.[160]

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After taking leave of St. John's, Noel entered a period of self-imposed retirement. A few engagements were reluctantly agreed to, including a lecture before the YMCA,[161] an appearance on behalf of James Shore, and a sermon delivered before the Scottish Church in Regent Square.[162] He also preached at the Weigh House Chapel,[163] before the London Missionary Society,[164] and, according to one source, was scheduled to preach at the Episcopal Chapel in Grey's-Inn Lane;[165] however, when Blomfield got word of this, he issued a last-min-

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[159] Loc. cit. Cf. 28 February 1849, pp. 94, 157. Others complained that, although worthwhile, it was too expensive. Cf. 3 January 1849, p. 4; 10 January 1849, p. 10; 24 January 1849, p. 61; 31 January 1849, p. 81; and 7 February 1849, p. 100.

[160] Cf. B.M., 1849, p. 778. An anonymous Congregationalist characterized Noel's entry into the baptismal controversy as "reckless." Cf. A Dissenter, Cautions to Clergymen Seceding from the Episcopal Church, B.M., 1850, p. 109.

[161] B.W. Noel, 'The Church and the World,' in Lectures Delivered Before the Young Men's Christian Association, 1848-1849 (London, 1849).

[162] Clyde Binfield, George Williams and the YMCA (London, 1973), p. 53. See also Boase, p. 1159.

[163] Non., 9 May 1849, p. 358.

[164] Record, 17 May 1849.

[165] Non., 9 May 1849. The journal (23 May 1849, p. 398) attacked the Bishop over this, which caused Blomfield "some surprise," as he put it.

ute prohibition against Noel appearing in any Anglican pulpit in the Diocese, and the sermon was cancelled.

During this time, public speculation arose over the course of Noel's future ministry. Some suggested that he would lease the Episcopal Chapel in Grey's-Inn Lane, either as an independent chapel, or in connection with one of the existing denominations.[166] Others speculated that he would take St. John's out of the jurisdiction of the Church, even though such a move might be resisted by Daniel Wilson, who still held the Chapel's lease, and by Blomfield, who might initiate action against him in the ecclesiastical courts.

Perhaps as the result of the pending Gorham affair, Noel spent much of this time brooding over the doctrine of baptism. Concluding that his previous baptism had been invalid, he published a lengthy essay attacking paedobaptism,[167] and submitted himself for rebaptism by immersion--along with thirteen others (many of them fellow seceders from St. John's)--at the nearby John Street Baptist Chapel in August, 1849.[168] His accompanying sermon denounced infant baptism as an abuse

[166] Non., 15 August 1849, p. 639.

[167] B.W. Noel, Essay on Christian Baptism (London, 1849). For a review of this work from both sides of the paedobaptist controversy, see B.M., August 1849, p. 639; and E.M., November 1849, p. 580ff. Cf. B.W. Noel, The Effects of Infant Baptism, B.M., 1849, p. 677ff, which is a strong argument for insisting on believers' baptism. For a review see B.M., 1850, p. 293ff.

[168] Loc. cit. The report claimed that between 2,000 and 2,500 people were in attendance and that many others were turned away for lack of space.

having no sanction in Scripture.[169] This event heralded Noel's entrance into the Baptist ministry,[170] the most natural resting place for him and for many of the Anglican seceders, whose decision to abandon the Church was often based precisely upon those doctrines which Baptists cared most about.[171] Later that same year, Noel was named the new minister at John Street[172]--an establishment which had been opened in 1818 by another Anglican seceder, James Harington Evans of Western Schism fame--and was inducted in the following spring by James Sherman, Rowland Hill's successor at Surrey Chapel.[173]

Despite his rejection of the principle of establishment, Noel refused to become a partisan of political Nonconformity. In the 1850s and 60s, he declined either to join the Liberation Society or to appear on its platform.[174] He did, however, speak out on the side of the North in the American Civil War,[175] and was

[169] B.W. Noel, Address of the Hon. and Rev. B.W. Noel on the Occasion of His Baptism at John Street Chapel, August 9, 1849 (London, 1849), p. 5f. Cf. Pulpit, 56. For a response see Adelphos, A Letter to the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, E.M., 1849, p. 476ff; British Banner, 26 September 1849; Benjamin Hanbury, My Baptized One. Thoughts for Thinking Parents (London, 1850); Anon., The Views on Baptism of the Honorable and Rev. Baptist Noel, M. A. (Leeds, 1849).

[170] Arthur Mursell, Baptist W. Noel: A Tribute and a Memorial (London, 1873), p. 7.

[171] See Anon. [Thomas Binney], The Great Gorham Case (London, 1850), p. 108.

[172] John Dix, Pen Portraits, p. 81.

[173] B.M., 1850, p. 296.

[174] Skeats and Miall, p. 510f. They predictably referred to Noel's reluctance to join the Liberation Society, or become more involved in the disestablishment campaign, for reasons of piety, as "a very illogical and unsound conclusion."

[175] B.W. Noel's Obituary, Baptist Messenger, 1873, p. 56.

twice (1855 and 1867) elected Chairman of the Baptist Union.[176]

Noel retired from John Street Chapel in 1869. In retirement he resided at Stanmore, where he preached on Sunday mornings at the little independent chapel at Edgeware.[177] In the evenings, however, he expressed his pan-evangelical beliefs by attending service at the parish Church, and on Wednesdays assisted the Rector at lectures held at the Memorial Institute.[178] He remained healthy and active until shortly before his death in January 1873.[179] Though St. John's, Bedford Row, continued its Evangelical ministry after Noel's secession, it never regained its prominence in Evangelical circles: the glory was departed; the congregation soon began to disperse and its various charitable institutions were broken-up. In November 1856,[180] the roof collapsed and the building was pulled down.[181]

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Noel's secession into Protestant Dissent in 1848 aroused some of the same kind of shocked response among Evangelicals that Newman's secession to Rome had done among High Churchmen barely three years before. Here again was a prominent Churchman, the rising hope of his party, who found the *via media* of the Church of England profoundly unsatisfactory. His rejection of the secu-

[176] A.C. Underwood, A History of the English Baptists (London, 1961), p. 237f.
[177] Boase, p. 1159. See also William Brock, Memorial Sermon for Baptist W. Noel (London, 1873).
[178] Non., 29 January 1873, p. 112.
[179] He was buried in the parish cemetery at Stanmore.
[180] Bateman, 2:172.
[181] Baptist Messenger, 1873, p. 56.

larizing Erastianism of establishment, though based more on utilitarian than ecclesiological considerations, was in some ways parallel to that already voiced by Tractarians, which was to find classic expression in Manning's principled exit from Anglicanism three years later.

Noel's departure, however, for all the sensation it caused at the time, led to no group exodus. Apart from several members of his congregation, only one other Evangelical clergyman appears to have followed Noel's example, the comparatively obscure John Dodson, of Cockerham, Lancashire, though he was also impelled by alarm at the progress of the Gorham affair.[182] Why was this? Noel, for all his talents and connections, was seen as something of an outsider by the *Christian Observer* moderates, possibly because of his Whig political leanings. His own refusal to make political capital out of his secession, and his decision to exert a lower profile on the national religious scene, may also have been factors. Moreover, Noel's withdrawal from the Church was an act of personal choice, not the outcome of a tyrannical act by an authoritarian Church or State. He seceded in a year of extraordinary social unrest (1848 was the year of the great Chartist demonstrations in London and a chain of violent Continental revolutions), when the fear of insurrection was acute. This period, most Evangelicals would have concluded, was no time to weaken the established institutions of

[182] See Dodson, Brief Reasons for Leaving the English Establishment (London, 1849); Non., 4 April 1849, p. 260; 26 December 1849, p. 1018.

Church and State: now the prudential arguments for a national church as a guardian of social order seemed more convincing than ever.

At the same time, Noel's secession and the publicity given to it contributed to the sense of acute unease which characterized Church-State relations in the mid to late 1840s; no sooner had one issue arisen to perplex Evangelicals than it was followed by another. Soon after the crisis over Maynooth came that of the Gorham affair. While the impact of the Gorham affair on Evangelicalism in general was terrific, its influence upon Noel and his decision to secede remains an open question.[183] As early as 1844, an anonymous author, commenting on the growing polarization between Tractarians and Evangelicals, warned that Noel (a particularly embattled opponent of the Oxford Movement) would, with several other prominent Evangelicals, "openly repudiate all connexion with the Church of England if the High Church principles prevailed."[184] Surprisingly, during the slow progress of the Gorham case through the courts, Noel made no direct reference to it in any of his numerous publications. In 1848, while

[183] B.W. Noel's obituarist in the Times (21 January 1873, p. 8) suggested that his secession was produced by the Gorham affair. This point was later picked up by the D.N.B. and by a number of other accounts, including, Horne (p. 123f); Garratt (p. 220); Lady Norah Bentinck, My Wanderings and Memories, 2nd ed. (London, 1924), p. 94; and Lewis (p. 183). This, however, was rebutted by Elliott-Binns (p. 462). The Non. (22 November 1848, p. 895), happily attributed it to Church and State tensions, while the Oxford Chronicle claimed that it was a combination of complex forces, including Gorham, the Shore case, and Blomfield's opposition to the Evangelical clergy (see Non., 6 December 1848, p. 928).

[184] The Principal Clergy of London, MSS Add C. 290, B.L.O.

brooding over his future in the Church, Noel came to concur with Phillpotts that the *Prayer Book* did sanction baptismal regeneration--a conclusion that might have sealed his decision to secede.[185] On the other hand, at the time of his secession he would have been unaware of the final outcome of the case, since the judgment of the Privy Council was not delivered until some fifteen months after his departure.[186] The Gorham crisis was probably only one of a number of pressures which determined Noel's decision to abandon the ministry of the Church of England.

The case of James Shore (discussed below) was perhaps equally influential. Shore, a seceding clergyman, had been prosecuted by Bishop Phillpotts for officiating in a Dissenting chapel, and had been imprisoned. So enthusiastic were Noel's denunciations of Phillpotts' behaviour over the case that, in April 1848, Blomfield wrote to Noel prohibiting him from attending further meetings or from continuing publicly to speak on Shore's behalf. Noel responded to this by writing to the chairman of Shore's London Committee, explaining what had happened and offering his support to their motion condemning Phillpotts' prosecution of Shore. He objected to all laws exposing clergymen to imprisonment for seceding, for these were contrary to the Toleration Act, unchristian, and unconstitutional, and ought im-

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[185] B.W. Noel, Essay on the Union of Church and State, p. 439f.

[186] Judgment of the Court of Arches, in favour of Phillpotts, was rendered on 2 August 1849. This was appealed by Gorham to the Judiciary Committee of the Privy Council and its judgment, made in favour of Gorham, was rendered on 8 March 1850.

mediately to be repealed.[187] This curb of Noel's free speech by his Diocesan, and the claim that clergymen cannot renounce their clerical orders, undoubtedly strengthened his resolve to secede from the Church. Although Shore's imprisonment did not occur until some months after Noel's secession,[188] the sensational publicity which surrounded his case--like that of Gorham--insured that its influence upon Noel's decision to seek out 'greener' ecclesiastical pastures was substantial.

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While Noel's personal crisis was reaching a climax, a far graver issue was emerging which would severely test Evangelical loyalty to the Establishment before a more or less satisfactory resolution could be worked out: the Gorham case. While Noel's was a lonely secession, the Gorham affair seemed to some anxious Churchmen, at least for a time, to threaten a mass exodus of Evangelical clergymen from the Church of England in a kind of English version of the Scottish Disruption. The crisis was exacerbated by its coincidence with another Evangelical *cause celebre*, the secession of James Shore, as discussed in the next chapter.

The stages of the Gorham affair are well known, and can be briefly summarized. The controversy arose over the refusal of Bishop Phillpotts to institute G.C. Gorham to the living of Bramford Speke. Gorham was an Evangelical of considerable intellectual ability and a former Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge. Prior to

[187] *Non.*, 19 April 1848, p. 269. Blomfield had also banned George Mortimer, Headmaster of the City of London School, from attending the same meeting.

[188] Shore was imprisoned on 9 March 1849.

his ordination in 1811, Thomas Draper, the Bishop of Ely, had threatened to disqualify him on the grounds of his 'unsound' views on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, but when Gorham challenged the Bishop, nothing came of it. In 1846, Lord Lyndhurst presented him to the wealthy benefice of St. Just, Penwith, Cornwall, where he was subsequently instituted, without incident, by Bishop Phillpotts.[189]

The relationship between the two men was quickly soured over Gorham's advertisement in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* for a curate who was "free from all tendency to what is well understood by the term Tractarian error."[190] The wording of this advertisement was regarded by Phillpotts as not only provocative, but as a sign of possible doctrinal 'unsoundness,' and he summoned the prospective curate for an examination in order to determine his orthodoxy. When Gorham was presented by the Lord Chancellor Cottenham to the Crown living of Bramford Speke in the following year, Phillpotts hesitated, eventually subjecting Gorham to a grueling written and oral examination on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[191] As a result, Gorham was judged by Phillpotts as unfit to be instituted, by reason of his holding doctrines "contrary to the true Christian faith" and opposed to those contained in the Church's Articles and formularies.[192]

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[189] D.N.B.

[190] G.C.B. Davies, Henry Phillpotts Bishop of Exeter, 1778-1869 (London, 1954), p. 231; Nias, p. 7.

[191] They were held, on and off, from 17 December 1847 until 10 March 1848, and comprised some fifty-two hours of actual examination. See Nias, p. 11; D.N.B.

[192] Nias, p. 44.

A lengthy and acrimonious legal challenge to this ruling then ensued in the ecclesiastical courts. The likelihood of an episcopal victory appeared not only to threaten the imposition of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration upon all 'gospel clergymen', but to split the Church along Protestant-Catholic lines.[193] If Phillpotts were upheld, it seemed this would end the tradition of doctrinal inclusiveness which had allowed different groupings to coexist in the same Church. To Evangelicals it would appear to announce an official disavowal of the doctrine of the Reformers and the plain, literal construction of the Thirty-Nine Articles which was the basis of their teaching. It would amount to a decisive victory for High Churchmen and Tractarians.

The effects of such changes in the nature of the Church would (it was feared) have enormous repercussions, including the likelihood of Evangelicals being refused ordination in a number of dioceses, such as Peterborough, where Bishop Marsh had once terrorized Evangelicals with his notorious 'eighty-seven questions,' or Bath and Wells where the Bishop's examining chaplain had rejected at least one Evangelical because of his 'unsound' views on baptism.[194] Equally, it might result in Evangelical clergymen being refused installation by High Church bishops, giving *carte blanche* to men like Phillpotts who already boasted of his success

[193]The case was filed by Gorham in June 1848, with the final appeal of Phillpotts not being settled until around August 1850.

[194]See Record, 14 June 1849.

in weeding Evangelicals out of his Diocese.[195] These fears were heightened at a critical moment[196] by the appearance of a well-publicized sermon delivered at St Mary Church, Totnes, by William Maskell, Phillpotts' domestic chaplain, who condemned the Evangelical party for its "guilty inconsistency," and admonished its members in the strongest language to follow the example of the two-thousand Nonconformists who, under similar circumstances during the reign of Charles II, had been compelled to abandon their positions in the Church.[197] The comments accompanying the account of the sermon in the *Record* indicate that many Evangelicals took it for granted that Maskell was simply parroting Phillpotts' own views on the subject. Consequently, the polarization of Church parties rapidly increased. Evangelicals began to fear that they would be pushed out of the Diocese of Exeter and the Church itself by a new, aggressive and Tractarian-inspired High Churchmanship.[198] It was Phillpotts--and not Noel and the other seceders--whom the Evangelicals charged with being guilty of promoting the deadly sin of schism and of undermining the foundations of Anglicanism.[199]

[195] See Ibid., 4 May 1848; 8 January 1849. On 28 December 1848, the Record claimed that while Phillpotts had appointed many Tractarians in his Diocese, "a considerable number" of Evangelicals, already serving in Devon and Cornwall, have been rejected by the Bishop "as unfit to receive institution or license, 'by reason,' as his Lordship has alleged, 'of their holding doctrines contrary to the true Christian faith.'"

[196] On August 11th, 1848, just nine days after issuance of the judgment of the Court of Arches against Gorham.

[197] Record, 28 August 1848.

[198] Evelyn R. Garratt, ed. Life and Personal Recollections of Samuel Garratt, (London, 1908), p. 219f.

[199] R.W. Needham, The Church and the Synod (London, 1851), p. 6.

To many Evangelicals, therefore, the Gorham affair was in part a debate over the imposition of an unacceptable, Popish doctrine: as Gorham wrote to a friend, my "simple object in this contest has been, to resist the attempt to fix a Popish sense on our Articles and Liturgy,--to make a Christian ordinance, (of beautiful simplicity), a superstitious charm."[200] At its heart lay the issue of a bishop's right--legal or moral--to demand from ordinands or priests a double subscription relative to the two offices of baptism (or any other point of knotty doctrine): a simple subscription to the offices contained within the formularies, and a subscription to a private, episcopal, construction of that particular doctrine.[201] Did Phillpotts have the right, upon the strength of the Thirty-Ninth Canon, to require not only an honest assent from Gorham to the Articles and *Prayer Book*, but to demand a further assent to the construction of certain portions of them based on his own private interpretation? If the ecclesiastical courts ruled that he indeed held such a right, it would not be a victory for the simple exposition of a particular doctrine but a virtual end to the Church's comprehensiveness.

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The effects of the Gorham case on the Evangelical party and its relationship with the Church are difficult to measure. Though several studies have addressed

[200] Letter of 15 January 1851, MSS Phillips-Robinson, c.515, 60-62, B.L.O.

[201] See G.S. Faber, Notes on the Gorham Case, c. 1850, MSS Eng. Litt d. 142. 157-158, B.L.O. Cf. C.O., 1849, pp. 648, 822.

this issue,[202] important questions remain. Were Gorham's views on baptism held by most Evangelicals? What were his own views on the case as it progressed through the courts? What level of support did he received from his own party? Most importantly, had Gorham's appeal to the Privy Council been denied, would the Evangelicals have seceded *en masse* as their contemporaries had done in the Scottish Disruption?

During his examination by Phillpotts, Gorham consistently defined baptism in terms of the central importance of the doctrine of justification by faith. While assenting to the "just and favourable" construction of the Articles, he insisted that they must be defined by means of their consistency with Scripture, by their comparison with other passages from the Church's formularies, and by the general view of those by whom the Liturgy was reformed and the Articles written.[203] In support of this, he quoted passages from the Articles, concluding: "Such is the doctrine of the Church on the efficacy of both Sacraments, and therefore of baptism--Where there is no worthy reception, there is no bestowment of grace."[204] Thus, the Church's declaration on the regeneration of each infant was hypothetical since no other construction would reconcile the Liturgy and the Articles.[205]

[202]Most notably Nias, pp. 134-141; Davies, pp. 230-263, 370, 390; Peter Toon, Evangelical Theology, 1833-1856 (London, 1979), pp. 86-94; Lewis, pp. 183-187.

[203]Nias, p. 12ff.

[204]Quoted in Davies, p. 233.

[205]Ibid., p. 234.

As Clyde Ervine has shown, though Evangelicals were united in rejecting a mechanical *ex opere operato* theory of regeneration in baptism, they differed among themselves on the nature of the sacrament and its efficacy.[206] J.B. Sumner, who, as Archbishop of Canterbury, played a vital role in Gorham's ultimate institution, acknowledged that *some* regeneration did indeed occur in baptism, but he was not certain exactly how much.[207] Daniel Wilson agreed that regeneration may occur in baptism, but pleaded for the spiritual transformation of the soul which is "so much the more important part of the entire work."[208] William Goode, the editor of the *Christian Observer*, issued a series of pamphlets during the Gorham crisis which supported the view that regeneration could occur in baptism, but insisted upon the conditions of faith and repentance for the efficacy of the sacrament, albeit not denying that infants might receive grace through it.[209] He allowed that in some cases, regeneration and adoption are "formally made over, and in that sense given, in and by

[206] 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. 72.

[207] John Bird Sumner, Apostolic Preaching Considered (London, 1815), p. 145ff. A new edition, with an amended preface, was published by Sumner during the height of the Gorham crisis in order to 'clarify' his views, which Tractarians were quoting to support their own cause.

[208] Daniel Wilson, The Doctrine of Regeneration Practically Considered (London, 1817), p. 39ff.

[209] Nias, p. 152.

baptism."[210] Henry Ryder regarded the doctrine of regeneration as perfectly consonant with membership of a national church like the Church of England:

> I would...wish generally to restrict that term to the baptismal privileges; and considering them as comprehending, not only an external admission into the visible Church,...not only a covenanted title to the pardon and grace of the gospel...but even a degree of spiritual aid vouchsafed and ready to offer itself to our acceptance, or rejection, at the dawn of reason.[211]

Ryder here took a position beyond that held by Evangelicals like Simeon that the *seeds* of regenerating grace were given to an infant at baptism[212] and the Church should, therefore, cultivate these seeds, which had been planted in good works and spiritual graces, until they blossomed into conversion. At the same time, he warned that all baptized individuals should not be regarded as if they had undergone a true spiritual conversion, for baptism was not meant to "sooth and delude the people into a false peace."[213] On the other hand, there were some Evangelicals who appeared to deny any real efficacy to baptism. The *Record* defined it as an ordinance which is not "for the first importation of grace, but for its increase and confirmation."[214] While not overtly inconsistent, these differing expres-

[210] See William Goode, A Letter to the Bishop of Exeter (London, 1850). Cf. The Doctrine of the Church of England as to the Effects of Baptism in the Case of Infants (London, 1849); The Case of Archdeacon Wilberforce Compared With that of Mr. Gorham (London, 1854); C.O., 1849, p. 831.

[211] Henry Ryder, Charge to the Clergy of Gloucester (Gloucester, 1816), p. 20.

[212] See Ervine, p. 72.

[213] Ryder, p. 21.

[214] Record, 10 September 1849.

sions led to some criticism of Evangelicals by Nonconformists as holding indefinite views of baptism.[215]

During the course of Gorham's ordeal he was under no illusions as to the difficulty of the task which confronted him. A month before the commencement of his examination, for example, Gorham wrote to his daughter:

> A great trial...is at hand for me, and for you all. It is inevitable, I think, that the Bishop and I shall disagree on doctrine, and I think he will refuse to institute. My mind is *fully* made up for the crisis. And if he refuses, extensive law processes must follow--ruinous to me--and possibly he will try to eject me from St. Just. Be it so, if it be the will of God."[216]

In spite of these difficulties, for a time, he became convinced that he would be ultimately vindicated, and instituted at Bramford Speke.[217] Only, ironically, after the decision of the Privy Council, which *upheld* his right to be instituted, did such assurance began to dissipate, for Gorham was aware of Phillpotts' reputation for finding obscure legal loopholes which thwarted the plans--and often the legal rights--of his adversaries. "My institution is very uncertain," he wrote to his daughter on May 4th, 1850. "I *expected* it to be this, or next week. But all depends on the success of the Bishop's quirk about the *non*-jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee of the Privy Council--*if* he succeeds--then I stand condemned by the Articles; and my final *expulsion* from the Church is certain--for alteration is impossible--I will," he added, "under no circumstances avow my belief in the abominable doctrines

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[215] See Binney, p. vii.

[216] Letter of 17 November 1847, in Gorham Letters, MSS Eng. Litt. d.142.48, B.L.O.

[217] Letter of 15 February 1848, in Gorham Letters, MSS Eng. Litt. d.142.55, B.L.O.

which it is attempted to enforce."[218] Gorham's friends and supporters shared this fear, as the London Evangelical John Rashdall confided to his diary.[219]

Some remarks made by Gorham about the reluctance of Evangelicals to support his cause or to come to his aid are surprising. "How sad it is," he wrote to Sir Thomas Phillips on January 15th, 1851, "that among the clergy we have so few men of *nerve*, resolution, and wisdom, on the right side of the [baptism] question. I felt myself left all but alone in the great struggle, *until* there seemed to be a first-feel of success."[220] This was overstating the case, for he had been the recipient of the benefits--financial and otherwise--from an influential London Committee formed on his behalf,[221] which not only underwrote his substantial legal expenses, but presented him with a silver tea service with the balance.[222] Nevertheless, the support of Evangelicals for Gorham was not what it could have been. This hesitancy in opposing the decision of the spiritual courts may have reflected the Evangelicals' natural disinclination to 'appeal unto Caesar.'[223] It may also have reflected the party's assurance of the rightness of their cause, and their confidence that Providence would look after the outcome. More likely it reflected the complex ecclesiological position in

[218] Gorham Letters, MSS Eng. Litt. d.142.70, B.L.O.
[219] Diary of John Rashdall, April 10th, 1850, MSS Eng. Misc. e. 351-60, B.L.O.
[220] MSS Phillips-Robinson, c.514, 60-62, B.L.O.
[221] See letter of 19 January 1848, describing the meeting of some 100 Evangelical clergy meeting at Daniel Wilson's in London, in support of his case. MSS Eng. Litt. d.142.51, B.L.O.
[222] D.N.B.
[223] See Garratt, p. 222.

which Church-State conflicts placed the Evangelicals, for their Erastianism naturally encouraged obedience to the Judiciary Committee of the Privy Council as the highest ecclesiastical authority in the land. When liberal and High Churchmen began to suggest that Convocation be revived (and thus permit ecclesiastical disputes to be settled by an ecclesiastical body), they received the support of some Evangelicals such as Noel. As Tractarianism became more threatening, however, most Evangelicals began openly to oppose the idea. John Sinclair, the moderate Archdeacon of Middlesex, protested that the Church's numerous blessings could well be lost if subjected to the caprice of a national clerical synod.[224] Likewise James Garbett, the Archdeacon of Chichester, urged that it was better to carry on with the present system, thus preserving the Church from internal strife and disruption. In any case, it was now impossible to ignore the laity and, as High Churchmen wished, to form an exclusively clerical synod.[225] Hugh McNeile also wished to keep spiritual judgments in the hands of the temporal powers, so as to avoid the possibility of judgments favourable to the Tractarians.[226] The *Record* encouraged Parliament to continue the plenary exercise of Royal Supremacy as the only means of preserving in the Church the doctrines of

[224]John Sinclair, Synodal Action in the Church Unreasonable and Perilous (London, 1852).

[225]James Garbett, Diocesan Synods and Convocation (London, 1852).

[226]See Hugh McNeile, The Royal Supremacy Discussed in a Correspondence Between Archdeacon [Robert] Wilberforce and the Rev. Hugh McNeile (London, 1850), pp. 6-44.

the Reformation against Tractarianism.[227] Thus, it firmly opposed the revival of Convocation for a variety of reasons.[228] The *Christian Observer* even expressed approval of Phillpotts' course, because it had brought the question of baptismal regeneration into the open, thus putting a stop to attempts by other bishops to enforce their own *private views* as to the standard of doctrine in the Church.[229] But some Evangelicals were perturbed by such talk.[230]

One of the most important questions remaining in the wake of the Gorham affair is whether a decision by the Privy Council upholding Phillpotts' position would have led to a major Evangelical disruption out of the Church. If the decision had gone against Gorham, Evangelicals would have been faced with several distinct options. An appeal to a higher court, especially the Lords, was one possibility,[231] although Lord John Russell had advised Gorham against taking such a step as early as January 1848.[232] Another option was to remain within the Church and to continue to labour for the extension of Reformation principles which formed the basis of the party.[233] Clearly, many Evangelicals who had determined to remain no matter what were busy framing excuses for themselves after the appearance of Jenner

[227]*Record*, 16 September, 14 October, 15 November, 1850.
[228]Ibid., 8 November 1852.
[229]C.O., 1848, p. 573f.
[230]Garratt, p. 221ff.
[231]See Garratt, p. 221.
[232]Letter from Lord John Russell to Gorham, 22 January 1848, MSS Eng. Litt. d.307.112, B.L.O.
[233]See Another Clergyman, Is a Decision of the Privy Council a Reason for Secession? A Letter to a Clergyman of the Evangelical School (London, 1850).

Fust's decision.[234] One such individual wrote to the *Record* claiming that, had the decision of the Court of Arches occurred forty to fifty years ago, it might have done "immense mischief" to the Church and the Evangelical party, but not today.[235] A third option was secession.[236] The *Record* itself was adamant in opposing any suggestion of an Evangelical disruption in the Church:[237] all the Tractarians could gain by a victory, it claimed, would be "the nominal establishment of an inoperative test," for, besides Phillpotts, few other bishops could be found to enforce such a policy.[238] Evangelicals were aware that if one or two eccentrics like Marsh and Phillpotts were produced by the episcopate, there were far more who showed no opposition to the ordination or institution of Evangelical clergy: things could not be entirely bad when a 'gospel clergyman' like J.B. Sumner was Archbishop of Canterbury.[239] With one exception, all the letters in the *Record* published on the issue were in favour of remaining in the Church.[240] To abandon the Church in her hour of need, therefore, would be the greatest injury which could be inflicted upon her,[241] wholly unnecessary and unjustified, and the fulfilment of the Tractarians' deepest ambitions.[242] Edward Bickersteth took up this theme, urging his fellow brethren to remain at their posts

[234] See Garratt, p. 221.
[235] *Record*, 13 August 1849.
[236] Toon (p. 90) suggests this as the likely outcome.
[237] *Record*, 8 October 1849.
[238] Ibid., 13 August 1849.
[239] See Lewis, p. 183f.
[240] Ibid., p. 184.
[241] *Record*, 17 September 1849.
[242] Ibid., 24 September 1849.

"and help faithful men in it, while there is any hope of remedying so great an evil, in their struggle to withstand error, and uphold the true faith of Christ in our Church."[243] Lord Shaftesbury, who would have been at the forefront had any such disruption taken place, was even more forthright: "whoever talks of secession," he wrote, "is a traitor."[244]

Not all members of the party shared such a view, at least in the early stages of the affair. The *Christian Observer* was so alarmed by Jenner Fust's decision that it declared: "we believe no such crisis has occurred in our Church for at least two centuries."[245] While confident that the Privy Council would eventually vindicate Gorham, it warned that a victory for Phillpotts would likely result in "as complete a disruption" as that of the Scots Kirk.[246] William Goode, who served for many years as its editor, warned Phillpotts that the Evangelicals would simply withdraw from the Church if his doctrine of baptism was made authoritative.[247] John Rashdall confirmed Goode's views, claiming that if the decision was not reversed, "it [might] lead to a great schism."[248] The Broad Churchman J.C. Hare, the Archdeacon of Lewis, writing shortly after the announcement of the Privy Council's decision favouring Gorham, claimed that it had prevented the secession of "a very large proportion" of the Evangelical

[243] Ibid., 10 December 1849.
[244] Quoted in Garratt, p. 221.
[245] See C.O., 1849, pp. 809-856.
[246] Ibid., 1850, p. 72. Cf. pp. 140, 289.
[247] Goode, A Letter to the Bishop of Exeter, p. 95f.
[248] Diary of John Rashdall, Entry for 2 August 1849, MSS Eng. Misc. e. 351-60, B.L.O.

clergy, which would have left the Church in the complete control of the Tractarians.[249] John Venn, of St. Peter's, Hereford, and son of the Rector of Clapham, was one of those who seriously considered seceding at the time, but was persuaded by his brother to reconsider.[250] Several Evangelicals, however, did secede after the decision of the Court of Arches, including Charles Chapman, who denounced baptismal regeneration as "a monstrous error" which was nonetheless "unequivocally" set forth as the doctrine of the Church,[251] and T.T. Cuffe, who expressed similar objections.[252] A letter published by the *Record* claimed that "many Evangelicals and sound Churchmen" had decided that they must secede were Jenner Fust upheld.[253]

Despite Gorham's ultimate vindication by the Privy Council, his case left its imprint upon Evangelicalism. It sharpened the party's awareness of its Reformation heritage and underscored its points of divergence with Tractarians.[254] It widened the divide between Churchmen and Dissenters, for in securing the Evangelicals for the Church, it robbed the Liberationist campaign of valuable potential allies in the cause of disestablishment. Most important of all, the decision of the Judicial Committee, by affirming the Church's comprehensive

[249] J.C. Hare, Archdeacon Hare's letter to the Hon. Richard Cavendish, 1850, in Miscellaneous Pamphlets (Cambridge, 1855), pp. 4, 95.
[250] John Venn, Annals of a Clerical Family (London, 1904), p. 201n.
[251] Charles Chapman, Address, B.M., 1850, p. 480.
[252] T.T. Cuffe, Reasons for Secession; or, Objections to Remaining in the Established Church (London, 1851).
[253] Record, 24 September 1849.
[254] Lewis, pp. 186, 231.

nature, averted the distinct possibility of a major Evangelical disruption from its ranks. Although a number of Tractarians did secede as the result of the Gorham affair, they were so few in number that they did not constitute a serious threat to the Church's continuation. If, however, the Church's long-standing tradition of accommodation had been eroded by the ecclesiastical courts, and if sufficient numbers of bishops had taken it upon themselves, like Phillpotts, to insist upon a private construction of the Articles and formularies, then the Church might not have survived in its historical form. This, it must be admitted, might not have happened, for despite their agitation over the apparent Erastianism of the final judgment, some old-style High Churchmen like Archdeacon Churton were "quite content" with the judgment, as was Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, fearing that if Gorham had lost there would have been a enormous popular clamour in his favour.[255] But far larger issues were at stake than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[256] The victory for Gorham sent a message to Phillpotts and the episcopate that future attempts to impose a partisan construction of the Anglican formularies were unlikely to be accepted by the courts: the comprehensiveness of the Church was to be maintained. If the case contributed to the exacerbation of party conflict in the Church of England it may be that its long term effect was, in a curious way

[255] G.I.T. Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868 (Oxford, 1977), p. 205.

[256] See Needham, p. 3; Rashdall, Journal Entry for 8 March 1850; and R.W. Sibthorp in J. Fowler, Richard Waldo Sibthorp: A Biography (London, 1880), p. 103f.

stabilizing, at least for Evangelicals. After 1850, remarkably few clergymen seceded into Protestant Nonconformity. Perhaps the crisis, by forcing Evangelicals to take stock of their relationship to the Established Church, had revealed to them the underlying strength of their commitment to it. Perhaps the revelation that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council--and the Royal Supremacy behind it--were an abiding bulwark against High Church tyranny pacified many troubled Evangelical consciences.

The Case of the Rev. James Shore and the Canonical Implications of Clerical Secession from the Church of England

The Evangelical clergymen who seceded into Nonconformity often paid a price for their action. By crossing the subtle social boundary between Anglican priesthood and Dissenting ministry they forfeited status and often, no doubt, some income. A number vanished into comparative obscurity as pastors of small chapels, whether as Strict or Particular Baptists, Christian Brethren, ministers of a major denomination, or preachers in some unlabelled gospel chapel. If not so severely penalized for their secession as many of their colleagues who went to Rome--particularly those with wives and children, for whom entry into the Roman priesthood was closed[1]--they usually came off the worse in temporal terms for following the dictates of conscience. This, no doubt, they fully anticipated.

What was not anticipated, however, was the imposition of a legal penalty for their act of secession. Though Anglican secessions to Rome or Dissent were not infrequent, their legality was apparently seldom--if ever--questioned. Liberal Churchmen, like Theophilus Lindsey, who had abandoned the Establishment for Unitarianism, had set up their chapels with impunity. William Tiptaft received a threat from his Diocesan upon seceding from Sutton Courtenay, but nothing came of it.[2] Those who left the *via media* for Rome were assumed to be acting within the framework of the law when

[1] See P.A. Adams, 'Converts to the Roman Catholic Church in England, Circa 1830-1870,' (B.Litt. thesis, Oxford University, 1977).

[2] See Chapter Seven.

they took up a new ministry as priests of another confession. Though Anglican bishops deplored such secessions in private or in public, they usually accepted them as *faits accomplis*. Those who departed from the Anglican communion were assumed to be misguided but not in breach of the law.

But this state of affairs was suddenly shattered in 1844 when an unknown Evangelical named James Shore was imprisoned for attempting to secede from the Church and to officiate as a Nonconformist minister.[3] This unprecedented prosecution at the hands of his Diocesan was based upon an obscure and long-forgotten Canon which appeared to block the path of any clergyman who seceded from the Church and went on to officiate within a body not in communion with it.[4]

What gave Shore's case an added dimension of sensationalism was its unfortunate timing. Not only did the affair burst into prominence contemporaneously with the Gorham case; it also involved the same leading prosecutor, the cantankerous and litigious Bishop of Exe-

[3]Little is known about Shore outside the events surrounding his case. He was born on 31 July 1805, at Haselbury Plucknett, Somerset, the third son of Thomas Shore, a merchant from Nottington, Dorset, and attended schools in Norton and Dorchester, Dorset. On 6 February 1824, he was admitted as a pensioner at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and was graduated B.A. in 1828 and M.A. in 1831. He was ordained as curate of Berry Pomeroy in 1828 by William Carey; two years later, he was transferred to the curacy of Bridgetown Chapel, where he remained until his death in 1874. See Al. Cant., 5:501; James Shore, A Statement of the Proceedings of the Bishop of Exeter in the Case of the Rev. James Shore, MA (London, 1848), p. 4.

[4]Sir John Dodson, Q.A., claimed in April 1845 that Shore's case was the first instance of a clergyman being prosecuted for seceding from the Church of England since the Reformation. See Notes of Cases in Ecclesiastical and Maritime Courts, ed. by Thomas Thornton, 7 vols., (London, 1843-50), 4:594.

ter, Henry Phillpotts.[5] In many Evangelical minds there were clear links between the two cases: both involved 'gospel ministers' as the victims of a High Church prelate whose determination to make life difficult for the Evangelical clergy in his diocese was well known.[6] Phillpotts' notoriety as an alleged episcopal tyrant also extended beyond the Evangelical camp. The Broad Churchman W.J. Conybeare held him up for ridicule as a ridiculous episcopal martinet in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*.[7] Sydney Smith, a lifelong opponent of 'persecuting bishops,' denounced Phillpotts as a prime example,[8] remarking humorously that he had single-handedly proved the existence of Apostolic Succession, "there being no other way of accounting for the descent of the Bishop of Exeter from Judas Iscariot."[9]

Although the Shore case has been relegated to an obscure footnote in the history of the Victorian Church, the story of his secession, subsequent prosecution, imprisonment, and final release was celebrated by contemporaries as a stage in the advancement of religious liberty. It had judicial importance in exposing loopholes in English Canon law. It aroused a sharp discussion on the nature of Anglican orders. It illustrated the extent to which the rules of ecclesiastical

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[5](1778-1869). Bishop of Exeter from 1831-1869, he was a Tory High-Churchman of the 'old school.'

[6]See R.W. Needham, The Church and the Synod (London, 1851), p. 4ff.

[7]W.J. Conybeare, 'Bishop Phillpotts,' Ed.R., 1852, p. 75. For a response see Henry Phillpotts, A Letter to Sir Robert Inglis, (London, 1852).

[8]Letter to Lady Holland, 25 November 1834, in Selected Letters of Sydney Smith, ed. by Nowell C. Smith (Oxford, 1981), p. 153.

[9]Quoted in Hesketh Pearson, The Smith of Smiths, 5th ed. (London, 1945), p. 236.

superintendence, discipline, and order were beginning to be enforced, in contrast to the laxity of earlier decades in which unorthodox theology and clerical 'irregularities' had been frequently ignored. If public interest in the case evaporated within a few years, it nevertheless did a good deal to exacerbate the growing conflict between Church parties in early Victorian England.

Given the contemporary significance of the Shore affair as a *cause celebre*, the absence of any retrospective historical treatment of it is most surprising. Though briefly alluded to in several nineteenth-century works on English Nonconformity,[10] touched on in one or two biographical accounts of the period,[11] and in a number of texts dealing with the obscure thickets of

[10] F.S. Merryweather, History of the Free Church of England (London, 1873), pp. 66-82; T.E. Thoresby, The Free Church of England (London, 1873), p. 57; Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, History of the Free Churches of England 1688-1891 (London, 1891), pp. 511-512; Frank Vaughan, A History of the Free Church of England (Bath, 1938), pp. 22-25; Allan Brockett, Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875 (Manchester, 1962), p. 211-212; A.E. Price, The Organization of the Free Church of England, 2nd. ed. (London, 1908), p. 11; A. Elliott Peaston, The Prayer Book Tradition in the Free Churches (London, 1964), pp. 70-751. A second edition of Vaughan was published in 1960, which includes a brief chapter on Shore (pp. 27-36), a drawing of Shore, and a photograph of Bridgetown Chapel.

[11] Thomas Archer, William Ewart Gladstone And His Contemporaries, 4 vols. (London, 1898), 2:170; Richard S. Lambert, The Cobbett of the West (London, 1939), p. 132ff; G.C.B. Davies, Henry Phillpotts Bishop of Exeter, 1778-1869 (London, 1954), p. 220ff.

English ecclesiastical law,[12] it has never been examined in depth.

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The overture to the Shore affair began during the summer of 1832. Edward Adolphus Seymour, the Eleventh Duke of Somerset,[13] erected a substantial structure in the growing hamlet of Bridgetown, Devon, adjacent to Totnes but within the parish of Berry Pomeroy.[14] He intended to use this building as an Anglican place of worship. In due course, he wrote to Bishop Phillpotts explaining his intentions, and in mid-August the two met to discuss the situation.

Knowing more about the intricate details of these matters than the Duke, Phillpotts proposed two options for the building: it could either become a chapel-of-ease within the parish of Berry Pomeroy, in which case the duty for providing its service and the consequent right of nominating its minister would belong to the vicar; or it could become a chapel of a district taken

[12] George C. Brodrick and William H. Fremantle, A Collection of the Judgments of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Ecclesiastical Cases Related to Doctrine and Discipline (London, 1865), pp. 44-49; Sir Robert Phillimore, The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England, 2 vols. (London, 1873), 2:1184; C.A. Cripps, A Practical Treatise on the Law Relating to Church and Clergy, 6th ed. (London, 1886), pp. 19, 20, 42, 580; J.T. Edgerley, ed. Ecclesiastical Law [Reprinted from Halsbury's Laws of England], (London, 1957), pp. 199n, 186n, 217n.

[13] (1775-1855). D.N.B. Little is known about the Duke's theological leanings. Presumably, in matters of religion, as in politics, he was a determined advocate of personal liberty and freedom.

[14] At the time, the parish of Berry Pomeroy contained around 200 families, almost all of which conformed to the Established Church. See Michael Cooke, ed., 'The Diocese of Exeter in 1821,' ed. by Michael Cooke, 2 vols., 1960, 2:19; in Report of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, vol. 4, 1960.

out of the existing parish, and the Duke could acquire the patronage upon provision of a suitable endowment.[15]

During the course of these negotiations, it became clear that the Duke was primarily concerned about obtaining the patronage of the Chapel and not about the legal status of the building. Phillpotts, on the other hand, was determined that the Chapel's financial stability be guaranteed, so as to prevent the impoverishment of its incumbent. Consequently, he refused to licence the building until the Duke agreed to establish an adequate endowment. This difference soon became a serious point of contention between the two, for the Duke, having already spent a considerable sum on construction, had not anticipated the need for an endowment, and had not realized that the building could not be used for Anglican worship without a licence from the Bishop.

These differences were only resolved through a series of complex, protracted, and sometimes acrimonious negotiations. Phillpotts eventually consented to license the building as a chapel-of-ease, providing the patronage was held by the vicar of Berry Pomeroy and the Duke would provide an adequate endowment as soon as possible. When this endowment was established, the right of appointment would be transferred to the Duke

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[15] Letter of Mr. Maberley to Mr. Barnes, 18 August 1832, in Henry Phillpotts, A Letter to Sir Robert Inglis, p. 56; Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, 4th ed. (London, 1849), p. 5.

and the Chapel would, presumably, be consecrated as a separate parish.[16]

The petition setting forth this agreement was prepared by Ralph Barnes, the Bishop's secretary, and signed by the Duke in October 1832. After inspection, Phillpotts agreed to license the building, and the documents were sent to the Duke a week later. With all obstacles now overcome, John Edwards, the vicar of Berry Pomeroy, appointed James Shore as curate of Bridgetown (at the Duke's request), and the Chapel was opened.

A workable compromise was now in place, albeit one fraught with potential hazards. Phillpotts believed that the stipulations contained within the petition and licence furnished adequate incentive for the Duke to endow the building as quickly as possible, and also to restrict its services to the rites of the Established Church.[17] The Duke saw matters differently. As patron of Berry Pomeroy, he believed that he could exert sufficient influence upon the vicar to nominate whomever he himself wished as curate, granting him the benefits of the patronage without requiring the payment of an endowment. Additionally, while the language of the licence insured that the building must always be used for 'religious worship,' the Duke apparently did not realize (because such a case had not yet arisen) that this would present an obstacle to its becoming a Nonconformist meeting-house at some future date. These misappre-

[16] Vaughan suggests that the Chapel was first licensed by Phillpotts for a two year period. See p. 30, 2nd ed.

[17] Davies, p. 222.

hensions soon embroiled the Duke, the members of his family, the Bishop, and, most significantly, James Shore, in an unpleasant and complicated legal entanglement.

John Edwards died in 1834.[18] The Duke then nominated the Rev. Edward Brown as his successor as vicar of Berry Pomeroy, with the understanding that Shore would continue as curate at Bridgetown. Brown's service in the parish continued until 1843, when he received the Duke's sanction to exchange the living for a Yorkshire parish held by the Tractarian William Burrough Cousens.[19]

After the Duke had agreed to this exchange, and after some consultation between Cousens and Phillpotts, it was "found" that, in 1834, through the "inadvertence of the Bishop's registrar," Shore had not received a formal nomination from Brown to serve as curate at Bridgetown. As the result of this omission, which Phillpotts characterized as a "very rare occurrence," it came to light that Shore had been serving at the Chapel for the past nine years without a valid licence.[20] When this development was brought to Brown's attention, he denied Phillpotts' allegation, and claimed that he had, in fact, completed the necessary

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[18]He served as Vicar of Berry Pomeroy from 1781 to 1834. During this time, he resided at Blagdon, some two miles from the Church, and performed no clerical duties, content to leave such matters to his curate. See Cooke, 2:19.

[19]Cousens was the son of William Cousens of Ipplepen, Devon. He matriculated at Magdelen Hall, Oxford, 10 March 1818, age 26, and was made a B.A. in 1824 and a M.A. in 1825. See Al. Ox., 1:300.

[20]Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 15.

paperwork at the time of his arrival in the parish. Under pressure, Phillpotts produced a nomination which had been signed by Brown in 1834; however, it did not pertain to Shore, but to a mysterious stranger named Dusautoy.[21] Shore was then informed by the Bishop that he could only continue at Bridgetown by acquiring a new nomination from Cousens.

This predicament, unanticipated by the Duke when the exchange was agreed to, placed Shore in a most precarious position, for no arrangement had been made with Cousens to continue his services, and since Cousens now held the cure of souls, he had complete power over all Anglican ministry within the parish. Ultimately, this legal entanglement--created by the Duke's approval of the exchange between Brown and Cousens--presented Phillpotts with the opportunity to institute a 'doctrinally suitable' clergyman, while simultaneously removing what he considered to be a troublesome and unsound curate, from Berry Pomeroy.

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Phillpotts' antipathy towards Shore had been developing ever since 1841. In that year, the patrons of the parish of Cudleigh had held an election in order to determine the parishioners' choice of a new incumbent, and Shore had put himself forward as one of the initial four candidates.[22] He withdrew prior to the election, but was, soon afterwards, publicly accused of publish-

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[21] See letter from Brown, dated 29 December 1848, E.R., 1849, p. 617f.

[22] Lambert, p. 132f. The terms of the trust required the trustees to hold an election in the parish and to nominate the successful candidate as incumbent.

ing a handbill supporting Wilmont Palk, the Evangelical candidate opposed by the Bishop. Phillpotts was outraged by Shore's alleged action, which he characterized as an "extremely indecent and improper thing,"[23] and summoned him to be admonished for his open disloyalty.

Palk was duly elected and nominated by the trustees to become the new incumbent. Phillpotts, yet to be defeated in the matter, refused to institute Palk, alleging that the deed of trusteeship was "faulty" and the election "irregular."[24] Hoping to delay matters until the right of presentation lapsed, he abandoned his scheme only when the trustees procured a court order requiring him to institute Palk and to pay costs. Phillpotts suffered a public humiliation of no small proportion from this affair, and was quick to place the blame for it on Shore's "disingenuousness"--a factor which, he later stated, almost induced him to withdraw his licence.[25]

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Cousens arrived at Berry Pomeroy on October 14th, 1843, and Shore called on him two days later. During this meeting, Cousens informed Shore that the matter of a new nomination had now been taken "out of his hands," since he had previously engaged with the Bishop to replace Shore as curate.[26] This came as a great surprise to Shore, for he had just received two separate appeals from Phillpotts urging him to secure the nomination

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[23] Ibid., p. 133.
[24] Loc. cit.
[25] Testimony by the Bishop in Phillpotts v. Latimer. See the E.R., 1849, p. 613.
[26] James Shore, A Statement of the Proceedings, p. 5.

from Cousens as soon as possible. As a result, Shore soon realized that he was being deceived by Cousens and Phillpotts who, it now appeared, had conspired to prevent him from obtaining the nomination.[27] Later that same day, Shore received a note from the Bishop prohibiting any further services at Bridgetown. He obeyed the order and closed the Chapel, and it remained shut for the next five months.[28]

Shore then consulted with the Duke of Somerset, who offered to remove the Chapel from the jurisdiction of the Establishment if doing so would make it possible for Shore to continue as minister.[29] Although "sincerely attached" to the Anglican Church, Shore admitted that with "pain and reluctance" he was willing to secede from it out of concern about the continued spiritual welfare of his congregation--especially under a Tractarian incumbent. In addition, he believed that Phillpotts would use his influence to prevent his securing a position in any other diocese, thus subjecting his family to the "destitute circumstances" of clerical unemployment and poverty.[30] Because of these factors, rather than for any serious objections to Church order or doctrine, Shore informed Phillpotts that he intended

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[27]Loc. cit. This was denied by Phillpotts, however, who claimed that he gave Cousens "no encouragement" on the question, and "made him understand that he must act altogether on his own judgment" in the matter of allowing Shore to continue as curate. See Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 17.

[28]Culling Eardley, An Appeal to the Country on Behalf of the Rev. James Shore, 2nd ed. (Torquay, 1849), p. 4.

[29]Letter from Shore to Phillpotts, 13 November 1843, in Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 21.

[30]Letter from Shore to Phillpotts, 11 November 1843. Quoted in Ibid., p. 20f.

to continue at Bridgetown with or without a new nomination, even if this required his reluctant secession from the Establishment.

Phillpotts responded that this implied threat made it impossible for the two to remain in communion. Moreover, he warned Shore that both Church Canon and civil law forbade the secession of any clergyman who had been episcopally ordained.[31] Perplexed by the Bishop's response, Shore disregarded this thinly veiled threat to prosecute him if he attempted to secede, and prepared to continue with his ministry at Bridgetown.

In February, 1844, a petition signed by eight hundred members of the Bridgetown congregation was presented to the Duke urging him to reopen the Chapel as soon as possible.[32] The Duke was only too happy to comply with the wishes of the signatories, and, on the twenty-sixth of that month, had the building registered under the provisions of the Toleration Act (52nd Geo. III. cap. 155) as a Dissenting meeting-house.[33] Shortly thereafter, Shore informed Phillpotts that he now considered himself outside the jurisdiction and author-

[31] Letter from Phillpotts to Shore, 13 November 1843. Ibid., p. 22.

[32] Eardley, p. 4; Merryweather, p. 67. Little is known about the identity or nature of these petitioners. Presumably, they were members of the congregation which Shore had developed since opening Bridgetown Chapel in 1832. It is also unclear whether prior to attending the Chapel, the petitioners worshiped at the parish Church at Berry Pomeroy (some two miles away), the parish Church at Totnes (across the river), or were members of various Dissenting bodies. In any case, the appearance of a petition of this strength would support the numerous testimonials which appeared during this time alluding to Shore's popularity.

[33] James Shore, A Statement of the Proceedings, p. 7. Davies (p. 224) incorrectly identifies the date as February 16th.

ity of the Church and no longer subject to his discipline.[34] Phillpotts responded by revoking Shore's clerical licence. In order to remove any possible doubts about his new status, Shore then recited the oaths and signed the required declarations under the Toleration Act of 1689.[35]

On March 22, 1844, Shore again notified Phillpotts that he no longer considered himself to be "a minister of the Establishment." He politely enquired of the Bishop whether additional procedures were necessary for a clergyman lawfully to secede from the Church,[36] but this question was ignored and he was simply informed by the Bishop's secretary that he could not "officiate as a clergyman *in any place* without the licence of the Bishop."[37]

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Phillpotts' provocative response to Shore's enquiry was prompted by his belief that the seventy-sixth Canon prevented any clergyman from voluntarily renouncing his orders in the Church. This read: "no man being admitted a Deacon or Minister shall from thenceforth voluntarily relinquish the same, nor afterwards use

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[34] Letter from Shore to Phillpotts, 28 February 1844. Quoted in Eardley, Appendix A.

[35] 1 William and Mary, cap. 18; later, 52 Geo. III. cap. 155, sections 4 and 5. See James Shore, A Statement of the Proceedings, p. 7.

[36] Letter from Shore to Barnes, 22 March 1844. Quoted in James Shore, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, M.A., by Himself (London, 1849), p. 65.

[37] Letter from Barnes to Shore, 6 April 1844 (emphasis added). Quoted in Ibid., p. 66.

himself in the course of his life as a layman, upon pain of excommunication."[38]

The legal implications of this Canon at the time of Shore's secession are difficult to determine. In its original, early seventeenth-century context, it was presumably intended to bind the clergy for life to the Church and to the jurisdiction of their Diocesan. Such a restriction would prevent indiscriminate secessions--undertaken in an attempt to escape episcopal discipline--and would help to avoid the creation of rival religious bodies within a parish. Perhaps because of the Anglican Bishops' reluctance strictly to interpret the Canons during the easy-going eighteenth century, no attempt to enforce the seventy-sixth Canon had ever been made. Although in some ways Phillpotts was an episcopal martinet, even his record on canonical enforcement was inconsistent, as W.J. Conybeare pointed out in the *Edinburgh Review*. The Bishop, Conybeare claimed, "violates the rubric every time he Confirms, and disobeys the Canons of the Universal Church, by deserting his episcopal residence in the cathedral city;"[39] he habitually alters the wording of services to suit his fancy, lavishly bestows patronage upon his relations and partisans, and repeatedly usurps patronage rites belonging to others.[40] Another example of such personal flexibility by Phillpotts was exposed in

[38]C.H. Davis, The English Church Canons of 1604 (London, 1869), p. 75. If violated, each of the Canons also carried civil penalties (fine or imprisonment), which could be inflicted by the ecclesiastical courts.

[39]Conybeare, p. 75.

[40]Ibid., pp. 75-79, 83f.

the case of *Escott v. Mastin* in 1842,[41] which involved the refusal of an Anglican clergyman to perform the burial service over a child who had been baptized by a Wesleyan minister--an action which the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council held to be in violation of Canon law, suspending the offending clergyman from his duties for three months.[42] In his *Charge* of 1842, Phillpotts expressed his fervent opposition to the ruling, characterizing it as "*ipso facto* void," for any Canon "purporting to extinguish a right created or recognized by the law of the land, is not worth the paper on which it is printed."[43] Accordingly, "heretics and schismatics"--as he characterized Nonconformists--should be regarded as *ipso facto* excommunicated and ineligible to receive the sacraments of the Church.[44]

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As the direct result of Shore's continued ministry at Bridgetown Chapel without licence and against the monition of his Diocesan, charges were instituted against him in the ecclesiastical courts at the instruction of Phillpotts.[45] On June 14th, 1844, he received a summons ordering him to appear before a Pre-

[41]Brodrick, pp. 4-29.
[42]Ibid., p. 4. See also the case of *Titchmarch v. Chapman*, 1844.
[43]Henry Lord Bishop of Exeter, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Exeter (London, 1842), p. 58f.
[44]Ibid., p. 68ff.
[45]The case was officially known as *Barnes v. Shore*.

liminary Commission of Inquiry.[46] Shore considered ignoring the summons, but naively concluded that if he did he might be committed for contempt, thus preventing his case from being tried on its merits.[47] He therefore appeared--under protest--before the Commission, which was held on August 6, 1844, at the Seven Stars, Totnes,[48] and argued that as the result of his secession and his declarations under the provisions of the Toleration Act, he was now a Dissenter and exempt from episcopal discipline. The Commission, however, denied this claim, countering that a clergyman could not "divest himself of the character which had been impressed upon him by his ordination," unless he was released under the same authority by which the obligation was imposed. In other words, a clergyman could be deposed from his orders, but he could not voluntarily relinquish them.[49]

Shore was convicted by the Commission of violating Canon law and of disobeying his ecclesiastical superiors. He appealed against its decision to the Court of Queen's Bench[50] and to the Court of Arches,[51] the lat-

[46]The Diocesan Court had been amended by the Church Discipline Act of 1840 (3-4 Vic. c. 86). After being charged, a clergyman was required to appear before a Preliminary Commission, where the bishop would either hear the case in person with three assessors (one of whom must be a lawyer), or send it by letter of request to a provincial court. See S.L. Ollard, ed. A Dictionary of English Church History 2nd ed. (London, 1919), p. 157.

[47]Eardley, p. 5.

[48]James Shore, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 31.

[49]C.O., 1846, p. 349f.

[50]Brodrick, p. 45.

ter issuing its initial judgment in August 1845. Sir Herbert Jenner Fust,[52] writing for the Court, dismissed Shore's conscientious grounds for seceding as "palpably absurd," and claimed that both "the spirit of the Canons" and "common sense" opposed the notion that a clergyman could voluntarily renounce his orders. "Is it meant," Fust asked, that "one being guilty of immorality, can exempt himself from the censures of the Church, by saying he had taken certain oaths [and] by qualifying...as a Dissenting teacher? Were that so, there would be an end to all Church discipline. The notion is too preposterous."[53]

On June 20th, 1846, Fust issued a subsequent ruling.[54] Although exempting Shore from answering for the offence of seceding from the Church, for which "there must be other proceedings, in order to procure additional punishment;" he charged him with "publicly reading prayers, according to the form prescribed by the *Book of Common Prayer*, and of preaching in an unconsecrated chapel without a licence."[55] Although his arguments are not entirely clear, it appears that Fust might have ruled differently if the services in question (led by Shore) had been performed in a private house or if he had not used the *Prayer Book*. Shore was

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[51] An ecclesiastical court with medieval origins operating in the province of Canterbury (it was known as the Chancery Court in the province of York). Its name was taken from the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow where its sessions were originally held. See Ollard, p. 154ff.

[52] 1778-1852. He was Dean of the Arches, a Privy Councillor, and Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

[53] *The English Reports*, vol. CLXIII, (Edinburgh, 1900), pp. 1074-1080.

[54] Brodrick, p. 46ff.

[55] Ibid., p. 48f.

then admonished to refrain in the future from such offences, which not only violated the dictates of his Diocesan, but would now also violate those of the Court; finally came the reminder that he was still a clergyman, "from which office he cannot of his own authority relieve himself."[56]

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Three days after Fust's subsequent ruling, Lord Brougham introduced a petition on Shore's behalf in the Lords. Phillpotts responded by denying any wrongdoing in the affair and by dismissing Shore as a disobedient malcontent of little significance. If blame must be accorded, he argued, it should fall upon the shoulders of the Duke of Somerset who had failed to keep his promise to endow Bridgetown Chapel. Such an attack upon the absent and ailing Duke did little to divert criticism from Phillpotts, or to diminish his growing reputation as a litigious brawler.[57]

The focus of the debate then shifted to the West Country, from which the issue had emanated. Lord Seymour, the Duke's son and Liberal MP for Totnes, leapt to the defence of his aged father at a local rally, claiming that Phillpotts' attack was "a deliberate falsehood" and that no such engagement to endow the

[56] Ibid., p. 47ff.
[57] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. LXXXVII, p. 869f.

Chapel had ever been made.[58] The Bishop's statement was "diametrically contrary to the truth" and "a malicious charge" which had left a "false imputation" upon the Duke.[59] The press was quick to take up Shore's case, particularly the *Western Times* whose Radical and fervently Protestant editor Thomas Latimer (an old and bitter opponent of clericalism, who pursued Phillpotts with determination) now seized a golden opportunity to ridicule Tory and High Church intolerance. Latimer characterized Phillpotts as "an adroit man, knowing rather than intelligent,...cunning rather than clever. Everlastingly in hot water, but never clean...he stands branded as a consecrated, careless perverter of facts, and one who does no credit to the mitre, which he is paid £200 a week...to wear." The Bishop, Latimer claimed, was "so notorious as a brawler, that any story respecting his rule and discipline, provided it do not contain the imputation of any of the milder virtues, is received without question, and circulated from mouth to mouth as gospel."[60]

[58]Edward Adolphus Seymour, the Twelfth Duke of Somerset (1804-1885) was Liberal MP for Totnes between 1834-1855, when, upon the death of his father, he ascended to the title. He served as First Lord of the Admiralty between 1859-1866. See Letters, Remains, and Memoirs of Edward Adolphus Seymour, Twelfth Duke of Somerset, K.G., ed. by W.D. Mallock and G. Ramsden (London, 1893); D.N.B. In religious matters--as in politics--he was a decided liberal. In 1872, he published an impassioned plea for rational Christianity. See Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism (London, 1872). This was attacked by, amongst others, Joseph M'Caul, in The Duke of Somerset's Recent Attack Upon the Bible Criticized (London, 1872).

[59]Lambert, p. 138.

[60]Western Times, 25 July 1846. Quoted in Ibid., p. 139.

The contest escalated as Phillpotts responded to this attack by filing a claim for libel and defamation against Latimer.[61] Although the securing of an impartial jury proved to be extremely difficult, the trial eventually opened in Exeter in March 1848. After hearing the testimony, Baron Platt, the trial judge, instructed the jury to find for Phillpotts; ignoring this, they instead found for Latimer, ruling that the Duke had not violated his engagement over the endowment and that Latimer was innocent of issuing libel or of making defamatory statements.[62] Phillpotts avoided paying costs only through a legal technicality, with the accompanying publicity helping further to damage his already dubious reputation.

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Although on the face of it the eighth section of the Toleration Act (19 Geo. III. cap. 44.) appeared to provide refuge for clergymen seceding into the Nonconformist ministry, a number of prior legal opinions had disputed this.[63] As early as 1742, Lord Hardwicke insisted that although the Toleration Act was made to "protect persons of tender consciences, and to exempt them from penalties," to extend it to clergymen who had acted contrary to the Church's rules and discipline would be to "introduce the utmost confusion."[64]

[61] Because of the seriousness of the case, Latimer would have been guilty of criminal charges if the jury had found for Phillpotts.

[62] Davies, p. 226ff.

[63] See E. Williams, The Eighteenth Century Constitution (Cambridge, 1960), p. 44.

[64] Quoted in the Quarterly Review, 1849, p. 43.

Likewise, the fourth section of the Toleration Act (1 William and Mary cap. 18) which, the Court of Queen's Bench decreed in the case of *Barnes v. Shore* on November 11th, 1845, exempted both laymen and clergy who took the oaths and subscribed to the relevant declarations from prosecution in the ecclesiastical court for not conforming to the Church of England. To claim this exemption, it was probably sufficient that the party simply declare himself publicly to be a Dissenter. An Anglican clergyman, however, could not in this manner, or otherwise at his own pleasure, divest himself of his orders so as to exempt himself from correction by his bishop for breach of Ecclesiastical discipline.[65] In order for Shore to gain the exemption provided by the Toleration Act, he must prove that he had been sued in the ecclesiastical court for Nonconformity. Even so, this would not absolve him, as an episcopally ordained clergyman, from canonical obedience in those things which accorded to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church.[66]

The wording of the Dissenters' Relief Act of 1779 also contributed to the obscurity of this point of law.[67] Because in describing those eligible for protection it employed similar language to that of the

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[65] Brodrick, p. 45.

[66] Ibid., p. 49n.

[67] It read: 'That every person dissenting from the Church...and in holy orders...being a preacher...of any congregation of dissenting Protestants, who, if he scruple to declare and subscribe a declaration...shall be...hereby declared to be, entitled to all exemptions, benefits, privileges, and advantages granted to Protestant Dissenting ministers...and shall also be exempted from any imprisonment...for preaching or officiating in any congregation of Protestant Dissenters.' Quoted in Williams, p. 345f.

eighth section of the Toleration Act, it appeared to exempt Anglicans who made the necessary declarations from penalty or imprisonment for officiating as Nonconformists. In Shore's case, however, this argument was also rejected by the courts.

In 1812, another statute (52 Geo. III c. 155, section 4) extended the relief of the Toleration Act to "every person who shall teach or preach at or officiate in or shall resort to any congregation of Protestants."[68] This ambiguous wording was modified two years later in the case of *Carr v. Marsh*, in which the court restricted the statute's application to laymen and denied the extension of its benefits to anyone who had been episcopally ordained.[69]

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Shore appealed against the decision of the Court of Arches to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which rendered its decision on August 24th, 1848. His appeal was denied on four distinct findings: that secession does not shield a clergyman from ecclesiastical censures for breach of discipline; that an unconsecrated proprietary chapel, to which strangers are admitted, is not a private house; that to find a sentence of guilty under ecclesiastical law, it is not necessary that all the charges be proved; and, that the Court in awarding a penalty is not bound by the request of the accusing party.[70]

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[68] Quarterly Review, 1849, p. 43.

[69] *Carr v. Marsh* involved a proceeding against a clergyman for preaching in a parish church without the incumbent's permission. See Ibid., p. 44.

[70] Brodrick, p. 44.

As the result of this decision, three documents were issued against Shore: a prohibition against officiating or preaching within the province of Canterbury, a writ to pay Phillpotts' costs in the Court of Arches, and another writ to pay the Bishop's costs in the Privy Council.[71] In his judgment Sir John Dodson declared that "a priest," although "a seceder," may be "*committed to prison* for contempt of court for preaching as a Dissenting minister." Furthermore, neither deposition, degradation, nor excommunication, "can confer on a clergyman a legal right to officiate or preach as a Dissenting minister."[72]

Dodson's insistence that clergymen could not voluntarily renounce their orders left Shore with few options. Reform of Canon law could only be undertaken by Convocation, but this had been in a state of suspension since 1717.[73] Therefore, it appeared, only Shore's willingness to abandon his ministry at Bridgetown, or, conversely, Phillpotts' willingness to set aside the judgments of the ecclesiastical courts, could now pre-

[71] Eardley, p. 6f.

[72] Ed.R., 1849, p. 148f; Non., 1848, p. 668. Sir John also referred to the case of Horne Tooke which involved the constitutionality of a clergyman sitting in the Commons. In 1801, Horne Tooke was elected MP for the rotten borough of Old Sarum. Shortly after taking his seat, a bill was rushed through both Houses prohibiting clergymen from the Commons. Uncharacteristically, Horne Tooke resigned his seat without protest at the end of the session. See Hansard, vol. XXXV, p. 1323ff.

[73] As the result of the Bangorian controversy. The English Canons continued in their unreformed state until 1865.

vent Shore from being arrested and imprisoned.

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During 1848, Churchmen and Dissenters alike mounted a public campaign to protest against Shore's prosecution and to encourage Parliament to enact relief for seceding clergymen. In April, five thousand of Shore's supporters attended the first of several Exeter Hall rallies,[74] and numerous other large gatherings were held in many of the great towns up and down England and Scotland.[75]

After the the Court of Arches issued its prohibition against his engaging in ministerial activity,[76] Shore expected Phillpotts to demand a warrant for his arrest at any moment over his refusal to abandon his Bridgetown ministry. Phillpotts, however, was awaiting the outcome of the Privy Council's decision before making any such moves, and Shore remained free to continue his ministry and to travel around the country speaking at public meetings on behalf of his case.

After the Privy Council decision was issued, however, Shore's precarious legal status began to deteriorate. He had hoped that extensive publicity might delay or even prevent his incarceration, but this was not to be. In early 1849, a warrant was finally issued for his arrest on the dubious grounds of his failure to pay £186. 14s. 2d. in costs to the Privy Council.

Issuing a warrant for Shore's arrest was one thing, apprehending him was quite another, for the ec-

[74] Non., 1848, p. 268.
[75] Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 30. Cf. Non., 1849, p. 59.
[76] Issued June 1846.

clesiastical authorities shrewdly concluded that any attempt to arrest him at Bridgetown was likely to result in a violent confrontation between the officers of the court and the members of his congregation. Some weeks passed in this unsettled state, and Shore continued defiantly to proclaim his right to preach wherever he was called by God. In early March, he tested this assertion by accepting an invitation to preach at Spa Fields Chapel, London.

The ecclesiastical authorities were quietly alerted that Shore was finally venturing outside the protection of Bridgetown, and a plan was devised to capture him in the very act of preaching. During the service at Spa Fields, therefore, two officers of the Court of Arches quietly slipped into the back of the Chapel, and, in one of the more dramatic religious confrontations of the period, waited until Shore had finished his sermon and had begun to descend from the pulpit. Then, in near riotous conditions, they pushed through the shocked and protesting onlookers to arrest and transport him to Exeter gaol.[77]

In a quickly written note, Shore informed the Rev. Thomas Elisha Thoresby, the minister of Spa Fields, that he had indeed been arrested, and declared that this intrusion on his person had nothing to do with his refusal to pay the Bishop's costs, as the warrant claimed, but was solely the result of his unwillingness to cease from preaching outside the Establishment. He did not have the means of paying these costs, and even

[77]Vaughan, p. 24; Price, p. 11.

if he had, he "should still be under contempt of court for preaching" and would again be committed to prison.[78]

Thoresby rushed off immediately to place an announcement of the arrest in next morning's *Times*, including a reiteration of Shore's claims. Phillpotts was greatly angered by this public rebuke and the subsequent sensation, and ordered Barnes to issue a statement denying Shore's allegations and assuring the public that the arrest involved nothing more than Shore's refusal to pay the outstanding court costs.[79] This claim however was publicly denied on a number of occasions.[80]

The details and complexity of the case had by now become lost on the public. What seemed certain, however, was that Shore had seceded over a matter of conscience, that the unscrupulous Phillpotts had concocted a series of legal obstacles in a 'Jesuitical' attempt to prevent this from occurring, and that officers of the court had invaded the sanctity of a Nonconformist chapel to arrest and imprison Shore for nothing more than preaching the gospel. Furthermore, in spite of the Bishop's assurances, the rulings of the various courts clearly indicated that if Shore were persuaded to pay the costs in question, he would again be impris-

[78]Letter from Shore to Thoresby, 9 March 1849. Quoted in Vaughan, p. 24; Thoresby, p. 57.

[79]Letter of Barnes to the Times, 12 March 1849, p. 8.

[80]Including E.P. Bouverie, who denounced it on the floor of the Commons on 21 March 1849 (Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. CIII, p. 1073); John Fitzgerald, An Appeal to Pious and Devoted Clergymen (London, 1851), p. 33f.

oned for continuing to preach without permission.

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The public outcry accompanying Shore's imprisonment forced Archbishop Sumner to press Phillpotts for an immediate explanation of his behaviour. The Bishop's response, however, which he quickly published,[81] led to even more public commotion and interest in the case and, as it turned out, to his own further public condemnation. In expressing his approval of the Clergy Relief Bill, which was designed to provide a legal mechanism by which Anglican clergymen could renounce their orders, Phillpotts denied wishing to chain any member of the clergy to the Church's communion if he conscientiously believed that it was his duty to withdraw from it. "The true Churchman," he wrote, would instead urge clergymen "quietly to withdraw," rather than "to persist in the performance of offices which they can no longer perform without peril to their own souls, and a serious offence to the souls of others." He went on to claim that on more than one occasion, he himself had acted on this principle, and had, in fact, offered Shore the same courtesy.[82]

Phillpotts then offered a most ingenuous suggestion. He denied that Shore had properly seceded from the Church and cited extracts from his correspondence to substantiate this allegation. If Shore had in fact seceded, as the Chancellor had strongly advised him to do, and proclaimed himself a Dissenter, he would have

[81] Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore

[82] Ibid., p. 3f.

been "speedily released" from his obligations with "little or no cost to anyone."[83]

From his cell in Exeter gaol, Shore defended himself against the Bishop's allegations by publishing a strong attack upon Phillpotts and upon the discrepancies contained within his explanation.[84] This account claimed that the Bishop had mutilated and suppressed many of Shore's most important letters, had made misleading statements,[85] had clandestinely attempted to undermine Shore's character and to drive him away from his congregation, and had carefully omitted a key sentence from a quoted letter without specifying that he had done so.[86]

These discrepancies were blatantly obvious to everyone who examined the two accounts, and their public disclosure did little to advance Phillpotts' already tarnished reputation. Shore, on the other hand, benefited from the publicity aroused by these revelations, and his reputation as a poor curate suffering at the hands of a powerful--and unscrupulous--bishop was substantially advanced by Phillpotts' apparent duplicity.

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As the weeks passed, Shore's health began to deteriorate, and pressure increased for his friends and supporters--banded together in a London committee--to pay his costs and to secure his release from gaol. The religious press urged payment by public subscription;[87]

[83] Ibid., p. 30.
[84] James Shore, The Case of the Rev. James Shore.
[85] Ibid., p. 6ff.
[86] Ibid., p. 9ff.
[87] Non., 1849, p. 198; Record, 15 March 1849.

Shore, however, refused to consider any such suggestion. Declaring himself a prisoner for the sake of conscience, he announced that "he would rather remain in prison for life, or until such measures of religious liberty were obtained as to leave all men free," than to come out because concessions had been made to his own case.[88]

By May 2nd, however Shore's health had worsened still further, and the committee concluded that securing his prompt release was now imperative.[89] The final sums were soon collected and, on the twenty-third, a cheque for £186 14s 2d. was drawn and presented to the Sheriff of Exeter. The courier was then informed, however, that Phillpotts had also demanded that Shore pay an additional attachment for costs in the Privy Council in the amount of £124 1s 10d.[90] Although furious at this uncharitable treatment, Shore's committee had no choice but to submit to the Bishop's demands, and, a week later, the additional amount was sent and Shore was released.

In spite of repeated warnings from the various courts, Shore was determined to continue as minister at Bridgetown. "I shall occupy the same ground and preach the gospel as I did before," he declared firmly upon his release, and "if the Bishop feels it to be his conscientious duty to carry out the laws of his Church, I

[88] Ibid., p. 299; E.R., 1849, p. 777. Phillpotts, however, stated that he gave "no direction" for enforcing the decrees of the courts; neither did he do anything to prevent their being enforced. Henry Phillpotts, The Case of the Rev. James Shore, p. 31.

[89] Times, 5 May 1849, p. 6.

[90] Non., 1849, p. 418.

shall, of course, be soon committed to prison again. I hope (D.V.) I shall be able to preach to my congregation...next Sunday."[91]

After his release from prison, traces of Shore all but vanish. For some time, he continued to appear at meetings, "bemoaning his ill-treatment," but he gradually faded from the public eye and at last passed into obscurity.[92] His ministry at Bridgetown continued for the remainder of his life. He died as the result of a riding accident in Buxton, Derbyshire, in 1874, in his seventieth year.[93] Bishop Phillpotts had died five years earlier. Ironically, Bridgetown Chapel, which continued to be owned by the Duke of Somerset, became an Anglican Church in 1888.[94]

In January 1850, the *Times* announced the disbanding of Shore's London committee. During its existence, it had raised £614. 2s. 7d. by public subscription, out of which the sum of £525. 15s. 10d. was spent on the case (including the £310. 16s. 4d. that had been paid to Phillpotts for his costs). The remaining £88. 6s. 9d. had been presented to Shore after his release from gaol.[95]

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The high drama which surrounded the Shore case also proved to be the catalyst in a number of important--and related--events: it assisted the formation and ear-

[91] Ibid., p. 438; Record, 14 June 1849.
[92] Lambert, p. 171.
[93] Vaughan, 2nd ed., p. 34.
[94] This occurred three years after the death of the Twelfth Duke, and was undertaken by his son, the Thirteenth Duke. The Church now lies within the parish of Totnes.
[95] Times, 10 January 1850, p. 8.

ly history of the Free Church of England; it excited an acrimonious debate over the question of the indelibility of Anglican Orders, and it prompted the introduction of the ill-fated Clergy Relief Bill in Parliament.

Upon seceding from the Church in 1844, Shore launched the Free Church of England, a Protestant body instituted to counteract the growth of ritualism in the Established Church.[96] Like other splinter bodies such as the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, it continued (reflecting the atavistic wishes of many Evangelicals) to use the Anglican *Prayer Book* and the Thirty-Nine Articles, although restricting the use of vestments, eliminating any reference to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and forbidding any practice restricting the freedom of conscience of the clergy.[97]

The Free Church experienced quiet growth throughout its early years and a number of new congregations were organized in the West Country, including Exeter (1844), Ilfracombe (1844), Southernhay (1845), Babbacombe (1852), and Bovey Tracey (1857).[98] Its members, both clerical and lay, were drawn largely from Anglican Evangelicalism: as, for example, in T.R. Matthews who appears to have become a bishop in the new body.[99] In the 1850s, the Free Church amalgamated with the Coun-

[96] Vaughan, p. 66.
[97] Peaston, p. 80ff.
[98] See Brockett, p. 212f. It remains unclear whether the foundation and extension of the Free Church was primarily motivated by anti-Phillpotts sentiment, or was more broadly based. It was, however, unquestionably aided by the tensions which developed between Phillpotts and the Evangelicals in the Diocese.
[99] See John Fitzgerald, The Apostolic Minister's Preparation for Departure (London, 1847); Cor. B/5/7/4/14, Bishop Kaye Correspondence, Lincoln County Record Office.

tess of Huntingdon's Connexion,[100] and between 1850 and 1863, the creation of a constitution for its legal organization was prepared.

This association between the Free Church and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion continued until the 1860s, when differences prompted both parties to conclude that its termination would be best for all concerned.[101] In 1873, the Free Church opened discussions with the newly-founded Reformed Episcopal Church in America, and a federal union between the two bodies was soon effected.[102] Three years later, Benjamin Price was consecrated by Edward Cridge, the former Dean of Victoria, British Columbia, who had earlier been consecrated by George David Cummins, the former Assistant Bishop of Kentucky in the Episcopal Church and Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church in America.[103] Five days later, Cridge and Price consecrated John Sugden as the second Bishop in the Free Church of England.[104] It was perhaps ironic that a Church whose origins can be traced back to a bitter struggle of an apostolically ordained priest to renounce his sacred orders should, in turn, be so concerned about gaining apostolicity.

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From the outset, questions about the doctrine of the indelibility of Holy Orders cast a shadow over Shore's case. The origins of this doctrine--which involved the essential nature of the Anglican priesthood,

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[100] Vaughan, p. 23.
[101] Ibid., p. 65.
[102] Ibid., p. 70f.
[103] Peaston, p. 72.
[104] Vaughan, p. 267.

as distinct from its role or function--lay within patristic teaching, and had been upheld by the Council of Trent.[105] In 1597, the doctrine of indelibility was brought into mainstream Anglican teaching through the publication of Book V of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. This argued that once ordination had occurred, a priest's clerical function might be suspended or degraded, but the ties binding him to its sacred and lasting character could not be severed by voluntary renunciation.[106] In 1604, the adoption of the seventy-sixth Canon appeared to incorporate the doctrine of indelibility into the body of Anglican law. In theory, this would have applied to all episcopally ordained clergymen who have abandoned the Church of England since 1604, which would include some of the nearly two-thousand Puritans who were ejected--or who withdrew -- from their livings at the Restoration, the Nonjurors, the eighteenth-century Anglican rationalists who moved into Unitarianism, some of the Evangelicals who became Methodists, and the Tractarians--like John Henry Newman --who seceded to Rome.

Why so many of Shore's seceding predecessors had been spared prosecution under the seventy-sixth Canon is not clear. The tolerance of eighteenth-century bishops offers a partial explanation. It is likely that the absence of any previous prosecution of this kind had diverted attention from the possibilities of the Canon in the minds of modern bishops less litigious

105 Ed.R., 1849, p. 151.
106 Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie (London, 1611), p. 411.

and crusty than the notorious Phillpotts. Secessions to the obscurer corners of Protestant Dissent may have seemed too trivial to warrant provocative legal action in an era of advancing political liberalism: such action might also be construed as persecution and play into the hands of the Liberation Society. It is possible that some High Churchmen would not have welcomed a suit which could conceivably have been applied to those who seceded Romewards--though in such instances of secession from one branch of the Catholic Church to another, the issue of indelibility would presumably not have applied.

Phillpotts himself was too astute to become embroiled in a debate over the indelibility of Anglican orders. He consistently evaded the not infrequent claims of his critics that he was advocating the doctrine of indelibility through judicial intimidation, by simply asserting that he was engaged in nothing more than the proper and necessary enforcement of church discipline and Canon law. However, his prosecution of Shore was unprecedented in the nearly two hundred and fifty years since the enactment of the Canons, and, at the very least, it suggested that Phillpotts' understanding of a clergyman's ability to set aside his priestly character differed widely from common Anglican practice.

Some of Shore's earlier colleagues in the Evangelical movement, like John Wesley, who ministered before the Oxford movement precipitated a reaction away from High Church principles, spoke in favour of indelibili-

ty.[107] Thomas Scott, a generation later, writing in response to the secession of the Irish Evangelical John Walker, claimed that the ancient church "considered the ministerial office and character as abiding...Even if," he added, a clergyman "should on any account be removed from his original charge; does not his office and character remain indelible; except taken away by him who delegated them?"[108] Many of Shore's Evangelical contemporaries, however, seem to have rejected such ideas. The *Christian Observer* argued that the propriety of a clergyman renouncing his orders depended upon whether he had initially been called by God into the Church's ministry. If so, then he could not renounce his status, for "the call given by the Holy Spirit may not be dispensed with at the individual's pleasure."[109] If, on the other hand, a clergyman came to believe that his initial call into the ministry had not been of God, and that he now believed he was being called to leave the Church or to minister in another pasture; or, conversely, that the Church had come to believe that its act of ordaining a person had been in error, both must remain free to act: the clergyman to renounce, and the Church to dispose.[110]

The principle of Apostolic secession was also endorsed by several Evangelical leaders of the post-Tractarian era who took pleasure in the Apostolic descent

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[107] See John Wesley, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, 4th ed. (Bristol, 1758), p. 88.

[108] Thomas Scott, A Letter (Kilkenny, 1816), p. 26f.

[109] C.O., 1846, p. 351.

[110] Loc. cit. Cf. C.O., 1849, pp. 216, 287, 288, 360.

of the Anglican priesthood.[111] The normative position of Evangelicals, however, accepted the ministry of other, non-episcopal Protestant churches as valid. Episcopacy was ancient and apostolical but not *jure divino*: it might pertain to the *bene esse* of the Church, but not to the *esse*.[112] Ultimately it was the Holy Spirit, not the terrestrial church, which called men to the ministry and the conversion of sinners which validated its authenticity.

Phillpotts prosecution of Shore was seen as much more than a high-handed disciplinary act by an authoritarian bishop. From the Evangelical point of view it possessed a theological dimension relating it to the Gorham issue as an act of aggression against Reformation principles instigated by a Tractarian sympathizer. It was noted that Phillpotts had failed to proceed against seceders to Rome in his own diocese--among them his own chaplain William Maskell, who seceded in 1850. This implied that the Bishop of Exeter placed Romeward secession in a different category from secession into Dissent, and saw it as a transition from one branch of the Catholic Church to another. Whether this is true or not is difficult to determine. When Edward Manning, who had been in close and constant consultation with Phillpotts during--and after--the Gorham affair, subsequently seceded to Rome, for instance, the Bishop was so shocked and angered that he denounced it as "a pub-

[111] See Ibid., 1804, p. 482f; 1836, p. 562; Thomas Gisborne, A Familiar Survey of the Christian Religion, and of History (London, 1799), p. 538ff.

[112] See Norman Sykes, Old Priest and New Presbyter (Cambridge, 1956).

lic disgrace." Phillpotts later apologized to Manning, however, saying that, distracted by the Shore case, he had "spoken in sorrow as much as in anger."[113] Nonetheless it might well have appeared to Evangelicals that indelibility was being smuggled into official Anglican teaching through the ecclesiastical courts in the Shore case, much as attempts were being made in the Gorham case to force baptismal regeneration as the only acceptable interpretation of the baptismal rubric. If High Church bishops continued in this campaign, the Church's tradition of internal accommodation--by which Broad, High, and Evangelical Churchmen co-existed in mutual tolerance--would be destroyed. The Shore case, however brief its duration, helped to sharpen up the internal party divisions of the Established Church and to intensify the alarm created by the secession of Newman and others in 1845. Fears of High Church intransigence were not confined to Evangelicals,[114] for Broad Churchmen also expressed alarm at the rigidity of Phillpotts' construction of Anglicanism, which was perceived as a possible threat to the comprehensiveness of the National Church.[115]

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It is not surprising that moves were made to resolve the ambiguities of the Canon by Act of Parlia-

[113] Edmund Sheridan Purcell, The Life of Cardinal Manning, 2 vols. (London, 1896), 1:629, 2:692n.

[114] See Julian Charles Hare, Letter to the Hon. Richard Cavendish (London, 1850).

[115] See Thomas Musgrave, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of York (London, 1849); John Kaye, A Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln (London, 1852); Edward Copplestone, A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Llandaff (London, 1848).

ment. In 1846, the Whigs, led by Lord John Russell, had taken office, and liberalism was increasingly in the ascendent.[116] In February 1849, E.P. Bouverie introduced the Clergy Relief Bill (as it was quickly labelled) in Parliament in direct response to Shore's impending imprisonment. This proposed that seceding clergymen, after subscribing to the normal oaths required under the Toleration Act, should declare their dissent from the Articles of the Anglican Church. A copy of each declaration would then be forwarded to the local bishop and registered. This action would have the full force and effect of deprivation, the declarers being relieved of all burdens and liabilities as clergymen, and of all pains or penalties for acting as Dissenting ministers. They would also be allowed to sit in Parliament.[117]

On March 14th and 21st, and May 2nd, 1849, the Clergy Relief Bill provoked sharp debates in the Commons.[118] If Shore himself was a minor personage, many of those who debated his case were not, for they included Gladstone,[119] Roundell Palmer,[120] John Bright,[121] Sir George Grey,[122] and Joseph Hume.[123] The

[116] See G.I.T. Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868 (Oxford, 1977), p. 181ff.

[117] See Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. CII, p. 1128ff. Bouverie (1818-1889) was the Liberal MP for Kilmarnock and the second son of the third Earl of Radnor, W.P. Bouverie, the distinguished Whig politician. He later served on the Ecclesiastical Commission for England and supported the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

[118] Ibid., pp. 696-702, 1072-1075; vol. CIV, pp. 1120-1139.

[119] Ibid., vol. CII, p. 1132f; vol. CIII, p. 1075; vol. CIV, p. 1127f, 1131ff.

[120] Who was a future Lord Chancellor. Ibid., vol. CII, p. 1074.

[121] Ibid., vol. CII, p. 701; vol. CIV, p. 1126f.

[122] Ibid., vol. CIII, p. 700f.

members showed understandable confusion about some of the issues involved. The Attorney General himself, when asked whether it was true that a clergyman leaving the Church of England for the Roman Church was free from all penalty while one seceding to a Protestant Dissenting denomination was not, replied evasively that the question put to him was "a point about which great difficulty existed both in the civil and the ecclesiastical courts," and that "he must decline, without further consideration, to answer it."[124] This apparent inequity understandably worried several members.

Though the debate produced the usual crop of 'red herrings' (that is, should a seceding clergyman be allowed to stand for Parliament?),[125] the issues which most concerned MPs were fairly clear, whatever the complexities of the law. Would the official sanctioning by a Clergy Relief Bill of secession like Shore's not make exodus from the Church all too easy, thus devaluing the sacred--and established--character of the Anglican priesthood? It was one of the paradoxes of the Shore affair that an exponent of this view was none other than Henry Drummond, the former abetter of the Western Schism and the Catholic Apostolic Church, whose establishmentarian Toryism now came to the fore. How, asked Drummond, could ecclesiastical discipline be maintained by the Church if it abrogated the right to inflict civil penalty? Could the Army and Navy be run effectively if the House repealed the Mutiny Act? Pas-

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123 Ibid., p. 697f.
124 Ibid., p. 701.
125 Ibid., p. 1075.

sage of the Clergy Relief Bill in his view would amount a virtual separation of Church and State.[126] Others agreed that it was important to keep some kind of strict formal control over exit from the Church, as well as entry into it. What otherwise was to stop a clergyman from popping in and out of his sacred--and established--office as the whim took him? If the terms of egress were totally relaxed, H.C. Lacy argued, then "a man might say he was a Dissenter now, and the next day say he was not a Dissenter."[127] Why could some legal machinery not be created "by which a clergyman might be divested of his office by the same authority which invested him with it?"[128] Should not some disciplinary controls be kept to stop a rascally cleric from 'seceding' in order to avoid censure and punishment for immorality, or for a casual desire to take up some more profitable secular employment? Behind this argument lay, perhaps, some consciousness of the growing assimilation of the clerical profession to others like medicine and the law, which for some time had been tightening up their standards and procedural requirements.

On the other side was the liberal argument that the existing Canon, if enforced on Shore, would encourage hypocrisy and make clergymen 'insincere on compulsion;' because although they dissented from the doctrines of the Church, they must remain in it, or subject themselves to penalties for preaching what they

[126] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. CIII, p. 699f.
[127] Ibid., p. 697.
[128] Ibid., p. 1073f.

believed to be the truth in a building unlicensed by a bishop. The Radical Joseph Hume wholeheartedly agreed with this liberal argument: any other course, he claimed, "would encourage hypocrisy" and he hoped that Parliament "would place every facility in the way of a clergyman's leaving the Church under such circumstances."[129] What was at stake, in Shore's case, on this construction, was liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment, themes repeatedly championed by liberals and Dissenters.

The Clergy Relief Bill passed out of the Commons on July 25th, 1849,[130] and its first reading was held, without debate, in the Lords on the same day.[131] The Parliamentary session ended on August 1st, however, and the bill died without a final reading. It was not reintroduced in the next session.

It is difficult to determine precisely why a relief bill of some description was not enacted as the immediate result of the Shore case. When Bouverie's Bill was introduced, it received a warm reception from Evangelicals and Dissenters alike, who lauded its aims and pressed for its swift enactment.[132] The Bill may not have been reintroduced, however, because public interest in the case diminished after Shore's release from prison, or because the amended--and watered down--version had been severely criticized by Churchmen and

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[129] Ibid., p. 1074.
[130] Ibid., vol. CVII, p. 951ff.
[131] Ibid., p. 949.
[132] See C.O., 1849, pp. 216, 287, 288, 360; Non., 1849, pp. 222, 229; Eardley, p. 23.

Dissenters alike, prompting Bouverie and his supporters to conclude that no bill was better than a bad bill.[133]

Thus it was not until 1870 that relief was definitively granted to seceding clergymen. The Clerical Disabilities Act (33 and 34 Vict. c. 91) provided that after resignation clergymen should execute a 'deed of relinquishment'--abandoning all privileges and obligations acquired at ordination--which was to be enrolled in the Court of Chancery. They would then be free to act as laymen--or as Dissenting ministers--without penalty or encumbrance from their former character as priests in holy orders. This statute was later modified by the Incumbents Resignation Act of 1871 (34 and 35 Vict. ch. 44 SS 15), and by the Burial Laws Amendment Act of 1880 (43 and 44 Vict. Ch. 41 SS 14).[134]

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The Shore case is one of the more curious and tangled episodes in the legal history of the Victorian Church. Its timing contributed much to the perplexity and anger surrounding it. The extension of Tractarianism and the weakening of Evangelical confidence and leadership meant that it would not pass unnoticed in high places. The furore over the recent secession of Newman and the Gorham case focused attention on its outcome, while Bishop Phillpotts, the chief combatant, was already much in the public eye, both locally and nationally, for many acts of episcopal high-handedness. In the Shore case, as in Gorham's, two unusually

[133] Even Shore had criticized the amended bill for requiring seceders to suffer deposition. See the Record, 23 April 1849.

[134] Blunt, p. 213f.

strong-minded clergymen, each convinced of their rectitude, collided head on. Each was no doubt motivated by party spirit as well as conscientious religious principle. Shore was convinced that it was God's will for him to continue at Bridgetown and, as Phillpotts painfully discovered, no amount of ecclesiastical pressure, discipline or intimidation could alter this conviction.

No doubt Shore acted contumaciously in disregarding the command of his Diocesan to cease from officiating as a clergyman in the Diocese of Exeter. It is likely that, had he wished, he could have reduced the tension of the affair and saved his Church and Bishop from adverse publicity by securing preferment elsewhere from some Evangelical patron. His public campaign of vengeance against Phillpotts and the Tractarians tended to deteriorate into a personal vendetta. It certainly exacerbated the conflict of what were now becoming recognizably rival 'Church parties.'[135]

The Shore affair presented both antagonists with dilemmas and a tension between principles to which they held dear. In Shore's case, it was the tension which we have seen recurring in other parallel cases: that between loyalty to the Anglican Establishment and loyalty to the 'gospel principles' of the Reformation, which appeared increasingly threatened nationally as well as in the Diocese of Exeter. It also presented the Evangelical party with an *embarras de choix*: condemnation of the Privy Council's ruling compromised

[135]See Walter Farquhar Hook, Letter to the Bishop of Ripon, on the State of Parties in the Church of England (London, 1841); F.D. Maurice, Reasons for Not Joining a Party in the Church (London, 1841).

their own Erastianism; conversely, submission to it encouraged heretical doctrine and the violation of Shore's right of private judgment.

Phillpotts too had a tightrope to walk between his obligation to maintain the unity of his Diocese--and the comprehensive National Church of which it was a part--and his inbred desire to enforce obedience and uniformity among the clergy under his control. When reminiscing with Edward Manning about the Shore affair some years later, Phillpotts asked the Cardinal how the Catholic Church dealt with recalcitrant priests. "We have a ready remedy for a priest who disobeys his bishop," came the reply. "We suspend him *a divinis* by withdrawing the 'facilities' given to him on taking charge of a mission." "I envy the Church of Rome," Phillpotts remarked, "for its possession of such an effective weapon."[136] Paradoxically, Phillpotts' passion for censure and litigation helped destroy the very unity of Church and State which, as with other High Churchmen, he sought to maintain.

Questions remain as to Phillpotts' primary motivation for prosecuting Shore. He may have wished to uphold an uncompromising enforcement of episcopal authority as recognized in Canon law, but this seems inconsistent with his behaviour during the case of *Escott v. Mastin.* He may have believed that all seceders into the Nonconformist ministry should be prosecuted, but this is inconsistent with his practice elsewhere, since other Evangelical seceders within his diocese escaped

136 Quoted in Purcell, 2:692n.

ecclesiastical censure and prosecution. It is possible that Shore was used as an example in the expectation that the threat of arrest, ruinous prosecution and a lengthy prison sentence would sufficiently deter all but the most determined seceder from following his example.[137]

In any case, Phillpotts may have been less concerned about ecclesiastical discipline and authority, or the secession of an unimportant Evangelical, than about the loss of Bridgetown Chapel. He alluded to this point on a number of occasions, and his provocative attack upon the absent Duke of Somerset during the debate over the Clergy Relief Bill suggests that the animosity created by the unsatisfactory conclusion of the endowment negotiations remained a prime force behind his actions.

The reverberations of the Shore case did not match those of the Gorham affair. Its implications were less serious because it affected only those clergymen who actively chose to secede into Dissent, and not the great mass of Evangelical clergy. Moreover, it did not go to the very heart of Anglican theological and doctrinal identity as did the debate on baptismal regeneration. Though the issue of indelibility lurked beneath the surface, it was not made fully explicit. The right of a priest in the Established Church to transfer his ministerial functions elsewhere was--unlike many doctrinal issues--at least a soluble question, which could be laid to rest by a simple act of Parliament. Shore

137See Non., 1849, p. 299.

was a lone and obscure individual, not the head of a group; not well-established in the party as was Gorham, and not likely to set in motion a landslide of similar secessions.

At the same time his case was important. It disturbed the already troubled consciences of Evangelical clergymen. Richard Spooner, speaking in the Commons on Shore's behalf, described how he had received a heavy pile of mail from sympathetic clerics, expressing "regret that any person should be exposed to ecclesiastical censures on account of their dissent from the doctrines of the Established Church."[138] The Bridgetown Chapel affair was yet another ingredient in the few, critical years which saw publication of Tract 90 in 1841, the Scottish Succession in 1843, Newman's secession in 1845, Gorham's legal ordeal between 1847-50, and Baptist Noel's dramatic secession in 1848. There can be little doubt that the Shore case added to the crisis of confidence which seized Evangelicalism in the mid-nineteenth century.

[138] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. CIII, p. 699.

Conclusion

Despite all the polemic and publicity which accompanied the secessions described in this dissertation, the number of clergymen who formally seceded from the Church of England in the first half of the nineteenth century was relatively small. This does not mean, however, that their secession was without significance. As we have seen, they were an unsettling influence on many of their brethren and on the Church of England as a whole. Their role in sharpening up party conflict within the Church was not negligible. The existence of various groups of 'ultras' in the Evangelical ranks helped to confirm suspicious High Churchmen in their stereotyped views about the dangers inherent in extreme Protestantism. Here, it seemed, was evidence of the tendency of religious individualism--the belief in 'private judgment'--to produce schism and anarchy. The seceders were living proofs that Evangelicals were unsound in their Churchmanship, and had a dangerous proclivity to Dissent. Men like Drummond and Irving, trusting in the imaginary prompting of the Holy Spirit, showed the folly of evangelical religious 'enthusiasm.' Groups like those around Kelly or Darby showed the consequences of attempting rash and radical biblical exegesis, without reliance on the accumulated wisdom of Tradition. The seceders underlined the need for the fixed, objective, dogmatic creed, which could only be provided by a Tradition-based faith, founded on the accumulated wisdom of the Church Catholic.

There is little doubt that the great mass of Evangelicals who remained loyal to the Church of England were often gravely embarrassed by these well-publicized secessions from their ranks. Their claim to be not only good Churchmen, but the only *true* Churchmen, was undermined by the exodus of their disgruntled colleagues, angrily shaking the dust of Anglicanism off their feet as they departed. The secederers compromised the efforts of men like Simeon and William Goode to build up a sensible, orderly Evangelical party in the Church, which was moderate enough to attract intelligent and respectable converts. They were perhaps even more disturbing because they articulated ideas and anxieties which existed in the minds of a large number of respectable Evangelicals, and gave them dangerous articulation. The secederers also brought into unwanted salience half-concealed doubts--doubts about the purity of the liturgy, for example, about the value of the Church-State connection, and (in the case of the pre-millennialists) doubts about the spiritual state of the present-day Evangelical party. By publicizing their views they provided ammunition not only for the opponents of 'vital religion,' but also for the rivals of the Church of England itself. The secessions were clearly a godsend to critics of the Establishment, especially the militant Nonconformists of the Liberation Society, who delighted in showing up the corruptions of the State Church. Secederers like J.C. Philpot and Henry Bulteel, who published violent attacks on the apostasy of the

Church which they had abandoned, provided propaganda for the cause of disestablishment.

Nonconformist leaders entertained the hope that there might one day be large-scale secessions of Evangelicals to Protestant Dissent, precipitated perhaps by some great *cause celebre*. As we have seen, the Gorham case and the Noel secession had both aroused excitement and expectation in Dissenting circles. But there was to be no English equivalent to the Scottish Disruption of 1843. The almost simultaneous crises produced by Gorham, Noel, and Shore shook Anglican Evangelicals, but the shudder was brief, and the alarm was short-lived. Remarkably, the period succeeding that which is covered in this dissertation produced no group seces-sions equivalent to those of the Walkerites, the Kelly-ites, the Western Schismatics, the Darbyites, or the Catholic Apostolicals.

This is perhaps surprising. The later decades of the nineteenth century were marked by party conflict and crisis. The Church was racked by the storm over the *Essay and Reviews* and by the Colenso affair, which were followed by the long, drawn-out warfare of out-raged Evangelicals and militant Ritualists. In the late nineteenth century, the High Church wing of the Established Church increased its numerical strength. Yet the trickle of Evangelical seceders seems virtually to have dried up. There were no more group secessions, and individual withdrawals, such as those in protest against Ritualism, appear to have been rare indeed.

Why was this? Events that did not happen are notoriously more difficult to explain than those that did, so any answer must be highly tentative, especially since the late nineteenth century lies well beyond the period on which this dissertation has focused. The history of late Victorian Evangelicalism remains largely unexplored, and contains much unmapped territory. Nevertheless, one or two highly tentative suggestions can be offered.

Does the Gorham case offer a clue to the relative absence of secessions in the 1850s and 1860s? If the case threatened to trigger off mass secessions in its early stage, when Phillpotts had gained the initial, favourable verdict in the Court of Arches, the final judgment could be construed as an Evangelical victory. The highest tribunal had now declared that the Evangelical interpretation of the Baptismal service was valid. If the contest was indeed what some claimed that it was, namely a battle for the survival of Reformation principles in the Church of England, then the Reformers appeared to have won through. Moreover, the knowledge that the Judicial Committee was henceforth always in play as an arbiter in such cases, may have comforted anxious Evangelicals who feared for the future of the gospel at the hands of autocratic High Church prelates like Phillpotts. It was now less probable that any bishop would attempt high-handedly to winkle Evangelicals out of his diocese, or to impose partisan views of the Anglican formularies on his clergy.

It is possible too that the departure of the most advanced, 'Romanizing' Tractarians with Newman in 1845, and with Manning in the wake of the Gorham judgment, helped to relieve some of the anxiety felt by Evangelicals at the progress of the Oxford Movement. Provocative figures like W.G. Ward and Frederick Oakeley, who had shocked Protestants by attacking the Reformers in the *British Critic*, seemed now to have revealed themselves in their true colours by apostatizing openly to Rome. Did the Romeward secessions clear the air and lower the tension? Though the Anglo-Catholics retained a formidable presence in the Church, they were no longer so alarming. They were now under the tutelage of Pusey, whose loyalty to the Church was deep and who did not share the root and branch antipathy to Evangelicals displayed by some of the Romanizers.[1] The energies of the Oxford Movement were now directed less to controversy than to quiet work in the parishes.[2] By this time, moreover, Evangelicals had had time to organize their counterattack. They felt more secure. In apologists like William Goode and Francis Close, they produced a formidable defence of the Evangelical position and of their claim to a rightful place in the Church of England.[3] It is likely that, by the 1860s, the spectre of Roman subversion within the Church, though still alive, did not arouse quite the same anxiety: with the arrival of Cardinal Wiseman and the furore over Eccles-

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[1]See David Forrester, Young Doctor Pusey (London, 1989), pp. 108-134.

[2]See George William Herring, 'Tractarianism to Ritualism' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1984).

[3]See Peter Toon, Evangelical Theology, 1833-1856. A Response to Tractarianism (London, 1979).

iastical Titles, it was the rejuvenated Roman Church itself which was the chief target of Evangelical hostility, more than the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England. The external enemy drew most of the 'No Popery' fire. Though Evangelicals remained ever watchful of Catholic activity in the Church, they learned in time to come to terms with its existence as a permanent element in the Establishment.

If religious anxiety lay behind some of the secessions, so too, as we have seen, did social and political tensions. By the mid-1850s, these had largely subsided. The fears of atheistical radicalism which had alarmed Churchmen from the 1790s through the 'Hungry Forties' and the Chartist era, had lost much of their force. Churchmen had come to terms with the traumatic crisis of 1829-1832. The shock of Catholic Emancipation and the Reform Bill, which had intensified the millennial expectations of men like Drummond and Irving, was now water under the bridge. The Whigs turned out not to be the anticlerical Erastians which many Tory Churchmen of the Drummond type had feared. It was the Whig Lord John Russell who appointed J.B. Sumner to Canterbury in 1848. Indeed, between 1855 and 1860, Lord Palmerston used his patronage to appoint a row of Evangelicals to the episcopate.[4] The acute 'Church in Danger' crisis of the early 1830s subsided. The Established Church met the challenge to its hegemony by a massive programme of Church and school building, and regained much of the confidence which had ebbed away in

[4]See Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (London, 1971), 1:468-476.

earlier decades. By the early 1850s, Britain was moving into the period of the mid-Victorian economic boom. Politically we are in what W.L. Burn has termed the 'Age of Equipoise.'[5] Chartism had collapsed. The Corn Laws were repealed. Liberalism was in the ascendant, and a high degree of social and political consensus was, to some extent, replacing the sharp class conflicts of the Thirties and Forties. By the Fifties and Sixties, the eschatological anxiety which gripped many Evangelicals in the early decades, and had contributed to the unease and psychic anxiety which encouraged secession, had largely subsided.

In the later decades of the century, the Church of England began to cope much more effectively with the problems of 'spiritual destitution' in the cities. A massive programme of Church and school building funded by private contributions showed that the church was now outstripping its denominational rivals in the field of evangelism and pastoral care. Significant relaxations in the law now made it easier for clergymen to copy the evangelistic methods of Dissenters and Methodists: in 1855, thanks to Lord Shaftesbury, the law prohibiting the assembly of more than twenty persons outside the Church for Anglican worship, was repealed: it was now possible to copy the Dissenters by holding services in the open air, or in the public halls.[6] Had Baptist Noel still been an Anglican priest in 1860, it is possible that he would no longer have despaired of the ability of the Established Church to tackle the prob-

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[5] W.L. Burn, The Age of Equipoise (London, 1964).
[6] See Chadwick, 1:524f.

lems of metropolitan irreligion as effectively as the Nonconformists were doing.

But this is to stray into the realm of conjecture. The fact remains that Evangelical group secessions seem to have dried up after the middle of the nineteenth century. The exodus of bodies like the Walkerites or Irvingites has not been repeated during the last ninety years. At the climax of the furore against Ritualism in the 1890s and in the early years of the present century, attempts were made to organize a collective secession of Evangelical clergy, who were disgusted at the legal protection which had been accorded to those using novel Catholic rituals. The response to these upheavals was negligible. At least three clergymen publicly seceded from the Church at various times, but the leaders of the party were resolute against any such step. As J.C. Ryle argued fiercely in 1892, "secession is not necessary. So long as the Articles and Prayer Book are not altered we occupy an impregnable position. We have an open Bible and our pulpits are free."[7] Evangelicals realized that a large scale secession would only leave the Church more securely in Ritualist hands, and might provoke a disastrous disestablishment by an angry and Protestant Parliament.

Whether this will continue to be the case is a question that lies, fortunately, beyond the remit of this dissertation.

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[7]See M. Wellings, 'Aspects of Late Nineteenth Century Anglican Evangelicalism: The Response to Ritualism, Darwinism and Theological Liberalism' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1989), p. 178ff.

Appendix I: Evangelical Seceders, 1736-1900

1) Evangelical Clerical Secessions From the Church of England

Mr. Arnold: c.1818 (Western Schism)
Nicholas Armstrong: 1833 (Irvingite)
C.T. Astley: c.1880s. (English Presbyterian)
J.S. Baker: 1832 (Nondenominational)
Frederick Bannister c.1840s (Plymouth Brethren)
George Baring: 1816 (Western Schism)
Henry Battiscombe: 1828 (General Baptist, Later Anglican)
George Bevan: 1816 (Western Schism)
Mr. Bird: c.1840s (Nondenominational)
Henry Biss(e): 1830s (Particular Baptist)
Henry Borlase: 1832 (Plymouth Brethren)
John Bradford: 1778 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
Charles L. Brenton: 1831 (Particular Baptist/Plymouth Brethren)
Isaac Bridgman: 1822 (Nondenominational)
W.J. Brook: c.1800 (Particular Baptist)
H.F. Bruder: c.1835 (Nondenominational)
Henry B. Bulteel: 1831 (Irvingite/Part. Baptist/Ply. Brethren)
James T. Campbell: 1832 (Congregationalist)
Robert Harkness Carne: 1820 (Independent Calvinist)
Edward Carr: 1811 (Nondenominational)
George Carr: 1830s (Plymouth Brethren)
E. Caulfield: 1849 (Nondenominational)
Charles Chapman: 1850 (General Baptist)
Thomas Charles: 1811 (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist)
John Code: 1836 (Plymouth Brethren)
Mr. Cole: c.1831 (Particular Baptist)
Brian Bury Collins: 1780s (Wesleyan Methodist)
Thomas C. Cowan: 1817 (Western Schism)
T. Tennison Cuffe: 1850 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
Henry Dalton: 1835 (Irvingite)
John Nelson Darby: 1828/33 (Plymouth Brethren)
Mr. Digby: c.1840s (Nondenominational)
Robert Crawford Dillon: c.1848 (Reformed Church of England)
John Dodson: 1849 (General Baptist)
James Harington Evans: 1815 (Western Schism/Baptist)
John Gambold: 1742 (Moravian)
Robert Gibson: 1833 (Nondenominational)
Bernard Gilpin: 1834 (Congregationalist)
Robert Govett: c.1840 (Particular Baptist)
W.A. Gunn: 1792 (Congregationalist)
Peter Hall: 1833 (Nondenominational)
Mr. Hamilton: c.1770 (Nondenominational)
Edward Hardman: 1834 (Irvingite)
Charles Hargrove: 1835 (Plymouth Brethren)
James Lampen Harris: 1832 (Plymouth Brethren)
J.B. Heard: n.d. (Nondenominational)
Richard Hill: c.1835 (Plymouth Brethren)
Roger Hitchcock: 1826 (Particular Baptist)
William Hurn: 1822 (Congregationalist)
Thomas Husband: 1833 (Particular Baptist)
John Hutchins: c.1740s (Moravian/Quaker)
Benjamin Ingham: c.1736 (Moravian/Inghamite/Sandamenian)
Andrew J. Jukes: 1844 (General Baptist, Later Anglican)
John Kay: 1834 (Particular Baptist)

Thomas Kelly: 1803 (Kellyites)
Charles Kinchin: 1739 (Wesleyan Methodist)
T.R. Matthews: 1832 (Free Church of England)
Capel Molyneux: 1872 (Nondenominational)
William Morshead: 1832 (Plymouth Brethren Leanings)
Christopher Neville: 1870 (Nondenominational)
Honorable Baptist W. Noel: 1848 (General Baptist)
C.H. O'Donoghue: 1832 (General Baptist)
H.J. Owen: 1833/4 (Irvingite)
Frances Oakley: 1740 (General Baptist/Moravian)
John William Peters: 1834 (Nondenominational)
J.C. Philpot: 1835 (Particular Baptist)
Henry James Prince: c.1843 (Princeites/Agapemonites)
Charles Raby: c.1811 (Independent Calvinist)
Arthur Augustus Rees: 1840s (Nondenominational)
Mr. Robinson: 1830s (Plymouth Brethren)
Jacob Rogers: 1740 (General Baptist/Moravian)
Daniel Rowland: 1763 (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist)
Mr. Seager: c.1840s (Nondenominational)
James Shore: 1844 (Free Church of England)
John Simpson/Sympson: c.1740s (Moravian)
Isaac Slee: 1779 (General Baptist)
Thomas Snow: 1815 (Western Schism)
Charles Stirling: c.1900 (Nondenominational)
Leonard Strong: c.1827 (Nondenominational/Plymouth Brethren)
Robert Taylor: 1818 (Deism)
William Taylor: 1783 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
William Tiptaft: 1831 (Particular Baptist)
Frederick Tryon: 1839 (General Baptist)
W.T. Turpin: c.1830s (Plymouth Brethren)
John Walker: 1804 (Walkerites/Separatists/Church of God)
George V. Wigram: 1831 (Plymouth Brethren)
Thomas Wills: 1783 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)

2) **Some Notable Evangelical 'Irregulars'/'Half-Regulars'**

Thomas Coke: c.1778 (Wesleyan Methodist)
Henry Draper: c.1809 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
Sir Culling Eardley: c.1850 (Nondenominational)
John Eyre: 1775 (Nondenominational)
John Fletcher: 1768 (Wesleyan Methodist)
Henry Gauntlett: 1805 (St. Mary's Chapel, Reading)
Thomas Haweis: 1768 (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion)
Rowland Hill: 1769/1770 (Surrey Chapel, London)
Griffith Jones: c.1716 (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist)
William Mann: 1786 (Bethesda Chapel, Dublin)
Edward Smyth: 1786 (Wesleyan Methodist/Bethesda Chapel, Dublin)
William Williams: 1743 (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist)

3) **Some Notable Evangelical Lay Seceders**

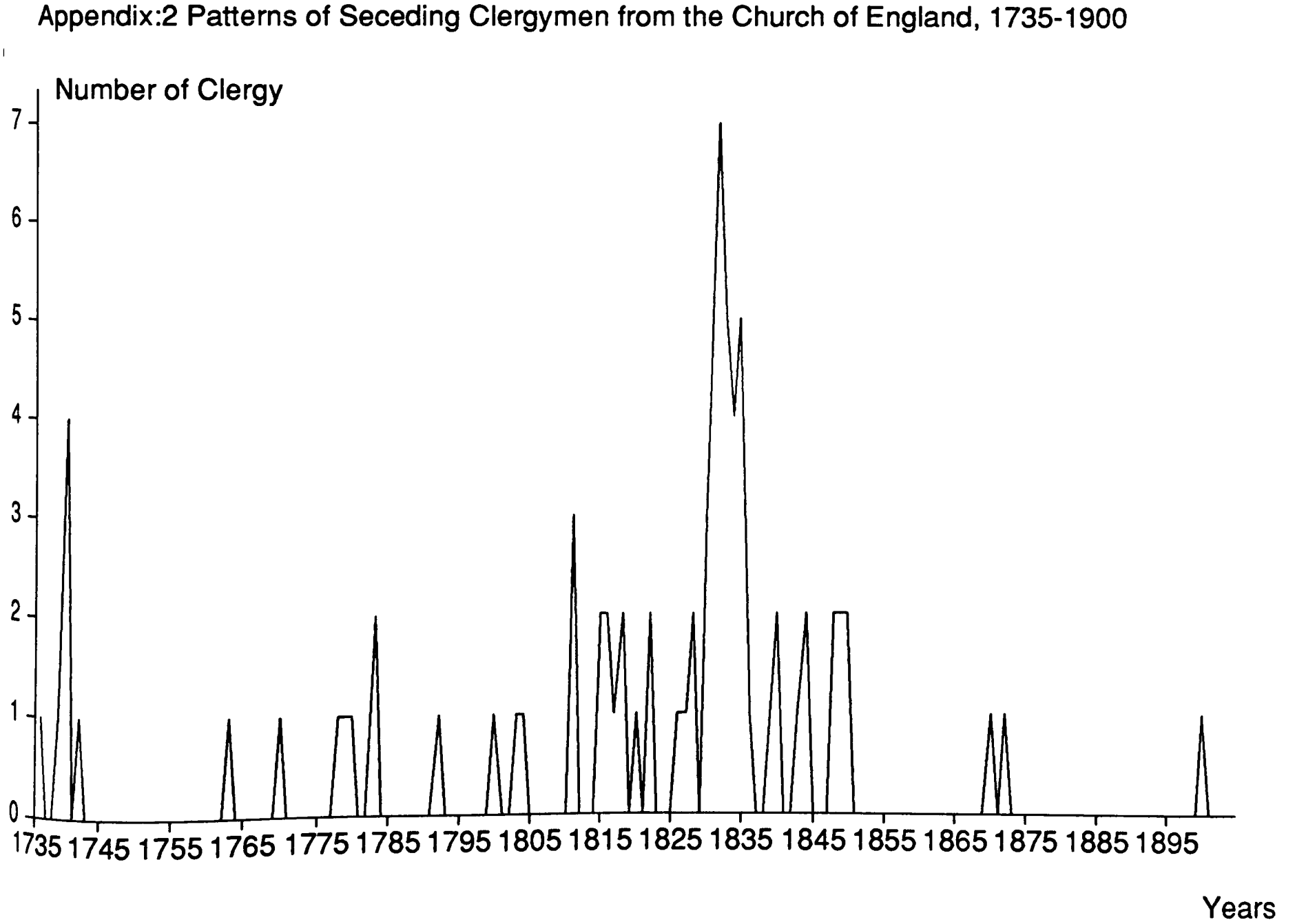
Sir Thomas Baring: 1815 (Western Schism)
John Gifford Bellett: 1827/8 (Plymouth Brethren)
John Bate Cardale: 1831 (Irvingite)
Henry Drummond: 1815 (Western Schism, later Irvingite)
Anthony Norris Groves: 1827 (Plymouth Brethren)
Howel Harris: 1736 (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist)

Lady Selina Hastings: c.1761 (Countess of Hunt. Connexion)
Thomas Kemp: 1816 (Western Schism)
Francis W. Newman: c.1830 (Nondenominational/Unitarian)
Benjamin Wills Newton: 1830 (Plymouth Brethren)
Spencer Perceval: 1834 (Irvingite)
Lady Theodosia Powerscourt: 1833 (Plymouth Brethren)
Robert Robinson: 1758 (Congregationalist/General Baptist)

4) Some Notable Evangelical Seceders to Rome (*Via* Tractarianism)

Ambrose Lisle March Phillips: 1824
William Dodsworth: 1851
Frederick William Faber: 1845
Henry Edward Manning: 1851
John Henry Newman: 1845
George Dudley Ryder: 1846
Richard Waldo Sibthorp: 1841
George Spencer: 1830
Henry William Wilberforce: 1850
Robert Isaac Wilberforce: 1854
William Wilberforce: 1863

Appendix II: Patterns of Seceding Clergymen from the Church of England, 1735-1900



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