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TIMOTHY STUNT

John Synge and the Early Brethren

One of the names referred to from time to time in the history of the early Brethren movement is that of John Synge, and yet we are told very little about him and the details of his career are rather elusive. The recent publication of Edward Stephens' biography of the dramatist John Millington Synge has some information about his grandfather, but even so the picture is incomplete. The purpose of the present paper is to bring the various materials together, so as to shed more light on the aspirations of the early Brethren.

The Synge family were well known landowners in Ireland. One of John Synge's great-grandfathers was Nicholas Synge and another was Samuel Hutchinson, both of whom were Bishops of Killala. Nicholas' son Edward married Sophia Hutchinson and their sixth son Francis Synge (John's father) established the family estates in County Wicklow at Roundwood and Glanmore or Glenmore where he spent a lot of money extending the mansion which he called Glanmore Castle.¹

Influence of Pestalozzi

Born in 1788, John Synge attended both Trinity College, Dublin and Magdalen College, Oxford² and in 1812 went on a continental tour spending some time in Spain and Portugal where he was able to watch Wellington's exploits in the Peninsular War. In 1814 on his way back from Italy he reached Yverdon in Switzerland and was persuaded with some difficulty to visit Pestalozzi's Institute. Synge was so impressed by Pestalozzi and by the happiness and intelligent interest shown by the children that he remained at Yverdon for three months instead of the two hours he had originally intended. He wrote enthusiastic letters to his friend Digges La Touche back in Dublin, explaining Pestalozzi's system.³

The educational methods in practice at the turn of the 19th century were not generally very successful. Synge's original refusal to visit the Institute at Yverdon was because he felt "no small degree of prejudice against the schemes of education from the little he had seen of the mechanical systems practised at home."⁴ Pestalozzi's genius was to see the problem of education from the child's point of view. Abandoning the attitude that the child's mind was a sort of bottle into which as much information and procedural formulae should be poured as was possible in the time available, Pestalozzi believed that there were innate powers of knowledge in a child that had to be awakened. He felt that in the innocence of the infant there

was still some trace of the divine nature and that it was the responsibility of the teacher to bring these innate abilities to fruition. Indeed he insisted that "intuition is absolutely the foundation of all knowledge."⁵

Obviously Pestalozzi owed a great deal to the intuitionary theories of Rousseau's *Emile* and the Romantic Movement; nevertheless, his understanding of the problem was imbued with a spiritual depth which derived from his own deep Christian faith and compassion. Indeed he applied his child-centred ideas to questions of spiritual understanding as well. In what is probably his most famous work, *How Gertrude Teaches her Children*, Pestalozzi emphasises the spiritual role of the mother in bringing up her family. In answer to the question, "How does the idea of God develop in my soul?" he answers: "The feelings of love, trust, gratitude, and the readiness to obey must be developed in me before I can apply them to God. I must love men, trust men, thank men, and obey men before I can aspire to love, trust, thank and obey God."⁶ And it is precisely in the introduction of the child to such experiences as love, trust and thankfulness that the role of the mother in Pestalozzi's scheme is so crucial.

Child-centred education is fairly common-place now, in principle at any rate. If an older generation learnt multiplication at school solely by means of table recitation, our children are almost certainly also learning to multiply with apples or counters. Similarly in the spiritual realm, though some evangelical Christians are fearful of a too anthropocentric existentialism, nevertheless we have learnt that it is of little use telling a person that God is a loving Father if he has never known a father who loved him. At the turn of the 19th century child-centred education was something revolutionary coming after the coldly systematic thinking of the enlightenment, and John Synge's enthusiasm was unbounded. On his return home he promptly transferred his enthusiasm into print by publishing a *Biographical Sketch of the Struggles of Pestalozzi to Establish his System of Education, chiefly from his own works, by an Irish Traveller*.

It is clear from this publication that Synge was particularly struck by the happiness and reduction of misery that Pestalozzi's system made possible. He proceeded to open a school at Roundwood for the villagers and established a printing press to produce manuals and texts for such teaching. A variety of these teaching aids are to be found in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.⁷ There can be little doubt that Synge's school was a success. In letters to Pestalozzi, he explains that the children are taught for three or four hours each day in language, arithmetic and geometry; time is also spent reading the Bible. The remainder of the day is occupied with practical work

on the land or in the production of footwear or straw hats. Bearing in mind the backwardness of the Irish economy this was fairly revolutionary and it is hardly surprising that Synge reports to Pestalozzi that one teacher who has adopted the new methods has been reprimanded by the governors as the latter are afraid that the children will not be happy with the position of servants if they prove to be cleverer than their masters.⁸

Another advocate of Pestalozzi's methods, writing in the *Christian Examiner*, prefaced his account of his visit to Switzerland in 1817 by saying: "My mind, I confess, was prejudiced in favour of Pestalozzi's plans from what little I had seen of them in my friend Synge's poor school in the County of Wicklow."⁹ Where Pestalozzi, largely through lack of money, had often been unsuccessful, Synge's venture seems to have flourished. There is a field near Roundwood where the school formerly stood, and it is still known as "the schoolhouse field."

John Synge was an evangelical churchman, and soon found himself having to defend Pestalozzi from the charge we have referred to earlier, namely, that his principles conflicted with the doctrine of original sin. In 1818 Synge asked Pestalozzi to make it clear that he accepted the doctrine of the fall of man.¹⁰ Pestalozzi was in fact primarily an educational practitioner rather than a theologian, and his statements on such matters never fully satisfied many Evangelicals. Samuel Gobat for example, himself a child of the Swiss Revival of the early 19th century and later Bishop of Jerusalem, criticised the false foundations of Pestalozzi's system and implied that Pestalozzi admitted this in his old age.¹¹ On the other hand one of the greatest admirers of Pestalozzi in England was the educationist J. P. Greaves whose sister played an important part in the beginnings of the revival in the Canton of Vaud between 1815 and 1822.¹² Both Greaves and Synge refused to accept that Pestalozzi's method was faulty theologically and Synge, in particular, was a staunch Evangelical.

Criticism of the Established Church

When in 1818 he married Isabella Hamilton, John Synge took charge of Roundwood, as his father moved to Glanmore Castle. At Roundwood the school continued to flourish, but Synge's activities were clearly not confined to this work. He was in touch with friends like James Digges La Touche and John Vesey Parnell (later Lord Congleton), who together with him were "strongly influenced by the teaching of John Nelson Darby."¹³ Possibly before Synge was in close touch with Darby, he met Anthony Norris Groves who had given up his dental practice in Exeter and in 1826 had begun to come to Trinity College, Dublin for quarterly examinations, with the

intention of being ordained and going as a missionary to Bagdad. It was possibly at Groves' suggestion that Syngé moved in 1827 to Devon where he bought Buckridge House, near Teignmouth. It was also said that he moved on account of his wife's poor health, but his interest in Groves was probably a more important factor.¹⁴

Groves' decision in 1828, to abandon his plans for ordination, and to go to Bagdad almost at once, created problems for two of his associates. The first was the deaf scholar John Kitto who had once helped Groves as a dental craftsman and who regarded him as benefactor and patron.¹⁵ However in April 1829 Kitto heard from Groves that he could take employment "with Mr. Syngé, a dear friend of mine, at Teignmouth, for three or six months from the 1st of June next, to help in printing some little works he is carrying on in Greek and Hebrew."¹⁶ In fact, after accepting the offer, Kitto unexpectedly decided to go abroad with Groves. The other of Groves' associates affected by his change of plan was Henry Craik who had been tutoring his children. He too was now offered a post at Buckridge House, as tutor to Syngé's children.¹⁷

It appears from Craik's Journal that Syngé was absent (possibly in Ireland) during June and July 1828 and that Craik may have still been living with Groves, though he was already preparing for his work in the Syngé household.¹⁸ Before long, however, he was living at Buckridge and working there.

Syngé's object in engaging Craik was not simply to get a tutor for his sons, but also to secure the help of someone with an adequate grasp of classical studies to assist him in the preparation of his educational publications. There are several references in Craik's *Diary* to "Greek Roots for Mr. Syngé". The entry for Monday the 10th of August 1829, reads: "Morning at Genesis with Mr. Syngé. Forenoon, as usual, with my pupils. Spent the afternoon in my study, and had a long and happy solitary walk. Evening engaged with Homer, and Greek Testament translations for Mr. Syngé."¹⁹ It appears that Craik's employer was again away in Ireland for a period beginning in December 1829 as the tutor's *Diary* speaks of "removing into my new lodgings" and "walking over to Teignmouth with the proof for the printer."²⁰

In fact Craik was an ideal assistant for Syngé. Both were enthusiastic in their interest in Hebrew and both were preparing books for students of the language. Syngé's volume was entitled *An Easy Introduction to the Hebrew Language on the Principles of Pestalozzi* by Parens.²¹ Craik's book was *Principia Hebraica; or an Easy Introduction to the Hebrew Language: exhibiting, in twenty four tables, the interpretation of all the Hebrew and Chaldee words, both primitives and derivatives, contained in the Old Testament*

Scriptures. It was published in 1831 like Synge's book and printed at Synge's expense on his own printing press.²²

At the same time it can hardly have been purely an academic friendship. Both men were sincerely devout and there must have been lengthy discussion between them in spite of the seventeen years' difference in their ages. Craik had been brought up as a Presbyterian but while he was staying at Buckridge he adopted Baptist views and preached at the Shaldon Baptist Church which was probably where he met George Müller in 1829, with whom he was to co-operate for many years to come.²³ It is impossible to imagine that such matters and issues, which were the talking point of so many Christians dissatisfied with the current slumber of both Established and Dissenting Churches, were not debated at length by Synge and his young tutor. Synge was an Anglican but by no means a very traditionally minded one, as was shortly to become apparent.

In June or July 1831, two or three months after Craik had left Buckridge to become the regular pastor at Shaldon Baptist Chapel, two clergymen from Oxford came on a preaching tour in the West Country. One of them was William Tiptaft, the Vicar of Sutton Courtney, later to secede and become a strict Baptist, while the other was Henry Bellendon Bulteel, curate of St. Ebbe's, at Oxford, whose University Sermon in February 1831 had rebuked ecclesiastical malpractices in high places, and had dared to ask whether the Church of England was any longer led by the Holy Spirit of God.²⁴ Bulteel's sermon had been a talking point for some time after²⁵ as it concluded with this rousing warning: "The whole Gentile Church whether Romish or Reformed is under the sentence of 'excision' if she continue not in God's goodness. . . . Being shortly about to cut off the whole Gentile Church, God hath now for some few years past been constantly raising up his witnesses to the fact.

"God has a twofold purpose in thus acting. One is to gather out his own elect from the midst of the overthrow, the other is to leave those that shall be overthrown without any excuse."²⁶

It will be seen therefore that Tiptaft was with a man who was very outspoken in his opinions, when he came to preach in the West Country. Bulteel actually was from a distinguished Plymouth family and there was consequently something of impropriety when the two men preached for about ten days in Plymouth, drawing crowds to listen to them in the open air to the dismay of scandalised Bishop and clergy. Leaving the town they travelled along the South Coast getting a mixed reception from the large numbers who gathered to hear them. Tiptaft in a letter to his sister and brother-in-law Deborah and William Keal described their progress saying that they preached twice at Teignmouth. "Many of God's dear people showed

us great kindness, and those who received us we called Jasons; for they certainly had to bear a cross. Mr. Synge of Buckeridge (sic) House, near Teignmouth, was very kind to us. He stood by us twice in the open air at Teignmouth. We took up our abode with him, and he sent us in his carriage to Totnes, and met us again at Exeter, and stood by us again. May the Lord reward him! He is a man of property, and cousin to your curate."²⁷

If Synge was prepared to support the public preaching of vigorous critics of the Establishment like Bulteel and Tiptaft, both of whom expected, not without reason, soon to be in trouble with their bishops, clearly he was far from complacent about the condition of the Church of England. Doubtless, Bulteel told Synge about the current discontent among Evangelicals at Oxford. He probably gave his host some idea of the deep impression made on several of the younger men of the University by the visits of J. N. Darby. The testimony of this Irish clergyman, whom Synge probably knew already, had given fresh meaning to their doubts about the Establishment.²⁸ In any case, Darby had been invited by Bulteel's young friend, B. W. Newton to visit Plymouth, and Synge may have been in touch with a number of Christians there as well. We know for certain that Synge was well acquainted with a retired naval officer, Captain Percy Hall, who was in Plymouth at this time, and who like Bulteel, Darby and others, was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with his position as a churchman, even though his father had been Dean of Christ Church and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and later Dean of Durham.²⁹ It was Hall who sent John Synge a pamphlet entitled *A Call to the Converted* written by one of the young Oxford Evangelicals, William George Lambert of Corpus Christi College.

Lambert is an elusive figure as far as biographical information is concerned. According to the *Alumni Oxonienses* he was the third son of Edmund Lambert of Slopeston Cottage, Devizes, Wilts.; he matriculated at the age of 17 in February 1822 from Wadham College, and was a scholar at Corpus Christi from 1822-1831, taking his BA in 1826 and MA in 1829. His death occurred in 1866. In addition to this we know that in March 1831 he and B. W. Newton were dining with Dr. John Hill after a meeting of the Society for the Conversion of the Jews at which J. N. Darby had been one of the speakers,³⁰ but by the beginning of 1832 Dr. Hill is lamenting that "Lambert my co-secretary in the Church Missionary Society has left it and the Church of England."³¹ It was in July 1831 that Lambert published *A Call to the Converted* in which he advocated secession. If Newton's memory is reliable, "Bishop Sumner (of Winchester then) was Visitor of Corpus; he took proceedings and deprived Lambert of his Fellowship."³² A conversation with Lambert was one of the main influences on Newton which led him to secede as well.³³

John Synge was most interested in Lambert's tract and sympathised with certain of its objectives, namely a fuller experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit among believers, and a visible expression of spiritual unity. Nevertheless, he disagreed strongly with the proposed course of secession and produced a reply to Lambert's tract, which he printed at Teignmouth, presumably on his own press, and which was entitled: *Observations on "A Call to the Converted" as it relates to Members of the Church of England, addressed to Capt. P. Hall, R.N.*

We shall reserve discussion of these two tracts for a later stage, but we may here observe Synge's perspicacity in one interesting aspect. Nothing is known of Lambert's subsequent career apart from the following recollection of his erstwhile friend, B. W. Newton: "I lost sight of him: he married a lady who was a mystic. Some years afterwards I was at Bath and heard that he was there too. I called on him on a Sunday and found him reading the newspaper. I spoke of something that is in Ephesians etc. 'Oh,' he said, 'do you still believe like that? such as Dr. Hawker and that school? I have got beyond all that.'"³⁴ Whether Lambert's final condition was as unregenerate as Newton implied is open to question, but clearly his later views were very different from those in his tract.

In Synge's reply it is therefore somewhat striking to note one of the reasons he puts forward for not seceding: "Yet one more reason presents itself to my mind for not acting towards the Church as our dear brother would advise, I mean a review of the numbers who have done so, with highly spiritual views, and holding out great prospects of something better, but in the event have either made shipwreck of their faith, or at least failed in the proposed object of a regenerate church. . . ."³⁵ It would be very instructive to know whether Lambert turned to a mystical approach because he found the ideal of a pure church was unattainable.

Glanmore Castle

The preface to Synge's reply was dated 1st November 1831, and it was probably one of Synge's last concerns before he returned to Ireland, for in the same year his father had died, and in 1832 he took possession of Glanmore Castle. At the time he seems to have returned to Ireland out of duty rather than inclination. Writing to Miss Bridson, the family governess, in December 1831 he gave his reasons: "a demesne of 1600 acres in the midst of a property of 4000 will require attention and labour, and indeed, were I disposed to cast it all behind my back tomorrow, justice to others would oblige me for some time to labour at it."³⁶ His wife had died in 1830 and on his return to Ireland he married Frances Steele whose sister Emily was two years later to marry his brother Edward.

Glanmore Castle, which was built by John Synge's father, was described in 1837 by Samuel Lewis, the topographer, as "the splendid residence of J. Synge Esq. . . ., a handsome and spacious castellated mansion with embattled parapets, above which rises a lofty round tower, flanking the principal facade in the centre of which is a square gateway tower forming the chief entrance."³⁷ Today the place is only a shell and the fabric is totally derelict. An enormous monkey-puzzle tree stands close to the house in the chaotic tangle of undergrowth which prevents the visitor from seeing more than a fraction of the estate. The surroundings, however, are quite fantastic. A nineteenth century writer described Glanmore Castle very aptly when he referred to it as "standing on a green platform half-way up the mountain, and hanging over the "Devil's Glen", a deep, long, and rocky gorge, with its precipitous sides lined with trees, between which the river Vartry, rushing from its upper moorlands, flings itself down through a huge cleft rock into a deep, round pool, issuing from which, it traverses the glen in whirl and rapid on its way to the sea, a thing of beauty to the eye, and a song of music to the ear."³⁸

John Synge was no less concerned about his tenants and their needs when he moved to Glanmore than when he had been at Roundwood. His great uncle Sir Francis Hutchinson had built a school in 1807 on the Glanmore Estate³⁹ and naturally Synge took great interest in the running of the school. According to Synge's accounts book, the schoolmaster in 1833 was given £20 a year with a house and one acre of land and the grass for one cow! His printing press was re-established near the Castle in the Glen in a building more recently known as "The grandmother's Tea House". Here his printer, Thomas Collins, (a deaf-mute taught by another follower of Pestalozzi, Dr. Orpus) produced for use in the local school, wall charts, which were to be held up before the whole class when there was a shortage of books.

It is hard in an age of comparative affluence to imagine either the grinding poverty that existed in Ireland at the time, or the simmering hatred that so often characterised the landlord and tenant relationship. At Glanmore, the Synge family had built a school and a church, but John Synge realised that more would be required than that. The first thing to be done was to find an agent who would be in full sympathy with his own Christian and humanitarian aims. Captain William Graeme Rhind was a retired naval officer who had entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, with the intention of gaining a degree and being ordained. He abandoned this plan and spent some years in active Christian work among the sailors in Plymouth during which time he probably met Synge in Devon. From 1828 to 1832 he was a secretary of the Reformation Society,

travelling to various parts of the country. He had been in touch with a number of the Evangelicals we have already mentioned, both at Plymouth and Oxford which he had visited in 1830.⁴⁰ In 1831 together with Nicholas Armstrong he resigned his position with the Society⁴¹ and came to Glanmore at Synge's invitation.

If something was to be done about the tenants' poverty, it was essential that they should be provided with employment. By 1835 Rhind had seventy families occupied with knitting, spinning, and weaving on Synge's estates. On principle Rhind and his family mostly wore clothes made by the Glanmore tenants. In his own words: "When I tell them my little girl is wearing their home-knit stockings, one can see how happy it makes them. Thus seventy families are clothed by their own industry,—and often times I am made their savings bank, until their earnings reach seven or eight shillings, for a little pig, &c. Thus also the shops are aided; and the great wheel goes round easier and better; for although I do not *oblige them* to take their earnings out in clothing, yet nine tenths prefer it. If they are sick I visit them; and if in need I aid them; and—during the confinement of mothers of families, if my funds admit of it, I give them extra aid—not in money (this, as much as possible, I avoid,) but in flannels, baby clothes, &c."⁴²

In addition to this scheme which, despite its paternalist overtones, was something very remarkable in its time, Rhind provided the tenants with medical help. "The kind Christian friend on whose estates I am residing, very handsomely allows me sufficient entirely to support a weekly general dispensary and also one daily call at my own house; to this all are welcome—his own tenants and all around." This included "a great many of 'Nobody's People' as they are emphatically called in this country, being either the tenants of little landlords, almost as poor as themselves, or cabin keepers by the roadside, who are neglected to a proverb; and of whom it may be said no man careth for me. I also vaccinate their children."⁴³

Such concern for the physical needs of the poor gave Rhind an opening into their hearts. From Clorah cottage where he lived, at the mouth of the Devil's Glen, he regularly visited Roman Catholics and Protestants alike and his evangelistic work was accepted by people because they knew of his real concern for them. When he returned home he would frequently find a long queue of people waiting for medical attention, squatting on the ground outside his house. When someone suggested that such an intrusion was a nuisance, Rhind's reply was characteristic: "I consider it one of the principal ornaments of the place."⁴⁴ When the cholera was raging in 1838 Rhind was ready to comfort those dying, even though in doing so he was taking a very great risk.⁴⁵

In addition to supporting Rhind in his work Syngé was initiating other schemes of development. There was an old slate quarry which he set out to exploit on a large scale. Welsh slate-cutters were employed. "Metal lines were laid to carry trucks for a mile or more to a small stream by which a watermill was built for dressing slates, flags and gravestones. The loaded trucks ran down by their own weight to an arch under the public road and with little or no assistance through it and down to the mill along the track of the disused Wicklow road". . . . The enterprise was a failure, though Syngé used his skilled quarry men to direct other ambitious projects on the estate, including the construction of the Upper Glen path, the River Avenue and a "great flight of 500 rustic steps winding up like a goat track among the trees on the steep side of the Glen." Edward Stephens attributes these schemes to Syngé's longing "to make the demesne of Glanmore a place for visitors to admire" and to his hope to make the quarry "profitable." Another motive is not considered by Stephens but would seem to be quite plausible. Such works provided employment for his tenants about whom he was genuinely concerned. Stephens refers to a "local tradition that in spite of their religious teaching, the Syngés were popular with the people in the district." Clearly he was ignorant of Rhind's work and has perhaps completely missed the humanitarian mainspring in John Syngé's schemes. In fact Syngé suffered for his efforts. He borrowed too heavily and although his sons refused to share in his plans he refused to abandon his projects. "In 1845 the inevitable crash came. Judgments were put into execution and the bailiffs were in the house when Syngé died."⁴⁶

Evidently Syngé's building schemes were ambitious but to ignore his concern for his tenants and neighbours is to misunderstand the man. It is hard to avoid the thought that if more Irish landlords had been both resident and as interested in their tenantry as Syngé was—especially in the support that he gave to Rhind in his work—much of Ireland's misery might have been avoided. But the poor were not the only ones to benefit from his help.

The Powerscourt Conferences

When John Syngé was living there, Glanmore Castle became one of the spiritual centres of County Wicklow. "In the Parish of Nun's Cross" wrote Bishop Daly's biographer, "the clergy always assembled at Glanmore Castle where they were sure to have a large meeting, on an average about forty who were hospitably entertained by Mr. Syngé. These meetings were highly prized and felt by all who attended them to be very profitable."⁴⁷ Syngé, for whom the clergy had a high regard as "an earnest and religious man, and a ripe scholar",⁴⁸ was an influence of importance in the

Established Church. The high regard in which he was held by the clergy is apparent from the following inscription in the church at Nun's Cross: "This tablet is erected by a few clerical friends of the late John Synge Esq., of Glenmore, a man greatly beloved, of real humility and genuine faith. He truly walked with God, his citizenship in heaven and his affections fixed on things above. Thus affording to all who knew him the surest evidence of being found in his lot amongst the blessed at the coming of the Lord of glory for which he looked and waited daily. 1845."

And yet, as his tract in 1831 had shown, Synge was more than a churchman. In addition to his services to the Established Church, he saw his loyalty as extending to the wider communion of all the children of God. For this reason he was glad to share in the fellowship of the Brethren insofar as they would let him. If their meetings conflicted with his loyalty to the Established Church then he could not join them very frequently, but he was regularly present at their meetings at Powerscourt House, some thirty miles north of Glenmore.

In 1833, Henry Craik, the Hebrew scholar whom John Synge had employed at Buckridge House, received an invitation from Lady Powerscourt through his former employer, to attend the prophetic conference at Powerscourt together with his fellow pastor George Müller. On the 18th September they arrived in Dublin where they were met by Mr. Tims and on the following day John Synge arrived and took them to Glanmore Castle. We learn from Craik's *Diary* some details of life at Synge's home. On Friday the 20th after spending the first part of the day alone, Craik "expounded to the servants", and then spent some further time on his own. From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Synge, Hewit, Rhind (who was working on the Glanmore estates) Müller and Craik engaged in united prayer. They were to have re-assembled at 3 p.m. but this was prevented by the arrival of other people on their way to Powerscourt. In the evening Craik addressed the company "with very little power and much discomfort from the fourth Psalm".⁴⁹ On Saturday, he remained alone until 11 a.m. when again the company gathered for three hours of united prayer after which they dined. From 4 to 7 p.m. they were again engaged in prayer "for Ireland, not forgetting Bristol, etc." After tea Craik spent some time with Müller praying for their congregations and families back in Bristol. On Sunday they broke bread from 10 a.m. to 12 and in the afternoon Craik appears to have been on his own again.⁵⁰

One of the visitors who arrived on Friday afternoon was B. W. Newton, whose letter written on Monday morning to his mother has survived. "I just write a very few lines to say that we arrived in Ireland in safety and well on Friday morning—and are now about

38 miles from Dublin at Glenmore Castle, Mr. John Synge's—our party consisting of J. L. Harris, Miss Trelawny, H. Soltau, my dearest H[annah] and myself. In a half hour's time we set out for Powerscourt. J. N. Darby is now with us and Müller and Craik from Bristol. . . . The entrance of the Devil's Glen, which is in Mr. Synge's ground and is considered one of the most striking spots in Ireland, is just opposite the window at which I am sitting."⁵¹

That so many leading Brethren should have met at Synge's home before travelling to Powerscourt indicates how far he was considered as one of them. The contemporary accounts are at variance as to whether it was in 1832 or 1833 that Robert Daly withdrew from the chairmanship of the Powerscourt conferences on account of the "anti-church" views expressed by many Brethren. It is clear however, that on Daly's withdrawal, Synge took his place and continued as chairman for several years. Stoney's account is emphatic on this point. He refers, if Neatby's history is reliable, to a conference in 1838: "Mr. John Synge was in the chair. He called on each to speak in turn on a given subject. Mr. Darby spoke last, and often for hours, touching on all that had been previously said. Mr. Wigram sat next to him. Captain Hall, Mr. George Curzon, Sir Alexander Campbell, Mr. Bellett, Mr. Thomas Mansell, Mr. Mahon, Mr. Edward Synge were there. There were clergymen present and Irvingites."⁵² This was long after most Brethren had severed their connexions with the Established Church, and yet one who had not done this was respected sufficiently to be their chairman, apparently as late as 1838.

The Problem of Secession

In fact, Synge had made his position very clear as early as 1831 when he replied to Lambert's *Call to the Converted*, and it is to a consideration of these pamphlets that we must now devote some attention.⁵³

Lambert's tract is perhaps the first English publication to contain all the emphases that later became characteristic of those known as Plymouth Brethren. It reflects for example the pre-occupation of the time with the possibility of miracles and tongue speaking, but it takes the matter much further than a simple pentecostalism and deduces certain ecclesiastical implications:

We are at present, much taken up with considering how far the church hath grounds for expecting the resuscitation of miraculous powers. . . . Nothing can be plainer than that the Scripture affords not the least warrant for confining them to one age more than to another, but they are made to depend on faith, and faith only, and that the design and use of them is to glorify Christ risen: but then, brethren, it is equally plain to me that

that faith must be embodied in a pure and spiritual church, a church formed and drawn together *solely* by the power of the principles above described, *solely*, that is, by the constraining power of the Spirit. . . . The Spirit of holiness, before he displays to the world a repetition of Pentecostal miracles, will prefer displaying the more astonishing, the more glorious, and the more lovely miracle of stubborn, human wills and lifeless human hearts brought into gracious, sweet and fervent union with the God of heaven and with each other (p. 10).

The role of the Holy Spirit is of crucial importance in Lambert's thesis because he sees the acceptance of the Holy Spirit's presence as rendering ecclesiastical forms obsolete:

Greatly, greatly, brethren, have they erred and fallen into the snare of the devil, who have contended hotly and pertinaciously for a form of ecclesiastical government and have put it forward as a distinct question. What hath been the consequence? They have drawn aside attention from what is essential to what is circumstantial, and have begun at the superstructure instead of the basis . . . (p. 13).

I consider one system just as worthless as another; in this system, whosoever values the glory of Christ . . . is bound to act on one of two alternatives; either the system must become a spiritual one, or he must renounce the system, and that not without a decided protest against it as a false one. He must give himself to the Lord, Brethren: I have done it myself, as far as it was in my power, and . . . have had clearer, surer, and more abundant experiences of his favour, than I ever had in my life before; and while he is with me, I will not care though the whole world be against me (p. 23).

Throughout, the writer indicates that, as he understands it, the Church must be composed of people who have spiritual experience, and yet he finds such experience a rare commodity:

What do we know of being filled with the Spirit, of rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, of the love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, of being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; of teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; of our speech being always with grace, seasoned with salt and ministering grace to the hearers? . . . (pp. 29-30).

and this inexperience derives from the attempt to preserve the right doctrine in ecclesiastical documents instead of in the hearts of the members of a *pure* church:

For God never designed articles and confessions and canons to be the 'pillar and ground of truth': no, he designed the hearts

of those in whom 'the truth' should dwell, the hearts of whom it should 'set free,' to be its better shrine, its living receptacle (pp. 40-41).

Indeed, in a pure church, Lambert maintains, the Spirit of God will direct all worship, and the contemplation of such a church leads the writer into an ecstasy of enthusiasm:

The Spirit rejoices to display his manifold power in diversity of gifts ministries and operations, dividing to every man severally as he will; if then we belong to any such system, so ordered that it prevents the Spirit thus profusely and variously putting himself forth; if for example, one man only is authorized to pray or otherwise edify the flock, and that perhaps only in a musty, fusty written form, or as much in the flesh, though *not* in such a form, whereas it is the mind of the Spirit that in the assemblies of the Saints (O beautiful and glorious assemblies, in the midst whereof standeth the Lord Jesus and his attentive angels) one should have a psalm, one a doctrine, one a tongue, one a revelation, and one an interpretation, and so all edify each other; if, I say, we are hedged in a system that precludes all this and damnably putteth God's glory under a bushel, let us by all means pray that we may with due despatch be tumbled out of it (pp. 53-54).

One suspects that Lambert, of whose spiritual development we know virtually nothing, had been unable to find a 'company of believers' with whom he could share his experience of conversion and who might have established him in his faith, but nevertheless his optimism is unwavering:

I will not despair. Even now the Church is rising from the ground on which she hath been lying; even now she stirreth herself up, and is beginning to recognize the high privileges and endowments of which, by the purchase and investiture of her Lord she was once seized; she sees them, I say, and wonders why she hath been so long content to want them. Yea she is altogether as a woman in travail, that laboureth to be delivered. And there are scribes, well instructed unto the kingdom, although in some points suffered still to err, who are giving richer and fuller apprehensions of Christ's person, glory and offices, than have for a long while been rife in the world. Above all a light hath fallen from heaven upon the page of prophecy, and thousands have been called to the hope of the revelation of the day of the Lord (p. 58).

Lambert's study of prophecy however, is to be no curious speculation for the biblical antiquarian. Rather it will be an aid to the piety and purity of the Church, as it is 'a doctrine to cut body and soul asunder . . . to snatch us out of the flesh and elevate us above the world and to sustain us in that elevation.' (p. 66) But

even as early as 1831 certain hermeneutical tendencies were already apparent which later were to become the stock-in-trade of Brethren dispensationalism. Lambert claims that Matthew xiv. 45-47 implies the existence of a well-ordered and well-governed church (such as 'no-one at present can show me') at the 'time our Lord comes into the air to receive his saints, a time quite distinct from his coming down to the Jews on earth' (pp. 62-63).

Along with Lambert's ebullient eschatological hopes he displays a characteristic concern about unity and the sin of denominationalism:

What mean these cursed names of division, Churchman, Quaker, Presbyterian? I know they are music in the ears of hell, and carnal man may be indifferent to them; but I know that one who is a disciple of the Lord Jesus should indignantly reject and disclaim any other title than that of 'saint' (pp. 67-68).

Surely, the writer continues, the revived church which he has been envisaging cannot fail to be united, but how will it be ordered? The answer is so simple that it would seem to be almost naive if we did not know that it was a solution that the Brethren were later to adopt as their own:

Why are there such scanty notices of church government and church order in the books of the New Testament, whereas those of the Law abound in the most minute and particular directions? Because the fulness of the Spirit's presence made them altogether unnecessary and *because that very omission was designed to be a method of forcing us to trust completely and implicitly in the Spirit's presence and the Spirit's teaching* (pp. 69-70).

On such a note of confidence *A Call to the Converted* is concluded. It manifests all the optimism of a young man of twenty-six and reflects the hopes of many earnest Christians at that time. It warrants such lengthy quotation partly because it appears to be completely unknown,⁵⁴ and also because it is remarkable that so many 'Brethren' attitudes are to be found so early in a single piece of writing. Even greater interest, however, attaches for our purposes to John Synge's reply, which enshrines both a more generous and more realistic approach to the church of the day, and also a 'Brethren' attitude almost forgotten in the course of time.

Synge's Reply

Broadly speaking, John Synge approved of Lambert's quest for a fuller experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit, but rejected his proposed course of secession:

Greatly indeed does my soul bless God for the precious truths it [Lambert's tract] unfolds, in calling the attention of the poor

scattered sheep of Christ to look for more ONENESS and more LOVE; in pointing out the necessity we have for a Reformation in our believing notions of the promises of the Holy Ghost, and in shewing so forcibly that *that* Reformation must be begun in love and unity among the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we would look for the full renewal of Pentecostal power. . . . I find no one trace among us of our being yet collectively partakers of that blessed Spirit, for where he dwells there will be abounding love to Christ, boldness for Christ, and affectionate unity among his members and therefore still farther are we from enjoying any of his outward power and gifts. In all these particulars my heart fully goes along with what our dear brother has set forth, with so much more perspicuity and power than I am capable of doing (pp. 1, 3).

But in spite of this agreement, Synge differs from Lambert over: what he says concerning the necessity of both coming out of the Established Church and testifying against (i.e. abusing) it, as a preliminary step to obtaining that unity and love among the brethren of Christ, in the absence of which and necessity for which I altogether agree with him. . . . It does appear to me that 'a church so strictly spiritual' as our friend speaks of, is not so easily attainable, or indeed not attainable at all 'until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, &c.' Is. xxxii. 15. (pp. 3, 4).

The basic ground on which Synge defends the Established Church is that it stands:

in a similar position to awakened Christians in our day, to that in which the Temple service stood to the Apostles *after* the day of Pentecost. . . . Let those that would meet me on the ground that the Established Church stands *higher* than the Temple service, remember that the latter stood on the direct enactment of God, and let those who would place it *lower* because of its corruptions, say, do they desire to speak worse of it than our Lord spoke of the Temple. . . . (pp. 4, 5).

Synge implores his readers to remember what a positive blessing the National Establishment

has been and is to our land, to have throughout it such pipes and conduits for the Word of God to run in, as are our Churches, while they set before the people who attend there so large a portion of that precious WORD in their services, in the course of a year, so much more, be it remembered, than any other denomination of Christians pretends to do; and which the Minister is not at liberty to select according to his own particular doctrines. . . . Deeply do I deplore that a man no sooner has his eyes open to desire a greater measure of spiritual food, than a

National Church is able to supply him with, than he thinks it necessary to turn his back on the Church altogether (pp. 6, 7).

Synge's argument here is based on the claim that the services of the Establishment are sound in form and teaching. He rebukes Lambert for the 'levity' of his reference to 'musty, fusty written forms.' In support of his own position he quotes rather effectively from another tract which Captain Hall had apparently sent to him:

It is curious that to these very '*written forms*' the other hostile pamphlet which you sent me, at the same time bears the following honourable testimony: 'For a CHURCH *strictly spiritual*, NO FORM, AS ALL ALLOW, COULD BE MORE EXPRESSIVE, NONE MORE SOUND (p. 3).

The quotation was from a tract of which no copy apparently has survived. It was entitled *A Protest against the National Establishment of England* and was written by George V. Wigram, another member of the group of radical evangelicals at Oxford who was later to be a leader among the Brethren.

The object of Synge's tract however, was to do more than merely defend the Establishment which he regarded as '*a store-fold rather than as a fattening-fold.*' (p. 8) He wants to go some way with Lambert in his suggestions but without seceding, and consequently his enthusiasm is for the prospect of an end to denominational division:

I do indeed thankfully hail the anticipations [in Lambert's tract] of some closer union in the wisdom and love of our Good Shepherd, through the power of the Holy Ghost, than any we are acquainted with (p. 9).

But together with this, Synge makes a counter-proposal. He suggests that without jettisoning the sound doctrine of the Establishment, people of like spirit

agreeing on the necessity for some closer fellowship among the children of God than public assemblies admit of . . . invite those, out of *every system*, who feel with them on these points, to assemble as often as circumstances will allow, in some convenient place, forgetting the distinguishing prominences which have kept them asunder; being brought together by the constraining love of Christ, and agreed that whatever unity of opinion *may be*, unity of spirit *must be* the work of the Spirit and not of the reasoning powers of man (p. 11).

Synge does not apparently envisage in this tract the breaking of bread taking place, but rather sees this as an occasion for meditation and prayer, the study of the prophetic scriptures and the investigation of such thorny questions as 'how far God's ancient people, the Jews, are interwoven with the hopes of the Church' (p. 12).

In conclusion Synge touches upon the most difficult aspect of his proposition. He believes that such meetings as he has proposed may be arranged 'without forsaking the National Church, without denouncing the National Church, or without attending meetings during her appointed hours of prayer.' (p. 13) Nevertheless he realizes that men who study together in this way may find themselves constrained to 'go by two and two into the villages, and teach and preach Jesus Christ, in the house, or out of the house, as may be convenient.' (p. 14) It is precisely here that the difficulty arises, and though he does not mention by name the preachers who were his guests at Buckridge a few months earlier, the fact that Bulteel's licence was withdrawn by the Bishop of Oxford after his West Country preaching tour is clearly what Synge has in mind when he imagines the possible consequences:

A minister for instance, on reading our dear brother's book, may be stirred up to commence such a meeting in his parish, or may see it to be his duty to join one, begun by others; and Canon law may be brought to bear upon him, to the depriving him of his Cure. How earnestly ought we to pray, that instead of denouncing the whole system of the Church, as many have done, when thus assailed for more zeal than carnal superiors will admit of, such a one should have previously counted the cost, and being prepared for such an issue, meet it and receive it in the full spirit of the Apostle's injunction [in I Peter ii. 20] (p. 15).

How much better, suggests Synge, would the testimony of a minister in this position be if, when suspended from his ministry by the authorities, he

take his seat among the congregation regularly while he continues at other times to teach and to preach Jesus Christ, and to join with the waiting disciples in his neighbourhood who are giving themselves to prayer and the word (p. 15).

The importance of this pamphlet which of necessity we have quoted at some length, lies in the fact that its author retained, as we have seen, his connexions with the Brethren movement for many years after he wrote it. His pamphlet reflects a point of view which, though never in the majority, was quite as 'primitive' as other early Brethren attitudes. Several points emerge which we must consider.

The fact that neither Synge nor Lambert emphasise the place of the Lord's Supper in their meetings, suggests that Newton's recollections were reliable when he said that Breaking of Bread began at Plymouth rather casually.⁵⁵

Secondly, Synge's use of the parallel of temple worship with the position of the Established Church, throws light on the development

of a more elaborate dispensationalism which later became characteristic among Brethren. If the brother who, like Synge, was reluctant to secede, used the argument that the disciples continued to worship in the Temple services, clearly it would be convenient for the separatist to claim that the church was not truly formed until the disciples had cast off all connexion with Judaism.⁵⁶ That the dispensationalist issue was already developing is apparent from the distinction that Lambert makes between the Jewish remnant and the Church, and from the fact that Synge considers the question of the relation of the Jews to the Church to be a suitable subject for further Bible study.

Most important however, is the fact that in Synge's pamphlet we have a reasoned apologia for 'Brethren' principles *without* secession. Some years ago in the pages of CBRF Journal a similar thesis was argued by my brother Mr. Philip Stunt and many Brethren were shocked by its apparent novelty. It will not be taken, I trust, as a breach of fraternal piety, if I observe that John Synge's proposals were far more consistent than those of Mr. Stunt who suggested that the Anglican pattern of liturgy would make a good basis for Brethren worship. Synge's idea was more logical as it maintained that Brethren worship should be supplementary to the Anglican services, and for that reason it would be generically different. If 'extra-establishment' meetings were to take the same liturgical form as Anglican services they would be redundant.

Synge's point of view was not in such a minority as later developments may have led us to think. In 1833 Darby seems to have been fairly sympathetic to Synge's argument as he expresses in a letter (April 30th) his anxiety about the proposed change at Limerick whereby breaking of bread will coincide with services of the Establishment—thus preventing people from attending both.⁵⁷

On the other hand, as Synge realized, the most difficult issue was for the minister like Bulteel whose gift and whose ministry was rejected by the Establishment. Would he have the grace to be subject to unspiritual authorities in the Church? It was easier for Synge who was a layman, and the fact that many Brethren were in or intending to take Holy Orders, explains the predominance of the separatist spirit.

It is also worth recalling that some separatist Brethren found their position faulty as time went on and grew more open in their approach, drawing nearer to Synge's own ideal. One such was Charles Hargrove who in 1835 had abandoned his clerical position in the Established Church, mainly under Darby's influence, but who later became far more kindly disposed to the Anglican communion. If he had not seceded in the somewhat bitter disillusion of

earlier difficulty, one suspects that he would have taken Synge's position. In fact the restraints of ecclesiastical authority upon his ministry⁵⁸ led him to secede because he was not prepared to submit and, in Synge's words, 'take his seat in the congregation regularly' while continuing 'at other times to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' By 1846 however, his outlook had changed considerably as the following incident demonstrates.

At one of the earliest meetings of the Evangelical Alliance when the constitution was being discussed, there was considerable surprise among many of the participants who had assumed that Plymouth Brethren would have nothing to do with the project, when Charles Hargrove announced that not only was he in full sympathy with the Alliance but also that he was a Plymouth Brother:

I feel just as much in communion with them as ever; but I do not feel so exclusively in communion with the Plymouth Brethren, as not to be just as much in communion with any brother in this room. Furthermore, anything God has given me to minister, I feel as free to minister in another place, as in any building of the Plymouth Brethren. . . . When I heard of this Alliance, my whole heart went out; and when I see the Basis, I see, permit me to say, (I hope I do not offend) that the grand principle of this Alliance is the principle of the Plymouth Brethren.⁹⁵

Hargrove's statement on this occasion is a striking recovery of Synge's original vision which in many ways did envisage the Brethren as a sort of Evangelical Alliance before that organization had even been thought of. The question that we cannot answer is whether Synge was influenced at all by the Moravians whose ecclesiology was so similar and whose Pietist meetings so resembled the sort of supplementary meetings that Synge was proposing.

The life of John Synge is worthy of our consideration for several reasons. First we are reminded that there was from the start a non-secessionist element in Brethren thinking. His ecclesiastical position was well argued and the Brethren were impoverished when his point of view disappeared from among them. There is still a good case for arranging services so that they will not clash with those of other Christians. A second point that Synge's career illustrates is that he was far from the socially conservative man of tradition that the early Brethren are often assumed to have been. In his concern for the social welfare of his tenants Synge was setting an example which, if it had been followed by other Irish landlords, might have changed the history of Ireland. Evidently there were among the early Brethren social as well as ecclesiastical radicals.

Synge's interest in new educational ideas was perhaps still more radical as he risked the wrath of critics who said he was threatening

the established order of society. Yet his commitment to child-centred education seems to have been deep and genuine. Its extent is still further illustrated in his relationship with his children. In contrast to so many families, most of Synge's children seem to have accepted rather than rebelled against their father's spiritual attitudes. In the case of his son Francis, Synge's ecclesiastical position seems to have narrowed somewhat. Instead of retaining his father's links with the Establishment, Francis regularly attended the Brethren meeting at Kilfee schoolhouse, but this may have been due to the influence of his wife Editha (née Truell) whose second husband was an Exclusive Plymouth Brother. Two other sons of John Synge were missionaries—one in the Aran islands and the other in the Australian bush. The piety of the youngest son, John Hatch Synge, is attested by his own son, the dramatist John Millington Synge, in his accounts of his childhood.⁶⁰ All this suggests a good relationship between the two generations. The testimony of godly children is an eloquent one, and all the indications are that John Synge's radicalism in social and ecclesiastical matters was accompanied by love and gentleness at home.

NOTES

- 1 K. C. Synge, *The Family of Synge or Sing*, (London 1937); A. Carpenter (ed.) *My Uncle John, Edward Stephens's Life of J. M. Synge*, (Oxford 1974) hereafter cited as *My Uncle John*.
- 2 G. D. Burtchaeli and T. U. Sadleir (ed.), *Alumni Dublinenses*, (Dublin 1935); J. Foster (ed.), *Alumni Oxonienses 1715-1886* (London 1887).
- 3 *A Biographical Sketch of the struggles of Pestalozzi to establish his system of education*, compiled and translated chiefly from his own works by an Irish Traveller [i.e. John Synge] (Dublin 1815). Also information from Mrs. Lily M. Stephens of Dublin, the widow of John Synge's great grandson, Edward M. Stephens.
- 4 *Ibid.* p. v.
- 5 Kate Silber, *Pestalozzi the Man and his Work*, (London 1965) p. 144.
- 6 *Ibid.* p. 147.
- 7 Trinity College Dublin Library Nos. 22Y 36; 22Y 36 No. 2; Papyrus Case E; Press 9 372 No. 5.
- 8 The letters are in the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, MSS. *Pestalozzi* 55a/365.
- 9 *The Christian Examiner and Church of Ireland Magazine* VII (1828) p. 337.
- 10 Letter 10th Dec. 1818 in Zurich Zentralbibliothek.
- 11 *Samuel Gobat Bishop of Jerusalem: A Biographical Sketch* drawn chiefly from his own journals, (London 1884) p. 41.
- 12 J. Cart, *Histoire du mouvement religieux et ecclésiastique dans le Canton de Vaud pendant la première moitié du dix-neuvième siècle* (Lausanne 1870-80) i. 120ff., 174ff. J. P. Greaves had a younger brother R. Greaves, Vicar of Deddington, Oxon (1822-37), who was an enthusiastic evangelical and a friend of both B. W. Newton and John Hill, Vice-principal of St. Edmund Hall. There are several references to him in Hill's Diary of which the following are perhaps the most interesting: '19 July 1823 Mr. Greaves and Mr. Meyers breakfasted with us . . . we found Dr. Mayow of whom we had heard mention made yesterday as having spent 3 years in Pestalozzi's establishment and having now set up a school of 30 boys at Epsom on that plan. Filled all the time with conversation on the subject of education.' '23 Sept. 1823 Mr. Greaves the elder brother of Mr. R. Greaves of Deddington called on his way to Town and brought with him some iron rods to make mathematical figures for John and George and a little book for the nursery. He has been for several years in Switzerland assisting Mr. Pestalozzi and entered very earnestly into the merits of his system.' Bodleian Library, *St. Edmund Hall MSS* 67/4 pp. 4b, 32b.
- 13 Letter to the writer from Mrs. Lily Stephens, Apr. 9, 1969.
- 14 *My Uncle John*, p. 8. The reference however, is misleading as there was 'no gathering of the Brethren' in Devon in 1827.
- 15 J. E. Ryland, *Memoirs of Dr. John Kitto*, (Edinburgh 1856) pp. 142-50, 153, 160, 189, 203, 231-32, 236.
- 16 *Ibid.* p. 289.
- 17 Mr. Coad suggests that this was only a temporary position, as Synge's main residence was at Glanmore, F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, (Exeter 1968) p. 36. In fact, Glanmore only came to John Synge on his father's death in 1831—an event that he could not have foreseen when he moved to Devon in 1827. Thus Craik's appointment may not have been quite so insecure as it seems in retrospect.
- 18 *Passages from the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik of Bristol*, ed. W. E. Taylor (London 1866) pp. 99ff.

- 19 Ibid. p. 109.
- 20 Ibid. p. 116.
- 21 Published in London 1831.
- 22 Later published by Bagsters, London 1864, see Craik's *Diary* p. 124.
- 23 *A Narrative of some of the Lord's dealings with George Müller*, written by Himself, (London 1881) i. 45.
- 24 H. B. Bulteel, *A Sermon on 1 Corinthians 2. 12 preached before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's on Sunday Feb. 6, 1831*, (Oxford 1831), p. 37.
- 25 M. R. D. Foot (ed.) *The Gladstone Diaries* (Oxford 1968) i. 343-46.
- 26 Bulteel, op. cit. pp. 51-52.
- 27 J. H. Philpot (ed.), *The Seceders 1829-1869*, (London 1931) i. p. 168.
- 28 For the current malaise at Oxford see T. C. F. Stunt, 'John Henry Newman and the Evangelicals,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* xxi (Jan. 1970) 65-74.
- 29 W. R. Ward, *Victorian Oxford*, (London 1965) pp. 38-39.
- 30 *Diary of Dr. John Hill* (See note 12) viii p. 36a.
- 31 Ibid. ix. p. 3b.
- 32 Newton's reminiscences are preserved in the Fry Collection, Newport, I.O.W. See *Large MS. Book* p. 279. There is however, no documentary evidence for Lambert's deprivation in the Hampshire Record Office, Winchester. The following have been consulted: (i) The visitation documents of Corpus Christi (E/8/C); (ii) The Wolvesey MSS. relating to Corpus Christi (A/9/A1); (iii) Bishop Sumner's Register 1824-63; (iv) The Day Book of the Bishop's Legal Secretary 1827-63.
- 33 Fry Collection, *Small MS. Book* 4 p. 118, 11 p. 148.
- 34 Fry Collection, *Large MS. Book* p. 279.
- 35 John Synge, *Observations on 'A Call to the Converted' as it relates to Members of the Church of England, addressed to Capt. P. Hall, R.N.* (Teignmouth 1831) p. 8.
- 36 *My Uncle John*, p. 9.
- 37 Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, (London 1837) ii. p. 144. In the 19th century Glanmore was often spelt Glenmore.
- 38 R. S. Brooke, *Recollections of the Irish Church*, (London 1877) p. 33.
- 39 Letter from Mrs. Lily Stephens to Dr. Kate Silber of Edinburgh, written in 1958.
- 40 For Rhind's earlier life see J. B. I[sbell], *Faithful unto Death, a Memoir of William Graeme Rhind*, (London 1863). The records of Sidney Sussex College indicate that Rhind only matriculated and took no exams. For Rhind's visit to Oxford see Hill's *Diary* viii. pp. 2a-b.
- 41 For the circumstances of Rhind's resignation from the Reformation Society see *Annual Report of the British Society for promoting the religious principles of the Reformation* (London 1832) pp. 25-9.
- 42 *Memoir of Rhind*, p. 41.
- 43 Ibid. p. 42.
- 44 Ibid. p. 43.
- 45 Ibid. pp. 50-51.
- 46 *My Uncle John*, pp. 9-12.
- 47 Mrs. H. Madden, *Memoir of the late Right Rev. Robert Daly DD.* (Dublin 1875) p. 148.

- 48 R. S. Brooke, *Recollections of the Irish Church*, (London 1877) p. 33. cf. p. 34 where Syngé is described as a 'skilled Hebraist.'
- 49 Craik's *Diary*, p. 167.
- 50 Ibid. p. 168.
- 51 Fry Collection, Letter from B. W. Newton at Glenmore, Wicklow to his mother, 23rd September 1833. Punctuation supplied.
- 52 Quoted in W. B. Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, (London 1901) p. 39. In the pamphlet, *Interesting Reminiscences of the Early History of 'Brethren' with Letters from J. G. Bellett and others*, (London n.d.) the same description is printed but with various differences. Clearly the account was circulating in MS. for some time and copying resulted in inaccuracies. On the basis of Bengel's textual principle, (*proclivi lectioni praestat ardua*) Neatby's version is the more reliable. The only important difference is that *Interesting Reminiscences* gives 183—instead of 1838.
- 53 William George Lambert, *A Call to the Converted*, (Oxford 1831). The only copy known to me is that in the British Library.
- 54 It is not mentioned in either H. H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, (London 1967) or F. R. Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter 1968).
- 55 Fry Collection, *Small MS. Book 4* p. 114, *Large MS. Book* p. 254.
- 56 It had long been a mystery to the present writer as to why the Scofield Bible had to wait until Acts 15. 13 before finding 'dispensationally the most important passage in the New Testament.' The simplest explanation is that before that point, the Editors felt that the early Christians had been far too involved with Jewish worship. In fact this was the sort of dispensationalism that Newton opposed, complaining, in a letter to Harris, Soltau and Batten in 1845 that people were teaching that 'the Pentecostal saints were not in church-standing but were formed for Godly citizenship in the earth.' (Fry Collection, Letter of March 30, 1845). Such a view, of course, was the only answer to Syngé's argument in favour of involvement with the Established Church.
- 57 *Letters of J. N. Darby* (London n.d., latest edition) i. p. 18.
- 58 H. H. Rowdon, *Origins of the Brethren*, p. 102.
- 59 *The Evangelical Alliance: Proceedings of the Conference held at Freemasons' Hall, London from Aug. 19th to Sept. 2nd 1846*, (London 1847) p. 149.
- 60 For details of Syngé's children, see *My Uncle John*, pp. 12-28.