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'Evangelicals and Culture in England 1790-1833'

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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A B S T R A C T

Evangelicals have traditionally been regarded as anti-intellectual, ascetic, and philistine. This thesis examines the truth of the allegation with reference to a particular generation, that which came to the fore after the death of Wesley and had largely died out as the Oxford Movement began to gather pace. It is common practice to analyse the influence of these Fathers of the Victorians upon their descendants. This study attempts instead to discover how far evangelicals were themselves influenced by the thought and taste of their age. It shows how their theology reflected that of their contemporaries, for evangelicals shared the eighteenth century belief in the priority of reason over the senses, and, rejecting pentecostalism, agreed with the apologists that Christianity would only be disseminated by the proper use of human means. In some respects therefore their theology encouraged cultural and intellectual pursuits, which were sometimes evangelistically useful, and were in any case assumed to be more concordant with spirituality than 'sensual' or 'worldly' activities. Evangelicals engaged in such pursuits to a far greater extent than is often recognised, both their competence and their taste bearing comparison with that of their non-evangelical fellows.

At the same time however other facets of evangelical theology militated against academic and aesthetic interests. Their increasingly rigid attitude to the Bible made evangelicals less willing and less able even than other dogmatic Christians to examine new ideas. Their deeply-rooted otherworldliness caused them to disparage any activity which was not immediately conducive to man's eternal well-being. Thus some evangelicals

eschewed all non-religious pursuits as 'vanity', while even the most cultured were unable theologically to reconcile their enjoyment of the arts with their faith. In their failure lies the justice of the traditional charge of philistinism.

ABBREVIATIONS

Societies

BFBS	British and Foreign Bible Society
BFSS	British and Foreign School Society
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
LMS	London Missionary Society
RTS	Religious Tract Society
SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
WMS	Wesleyan Missionary Society

Books and Periodicals

<u>BM</u>	<u>Baptist Magazine</u>
<u>CO</u>	<u>Christian Observer</u>
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
<u>EM</u>	<u>Evangelical Magazine</u>
<u>ER</u>	<u>Eclectic Review</u>
<u>MM</u>	<u>Wesleyan Methodist Magazine</u>

Note

The practice of the British Library Catalogue has been followed for the citation of volume numbers of periodicals. Thus the series and volume number is supplied for EM and ER, whereas the volumes for BM, CO, and MM are numbered consecutively from the beginning with no series division.

C O N T E N T S

1.	The Historiography of Evangelicalism	p 1
2.	The History of Evangelicalism	p 70
3.	The Theology of Evangelicalism	p107
4.	Faith and Fashion	p149
5.	Faith and Family Life	p200
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1. THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF EVANGELICALISM.

On one of its sides, Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints which Evangelicalism had laid on the senses and the intellect; on amusement, enjoyment, art; on curiosity, on criticism, on science. ¹

a. '...those writers, whom it is the fashion to call evangelical...': the problem of definition. ²

Any discussion of evangelicalism must properly begin with an attempt at definition, for it has been the fashion to call men of very varied creeds and levels of commitment evangelical. ³ Some historians, believing with G M Young that the movement was widely influential, have employed the term to describe attitudes and behaviour patterns common to Victorian society as a whole. Thus, Sir Robert Ensor virtually identified evangelicalism with Victorianism:

...nothing is more remarkable than the way in which evangelicalism in the broader sense overleaped sectarian barriers and pervaded men of all creeds; so that even T H Huxley, the agnostic, oozed it from every pore of his controversial writing... ⁴

A more recent historian, Ford K Brown, depicting evangelicalism as not only pervasive but also pernicious, has attributed to it the responsibility for all those nineteenth century developments which he finds most distasteful. He has

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1. G M Young, Victorian England, Portrait of an Age (1936, 1966 edn) p 5.
 2. W Roberts, Memoirs of the life and correspondence of Mrs Hannah More (2nd edn 1834) iii p 238. For further discussion of this phrase see below pp 44 - 45.
 3. In accordance with the general convention 'evangelical' and 'evangelicalism' are used as generic terms while 'Evangelical' and 'Evangelicalism' refer to the Anglican branch of the movement.
 4. R C K Ensor, England 1870 - 1914 (1936) p 137.

consequently been criticised by David Newsome on account of 'his tendency to describe as peculiarly Evangelical sentiments and beliefs which were certainly not peculiar to Evangelicals', and for labelling as evangelical all who were agents of the moral world which he deems to be the evangelical legacy:

Having arrived at the conclusion that the Evangelicals sought to reform (and ultimately convert) England by sponsoring religious and benevolent societies, he then assumes that those who joined in this work must therefore be Evangelicals. ⁵

A similar criticism must be levelled against Dr Kathleen Heasman who enthusiastically enlists churchmen of various persuasions under the banner of Evangelicals in Action. ⁶

While agreeing that the evangelical influence was extensive, Dr Heasman, unlike Professor Brown, regards that influence as beneficial. So too does Dr Ian Bradley, whose book The Call to Seriousness: the evangelical impact on the Victorians (1976) constitutes the most recent contribution to this school of writing:

To a large extent, Evangelical principles and practices triumphed and came to be adopted generally in nineteenth century England because they answered directly to the existing fears and aspirations of the age and fitted the demands of a rapidly developing and increasingly complex industrial society. ⁷

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5. F K Brown, Fathers of the Victorians (1961); D Newsome, 'Fathers and Sons', Historical Journal vi (1963) p 298.
 6. K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, an appraisal of their social work in the Victorian era (1962). Dr Heasman's book like Professor Brown's contains a mass of useful information; but its argument that modern social work methods derive from evangelicals' concern for the individual and from their humanitarian practices remains unproven. While the similarities between the two are extensively identified there is no causal analysis, nor is any comparison drawn between the influence of evangelicals and that of others.
 7. Dr Bradley's book constitutes a useful introduction to the study of evangelicalism and contains much real perception. But he uncritically asserts the predominant influence of evangelicalism on Victorian life and, like Dr Heasman, includes in his list of evangelicals people whose claim to the title must be questioned: the Victorian architect, G G Scott grandson of the renowned evangelical commentator (p 194), did not so regard himself when he wrote his Personal and Professional Recollections (1879); the 18th century religious writer Mrs Trimmer (p 23) was,

What Dr Bradley fails to consider is the legitimacy of labelling such 'principles and practices' as 'evangelical' albeit in Professor Ensor's 'broader sense'. Common to many works emphasising the extensiveness of evangelical influence, good or bad, is a failure to give due consideration to other factors which went into the making of Victorian England. Admittedly Drs Heasman and Bradley, who argue that evangelicalism was the motive force behind Victorian philanthropic and reformatory movements, pay lip-service to non-evangelical contributions, but they dismiss these, often with minimal examination, as comparatively insignificant.⁸ It is therefore salutary to appropriate Dr MacDonagh's warning about the other supposedly seminal influence on nineteenth century England:

In general, nothing is more mistaken than a 'blanket' prima facie assumption that 'useful', 'rational' or centralizing changes in the nineteenth century were Benthamic in origin.⁹

That evangelicalism was but one of the many influences which gave rise to the peculiarly Victorian frame of mind becomes evident in any analysis, however perfunctory, of eighteenth and early nineteenth century life. The spirit of philanthropy which Dr Heasman attributes primarily to evangelicalism was active if not widely institutionalised in the Hanoverian period characterised by Dr M G Jones as 'par excellence the age of benevolence':

The common tendency to date the provision of elementary education from 1870, or from the foundation of the National and British and Foreign School Societies in the early years of the nineteenth century, or from the

despite her fame, not accorded an obituary in the Christian Observer, leading organ of Anglican evangelicalism.

8. Eg Heasman, op cit pp 10 - 13; Bradley, op cit p 108.
 9. O MacDonagh, 'The nineteenth century revolution in government, a re-appraisal', Historical Journal 1 (1958) p 65.

establishment of Sunday Schools at the end of the eighteenth century, has obscured the efforts of educational enthusiasts throughout the eighteenth century to provide a means of free education for the lower orders in the four countries of the British Isles. ¹⁰

Similarly the rightful praise accorded to the evangelical opponents of the slave trade and of slavery has until recently tended to obscure 'the intellectually favourable climate' in which Professors Davis and Anstey argue they and their Quaker counterparts operated. ¹¹

If the seeds of Victorian philanthropy can be found in areas not necessarily subject to evangelical influence so too can those of propriety. Dr Clive describes the high seriousness and moral concern of the Edinburgh reviewers, men often scathing in their rejection of evangelicalism, and suggests that

Their native country supplied the reviewers with a two-fold heritage: Puritanism and Enlightenment. They retained the ethical postulates of the former along with the intellectual presuppositions of the latter.

Scottish Whigs disseminating this heritage to a public impelled to bid it welcome by the combined impact of French and industrial revolutions must take a place, however humble, beside the Evangelicals as progenitors of the nineteenth century English middle class ethic. ¹²

The exigencies of the French and industrial revolutions as Dr Clive suggests led many who were not evangelicals to adopt values and an ethic which have sometimes indiscriminately been described as evangelical.

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10. M.G Jones, The charity school movement (1964) pp 3 - 4, 6.
11. D B Davis, The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (1966); R Anstey, The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760 - 1807 (1975).
12. John Clive, Scotch Reviewers (1957) p 150.

Dr Soloway has stressed the prevalence of millenarian theories and belief in providential activity during the 1790s and succeeding decades as Englishmen of many theological persuasions shuddered at the sight of French depravity and speculated on the fearful possibility of an international conspiracy.¹³ The threat of invasion incited increased numbers of the affluent to attend church, maybe out of a sense of need, maybe in response to some primeval instinct which saw this as a means of averting catastrophe.¹⁴ The royal attempts to enforce morality and to avoid French permissiveness appealed to men who whatever their religious beliefs were concerned to safeguard the established order. Professor Brown's assumption that the suppression of vice was a 'peculiarly Evangelical activity', albeit subject to much Evangelical disapproval, has to be counterbalanced by the evidence cited in Dr Bradley's thesis, 'The Politics of Godliness': there were many non-evangelicals among the leading activists of the Proclamation and Vice Societies, and until the late 1820s 'every single measure introduced in the House of Commons which was directed against some vice or designed to improve public morals was brought up by a non-Evangelical'.¹⁵

The widespread assumption that the safety of the state went hand in hand with that of the church was reinforced by the collapse of throne with altar in France. In 1818 parliament responded to a highchurch appeal for the building of churches, while men divorced from the intensity

13. R A Soloway, Prelates and People (1969) pp 34 - 45.

14. Annual Register (1798) 'History of Europe' p 229.

15. F K Brown, Op cit p 428; I Bradley, 'The Politics of Godliness: Evangelicals in Parliament 1784 - 1832' (Oxford D Phil 1974) pp 115 ff.

of both evangelical and highchurch parties treated church matters with a seriousness all too often assumed to denote membership of one or other of these groups. Thus Professor Kitson Clark regards as highly significant

the development of a greater religious seriousness among men who may have been influenced by the example and thought of one or other party, but could not be considered as clearly members of either. Possibly Lord Liverpool might be considered in this number, and more certainly the second Sir Robert Peel, a conscientious churchman, who was neither an evangelical ... nor a highchurchman ... yet who did more for the Church of England than any other nineteenth century statesman. Some of the Bishops began to show an interest in church reform, such as Bishop Porteus, Bishop of London from 1787 to 1809, and Manners Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1805 to 1828. It was such men as these who were behind the legislative attempts to enforce residence and to provide for the proper payment of those curates who were left to take charge of parishes and who, after 1835, were responsible for the work of Peel's Ecclesiastical Commission, which probably saved the Church. ¹⁶

Church reform was part of a general move towards increased efficiency that was characteristic of the governments of the 1830s and subsequent decades. The forms of administration appropriate to a rural community were becoming increasingly unsuited to a more populous, mobile, and complex society, while the changes thus necessitated were encouraged by the new businessmen of the industrial revolution who imposed upon themselves and their employees an efficiency ethic not dissimilar to that of evangelicals. Thus the premium placed upon hard work and disciplined living, the condemnation of frivolity and license, were as much a product of industrialism as of evangelicalism, and characterised not only evangelicals such as Wilberforce but industrialists such as the Unitarian Josiah Wedgwood:

...the promiscuity and immorality that Arnold Bennett describes as the commonplace of the Staffordshire

16. G Kitson Clark, Churchmen and the Condition of England (1973) pp 47 - 48.

pot-bank had little chance to flourish in Wedgwood's factory. The reason was not so much morality as a desire for efficiency ... The life he designed for his workmen was not an indulgent one. They were not to have the luxury of downing tools for a wake or a fair; nor of working for three days in order to drink for four. The cherished St. Monday was to be unfrocked, and all the gods of idleness and mindless enjoyment similarly banished. Time was the new idol - together with care, regularity and obedience. There can be no doubt that the workmen lost much of their old liberty, and their lives much of its old variety. For in the brave new world envisaged by Wedgwood and his friends there was little place for brothels, alehouses, cock-fighting and bull-baiting for the ease and enjoyment of his workmen. In their place there would be schools for their children, hospitals for their sick, homes for their orphans, and societies, libraries and institutions for themselves. 17

The dissemination of this commercially motivated ethic prior to and independently of the revival is now widely recognised. Dr E P Thompson writes:

Long before the time of Hannah More ... the theme of the zealous husbandry of time had ceased to be particular to the Puritan, Wesleyan, or Evangelical traditions. 18

In an increasingly complex society such attitudes were not only prompted within obviously commercial circles. In 1784 Charles Jenkinson, 'the father of British civil servants', wrote to his son the future Lord Liverpool:

...you should not be satisfied in doing your exercises just so as to pass without censure, but always aim at perfection; and be assured that in doing so you will by degrees approach to it. I hope also you will avail yourself of every leisure moment to apply yourself to algebra and the mathematics: you will thereby attain not only a knowledge of those sciences, but by an early acquaintance with them you will acquire a habit of reasoning closely and correctly on every subject, which will on all occasions be of infinite use to you ... I would wish you for the present not to read any novels, as they will only waste your time, which you

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17. N McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Factory Discipline', Historical Journal iv (1961) pp 45, 51.
18. E P Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', Past and Present xxxviii (1967) p 89. Cf A Raistrick, Quakers in Science and Industry (1950) p 174 et passim.

will find not more than sufficient for the pursuit of more useful and important studies. ¹⁹

Jenkinson's letter could almost have been written by an evangelical for the way of life he recommended and the values he assumed were markedly similar to those urged on their sons by many evangelical fathers. Yet it is the latter whose influence upon Victorian society is often regarded as peculiarly seminal.

The imprecise use of the term 'evangelical' must therefore be criticised because it denies the multiplicity of other factors which contributed to Victorianism. It must be criticised too because it misrepresents evangelicalism itself. The sine qua non of evangelical faith was the belief that nothing but religion mattered. In their own terminology evangelicals were 'serious' Christians, testing all that they said and did by Biblical criteria. Thus, William Wilberforce claimed that

One of the main differences ... between real Christians and nominal consists in the cases in which they respectively apply religious principles. Even nominal Christians apply them on great occasions; real Christians apply them on small, that is on all ... ²⁰

It follows that nineteenth century evangelicals would not have understood Kathleen Heasman's claim that the 'Evangelical way of life' was shared by many 'with less definite religious convictions': the evangelical lifestyle was for them inseparable from the faith that produced it. ²¹ They might also have questioned Dr Bradley's suggestion that Lord Liverpool and Sir Robert Peel 'came from Evangelical homes'.²²

19. C D Yonge, The Life and Administration of Robert Banks second earl of Liverpool (1868) i pp 6 - 7.

20. Quoted Newsome, loc cit p 307 from a letter by Wilberforce to his daughter Elizabeth, 1823.

21. Heasman, op cit p 18.

22. The call to seriousness p 170.

Religious considerations do not appear to have informed Jenkinson when he urged diligence upon his son whose biographer comments:

Proud of the position to which he had raised himself by his political exertions and abilities, he from the first seems to have destined his eldest son to a similar career ... and being led by the expectations which he thus formed of him to urge upon him with especial earnestness the necessity of cultivating his abilities by the most diligent study. ²³

Jenkinson's own statement reinforces this interpretation for he assured his son 'Believe me, that the principal happiness I shall expect to enjoy in the decline of life is that which I shall derive from your prosperity and eminence'. ²⁴ No evangelical would have written that, or have omitted, as does Jenkinson, religious injunctions and an appeal to a sense of accountability before God. Moreover, no conscientious compiler of an evangelical biography would have ignored his subject's faith, for it was not only the focus of his life and thought but also explicit in every letter that he wrote. Evangelical seriousness was overt. Jenkinson and the first Sir Robert Peel may have been men of genuine religious commitment but the absence of evidence is almost certain proof that they were not evangelicals.

An evangelical can therefore be defined by reference to the obvious pre-eminence which he accorded to religion. It would however be wrong to suggest that evangelicals held the monopoly of either personal piety or religious seriousness. It is now increasingly recognised that the eighteenth century was not as spiritually arid as early historians of evangelicalism once suggested. Those

23. Yonge, op cit pp 5 - 6.

24. ibid p 7.

who have examined the origins of evangelicalism have pointed out with varying degrees of emphasis that the movement drew on vestigial puritanism and owed a substantial debt to the continuing tradition of highchurch piety in which a number of its leaders were nurtured. John Walsh, paying tribute to the seminal work of Elie Halevy, writes:

...the Revival, as Halevy remarked, was not a creation ex nihilo. Its rise and growth was a tribute to the forces which the national church still generated, and which were still often concentrated in its great voluntary societies, the S.P.G., S.P.C.K. and the religious societies. ²⁵

While some non-evangelical eighteenth century piety was expressed through these organisations, far more probably remains unrecorded: throughout the land individual clergymen struggled to recommend the faith in large unwieldy parishes often for negligible emolument. ²⁶ If a number of these independently experienced an evangelical conversion and adopted evangelical faith, others, most notably Jones of Nayland, practised and propagated a spirituality that remained independent of evangelicalism. ²⁷ Moreover, there was a greater degree of religious seriousness than is always acknowledged even among those who verged on latitudinarianism, so often the scapegoats of eighteenth century church history: the natural theologian William Paley entitled the first of his Sermons on several subjects 'Seriousness in religion indispensable above all other dispositions'. ²⁸

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25. J D Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', in G V Bennett and Walsh (eds), Essays in modern church history in memory of Norman Sykes (1966) p 144. On Halevy see further below pp 66 - 67.
26. See, for examples, A Skevington Wood, The Inextinguishable Blaze (1960) p 22.
27. A brief biography can be found in DNB.
28. The Works of William Paley D.D. (1838, new edn 1842) pp 713 - 18. One recent biographer quoting Paley's letters argues that 'To the Evangelicals Paley would seem cold and lacking in spiritual fervour' (M L Clarke, Paley, 1974 p 132). Another, however, stresses that the devotion, seriousness and piety 'manifest in his sermons

Evangelicals cannot therefore be identified by religious seriousness alone. While evangelicalism was the only movement, prior to the advent of Tractarianism, which laid stress upon this, it characterised a number of individuals who did not profess to be evangelical. A second test of evangelical commitment therefore is involvement in the organisations which the evangelical movement spawned. Evangelicals associated with other evangelicals. Their spirituality was not only personal but corporate, and found its outworking in the religious societies designed to revitalise church and nation. Where there is no evidence of such involvement it can be questioned whether the description of evangelical is appropriate.

But if most evangelicals were supporters of the societies, not all supporters were necessarily evangelicals.²⁹ In the absence of comparable bodies evangelical societies gained the support of many who, while in no way professing to be evangelical, could find no other context for their religious activity. In 1819 a correspondent of the highchurch anti-evangelical periodical The Christian Remembrancer stated that he had from the beginning been a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society, presiding and speaking at its meetings. He disapproved however of the Cambridge auxiliary's decision to undertake house-to-house visitation on the grounds that the practice was 'hostile to the peace and welfare of the Church of England' and subversive of his own role as parish priest. An editorial note confirmed that many 'respectable persons' were withdrawing from the society.³⁰

revealed a theologian whose personal feelings and aspirations bore a closer resemblance to those of the Evangelical than to those of the deist' (D L LeMahieu, The Mind of William Paley, 1976, p 22).

29. See above p 2,

30. The Christian Remembrancer i (1819) pp 212 ff.

Another reader, Reginald Heber, future Bishop of Calcutta, on the other hand was equally anxious that non-evangelicals like himself should not cease actively to encourage the work of the society. ³¹

Heber not only associated with evangelicals in Bible Society work; he also admired some of their publications and maintained a close friendship with John Thornton, nephew of Henry Thornton of Clapham. ³² But he had no sympathy at all with evangelicalism in its dissenting forms, and expressed his dislike of 'the Evangelical preachers considered as a body', objecting to 'their corporation spirit and the assumption of Evangelical as a party title'. ³³ Underlying this complaint was profound disagreement with the assertion that evangelicals' faith could be differentiated from that of the church at large and corresponded more closely to that of the Gospels. The title of Wilberforce's famous book, A practical view of the prevailing religious system of professed Christians in the higher and middle classes of this country contrasted with real Christianity (1797), is indicative both of evangelical exclusiveness and of the lack of tact which was sadly characteristic of much evangelical apologetic. The utter certainty that evangelical views corresponded to those of God understandably evoked the anger of those thus thrust unceremoniously beyond the pale: in 1812 the future Bishop, Richard Mant, responded by delivering the Bampton lectures

31. Amelia Heber, The Life of Reginald Heber D.D. (1830) i pp 519 ff.

32. ibid passim. On John Thornton treasurer of the BFBS and CMS see S Meacham, Henry Thornton of Clapham (1964) pp 56 - 57, and DNB under his father, Samuel Thornton.

33. Heber, op cit p 359.

under the title An Inquiry into the Justice of the Charge that the Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy. 34

Evangelicals can therefore be defined not only in terms of religious seriousness and activity, but also by reference to their belief about what constituted 'the Gospel'. It is however strikingly difficult adequately to differentiate between evangelical doctrines and those propounded by others. Thus, the staunch churchman Canon Overton in his useful and sensitive work on the revival suggested that the term 'evangelical'

is not altogether a satisfactory one, because it seems to imply that this school alone held the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. But this was by no means the case. All the great features of that system which is summed up in the term 'the Gospel' may be plainly recognised in the writings of those theologians who belong to a different and in some respects a violently antagonistic school of thought. The fall of man, his redemption by Christ, his sanctification by the Holy Spirit, his absolute need of God's grace both preventing and following him - these are doctrines which an unprejudiced reader will find as clearly enunciated in the writings of Waterland, and Butler, and Warburton as by those who are called par excellence Evangelical writers. And yet there is a sense in which the latter may fairly claim the epithet 'Evangelical' as peculiarly their own; for they made what had sunk too generally into a barren theory a living and fruitful reality. The truths which they brought into prominence were not new truths, nor truths which were actually denied, but they were truths which acquired under the vigorous preaching of the revivalists a freshness and a vitality, and an influence over men's practice, which they had to a great extent ceased to exercise. 35

An analysis of some of the doctrines which Overton listed serves to test his thesis and to reveal the difference

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34. For Mant who was to become chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury (1813) Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenoragh (1820) and of Down and Connor (1823) see DNB.
35. Abbey and Overton, The English Church in the eighteenth century (1878, new edn 1906) p 314. See also J. H. Overton, The Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth century (1886), The English Church in the nineteenth century (1894), the latter work despite its title covering only the years up to 1833.

between evangelicals' belief and that of others. Evangelicalism centred on soteriology and its soteriology centred on the Cross. Thus, in 1811, Charles Simeon, the most influential of all Evangelical clergymen, entitled a university address 'Christ crucified, or evangelical religion described'. Taking as his text St Paul's statement 'I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified', he argued that

In proportion as any persons in their spirit and in their preaching, accord with the example in the text, they are properly denominated 'evangelical'; and in proportion as they recede from this pattern, their claim to this title is dubious or void. ³⁶

Simeon would not have denied that others preached about the atonement. What he objected to was the nature and emphasis of their preaching. Like Simeon, William Paley believed that Christ's death was sacrificial and his sermon 'The efficacy of the death of Christ' comprised the citation of numerous Biblical texts supportive of this view. But although Paley asserted that the crucifixion somehow effected human salvation, he made no attempt to explain how this was done, suggesting that it was beyond man's comprehension. Indeed implicit in his preaching was the assumption that redemption was essentially a transaction within the Godhead efficacious whether or not men knew of it: 'It was only for a moral purpose that the thing was revealed at all; and that purpose is a sense of gratitude and obligation'. ³⁷ Simeon in contrast believed that it was essential for men to

36. C Simeon, Horae Homileticae (1819 - 20) ix p 319. The sermon is reproduced in A Pollard (ed), Let Wisdom Judge, University addresses and sermon outlines by Charles Simeon (1959). On Simeon see W Carus, Memoirs of the Rev. Charles Simeon (1847); A W Brown, Recollections of the Conversation Parties of the Rev. Charles Simeon (1863); C Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (1940); M Hennell and A Pollard, Charles Simeon 1759 - 1836 (1959); H E Hopkins, Charles Simeon of Cambridge (1977).

37. Paley, op cit p 774.

understand 'the doctrine of the crucifixion' and to appropriate for themselves what Christ had done. ³⁸

Paley expounded his views more fully in a further sermon 'All stand in need of a redeemer', clearly aimed at those who asserted salvation through works: he pointed out that even the best of men were painfully aware of the poverty of their service, and knew that their good deeds were all too often inspired by selfish motives; the Scriptural teaching that God had provided a redeemer was therefore 'much more satisfactory' than reliance upon human merit, and accorded with man's acknowledged sense of need. ³⁹ With all of this evangelicals could agree but their belief was expressed in much starker terms. Rather than arguing that men could not be sure that they deserved heaven, evangelicals maintained that they were positively bad, and moreover estranged from God. All men were inherently depraved, at enmity with God, and consequently under his condemnation. Simeon used the language of redemption and mediation much more exactly than did Paley, and, unlike Paley, frequently utilised the term 'reconciliation': through the death of Christ individuals were not only freed from the guilt of their sin and thereby admitted to heaven, but were also brought into a restored relationship with God, that profoundly affected their immediate lifestyle. Paley was concerned that men should live moral and godly lives but he did not on the whole relate this demand to his belief about the atonement: the death of Christ was for him primarily the means of facilitating man's

38. Pollard (ed), op cit p 105.

39. Paley, op cit pp 775 - 77.

entrance to heaven. In contrast the cross was for evangelicals the lynchpin of their faith, affecting not only their future but their present state, constraining them to that obedience which, they believed, would lead to increasing holiness. 40

Canon Overton's argument is clearly supported by evangelical emphasis upon the practical consequences of belief in the atonement. But a greater differentiation between evangelical beliefs and those of others needs to be made: at the time both evangelicals and their opponents were convinced that they were preaching different gospels. Thus Wilberforce sought to expose 'inadequate' and 'mistaken' conceptions of 'the corruption of human nature' and 'the terms of acceptance with God', while the Christian Remembrancer later protested that evangelicals exaggerated the corruption of human nature and undervalued good works. 41

The distinction between the beliefs of Paley and

40. See for example the conversation in Rowland Hill's popular Village Dialogues iv (1803) p 56, in which the preaching of 'Mr Legal-Definition' is condemned as insufficiently evangelical by 'Mr Worthy' who complains that 'all the time was taken up upon the duty of forgiving our enemies'. 'Mr Lovegood' replies 'And what a fine opportunity he had of impressing that excellent duty, from evangelical principles, when we are directed "to forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us?" It is much to be admired, how closely St Paul urges all social and relative duties, as resting upon no other principles than those that are evangelical; as though he knew no other argument to be conclusive among Christians, but what sprung from the atonement and salvation of our Lord...' On Hill see below p 102.
41. See the chapter headings of W Wilberforce, A Practical View...; Christian Remembrancer i (1819) 'On the omissions and exaggerations of what is termed evangelical preaching' pp 273 ff.. The complaints about evangelical omissions cannot be sustained when tested against volumes of evangelical sermons. That they were made reflects the extent of fear and misunderstanding of evangelicalism.

Simeon confirms the view that evangelicals laid far greater stress upon total depravity than did their non-evangelical fellows.⁴² The question of good works is more complex for here there was a greater range of evangelical opinion: some evangelicals, quickly disowned by the rest of the movement, occasionally fell into antinomianism; at the other extreme John Wesley like William Paley believed that the death of Christ was the cause of men's salvation which was conditional upon their continued good living.⁴³ Nevertheless it is perhaps possible to distinguish between non-evangelicals and evangelicals of all persuasions by reference to their respective emphases upon human endeavour and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Christian Remembrancer feared that evangelicals' concern for the activity of the Spirit led them to ignore human agency; evangelicals believed that undue emphasis upon human activity derogated from the finished work of Christ. Thus whereas the former stressed that, while no good could be done without the Spirit, he 'co-operated' with men's own endeavours and resolutions, the latter maintained that human endeavour and resolution were themselves the

42. For further discussion of this doctrine see below pp114 - 15.

43. On the antinomian controversy of 1816 see CO xv (1816) passim and the charge delivered by the evangelical Bishop, Henry Ryder, to the clergy of Gloucester in the same year pp 17 ff. For Wesley's view that man is saved 'not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition' see Davies and Rupp, A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain 1 (1965) pp 176 - 79, and J D Walsh 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals in the eighteenth century: with special reference to Methodism' (Cambridge Ph.D. 1956) pp 70 ff. Cf Paley, op cit pp 778 - 80 'The efficacy of the death of Christ consistent with the necessity of a good life; the one being the cause, the other the condition of salvation'. Similarly Hannah More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (3rd edn 1809) 1 p 58, maintained that 'salvation is not less the free gift of God, because he has annexed certain conditions to our obtaining it'.

product of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴ The difference was but one of emphasis but in some cases the difference in emphasis amounted to the propagation of a different theological system.

Evangelicals had no doubt that their theology was Biblical and they criticised those who upheld different systems for propounding 'unscriptural doctrine'. But while they can to some extent be defined by their attitude to the Bible, the distinction between their belief and that of others is again less immediately obvious than they and their more partisan historians assumed. In many respects evangelicals' claim to be simple 'Bible Christians' was more a warcry than a means of distinguishing them from their fellow Christians. Both regularly sought to defend their views by Biblical analysis, for it was commonly accepted, outside deistic circles, that the Bible constituted the authoritative divine revelation. It is therefore anachronistic to define eighteenth and early nineteenth century evangelicalism in terms of a 'conservative' approach to Scripture for evangelicals were no more conservative than their 'orthodox' contemporaries, many of whom identified revelation with the record, believed that the Bible was self-authenticating and the Genesis story historical and factual. H D McDonald writes that 'although the Evangelicals gave expression to what has been called a "Bible-religion" as distinct from the "Church-religion" of the orthodox, the place

44. Christian Remembrancer, loc cit. Wesley, Works (1872 authorised edn) vi 'Sermons ii series' LXXXV 'On working out our own salvation': 'If he did not work, it would be impossible for you to work out your own salvation' (p 511).

given to the Scriptures was in each case the same'.⁴⁵ John Wesley in his highchurch pre-evangelical period preached on the sufficiency of the Scriptures and warned against adding to them.⁴⁶ Similarly Heber sought to convert a Catholic parishioner by arguing that his church was out of conformity with the Word of God:

God has given no laws to men which are not contained in the Sacred Volume; nothing which is not grounded on Scripture can be necessary to be believed; nothing which is contrary to Scripture can safely be taught or practised. If then we prefer any human authority whatever to the written word of God, we fall under the heavy condemnation pronounced by Christ against the Pharisees, where He saith that they vainly sought Him, while they taught 'for doctrine the commandments of men', and where He complains that they had rendered 'the commandments of God of none effect through their traditions'.⁴⁷

The charge which Heber brought against Catholicism, latitudinarians like Bishop Watson levelled against their own church. In an attempt to repeal the requirement that clerics subscribe to the thirty nine articles, Watson argued that these were but the fallible word of man; the inspired Word of God should be the sole determinant of doctrine, and each man should be free to judge for himself what was taught in Scripture.⁴⁸

The similarity between the professed views of both Watson and Heber and evangelicals is evident. Evangelicals differed from Watson however in their certainty that Scripture contained clearly identifiable and consistent, if paradoxical,

45. H D McDonald, Ideas of Revelation, an Historical Study A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860 (1959) p 245. Chapter vi contains an outline of the arguments of some non-evangelical Bampton lecturers.

46. ibid p 246.

47. Heber, op cit i pp 408 - 09

48. Haddon Willmer, 'Evangelicalism 1785 - 1835' (unpublished Hulsean Prize Essay 1962) pp 24 ff.

doctrine. Watson and others opposed to subscription were concerned to effect the liberalisation of belief.

Evangelicals in contrast assumed that each individual who sincerely subjected himself to Scripture would in due course come to hold, not one of a number of possible faiths, but clearly defined 'evangelical' belief.

At the heart of this assumption lay the conviction that the Holy Spirit guided the sincere reader of the Old and New Testaments. It was again their emphasis upon the activity of the Spirit that most obviously differentiated evangelicals' attitudes to the Bible from those of their fellows. It is significant that the term 'fundamentalist' characterising evangelicals by a conservative approach to Scripture dates only from the 1920s.⁴⁹ Older synonyms such as 'enthusiastic' and 'spiritual' define by reference to the Spirit rather than the Word. Belief that the Spirit spoke through the Word led evangelicals to assume with the early nonconformists that 'the Lord hath yet more truth and light to break forth from his Word'. Thus, William Carey, the first Baptist missionary, was gripped by the challenge 'Go ye into all the world' neglected by previous generations.⁵⁰ Similarly John Wesley came to believe that the Word was challenging the existing formularies and practices of the Church through which Heber assumed it was properly expressed. Scripture was for Carey and Wesley as for Heber 'the truth once and for all delivered to the saints' but it was dynamic as well as authoritative.

49. The term which originated in America was not in common usage in England when the 1933 edn of the Oxford English Dictionary was produced.

50. W Pearce Carey, William Carey (1923, 8th edn 1934) chs vi, vii.

Disregard for Anglican ecclesiastical order, most blatant in Wesley, is frequently assumed to be another distinguishing characteristic of evangelicalism. For evangelicals appeared to their contemporaries to believe in a wild and iconoclastic Spirit who neither utilised divinely appointed channels of blessing nor respected divinely given order. But while it is safe to suppose that in the early nineteenth century all dissenters, save Unitarians and Quakers, were evangelicals, it cannot be assumed that evangelical Anglicans in many respects sympathetic to dissenters shared their disapproval of the ecclesiastical organisation of the established church.

The difference between the attitudes of Evangelicals who remained within the church, and Methodists, who eventually left it, was stressed in one of the few histories of the Evangelical party that published by G R Balleine in 1908:

Quite early in the Revival, long before the point of ordination had been raised, the forces began to fall apart into two divisions ... All the Methodists, like their leader, claimed the world as their parish; they would not hear of confining themselves to work in a single village. The Evangelicals, on the other hand, were in danger of making their parish their world. Many of them strongly disapproved of the itinerant system, and even those who itinerated most always put their parish work on a higher level. ⁵¹

More recently Dr Walsh, following in the footsteps of Henry Venn of the CMS and of Abbey and Overton, has argued that the

51. G R Balleine, A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England (2nd edn 1933) pp 50 - 51. Other accounts are listed by Charles Smyth, 'The Evangelical Movement in Perspective', Cambridge Historical Journal vii (1943) p 167. Canon Smyth's article remains an invaluable guide to Evangelical historiography. A brief but useful survey of the historiography of evangelicalism can be found in Daniélou, Couratin and Kent, Historical Theology (The Pelican Guide to Modern Theology ii, 1969) chs vii, viii, x.

two movements, far from 'falling apart' were distinct from the beginning. Evangelicalism was not just an offshoot of Methodism as is so often asserted, but an independent although contemporaneous development. Thus many Anglican clergymen, totally ignorant of the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield, were converted through reading their Bibles in the quiet of their own vicarages.⁵² Such were Walker of Truro and Adam of Winteringham.⁵³ In his important and sadly unpublished thesis, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals in the eighteenth century with especial reference to Methodism', which ranges far more widely than its title might imply Dr Walsh suggests that there were doctrinal as well as organisational disagreements between such men and Wesley, one facet of which was the belief that church order and doctrine were organically related.⁵⁴

If the disagreement between Evangelicals and Methodists dates back to the earliest years of the revival, it became increasingly marked as time went on. While some first generation Evangelicals, most notably John Berridge, had taken an almost wanton delight in irregularity, scorning the limitations placed by the parish structure upon the salvation of souls, those who came to the fore around the turn of the century were universally scrupulous in their ecclesiastical obedience. In the frenzied post-revolutionary period, the desirability of order infected Evangelicals such as

52. Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', loc cit p 136.

53. See Balleine, op cit passim. On Walker see G C B Davies, The Early Cornish Evangelicals 1735 - 60 (1951). The most detailed account of Adam of which I know is provided in Dr Walsh's doctoral thesis.

54. p 64. The other doctrinal disagreements listed by Dr Walsh concern predestination, total depravity, the role of good works, sanctification and assurance.

Simeon just as thoroughly as it reinforced the beliefs of 'high and dry' churchmen like Daubeny and Lord Sidmouth.

Thus, Canon Charles Smyth has found it appropriate to entitle his important book, Simeon and Church Order.⁵⁵

Simeon's immense influence over successive student generations of Evangelical ordinands did much to disseminate a concern for regularity throughout the Evangelical parishes of England. Nor were clerics alone affected by the change of attitude;

biographies reveal that laymen like William Wilberforce and Hannah More became uneasy as they grew older about attending dissenting chapels which they had frequented without qualm in their youth.⁵⁶

Nevertheless if Evangelicals were more solicitous of church order than their opponents always recognised, they found it impossible to accord to the Church of England that total loyalty which the high and dry school demanded. Professor Geoffrey Best has suggested that they maintained an essentially ambiguous love-hate relationship with the

55. For Berridge see Smyth, Simeon and Church Order (1940) ch iv. For Daubeny and Sidmouth see DNB.

56. Cf Teignmouth, Memoir of ... John Lord Teignmouth (1843) ii p 60. On his return from India in 1798, Shore, future Lord Teignmouth and BFBS president, barely knew the difference between Church and Dissent. He subsequently became a very loyal Anglican refusing as did Wilberforce to attend the preaching of even so renowned a dissenter as Robert Hall: R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) v p 140. Cf ii p 351; iii p 422; iv p 318. NB also H Thompson, The Life of Hannah More (1838) pp 342 - 51. Both these biographies to some extent reflect the church consciousness of their compilers, who exaggerate that of their subjects. Note however the testimony of the Methodist Thomas Jackson, Recollections of my own life and times (1873) p 181 in which he records that Wilberforce invited a Methodist involved in the abolition campaign 'to spend a few days at his house; but he would not allow the Methodist minister to pray with his family!' For a discussion of the Wilberforce biography see Newsome, loc cit pp 300 ff. Recent studies of Wilberforce have been produced by R Furneaux (1974) and J Pollock (1977). The standard biography of Hannah More is by W Roberts, op cit; the latest and most balanced is by M G Jones (1952).

established church. Although it was 'potentially their ideal of a visible church' and dissent was an evil, they nevertheless refused to equate the Church of England with the Church invisible to which alone they owed total allegiance.⁵⁷ Thus they admitted that a man might properly become a dissenter if it was impossible for him to gain due spiritual nourishment within the establishment. They believed that activity to encourage membership of the national church was ultimately of secondary importance to the task of Christianising the people and so they co-operated with dissenters in various undenominational societies, thus convincing their opponents that they were less than loyal to their own church. Evangelicals were always Christians first and Churchmen second, and recognised a distinction between the two roles.

So to a lesser extent did dissenters. The eminent Congregationalist, R W Dale, was later to claim that the distinctiveness of dissenting churchmanship had been lost when those converted through the ministry of particular preachers joined the churches under their charge with no consideration of denominational peculiarities.⁵⁸ Dale can be criticised for overstating his case for Evangelical Magazine contributors regularly asserted that they were dissenters on principle and discussed in detail not only the beliefs that distinguished them from Anglicans but also those at issue between themselves.⁵⁹ But if dissenters like

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57. G Best, 'The Evangelicals and the Established Church in the early nineteenth century', Journal of Theological Studies new series (1959). NB also Professor Best's thesis 'Church and State in English Politics 1800 - 33' (Cambridge Ph.D. 1955), ch vii.
58. R W Dale, History of English Congregationalism (1907) p 589.
59. EM i series xviii (1810) p 504. For the foundation of the Evangelical Magazine and the nature of such debates see below pp 72, 74 - 75.

Anglicans were more staunch in their churchmanship than is always recognised they too were forced to modify their exclusiveness as a result of evangelistic co-operation. Assuming that seventeenth century dissent provided a definitive model against which all later developments could be tested, Dale perhaps failed to recognise the extent to which churchmanship like doctrine is conditioned by prevalent circumstances. Thus in respect of the latter Professor Nuttall has observed 'The theology of Calvinism arises, naturally and properly, as a theology of the people of God. An Arminian theology arises equally naturally as a theology of mission to the unbeliever'.⁶⁰ In similar fashion recognition of other churches arose naturally and properly as a theology of evangelical co-operation. While Joseph Kinghorn, an evangelical dissenter of the old school, continued to argue that only those baptised on profession of faith should share 'table fellowship', other Baptists, most notably Robert Hall, were loath to exclude from communion those of whose Christian sincerity they had no doubt.⁶¹

If on the one hand evangelicals acknowledged that members of other denominations were truly Christian, on the other Anglicans in particular maintained that a baptised and indeed ordained member of their own communion might be in Wilberforce's words a 'professed' rather than a 'real' Christian. Underlying the distinction made by Anglicans

60. G Nuttall, 'The Influence of Arminianism in England', *The Puritan Spirit* (1967) p 77.

61. M Hood Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn of Norwich* (1855) pp 355 ff; ch xxii. That the pamphlet debate (1815 - 27) on the subject of closed communion took place at all is indicative of a continuing concern for churchmanship.

and dissenters alike between commitment and churchmanship was the belief that a 'real' Christian was one who could testify to conversion.

It would be wrong to suggest that evangelicals alone believed in conversion. In a conciliatory sermon 'On the doctrine of conversion' Paley readily agreed that there were some men, including some churchgoers, who needed to be converted, men who if they professed Christianity possessed only its form, and whose lives were totally uninfluenced by 'internal religion'. Furthermore there were some who, regularly allowing themselves to indulge in some particular sin, equally required conversion. But Paley and those who wrote in like vein were clearly anxious to reassure sincere Christians who could not testify to a time when they had passed from 'error' to 'truth'. There were, Paley argued, many Christians

who are, and have been, in such a religious state that no such thorough and radical change as is usually meant by conversion is necessary for them; they need not be made miserable by the want of consciousness of such change.

To preach conversion to such people, Paley maintained, was utterly inappropriate, although he believed that it was all-important to preach on the need for constant improvement. ⁶²

Anglican evangelicals were equally concerned to reassure those who could not cite the date and place of their conversion. Some expressed profound disapproval of the 'enthusiasm' and emotionality of some Methodist conversions, and of the tendency to equate conversion with the sudden experience of religious certainty. ⁶³ Their biographies

62. Paley, *op cit* pp 737 - 41.

63. See for example *CO* xxxii (1832) pp 783 - 85; xxxiii (1833) p 795.

(like those of some old dissenters) reveal that many Evangelicals never experienced so sudden and distinctive a conversion: on the contrary they agonised over months and years wondering if they were truly Christian, and eventually attained peace of mind in the gradual awareness that they were manifesting those fruits of the Spirit, which they regarded as the only proof of true conversion.⁶⁴ Their belief was clearly expressed by Charles Simeon, who, in a sermon 'On the New Birth', explicitly repudiated the allegation that Evangelicals expected instantaneous conversion:

It is supposed by many, and indeed affirmed by some, that we require a sudden impulse of the Holy Spirit, which without any co-operation on the part of man, is to convert the soul to God; and that we require this change to be so sensibly and perceptibly wrought that the subject of it shall be able to specify the day and hour when it took place.

But all this we utterly disclaim.

64. See for example the biographies of such notable Evangelicals as Hannah More, William Wilberforce, and Zachary Macaulay (Knutsford, Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay, 1900, p 114), and among dissenters, I Taylor, The Family Pen, Memorials ... of the Taylor Family (1867), E R Conder, Josiah Conder, a memoir (1857) p 64. Conder was editor of the Eclectic Review (see below p 76.) which maintained 'we would not attempt to fix the date ... of any man's conversion', ii series xviii (1822) p 489. A similar stance was adopted by George Burder, editor of the more enthusiastic Evangelical Magazine, who told his sons that God alone knew who was converted (H F Burder, Memoir of Rev George Burder, 1833, pp 180, 207). Cf EM ii series vi (1828) p 477 where it was stressed against Calvinist assertion that no-one could be sure that he possessed an 'interest in Christ' until his faith had been tested by its fruits. This belief led to a widespread suspicion of deathbed conversions which, while sometimes genuine, could not be so proved eg EM i series xix (1811) p 167; ii series ii (1824) p 438. F W B Bullock must therefore be criticised for citing only instances of crisis conversion in his book of case histories, Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain 1696 - 1845 (1959).

Simeon stressed that God could if he so wished, and sometimes did, convert men in this way:

...no man in the universe is authorized to say that he cannot, or shall not, or will not, do it. But we never require anything of the kind: we require nothing sudden. It may be so gradual that the growth of it, like the seed in the parable, shall at no time be particularly visible, either to the observation of others, or to the person's own mind. It may 'spring and grow up, he knoweth not how'.⁶⁵

Where Simeon differed from Paley was in his assertion that conversion, whether a recognisable or imperceptible experience, instantaneous or gradual, was an essential part of the spiritual progress of all men.⁶⁶

A religion which emphasises conversion, however defined, and which differentiates between commitment and institutional membership, inevitably tends towards individualism. Many who moved from Evangelicalism to Tractarianism later criticised the faith of their childhood for its failure to nurture corporate awareness, a complaint which was also levelled against the dissenting communions by R W Dale:

The Evangelical Revival insisted on the union of the individual saint with Christ; but the union of the Church - an organised society of saints with Christ was not familiar to it. It cared little for the Church; its whole solicitude was for the rescue of the individual sinner from perdition and the growth in holiness of the individual Christian. It failed to recognise the great place of the Church, both in the rescue of men from irreligion and in the discipline of Christian perfection.⁶⁷

65. Pollard (ed), op cit p 51.

66. Cf. the review of Paley's sermons in CO viii (1809) pp 239 - 41.

67. Dale, op cit p 590. Cf among highchurch Anglican comments those of W E Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement; its parentage, progress, and issue', British Quarterly Review lxx (1879) pp 10, 14, reproduced in Gleanings of Past Years (1879) vii.

A later historian, Standish Meacham, a master of pithy phrases, has argued that their diaries epitomise the way in which evangelicals relied on themselves for the care of their souls. Corporate worship was but a means to that end:

For the Evangelical, church was not a temple; rather a sacred schoolroom. He came not so much to worship with others as to be told how he might better find God by himself. The sermon - not the sacrament - that was the thing .⁶⁸

It is undoubtedly correct that the focus of evangelical thinking was individualistic rather than corporate. Thus, evangelicals emphasised that each person would eventually stand alone before the judgment throne of God where only his own faith and experience would be of any avail. So possessed were they with the necessity of personalised religion that they laid little stress upon the mystery of the church, its continuity through the ages, its corporate stewardship of the faith. Those who encountered such beliefs within Tractarianism were rightly critical of the imbalance of evangelical teaching. Moreover, Dale was right to imply that with the advent of mass preaching dissenters more and more assumed that the Spirit spoke through and to the individual rather than through and to the church meeting as a whole.

But the extent and nature of evangelical individualism must not be exaggerated. In the first place evangelicals were not isolationist in their faith. While they stressed the importance of personal experience, they

68. S Meacham, 'The Evangelical Inheritance', Journal of British Studies iii (1963) p 91.

believed that individual faith should be nurtured within a supportive context of corporate fellowship: the clerical society and class meeting owe their origins to the revival as do the greatest hymns of Christian fellowship.⁶⁹ If Anglican highchurchmen had a greater awareness of an ecclesiastical tradition stretching back through the ages, evangelicals were probably more aware of the church lateral.

Secondly evangelical individualism did not constitute self-reliance. It is here that Standish Meacham interestingly inverting the Christian Remembrancer's charge falls down so badly in his depiction of evangelical faith: no evangelical would have written 'With Christ's help, man could restore God's image to his soul' for the emphasis upon human endeavour detracts from the finished work of Christ.⁷⁰ Nor would an evangelical have defined his faith as

a belief in man's ability through Christ's intercession to face God and find salvation by himself. Doctrine, dogma, liturgy, sacraments, all might be dispensed with, and still man might discover Christ within him. All that one needed was a willing heart and the good tidings of the Bible.⁷¹

The description applies more aptly to Quakerism than to evangelicalism, for evangelicals firmly believed that religious experience resulted not from the discovery of some Platonic spark within oneself but from the infusion of divine grace from without. Thus not only were doctrine

69. See for example those of Charles Wesley grouped under the heading 'The communion of saints', Methodist Hymn Book (1933). For an account of clerical societies see M M Hennell, John Venn and the Clapham Sect (1958) Appendix B pp 276 - 79.
70. See above p 17; Meacham, loc cit p 90. It is significant that Dr Meacham makes no mention of the atonement in his delineation of evangelical faith. The same weakness in theological analysis is evident in his otherwise useful biography, Henry Thornton of Clapham 1760 - 1815 (1964).
71. Meacham, loc cit p 94. A similar misunderstanding is evident in Naomi Royde Smith's biography of an evangelical novelist, The State of Mind of Mrs Sherwood (1946) p 204 where unwillingness to summon a priest or minister to a deathbed 'to offer even the semblance of a viaticum' is interpreted as self-reliance.

and dogma important, informing men what Christ had done for them; liturgy and sacraments were numbered among the means of grace.

Where evangelical theology came into conflict with sacramental teaching was in the relative importance accorded to sacramental and non-sacramental means of grace. Thus the disagreement between Evangelicals and their fellow churchmen on the universal need for conversion found its focus in a protracted debate on baptismal regeneration which spanned much of the second decade of the nineteenth century. Partly in reaction to evangelical claims, Richard Mant and the Bishop of Lincoln, George Pretyman-Tomline, laid increasing stress upon the spiritual status and benefits conferred by the sacrament.⁷² In contrast Evangelicals argued that baptism did not of itself revoke the necessity of conversion. Here again however the difference between Evangelicals and others has sometimes been overstated maybe because of the misrepresentation that each side made of the other. The highchurchmen criticised Evangelicals for believing in instantaneous conversion and for arbitrarily associating regeneration with an outburst of emotional excitement. Equally inaccurately Evangelicals ridiculed their opponents for assuming that out-and-out blackguards were thoroughly regenerate because they had once been baptised. The supposed implication that the unbaptised

72. Pretyman-Tomline, Refutation of Calvinism (1811) ch ii; Mant, Two tracts intended to convey correct notions of regeneration and conversion ... extracted from the Bampton lecture of 1812 (1815). The regeneration controversy which stemmed from the publication of these two works was a recurrent feature in the Evangelical periodical the Christian Observer, in the years following 1811 and became a dominant theme in 1816. On Pretyman Tomline, a candidate for Canterbury who was nominated to Winchester in 1820 see DNB.

were excluded from heaven was rejected as being even more repugnant than the Calvinist decrees which the Bishop of Lincoln had himself so roundly condemned.⁷³ Beneath the vituperation of polemical warfare however it can be seen that there was a considerable range of Evangelical opinion, some of which is far more concordant with highchurch belief than is always acknowledged. By no means all evangelicals can be blandly denominated as anti-sacramentalists.

Much of the disagreement hinged upon the meaning of the term 'regeneration' used differently and often ambiguously by the various disputants. There was considerable variety of opinion about the Scriptural meaning of the term. Some Evangelicals claimed that it was used synonymously with 'new birth' and 'renewal' which latter term they glossed as 'created anew'; they denied that any of these words was ever linked with baptism. Since the New Testament writers frequently urged renewal on those who were already baptised, it followed that baptism did not effect regeneration.⁷⁴ While there was general concurrence in this conclusion, some Evangelicals rejected its premises arguing that in New Testament times the words 'baptism' and 'regeneration' were used interchangeably since almost all baptismal candidates were newly converted adults. Thus in a sermon

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73. CO x (1811) pp 584 ff; xi (1812) pp 365 ff. Contrary to evangelical assertions Tomline had taught that 'the promise is indeed conditional; and if men neglect to perform the conditions, they have no longer any claim to the privileges and blessings of the covenant into which they entered', op cit pp 85 - 86. Tomline expressed his views on the decrees in his fourth chapter.
74. CO xv (1816) pp 161 ff. Tomline in contrast differentiated between regeneration and renewal, op cit p. 86.

on 'The nature and necessity of regeneration' Charles Simeon suggested that the early church assumed that only 'truly regenerate persons' would submit to baptism.⁷⁵ While here equating 'regeneration' with 'conversion' Simeon sometimes followed a more technical line of argument maintaining that the former term was very rarely used by Biblical writers: while they invariably linked it with baptism, they meant by it not conversion but the conferring of baptismal privileges.⁷⁶

This argument provided a useful loophole for Evangelicals embarrassed by the liturgical claim that the newly baptised child was 'now regenerate'. Despite his belief that in Scripture 'regeneration' was synonymous with 'new birth' T T Biddulph maintained that liturgically it referred only to the benefits of church membership.⁷⁷ In an attempt to iron out the raging dispute the Evangelical Bishop, Henry Ryder, urged that the term be restricted to refer to baptismal privileges alone; whereas baptismal regeneration signified a change of state, conversion effected a change of nature.⁷⁸ Simeon concurred in this differentiation but he also verged on according to the liturgical term a more extensive meaning. Evangelicals

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75. Pollard (ed) op cit p 158. Cf CO xi (1812) p 366; xv (1816) p 320.
76. A W Brown, op cit ch xi. Tomline agreed that the term 'regeneration' always referred to baptism but equated it with 'new birth', op cit pp 85, 87.
77. CO xv (1816) p 179. On Biddulph incumbent of St James' Bristol from 1799 to 1838 see DNB and L P. Fox, 'The work of the Reverend Thomas Tregenna Biddulph ...' (Cambridge Ph.D. 1953).
78. H Ryder, A charge delivered to the clergy of the diocese of Gloucester at the primary visitation of that diocese in the year 1816. On Ryder a member of the Harrowby family, see DNB and G C B Davies, The First Evangelical Bishop (1958).

commonly argued that the affirmation of regeneration made at a child's baptism was hypothetical and prospective. Thus Simeon maintained that while the statement of regeneracy was conditional upon subsequent repentance and faith, it was an appropriate expression of the conviction that God would faithfully answer the pre-baptismal prayer of the church:

Christ saith 'Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them'. (Mark xi 24). If therefore we are thus bound to believe that we are receiving for the child the blessings of the new birth for which we have been praying, we are bound to thank God as if we had received them. ⁷⁹

There was a range of Evangelical opinion not only over Scriptural and liturgical semantics but also concerning the efficacy of baptism in paving the way for the new birth. Biddulph was one of a number of Evangelicals who, in an attempt to refute highchurch affirmations, lapsed into negative and minimalising language:

I cannot conceive of any other virtue given to the water in baptism (or to the bread and wine in the other sacrament) than that of a symbol, nor of any necessary effect following its application than that which is also symbolical. It represents to the eye the way of salvation, while it also affords evidence to the penitent believer of his interest in that salvation. 'To administer a sacrament is, by the outward Word and element, to preach to the receiver the inward and spiritual grace of God'. And preaching may or may not be effectual to those to whom it is addressed. ⁸⁰

The Christian Observer regularly engaged in similar negations as did even 'prayer book' Evangelicals like Simeon: 'Does the child' asked the former 'just emerging from the baptismal font, evidence any decay of selfishness, any fresh budding of holy and amiable qualities..?'; Simeon,

79. Brown, op cit pp 228 - 29, 233. Cf. Pollard (ed) op cit pp 55, 57; CO xi (1812) p 370; xv (1816) p 179.
80. ibid p 172.

stressing that the sacrament could not alone effect salvation but had to be 'sued out by faith', reputedly referred to it as 'mere baptism'.⁸¹ Nevertheless Simeon did not agree with those who depreciated baptism unless followed by further spiritual development:

Baptism not followed by confirmation is not void ...
Persons refusing to be confirmed go back again
avowedly to the world; yet their right to the benefits
of the Christian covenant remains.⁸²

Bishop Ryder listed as the privileges conferred by baptism, 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 and vouchsafed aid ready to offer itself to our acceptance or rejection ...⁸³

J B Sumner, future Archbishop of Canterbury, quoted his statement with approval, italicising the last phrase:

... if baptism is not accompanied with such an effusion of the Holy Spirit towards the inward renewing of the heart, that the person baptized, who of himself and of his own nature could 'do no good thing', by this amendment or regeneration of his nature is enabled to bring forth fruit, 'thirty, or sixty, or an hundred fold,' giving 'all diligence to make his calling and election sure,' - if the effect, I say, of baptism is less than this, what becomes of the distinction made by John, 'I indeed baptize with water, but He who comes after me, shall baptize with the Holy Ghost'? What becomes of the example of Christ himself? After his baptism, the descent of the Holy Spirit in a visible form, was surely intended to confirm his followers in a belief that their baptism would confer upon them a similar gift; and besides the washing away of their sins, and the remission of the penalty entailed upon the posterity of Adam, would bestow upon them a power enabling them to fulfil the covenant laws of their religion..⁸⁴

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81. Brown, op cit pp 231 - 34; CO xvi (1817) p 309. Cf xv (1816) pp 228 ff where the author in attempting to refute highchurch claims lays great stress on the right use of the sacrament and empties it of much objective significance.
82. Brown, op cit p 235.
83. Ryder, op cit p 20.
84. J B Sumner, Apostolical Preaching ... (2nd edn 1817) pp 172 - 73. For Sumner who was consecrated Bishop of Chester (1828) and Archbishop (1848) see DNB.

Sumner's comments on baptism at this stage in his ministry were 'highchurch' rather than evangelical in language and sentiment. On the one hand J H Newman testified that Sumner had taught him to believe in baptismal regeneration.⁸⁵ On the other the Christian Observer while praising Apostolical Preaching as a work whose merits outweighed its defects confessed that the section on baptism had 'excited our unfeigned surprize'.⁸⁶ In an attempt to meet evangelical objections Sumner introduced into his second edition a chapter 'On personal application of the Gospel' in which he stressed that preachers should not assume the spiritual well-being of their congregations but should exhort them to that obedience and faith through which alone the blessings of baptism were realised. Even here however Sumner continued to use the terminology of highchurchmanship urging renewal upon those regenerated in baptism. And he retained his assertion that it was wrong to preach conversion to those whom the church had declared regenerate, since this would only confuse and unnecessarily alarm those who had 'never thrown off that yoke of Christ which was laid upon them at their baptism.'⁸⁷

Sumner's writings can be interpreted not only to show his divergence from mainstream evangelicalism but more particularly to illustrate how nearly Evangelical and highchurchman concurred. The rest of Sumner's book is

85. Newman, Apologia pro vita suae (1864, Everyman edn 1966) p 35. Sumner's views are also quoted in a handwritten compendium of theologies of baptism collated by W E Gladstone (British Library, Gladstone Papers, Add Ms 44719 f 126 - 86). I am grateful to Dr D W Bebbington of the University of Stirling for alerting me to this manuscript.

86. CO xv (1816) pp 311 - 27.

87. Sumner, op cit pp 166 - 68, 245 - 51. Cf above p 26.

typically evangelical. Moreover highchurchmen like Mant were just as concerned as Sumner and other Evangelicals that baptism should be augmented by continued training within the church.⁸⁸ The difference between the two groups was therefore more one of emphasis than of substance. Thus while Mant believed that baptism properly reinforced by Christian education effected the new birth, Evangelicals regarded new birth as the all-important culmination of a process normally begun in baptism. Whereas Mant argued that conversion was unnecessary if a child had been baptised, catechised and confirmed within the church, Evangelicals maintained that baptism and Christian training initiated and sometimes brought about conversion. In consequence evangelical spirituality was perhaps more fraught and intense than that of churchmen who, rather than straining for assurance of conversion, were able to rest in the confidence that their baptism prefigured their acceptance by God. Nevertheless the spiritual development of the two groups was very similar. The difference lay in the doctrinal focus.

If highchurchmen like Evangelicals stressed the importance of post-baptismal training, Sumner was not the only Evangelical to believe with highchurchmen that baptism could effect new birth. A Christian Observer contributor who in 1812 reviewed Thomas Scott's reply to Bishop Pretyman Tomline wrote:

Mr Scott declares that a large proportion of the evangelical clergy suppose that some special gracious effect attends the due administration of this interesting initiatory ordinance. This is certainly

88. Mant, op cit pp 15 - 16.

our own sentiment. That in many instances, more especially in the case of children of really pious parents, true spiritual regeneration may take place in baptism we are willing to admit⁸⁹

Three years later the same periodical summed up Evangelical qualifications upon highchurch doctrine:

That God is pleased in some instances to connect the gift of regeneration with the due administration of baptism, no one can doubt; any more than he can question the strict propriety of the language of the church on this ground. But to imagine that this universal change of heart has actually taken place in every instance, contrary to the testimony of Scripture and fact, does in my mind involve a sentiment, not merely erroneous, but one which tends to undermine the whole superstructure of Christian doctrine.⁹⁰

The sacraments, the same writer concluded, should be highly esteemed but 'popish error' should be avoided.

This was just the balance that Edward Bickersteth was trying to establish in his book A treatise on the Lord's Supper. On the one hand in seeking to refute 'popish error' he, like Biddulph, lapsed into negative language. Denying that the Lord's Supper acted 'as a charm' he stressed that it was but a means to an end, the advancement of piety.⁹¹ In thus distinguishing between the means of blessing and the blessing communicated, he along with other Evangelicals tended to adopt 'low church' assumptions. In the first place because they sought to spell out exactly what the

89. CO xi (1812) p 370. The unembarrassed reference to baptism as an 'interesting initiatory ordinance' is indicative of the limitations of evangelical sacramental thinking; it should further be noted that Heber was critical of Scott's views on baptism as expressed in his autobiographical The Force of Truth (1779), op cit p 540.

90. CO xiv (1815) p 286.

91. E Bickersteth, A Treatise on the Lord's Supper (2nd edn 1822) p 111. On Bickersteth, secretary of the CMS, see DNB and T R Birks, Memoir of the Rev Edward Bickersteth (1851).

sacrament did and did not do, they denied its uniqueness and mystery, and implied that its meaning could be transposed into purely verbal terms: Dr Meacham is correct to stress the pre-eminence which they accorded to verbal communication.⁹² Secondly they focused so much attention on the benefits which the sacrament conferred that they tended to assess its significance subjectively rather than objectively. Thirdly while they admitted that in practice the Lord's Supper was a peculiarly effective means of grace, they insisted that it was but one means among others; the benefits which it conferred were not on the whole different from those communicated by other means.⁹³ Its supreme importance as a channel of blessing lay not in its efficacy or uniqueness but in its dominical ordination. Thus, in just the same way as the atonement was not central to Paley's teaching, so sacramental practice was not central to that of Evangelicals. There are comparatively few references to the Lord's Supper in the first edition of Simeon's multi-volume work of sermon outlines, Horae Homileticae, and no sermon is included on the most detailed New Testament exposition of the sacrament, I Corinthians xi.⁹⁴

92. See above p 29

93. See for example CO xii (1813) p 518 where a reviewer of Mant's 'Sermon on the Lord's Supper', while generally complimentary, criticised him for attributing 'exclusively to the Lord's Supper' 'that ... which though eminently due to it, is still shared in common by every other act of worship'.

94. This omission is rectified by three sermons in the later (1832 - 33) edition. Had sacramental practice been central to Simeon's theology he would surely have included such sermons in the first (1819 - 20) edition.

But if on the one hand their sacramental writing was characteristically low church, on the other hand evangelicals accorded to the sacraments a far greater respect than was common in low church circles. Bickersteth's book was written to encourage people to more regular participation in a sacrament which he regarded as both valuable and important. His aim was shared by other evangelical pastors: it is now widely acknowledged that the evangelical revival did much to restore the sacraments to a position of importance in the Anglican church.⁹⁵ The Christian Remembrancer's charge, designed to reveal the inadequacies of evangelical preaching, can be answered in the affirmative:

... is the hearer sufficiently reminded of the solemn obligations both as to faith and practice imposed upon him at baptism, and of the invaluable promises attached to a due fulfilment of them? Are the faith and the holiness of life, necessary to prepare us as fit guests at the Holy Supper and the spiritual benefits resulting from a worthy participation thereof, set forth, at their proper season, with the force which they substantially possess?⁹⁶

While Simeon denied that a level of prior sanctity was requisite in communicants, a demand which 'operates to the production of slavish fears', he stressed in a sermon on the Lord's Supper both the paramount obligation of attendance and the benefits that derived therefrom.⁹⁷

Moreover, evangelical biographies, Anglican and dissenting, reveal both a concern for proper preparation prior to receiving communion, and an awesome appreciation

95. See for example M M Hennell, op cit pp 122 ff.

96. Christian Remembrancer i (1819) p 274. It can be questioned how 'high' a view of the sacrament was held by this highchurch paper. Its terminology - 'The Holy Supper' - is not that of sacramentalism.

97. Pollard (ed), op cit p 179.

of its value and significance, not adequately communicated in the more prosaic manuals. The language of devotion is at least as accurate a guide to belief about the inexpressible as that of catechetical and exhortatory directive; judged according to this test evangelical and high church piety appear complementary. While G W E Russell, an evangelical turned highchurchman, describes instances of the pronounced evangelical anti-sacramentalism that developed in response to the Oxford Movement, he also points to the congruity of much Evangelical and Catholic affirmation.⁹⁸ In his more liturgical passages Bickersteth himself occasionally rises above prosaic explanation into the language of universal Christian devotion:

The Lord's Supper is a solemn ordinance, designed for a perpetual exhibition and commemoration of the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ. It is a representation to the outward senses of this great truth, that the only Son of God became man, and died for our sins. It teaches us by signs and emblems, those doctrines which the preaching of the Gospel brings before us expressly in words. Herein Christ offers himself to us with all his benefits, and we receive him by faith.

... the Lord's Supper was designed to represent, commemorate, and shew forth the Lord's death as a sacrifice for sin. This is done ... as a prevailing mode of pleading his merits before God. It has been

98. G W E Russell, The Household of Faith (1902, 2nd edn 1903) p 239 where he cites an evangelical sermon ending with the words 'I go to yonder table today, not expecting to meet the Lord, because I know he will not be there'. It needs to be noted that the preacher of this (apocryphal?) sermon was born in 1810 and was therefore not ministering until the time when evangelicalism was reacting against the Oxford Movement. See also 'The Common Creed of Catholics and Evangelicals' pp 313 - 29. Further comments by Russell on evangelicalism can be found in Collections and Recollections (1898) and A Short History of the Evangelical Movement (1915).

observed that 'What we more compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord, we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, wherein we plead the virtues and merits of the same sacrifice here, that our great High Priest is continually urging for us in heaven'.⁹⁹

The sacramental language of evangelical hymnwriters, such as Charles Wesley and the Independent Josiah Conder, was far from being that of effete memorialism or mere dedication.¹⁰⁰ Thus Bernard Lord Manning has argued that although later Protestants demurred at meditation on the wounds of Christ, the puritans and evangelicals brought back into English hymnology 'the language of medieval devotion': 'So in piety, do extremes agree: Catholic and Evangelical meet, and kiss one another at the Cross'.¹⁰¹

The point is particularly well made in reference to the early nineteenth century. In his seminal writings on the relationship between evangelical and Catholic revivals Dr Brilioth has pointed out that the term 'highchurchmen' was generally used in this period of 'the conservative followers of existing church practice, especially the Church's quality of State Church'.¹⁰² Not only their erastianism distinguished such highchurchmen from the later Tractarians for as the derogatory epithet 'high and dry'

99. Bickersteth, op cit pp 53, 60 - 61.

100. See Wesley's sacramental hymns and Conder's 'Bread of Heaven, on thee we feed' in Methodist Hymn Book (1933). For Wesleyan teaching see J C Bowmer, The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in early Methodism (1951) chs xii - xiii. NB also Pollard (ed) op cit pp 176, 180 where Simeon argues that the sacrament is not merely commemorative but also emblematic and a 'medium of communion with Christ'.

101. B L Manning, The Hymns of Wesley and Watts (1942) P 133 and ch v.

102. Y Brilioth, The Anglican Revival, studies in the Oxford Movement (1925) p 21.

suggests they were all too often spiritually barren: 'In men like Daubeny we find little more than ecclesiasticism, which is not always the companion of religion'.¹⁰³ But while evangelicals were totally at odds with those of this school they were in considerable sympathy with the more spiritually minded highchurchmen of the non-juring tradition. Dr Brillioth has suggested that Pusey could almost be called 'one of the great English Evangelicals' for his spirituality bore close resemblance to theirs.¹⁰⁴ The Christian Observer wrote very warmly of Keble's Christian Year.¹⁰⁵ Newman was only one of several Tractarians who continued to be grateful for the evangelical influence on their youth.¹⁰⁶ Indeed those who passed from evangelicalism to highchurchmanship tended to regard their pilgrimage as progression rather than rejection. That they needed to progress is indicative of lacunae within evangelicalism; the ease of progression just as surely points to similarities between the two movements.¹⁰⁷

Their congruity was clearly asserted by a contributor to the Christian Observer of 1828 who, scorning the traditional view of a highchurchman as a servile tool of the reigning authorities, erastian, and 'orthodox' in theology, defined him as one who considered an episcopal

103. ibid p 45.

104. Y Brillioth, Three Lectures on Evangelicalism and the Oxford Movement (1934) p 36.

105. CO xxviii (1828) pp 186 - 91.

106. Newman, op cit ch iii. Cf Russell, The Household of Faith (1903 edn) pp 231 - 45.

107. For the argument that Tractarianism was a development of evangelicalism see W E Gladstone, 'The Evangelical Movement; its parentage, progress and issue', loc cit. A more recent and outstanding account of movement from one to the other is D Newsome, The Parting of Friends (1966).

church with a threefold ministry to be the appointed order for conveying blessing to mankind, who believed that the church's authority derived directly from Christ, and who regarded the church as independent of the state, not its creation, a spiritual, divinely appointed, and in some sense exclusive body. One who held such beliefs might be Calvinist or Arminian, monarchist or republican, 'orthodox' or evangelical ... 108

The combination of evangelicalism with highchurchmanship was most evident at Clapham. Henry Thornton appointed Sir Robert Inglis, a conservative highchurchman and a believer in baptismal regeneration, as guardian of his children. 109 He had hoped prior to the premature death of John Bowdler that this son of a highchurch family might worthily have carried on the Clapham tradition. 110 Also intimate at Clapham were Alexander Knox and his friend Bishop Jebb of Limerick, who held decidedly Catholic views of church and sacraments. 111 The latter paid the ultimate tribute to Clapham Evangelicals:

Though doubtless, in certain points, I entertain a view different from them, I can safely say, that they belong to the elect of the earth, and I say now, what I should desire to say on my deathbed, sit meae anima cum istis. 112

It was to Alexander Knox whom Hannah More wrote concerning 'those writers, whom it is the fashion to call evangelical;

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108. CO xxviii (1828) pp 366 - 67.
 109. For Inglis, see DNB; J C Colquhoun, William Wilberforce his friends and his times (2nd edn 1867) ch xviii.
 110. On Bowdler, nephew of the improver of Shakespeare, see DNB; Colquhoun, op cit ch viii.
 111. Brilioth, The Anglican Revival ... ch iv, regards them as the forerunners of the Oxford Movement. Both are cited in DNB.
 112. Brilioth, The Anglican Revival... pp 39 - 40.

but which you and I had rather distinguish by the name of spiritual'.

Her identification of herself and Knox provides a timely warning to any historian who would define evangelicalism too rigidly. If the imprecise use of terminology misrepresents so too does the overprecise use of that same language. The history of opinion does not permit categoric classification. A definition such as that which has been attempted must serve as a guide rather than a plumbline, for some who do not altogether conform to the general description were clearly included by association within the evangelical fold.

On the other hand it can readily be admitted that some were more centrally within that fold than others. Knox and Jebb were highly critical of some individual evangelicals and of evangelical dogmatic theology. Conversely the Christian Observer which in 1834 reviewed a volume of their letters objected to their 'most unscriptural system of theology'.¹¹³ In an analysis of evangelical attitudes it seems appropriate to restrict discussion to those who saw themselves and were seen over a considerable period of time as being unquestionably within the evangelical tradition.

113. CO xxxiv (1834) pp 691 ff, a review of Charles Forster (ed), Thirty Years Correspondence between John Jebb ... and Alexander Knox (1834). The reviewer criticised Knox and Jebb for insisting that men's moral qualifications played some part in their justification, for their belief that all religious systems made some contribution to truth, for their praise of the Catholic Church, and for their assertion that the sacramental elements were vehicles as well as signs and seals of blessing. Cf Zachary Macaulay's criticism of them as over-contemplative and insufficiently active. Jebb, he believed, had hindered 'the cause of the Bible' (Knutsford, op cit pp 264, 390).

Thus, in practice the title 'evangelical' will be used primarily of those who were accorded obituaries in the recognised evangelical periodicals and who have featured in the old hagiographical histories which evangelical writers have from time to time produced for the edification of the faithful. Uncritical though these sometimes are, they provide an unparalleled guide to those whom it has through the ages been 'the fashion to call evangelical'.

'... but which you and I had rather distinguish by the name of spiritual'. Hannah More's definition is probably, despite all the necessary qualifications, the best that can be produced of evangelicalism of the early nineteenth century. Evangelicals did not possess the monopoly of spirituality; nevertheless they were invariably characterised by a religious seriousness which found its outworking in religious societies designed to revitalise church and nation; their doctrine can in part be distinguished from that of others by their belief that Biblical truth was applied to the heart of each believer by the Spirit and consequently profoundly affected the way in which he lived; while evangelical Anglicans by no means disregarded and in some cases highly valued the order and ordinances of the church, they refused to limit the Spirit, insisting that in the essential converting and nurturing of each individual, he worked through other means as well as through the discipline and sacraments of the established church. Finally the common tie between evangelicals and those of other traditions was spirituality.

Their firm conviction in the work of the Spirit gave rise to both the worst and the best in evangelicalism.

On the one hand believing in the personalised guidance of the Holy Spirit evangelicals tended to assume that the Spirit had directed them into all truth and that others must deliberately be setting themselves up against God. Thus their belief in the Spirit prompted an intolerance which contrasts unfavourably with the readiness of a man like Heber to recognise sincerity in those with whom he disagreed.¹¹⁴ On the other hand their spirituality could result in a way of life admired even by those who despised their beliefs. Thus, J A Froude, brother of the Tractarian leader and anti-ecclesiastical historian, was surprised into respect for the Evangelicals with whom he stayed in the summer of 1842:

If the test was personal holiness, I for my own part had never yet fallen in with any human beings in whose actions and conversation the Spirit of Christ was more visibly present.¹¹⁵

If seldom achieved, this was evangelicals' paramount aim.

b. '...not many wise ... are called': the question of culture.¹

Any dogmatic movement, be it political or religious, which claims uniquely to propound ultimate truth,

114. Heber, op cit i p 535. Heber complained that Thomas Scott reasoned 'throughout his work ... to this effect "I have examined these doctrines carefully, I have prayed diligently to God the Holy Ghost to show me the truth; I believe He has heard my prayers; and therefore I am sure that all which I have written is true".' Heber was exasperated by the intolerance of evangelicals and highchurchmen alike and was himself prepared to acknowledge the sincerity of those who disagreed with him (pp 548 - 49 et passim).

115. J A Froude, Short Studies On Great Subjects (1894 edn) iv pp 296 - 97.

1. 1 Corinthians i 26 (A.V.)

inevitably attracts both fervent support and bitter opposition. These are reinforced if the movement's adherents also proclaim that they are in intimate contact with the deity and guided by him. Hagiography and virulent caricature are therefore common characteristics of the historiography of evangelicalism. On the one hand those who accept the validity of religious experience are sometimes uncritical in their praise of activities which they believe to be divinely directed, ignoring both the disingenuousness of some evangelicals and the defectiveness of some of their policies and practices. On the other hand those who question or deny the possibility of religious experience sometimes misunderstand and misrepresent those for whom faith was in all sincerity the motivating force of life.

Thus, while Robert Wearmouth, like so many denominational historians, was over-sanguine about the extent and beneficence of Methodist influence, and E M Howse unduly euphoric about the achievements of the Saints in Politics, John and Barbara Hammond were unjustly disparaging of William Wilberforce and Hannah More.² Passionately and commendably concerned for the well-being of the oppressed, they construed the historian's task polemically as the passing of judgment upon those people and movements which they deemed to be oppressive, and which they made no real attempt to understand. Acknowledging Wilberforce's genuine humanity they were not interested in achieving empathetic understanding of his support for the repressive legislation of the Pittite and Liverpool ministries, but on the contrary arrogated to themselves the prerogative of determining

2. R Wearmouth, Methodism and the working class movements of England 1800 - 1850 (1937); Methodism and the struggle of the working classes 1850 - 1900 (1955); E M Howse, Saints in Politics (1952); J L and B Hammond, The Town Labourer 1760 - 1832 ... (1917) chs x and xi.

'what a man of a different era might be reasonably expected to understand or to do'.³ Nor were they concerned to appreciate why Wilberforce regarded Sunday observance as so important, dismissing his interest in the subject as an instance of petty religiosity. Charges of a similar failure in historical imagination must be levelled against Professor Brown whose in many ways impressive Fathers of the Victorians suffers from his assumption 'that those who believe spiritual blessings to be a greater gift than temporal must necessarily despise acts of simple humanity'.⁴ He therefore argues that Wilberforce's support of the slavery campaign was but a means to an end, that end being the moral improvement and religious conversion of Britain.⁵

The approach taken by such writers contrasts unfavourably with that of an older and greater rationalist historian, W E H Lecky. Whereas Professor Brown's unconcealed dislike of evangelicals prevents him from treating them as human beings and leads him uncritically to identify the effects of their actions with premeditated motives, Lecky, disliking their creed no less, sought to understand and empathise with them. While avoiding the hagiography of the faithful who all too readily depicted the movement as a glorious work of the Spirit, he was also free from the blindness characteristic of those who equally simply denigrated it as a secularly demonic instrument of class oppression. Few subsequent historians have maintained so judicious a balance, or treated the subject with such perception.

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3. G Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (1962) p 13.
 4. D Newsome, loc cit p 299.
 5. F K Brown, op cit pp 108 - 15.

In the first place Lecky recognised that religious motivation, however misguided and distasteful it might seem to the historian, could not be explained away: 'The Methodist movement was a purely religious one. All explanations which ascribe it to the ambition of its leaders, or to merely intellectual causes are at variance with the facts of the case'.⁶ Secondly Lecky appreciated, as the Hammonds did not, that evangelicalism had a genuine appeal for the lower classes, which he sought to explain:

That ... a movement like that of Methodism should have exercised a great power is not surprising. The secret of its success was merely that it satisfied some of the strongest and most enduring wants of our nature which found no gratification in the popular theology ... The moral essays which were the prevailing fashion, however well suited they might be to cultivate the moral taste, or to supply rational motives to virtue, rarely awoke any strong emotions of hope, of fear, or love, and were utterly incapable of transforming the character and arresting and reclaiming the thoroughly depraved.⁷

The doctrine of justification by faith, which diverts the wandering mind from all painful and perplexing retrospect, concentrates the imagination on one Sacred Figure, and persuades the sinner that the sins of a life have in a moment been effaced, has enabled thousands to encounter death with perfect calm, or even with vivid joy, and has consoled innumerable mourners at a time when all the commonplaces of philosophy would appear the idlest of sounds ... Historians and even ecclesiastical historians, are too apt to regard men simply in classes or communities or corporations, and to forget that the keenest of our sufferings as well as the deepest of our joys take place in those periods when we are most isolated from the movements of society. Whatever may be thought of the truth of the doctrine, no candid man will question its power in the house of mourning and in the house of death. 'The world', wrote Wesley, 'may not like our Methodists and Evangelical people, but the world cannot deny that they die well'.⁸

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6. W E H Lecky, A History of England in The Eighteenth Century (1878 - 90, 1913 edn) iii p 37.
 7. ibid pp 31 - 32.
 8. ibid p 150.

Such claims concerning the appeal of evangelicalism have regularly been made by evangelical historians; where Lecky differed both from them and from those who have castigated evangelicalism as possessing an essentially escapist attraction, was in his willingness to recognise both the strengths and the weaknesses of the movement. ⁹

Characteristically he suggested that each was the product of the other. Thus he argued that

The influence of men bears no kind of proportion to their intellects ... some of those who have effected the greatest revolutions of popular opinion owe their success quite as much to their weakness as to their strength ... If Wesley had not been very credulous and very dogmatic, utterly incapable of a suspended judgment, and utterly insensible to some of the highest intellectual tendencies of his time it may be safely asserted that his work would have been far less. ¹⁰

Lecky had no doubt that its intellectual incapacity was one of the great weaknesses not only of the leadership but also of the evangelical movement as a whole:

Regarding all doubt on religious matters as criminal, discouraging every form of study that could possibly

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9. A lengthy controversy has been joined between those who like the Hammonds and E P Thompson (see below p 55) believe that Methodism prevented revolution by chloroforming the people, and those who like Wearmouth and Professor Perkin (The Origins of Modern English Society, 1969, 1972 edn pp 353 ff) argue that it prevented revolution by fostering popular development but pointing it in a non-violent direction. Professor Inglis (Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England, 1963, p 2) and E J Hobsbawm (Primitive Rebels, 1959, ch viii; Labouring Men, 1964, ch iii) in opposition to both maintain that evangelicalism was not sufficiently influential to prevent revolution. The debate which derived from the work of Elie Halevy (England in 1815, 1913, part iii) has been summarised by Gertrude Himmelfarb (Victorian Minds, 1968, pp 292 ff). That evangelicalism combined conservative and radical traits is argued by D Spring, 'The Clapham Sect: some social and political aspects', Victorian Studies v (1961) and by W R Ward (see below pp 67, 73).
10. Lecky, op cit p 140.

produce it, deifying strong internal persuasion, and shutting its eyes on principle against every discovery that could impugn its tenets, it has been essentially the school of those who form their opinions rather by emotion than by reasoning, and who deliberately refuse to face the intellectual difficulties of the question. Its teaching lends itself admirably to impassioned rhetoric, and it has accordingly been rich in popular preachers, but in the higher forms of intellect it has in every generation been more conspicuously barren .. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not ... It has weakened the love of truth and the spirit of inquiry wherever it has passed ... ¹¹

To the charge of anti-intellectualism Lecky added that of asceticism citing instances of evangelical opposition to fine dress and ornamentation, to theatres and even to the recreational playing of the violin. ¹² Due account must therefore be taken of the fact that he, like Young one of the greatest historians of his generation, depicted evangelicalism as anti-intellectual, ascetic, and philistine.

The early history of the movement provides much evidence to support such a claim. The middle third of the eighteenth century saw the conversion of many in the lower orders of society, and the subsequent widespread commissioning and self-commissioning of previously unschooled itinerant preachers. Not only their educational background but also their attitudes seemed to militate against intellectual interests: evangelicals of all classes believed that academic attainments were valueless without personal faith, the one essential qualification for a preacher, whose primary task was to urge his hearers to seek such for themselves. In their Methodist forms, the conviction of sin and assurance of forgiveness which this initially entailed were often profoundly

11. ibid pp 151 - 52.

12. ibid pp 86 - 87.

emotional experiences: in all evangelicals they gave rise to an intensity of living and charismatic fervour which stood in stark contrast to the coldly rational religion supposedly typical of the eighteenth century. Thus evangelicalism appeared to be an emotional rather than an intellectual faith. Moreover, those whose lives were thus changed found in their religion a completely absorbing way of life: the fellowship of the Christian community provided more than sufficient companionship while the disciplines of spirituality became more satisfying than secular activities. Thus from preference as well as from principle, evangelicals tended to eschew contemporary culture and amusements.

The charge of philistinism was consequently early expressed. In 1781 an anonymous writer complained:

Pure METHODISM, as it subsisted under its founder, WHITFIELD, and some of his immediate followers ... seems to place Religion wholly, or chiefly in certain inexplicable impulses or movements of the mind; and requires of its votaries to commit themselves to the guidance of the Spirit, with an utter contempt of reason and all human learning. ¹³

A similarly damning indictment was made some thirty years later by Sydney Smith:

The Methodists hate pleasure and amusements; no theatre, no cards, no dancing, no punchinello, no dancing dogs, no blind fiddlers; - all the amusements of the rich and the poor must disappear, wherever these gloomy people get a footing. It is not the abuse of pleasure which they attack; but the interspersion of pleasure, however much it is guarded by good sense and moderation; it is not only wicked to hear the licentious plays of Congreve, but wicked to hear Henry the Vth, or the School for Scandal ... ¹⁴

Criticism of evangelical attitudes to literature was made not only in the broadly latitudinarian Edinburgh Review, for which Smith wrote, but also in the old-high-church Quarterly Review.

13. Quoted in A M Lyles, Methodism Mocked (1960) p 23.

14. Edinburgh Review xi (1808) p 357.

A regular contributor Robert Southey, a man by no means blind to the strengths of evangelicalism, saw as one of its most signal weaknesses its 'confederated and indefatigable priesthood, who barely tolerate literature and actually hate it'.¹⁵ And to the objections of churchmen of other schools must be added those of political opponents, among the most bitter of whom was the radical William Hazlitt, who maintained that Methodism 'absolves the understanding from the rules of reasoning'.¹⁶

If many critics spoke primarily of Methodism, their reproof was by no means restricted to the connexions established by Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon. The term 'Methodist' was often used generically to the intense annoyance of evangelical Anglicans who shunned what they regarded as Methodist excesses. But similar criticisms were levelled specifically at them. Thus the Edinburgh Review maintained that the Evangelical system demanded the continual suppression of intellectual questions.¹⁷ Evangelical Anglicans were themselves very conscious of such criticism: 'Every man of the world' Hannah More wrote, 'naturally arrogates to himself the superiority of understanding over every religious man'.¹⁸

Similar charges have frequently been echoed by those historians who share the antipathies of the early enemies

15. Quarterly Review iv (1810) p 507.

16. 'On Depth and Superficiality' (1826) in P P Howe (ed) Complete Works of William Hazlitt (1930 - 34) xii p 351.

17. Edinburgh Review lii (1831) p 449.

18. H More, Thoughts on the Manners of the Great (1798) Works (1834 edn) ii p 269.

of evangelicalism. Most obvious in his antagonism is Geoffrey Faber, historian of the Oxford Movement, whose intemperate language belies any claims to reasoned analysis:

...if ever the name 'the stupid party' was deserved it was deserved by the Evangelicals. Their insistence on the literal inspiration and understanding of the Scriptures, combined with their exaltation of feeling, atrophied their reasoning powers. Their thought, hobbled by texts, failed to explore even the fenced field of the Calvinistic logic. The fathers of the school made no effort to relate their conceptions to history or to philosophy, and their successors - even the ablest of them - wasted their minds on extravagant attempts to apply Scriptural prophecies to the events of their own times. The development of science passed above their heads as if they were children. As the initial fervour of the movement spent itself, piety, unsupported by intelligence, tended towards pietism.. 19

The charge of pietism is also made by the radical historian, E P Thompson, whose chapters on evangelicalism in The Making of the English Working Class (1963) combine very real perception with far-fetched Freudianism. He too, with qualification, questions the intellectual and cultural content of evangelicalism:

On the one hand a religion which found a place for humble men as local preachers and class leaders, which taught them to read and gave them self-respect and experience in speaking and organization: on the other hand a religion hostile to intellectual inquiry and artistic values, which sadly abused their intellectual trust. 20

J H Plumb is unprepared to grant that Methodism, by which he means evangelicalism in general, brought even those educational benefits recognised by Thompson:

There was nothing intellectual about Methodism; the rational attitude, the most fashionable of the day, was absolutely absent ... Everywhere in early Methodism one meets the prejudices of the uneducated, which always seem to be hardened by success. There was an anti-intellectual philistine quality which attracted the dispossessed but was dangerous for society ... At the beginning of the century there had been a vigorous

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19. G Faber, Oxford Apostles (1933, 2nd edn 1936) pp 74 - 75.
 20. E P Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (1963, Penguin edn 1970) p 44. NB the review by Geoffrey Best, Historical Journal viii (1965).

movement for primary education, which, if supported and strengthened by Methodism, might have survived the increased pressure from industry. But it got no support at all, and education and the children suffered. The complacent Methodist could regard his overworked children with a complacent heart . 21

That historians antipathetic to evangelicalism should write in this way is not altogether surprising. It is much more significant that the same views should be expressed, if in less prejudiced a tone, in less hostile works. Thus the belief that anti-intellectualism was a major characteristic of evangelicalism was sufficiently well-established for Professor Sykes to repeat it in the very few pages he devotes to the movement in his monumental Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century:

Inevitably its least satisfactory aspect lay in its retrograde intellectual influence. Owing its origin and strength largely to a reaction against the rationalistic and Socinian tendencies, which had developed from the Latitudinarian movement in theology, it went to extremes in depreciation of the intellectual study and criticism of the Bible. Even John Wesley, despite his academic training and scholarly attitude, was almost superstitious in his notions of the special interventions of Providence attendant upon the most ordinary details of his life, and in his recourse to the expedient of the sortes liturgicae for the determination of his problems. With Whitefield the situation was much worse, for he lacked altogether the education and cultured influence of his colleague; and the Calvinistic doctrine was peculiarly liable to exaggeration in the depreciation of learning and all human aids to salvation. Thus the theological and literary productions of the Evangelical revival were of little importance or permanent value to the tradition of the ecclesia docens; and the intellectual glories of the Georgian Church remain with the evidential and philosophical writers of the calibre of Butler, Waterland, Warburton, and Paley . 22

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21. J H Plumb, England in the eighteenth century (1950) pp 95 - 96.
 22. N Sykes, Church and State in England in the eighteenth century (1962) pp 398 - 99.

Yet more significantly the same complaint was made by those who had themselves once been evangelicals or who hailed from one-time evangelical families. W E Gladstone, tracing the history of the Evangelical party, commented:

It must be remembered that the massive learning which never wholly deserted the Church, and the preponderating share of purely intellectual force were never theirs, and perhaps were not in all cases adequately viewed among them. ²³

More forcefully Mark Pattison who had suffered a strictly evangelical upbringing, argued that evangelicalism 'insisted on a "vital Christianity", as against the Christianity of books. Its instinct was from the first against intelligence. No text found more favour with it than 'Not many wise, not many learned'. ²⁴ In the next century another son of evangelical parents, E L Woodward, claimed that the evangelicals' weakness 'was on the intellectual side. They neglected theology and history'. Theirs, he suggested, was 'a society which had always been afraid of ideas and tended to see in Bentham, Paine, Shelley, and Byron only different examples of the revolt against orthodoxy'. ²⁵ G M Trevelyan, great-grandson of Zachary Macaulay of the Clapham Sect, argued that:

An individualist commercialism and an equally individualist type of religion combined to produce

23. W E Gladstone loc cit p 7.
24. Pattison 'Learning in the Church of England' (1863), Essays ed Nettleship (1889) ii p 268. I am grateful to Dr S Prickett of the University of Sussex who drew my attention to this quotation.
25. E L Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815 - 1870 (1938, 2nd edn 1962) pp 504 - 05. Woodward's evangelical childhood is described in his autobiography Short Journey (1942). I have tried abortively to discover whether he was descended from Olivia Fanny Cunningham, daughter of the evangelical vicar of Harrow and wife of Rev Jonathan Henry Woodward minister of St James Bristol. The evidence while not conclusive seems to militate against such a relationship.

a breed of self-reliant and reliable men, good citizens in many respects - but 'Philistines' in the phrase popularized by their most famous critic in a later generation. Neither machine industry nor evangelical religion had any use for art or beauty... 26

A similar parallel between Benthamites and evangelicals was drawn by another descendant of Clapham, A V Dicey, who noted that 'Evangelicals assuredly did not exaggerate the value of the aesthetic side of human nature, and the High Church movement, looked at from one side, was a revolt against that underestimate of taste ...' 27

Even those who remained more consciously within the evangelical tradition accepted and perpetuated similar criticisms. Dicey's uncle, James Stephen, writing of 'The "Evangelical" Succession' and praising much that he saw to be of worth in it, was critical because 'No scholars arose among them illustrious for learning, nor any authors to whom the homage of the world at large has been rendered'. 28 He suggested that when the leaders of the Oxford Movement assessed the state of the Church of England they were uneasily conscious of

the intellectual barrenness with which that Church had been stricken, from the time when her most popular teachers had not merely been satisfied to tread the narrow circle of the 'Evangelical' theology, but had exulted in that bondage as indicating their possession of a purer light than had visited the other ministers of the Gospel. 29

The complaint that Stephen made of Anglican evangelicalism, R W Dale made of dissent. Evangelicalism had much to commend

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26. G M Trevelyan English Social History (1944) pp 493 - 94.
 27. A V Dicey, Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England (1905) p 404.
 28. J Stephen, Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography (1849) ii p 169.
 29. ibid pp 171 - 72.

it but it had destroyed the older puritan type of Independency, which was characterised by a 'keen interest in theology ... a delight in books and in intellectual pursuits of the severer kind'. With the influx of revival converts 'the intellectual earnestness ... disappeared'.³⁰ Vision was limited for there was 'no eagerness to take possession of the realms of Art, Science, Literature, Politics, Commerce, Industry, in the name of their true Sovereign and Prince'. Moreover, although evangelical leaders were often 'men of learning, men of great intellectual vigour and keenness', they lacked a disinterested love of truth: they cared for it not for its own sake but merely as an instrument in conversion'.³¹

Dale's view is implicitly accepted by Professor Donald Davie, whose 1976 Clark lectures constitute one of the most recent contributions to the study of evangelicalism and culture.³² On the one hand Professor Davie is concerned to reinstate eighteenth century dissent, and even Methodism as propagated by the Wesley brothers, as the locales of an important and neglected form of genuine literary culture: he rightly calls for further studies which will analyse the hymns of Watts and Wesley, not as an isolated corpus of material but as part of the literature of their day.³³ On the other hand he accepts with little question the strictures levelled against nineteenth century dissent by men like

30. R W Dale, *op cit* pp 590 - 91.

31. R W Dale, The Old Evangelicalism and the New (1889) pp 19 - 20. Cf The Evangelical Revival and other sermons (1880).

32. D Davie, A Gathered Church, The Literature of the English Dissenting Interest, 1700 - 1930 (1978).

33. ibid lectures ii and iii.

Matthew Arnold, of whose arrogance he is however properly critical: dissent, he argues, sadly became 'as philistine as the Church had always said it was'. That evangelicalism in its Anglican form was similarly tarnished is, he believes, fully established: 'of the philistinism of the Evangelicals there can be no doubt'.³⁴

With such concordance of opinion - and of naturally conflicting opinion - the case propounded by Lecky and Young appears invulnerable. But it cannot be regarded as irrefutably proven. J A Froude wrote of the Evangelical family that so impressed him in 1842

There was a quiet good sense, an intellectual breadth of feeling in this household, which to me, who had been bred up to despise Evangelicals as unreal and affected, was a startling surprise. I had looked down on Dissenters especially, as being vulgar among their other enormities; here were persons whose creed differed very little from that of the Calvinistic Methodists, yet they were easy, natural, and dignified...³⁵

That evangelicals and dissenters in particular have suffered an unduly bad press from those 'bred up to despise' them has been stressed by two more recent historians. Valentine Cunningham has shown how nonconformity, Everywhere Spoken Against, has been grossly misrepresented by those who have relied on the testimony of novelists, while John Kent lambastes those, including Dr Cunningham 'dissent's revenge on the Victorian novelists', who, he believes, have blinded themselves to new vision by writing within the framework of thought established by Matthew Arnold:

One has to put out of one's mind ...' the philistines' ... and look instead at what was happening at the end of the nineteenth century, not simply in religious institutions, but in nonconformity as a religious

34. ibid pp 56 - 58, 77 - 82.

35. J A Froude, op cit iv p 295.

sub-culture which had been changing and developing since 1860. Then one may see going on a renaissance in the English under-culture - to transform Arnold's derisive phrase - one may see a return of the human as the subject of value, a humanism which might employ some Christian imagery, but might equally resist the cramping effects of some religious systems and institutions on the human personality. ³⁶

Professor Kent therefore posits 'a renaissance within the nonconformist milieu of values often opposed to the official', and, characteristically sophisticated, adduces as evidence for this the rejection of dissent by Arnold Bennett, D H Lawrence and others, generally assumed to support the Arnoldian thesis.

Anna of the Five Towns

is part of the evidence that the nonconformist sub-culture was capable of creativity ... Anna is only one useful source of information about the circumstances in which the late nineteenth-century nonconformist sub-culture became, all over England, a place where young men and women sickened for the time being of the new industrial society which was forming, and turned for inspiration to Blatchford, Campbell, Morris, Tolstoy and many others. The brotherhood movement, the Clarion and its cycling clubs, the independent labour party were some of the organisations in which one may find the traces of a stifled revolution; and in that stifling, which explains something of what is shallow and cold in present-day British culture, orthodox nonconformity no doubt played a part. The creative elements in the nonconformist sub-culture had chosen the radical path and did not return. ³⁷

If Professor Kent's conclusion goes some way to substantiating the thesis which he is challenging, his repudiation of Arnold's model as a framework of thought and determination to discover whether dissent did not

36. J Kent, 'A late nineteenth century nonconformist renaissance' in D Baker (ed), Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History: Studies in Church History xiv (1977) pp 356 - 57. Professor Kent unjustly criticises Dr Cunningham not so much for his treatment of his subject, as for his choice of subject. Since Dr Cunningham subtitles his book Dissent in the Victorian Novel (1975) he cannot legitimately be criticised for allowing 'the novelists to dictate the terms of his subject'.

37. Kent, loc cit p 360.

contribute positively to cultural and intellectual development are to be welcomed. Earlier and less sophisticated attempts to reinstate evangelicalism were made by two mid-century Methodists: F C Gill in The romantic movement and Methodism (1937) hailed the revival as an important contributory factor to the development of romanticism, while H F Mathews in Methodism and the education of the people (1949) claimed that Methodism was an important educational force at a time when the industrial revolution was supposedly lowering intellectual standards. Both works are dated for their writers assumed that similarity predicated direct influence and sometimes adopted an uncritical attitude to their sources. Moreover, they protested too much, exaggerating the role of Methodism. Subsequently however the thesis that evangelicalism contributed beneficially to the intellectual ethos of the age has been implicitly developed by an historian disinterested in the reinstatement of the movement: Noel Annan has traced the interrelated family trees of the Victorian and Edwardian intelligentsia and shown how evangelicalism was one of three strands contributory to the development of 'The Intellectual Aristocracy'.³⁸ While he has thus clearly proved the existence of an intellectual tradition, his thesis that there was a common intellectual philosophy remains open to considerable question.

Whatever the various inadequacies of these works they all point up the shortcomings of the Lecky/Young account as a total description of evangelicalism. A number of twentieth century historians, following Froude, have cited individual instances of evangelical culture which

38. N Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy' in J H Plumb (ed) Studies in Social History, a tribute to G M Trevelyan (1955). The relationship between Trevelyan, Dicey and the Clapham Sect adverted to above is described in detail.

challenge the traditional picture. Thus, Amy Cruse in The Englishman and his books in the early nineteenth century (1930) described the Anglican evangelical leaders as scholars and cultured men, a depiction accepted by A O J Cockshut who suggests that Clapham parents encouraged 'an active love of the best literary culture'.³⁹ Similarly Professor Chadwick points out that the children of evangelical pastors 'were given the run of good libraries' and 'were encouraged to varied interests of natural history or music or good literature'.⁴⁰ While accepting the traditional criticism of evangelicalism Professor Chadwick implies that it needs qualification:

Nothing is commoner than the charge that evangelicals were ignorant. You can find learned evangelicals; James Schofield, the harsh-sounding Professor of Greek at Cambridge; William Farish, sweet-natured Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge; William Goode, famous in the Gorham fights, whose learning bore comparison with that of any English divine. Nor did they all wear blinkers. George Wagner of Brighton ... was a pupil of Julius Hare as well as of James Schofield and sought to find the best in German divinity. In riposte to Tractarian editions of the fathers they constituted (1840) the Parker Society to republish the classics of the English Reformation; and the standard of editing was not inferior. But what has learning to do with religion?⁴¹

Another who accepts the general truth of the traditional indictment but suggests that it is exaggerated is Cannon Charles Smyth:

Where the Evangelical party was weak, by comparison for example with the Tractarians, was on the intellectual side. This is the more surprising, because it always contained a number of individuals of outstanding intellectual ability among the clergy and even among the laity. The simplicity and sincerity of the

39. A Cruse, op cit p 71; A O J Cockshut, Truth to Life: the art of biography in the nineteenth century (1974) p 73.

40. O Chadwick, The Victorian Church i (1966) p 444.

41. ibid p 450.

Evangelical piety captivated many extremely able men in every walk of life. It has also to be said, I think, that the quality of such scholarship as the Evangelical party did in fact produce has been habitually under-estimated, whether because it is out of date or simply because it is forgotten. 42

Implicit in such statements is the challenge to test the general allegation of anti-intellectualism against the hard evidence of particular and neglected sources. Evangelicalism has suffered from the failure of historians to give due consideration to its special literature which as Lecky, and more recently Professor Davie, have pointed out, 'has scarcely obtained an adequate recognition in literary history'. 43

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42. C Smyth, 'The Evangelical Discipline' in H Grisewood (ed), Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (1966) p 102.
43. See above p 59; Lecky, op cit iii p 120. For more detailed accounts of eighteenth century evangelical literature see Henry Bett, The Spirit of Methodism (1937) ch vi 'The literary contribution'; T B Shepherd, Methodism and the literature of the eighteenth century (1940); and, one of the more useful accounts of first generation evangelicalism, L E Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals, a religious and social study (1953) pp 400 - 17. But the desideratum identified by Lecky remains: while some attention is paid to the leading poets and hymn writers and to the works of John Wesley, other evangelical prose writers have been largely neglected, particularly those of the early nineteenth century. Studies of nineteenth century religious novels tend to adopt a Victorian perspective: thus Margaret Maison's useful survey, Search your soul, Eustace (1961), is far from comprehensive with respect to the earlier period. A L Drummond, The Churches in English Fiction (1950) devotes one chapter to evangelicalism but is little more than a catalogue of illustrative extracts. A very brief account of some early evangelical novelists is provided in A G Newell, 'Early Evangelical Fiction', The Evangelical Quarterly xxxviii (1966), while R D Mayo provides a useful appendix on the fiction printed in religious magazines in The English Novel in the Magazines 1740 - 1815 (1962). There is almost complete silence on evangelical non-fictional prose.

It has suffered too from a shortage of individualised and localised studies which increasingly reveal the fallacy of treating the movement as a homogeneous entity. Individual and group studies of Methodists, Evangelicals and old dissenters clearly prove that not all evangelicals, and not all evangelical groups, can be tarnished with the same anti-intellectualist brush. Relying on local source materials for his new book So down to prayers: studies in English Nonconformity 1780 - 1920 (1977), Clyde Binfield, in the words of one of his reviewers 'lays bare a section of English society, cultured nonconformity, whose very existence some have doubted'.⁴⁴

A further, largely undeveloped, critique of G M Young's indictment of evangelicalism lies in the suggestion that evangelicals were no more antagonistic towards culture and the intellect than were other religious groups. Thus L E Elliott-Binns has stressed that 'the tendency on the part of the intensely religious to undervalue activities which have no direct bearing on the state of the soul can be found in all ages of the church; and later it was characteristic of Dr Pusey'.⁴⁵ Professor Best, while similarly admitting that there is something in the charge of anti-intellectualism, argues that evangelicals were no more obtuse towards science and theology than were the highchurchmen with whom they allied to oppose Essays and Reviews, Colenso, and Jowett.⁴⁶

44. D W Bebbington in The Times Higher Education Supplement 15 July 1977.

45. L E Elliott-Binns, op cit p 434. Cf Gerard Manley Hopkins, who on becoming a Jesuit in 1868 burnt his poems 'as not belonging to my profession' (W H Gardner, ed, Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1953, p 187).

46. G Best, 'Evangelicalism and the Victorians' in A Symondson (ed), The Victorian Crisis of Faith (1970) p 50. Cf Professor Kent in 'The Victorian Resistance: comments on religious life and culture 1840 - 1880',

The most radical challenge to the traditional view, however, asserts similarities not only between evangelicals and other dogmatic schools but also between evangelicals and their society at large. Whereas writers used to regard evangelicalism as a reaction against eighteenth century thought and life, some recent historians have stressed the element of continuity between evangelical and contemporary attitudes. Rather than viewing the movement as a cause of changes in society (vide Heasman, Brown, Bradley, Gill and Mathews), they have studied it as a product of its own society. Some of the seeds of this approach can perhaps be traced back to the seminal work of Elie Halevy 'The Birth of Methodism in England' which Dr Walsh describes as a 'brilliant but almost unknown essay ... written in 1906, which despite its shortcomings, provided valuable methodological patterns that have never been followed up'.⁴⁷ Halevy sought to relate the religious revival of 1739 - 41 to the economic depression of the same years. Dubious though some of his conclusions may now seem to be, the questions he posed concerning the effect of the contemporary economic, social

Victorian Studies xii (1968) p 150 'For Newman intelligence was something of a religious problem'. For the later controversies see O Chadwick, The Victorian Church ii (1970) pp 75 - 97; M A Crowther, Church Embattled ... (1970) passim.

47. J D Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', loc cit p 132. Halevy's essay which has only recently been published in English (ed and translated by Bernard Semmel, 1971), is subjected to more extensive analysis in Walsh, 'Elie Halevy and the Birth of Methodism', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society v series xxv (1975).

and intellectual climate upon evangelicalism are of permanent importance. The most substantial work adopting this perspective is Professor Ward's Religion and Society in England 1790 - 1850 (1972) which examines the way in which the churches were affected by the social divisiveness and the dispersion of authority characteristic of society as whole.⁴⁸ For an earlier period recent essayists have stressed the continuity between Methodism and a traditional folk culture, otherwise under attack from the new mobility of labour and the enclosure movement: in so doing Arnold Rattenbury implicitly challenges the view that evangelicalism was hostile to traditional pleasures, which he suggests found new expression within it.⁴⁹ Whereas he concentrates on Methodism, rooting this form of evangelicalism within the folk-practice of the age, Dr Haddon Willmer is concerned primarily although not exclusively with Evangelicalism, which he sees as an essentially eighteenth century form of religion, growing out of latitudinarianism, the basic assumptions of which it shared and developed. The thesis of his Hulsean prize essay 'Evangelicalism 1785 - 1835' (1962)

48. Professor Ward's thesis is also expounded in 'The religion of the people and the problem of control 1790 - 1830', G Cuming and D Baker (eds) Popular Belief and Practice: Studies in Church History viii (1972) and most cogently in his introduction to The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820 - 29 (1972) pp 4 - 8.
49. Arnold Rattenbury, 'Methodism, Commonsense and Coincidences of 1751', unpublished paper read at a conference on 'The Working Class and Leisure: class expression and/or social control', University of Sussex, November 1975. See also another paper delivered on the same occasion: John Rule, 'Methodism and Recreational Conflict in West Cornwall'. I am grateful to my colleague Dr Hugh Cunningham for drawing my attention to these essays, copies of which are lodged in the library of the University of Sussex.

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is that evangelical theology was not, as is so often assumed, just a reaction against the age of reason but on the contrary manifested many of its traits. 50

Such a reinterpretation of evangelical theology demands a re-examination of evangelical anti-intellectualism and philistinism, generally assumed to be the product of that theology. Chapter 3 therefore constitutes an analysis, within the context of the thought-forms of the day, of those facets of evangelicals' belief most likely to determine attitudes to cultural and intellectual matters. It seeks to show how their theology served both to disparage and to provoke such interests. Against this background, subsequent chapters examine in more detail evangelicals' responses to particular mental and aesthetic pursuits, assessing in each instance the truth of the traditional allegation. Biographies and contemporary periodicals give some indication of the extent to which evangelicals engaged in these activities, while at the same time revealing the nature and causes of such philistinism as undoubtedly did exist. It is therefore possible tentatively to determine why evangelicals regarded certain non-religious pursuits as more acceptable than others, how far they reflected the views of their contemporaries, and, thus, the extent to which their theology produced behavioural patterns at variance with those of the age ...

The age in question is the forty years between the death of Wesley and the death of Wilberforce. Evangelicalism has suffered from the tendency of adherents and denigrators

50. The unpublished manuscript is lodged in Cambridge University Library. Cf Anstey op cit pp 158 - 183, 198, where it is argued that evangelicals accepted and transposed the values of their age.

alike to treat the movement as an unchanging entity, assuming that the attitudes of any one generation are typical of all time. For an historian to acquiesce in such broad generalisation is to fail to ask the questions that the particularity of his discipline demands. To restrict an investigation of this kind to a single generation is therefore not only practical but also academically desirable. Canon Hennell has argued that the period 1770 - 1870 saw 'an increasing strictness and rigidity with regard to "the world"', as practices permitted by earlier evangelicals were condemned by their successors.⁵¹ His brief essay 'Evangelicalism and Worldliness 1770 - 1870' constitutes a useful if limited prolegomenon to the study of evangelicalism and culture, and testifies to the need for a more detailed examination of each generation's attitudes. Sympathetic and unsympathetic historians alike accept that the pre-Victorian generation was less philistine than that which followed. The latter, Ford K Brown suggests, 'had lost to a distressing extent ... the taste, culture and intellectual interest that had marked many of the dominant Evangelicals of Wilberforce's generation' among whom 'there was always a less bigotted Puritanism than developed at the end of the reform period and was a notable mark of the Bleak Age'.⁵² His admission provides both the incentive to and the justification for a study of 'Evangelicals and Culture in England, 1790 - 1833'.

51. G Cuming and D Baker (eds) Popular Belief and Practice: Studies in Church History viii (1972) p 229.

52. F K Brown, op cit pp 6, 404.

2. THE HISTORY OF EVANGELICALISM

The dates chosen to demarcate the different periods of evangelical history are to a considerable extent arbitrary, used more for the historian's convenience than to reflect any definite watershed. As soon as any attempt is made epigrammatically to entitle an age, it becomes evident that supposedly distinguishing characteristics were equally prevalent in the following era.¹ Moreover as Professor Burn has stressed, any succinct description of a period 'suffers from being preselected from a particular angle of vision', a complaint which can be levelled against the practice of periodisation itself.² On the other hand it is significant that most who have attempted, however tentatively, to distinguish between the different phases of evangelical development, have treated the years between the 1790s and the 1820s and '30s as a distinct unit. More than most it was a time that can meaningfully be differentiated from that which went before and that which followed.

The death in 1791 of John Wesley, the most dominant figure of the eighteenth century revival, inevitably marked the end of an era: Methodism could not but enter a new phase

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1. C Smyth, 'The Evangelical Movement in Perspective', loc cit p 168, criticises the analyses provided by Bishop Moule, The Evangelical School in the Church of England ... (1901), and W H B Proby, Annals of the 'Low-Church' party in England ... (1888) on just these grounds.
 2. W Burn, The Age of Equipoise (1964, 1968 edn) p 17.

of development, signified by the adoption of an oligarchic rather than a monarchical form of government.³ The Countess of Huntingdon died in the same year as in 1793 did the Rev John Berridge, one the last great exponents of an irregularity that was rapidly becoming less common.⁴ New leaders who were to dominate the evangelical stage for the next thirty years were coming into prominence: the community at Clapham dates from 1792 in which year Henry Thornton bought a house and invited Wilberforce to live with him, while John Venn with great trepidation accepted the living; Hannah More, who had been emerging into evangelical conviction during the late 1780s, had begun her educational work at Cheddar and in 1793 published the first of her many religious tracts for the poor, a signal event in the history of popular literature; in 1790 Charles Simeon held his first sermon class; Joseph Hughes, doyen of the future Bible Society, was a youthful tutor at Bristol Baptist College ...⁵

More significantly the 1790s marked a new

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3. For a discussion of changes in Methodism immediately after the death of Wesley see R Davies and E G Rupp (eds), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain 1 (1965) ch ix. The long delayed appearance of the later volumes of this work has forced students of nineteenth century Methodist history to fall back on the older accounts viz: Townsend, Workman, and Earys, A New History of Methodism (1909); H B Kendall, The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church (1909, revised 1919). For the first half of the nineteenth century the gap in Wesleyan studies is partially filled by W R Ward, The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820 - 29 (1972) and Early Victorian Methodism: the Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1830 - 58 (1976). There is a strong Methodist (and Mancunian) emphasis in his Religion and Society in England 1790 - 1850 (1972).
 4. A C H Seymour, The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon (1839). For Berridge see above pp 22-23.
 5. Standard biographies are: S Meacham, Henry Thornton of Clapham 1760 - 1815 (1964); M M Hennell, John Venn and the Clapham Sect (1958); J Leifchild, Memoir of the late Rev Joseph Hughes ... (1835). For Simeon see above p 14, and for More and Wilberforce p 23.

expansiveness of evangelicalism and hence a new co-ordination of evangelical effort. The hyperCalvinism of old dissent which had precluded any evangelistic effort was seriously challenged when in 1785 a leading Baptist Andrew Fuller published The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation.⁶ With the preaching of moderate Calvinism came the birth of the modern missionary movement: the Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1792 and the Missionary Society (later known as the London Missionary Society) in 1795.⁷ As the vision grew of extended evangelistic activity, at home and abroad so it became necessary to pool resources to achieve that vision. Hence the setting up of bodies at county and national level to give effect to the aspirations of previously localised groups. The activities of newly formed county associations and itinerant societies were reported in the Evangelical Magazine, founded in 1793 and itself an expression of growing consciousness that evangelicalism was a nationwide movement. Hand in hand with expansion and co-ordination went an

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6. For Fuller see J Ryland, The work of faith, the labour of love and the patience of hope illustrated in the life and death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller... (1816). Fuller's counterpart among the Independents was Edward Williams who published An Essay on the Equity of Divine Government and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace (1809) and A Defence of Modern Calvinism (1811). There are biographies by J Gilbert (1825) and W T Owen (1963). On the decline of hyperCalvinism see G F Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', Baptist Quarterly xxii (1968), and on the general history of old dissent R W Dale, History of English Congregationalism (1907); R Tudur Jones, Congregationalism in England 1662 - 1962 (1962); A C Underwood, A History of English Baptists (1947).
7. See R Lovett, The History of the London Missionary Society (1899); F A Cox, History of the Baptist Missionary Society (1842). There is a far more comprehensive bibliography than might be implied by the title in E Daniel Potts British Baptist Missionaries in India 1793 - 1837 (1967), while S Neill, A History of Christian Missions (1964) contains a useful summary and bibliography.

increased systematization of evangelical charity. The Evangelical Magazine recorded the establishment of numerous organisations concerned with every aspect of human welfare.⁸ The great age of evangelical societies dates back to the 1790s.

While the 'nineties were thus characterised by a proliferation of undenominational activity, they saw too a new hardening of denominational divisions. Professor Ward has argued that in the face of social divisiveness and the dispersion of authority consequent upon revolutionary influence, church leaders sought to consolidate their own position by asserting control over undenominational institutions such as Sunday Schools and itinerant societies.⁹ Hence arose a new denominationalism. The belief that Church and state as in France would stand or fall together created in Anglicans a stronger allegiance to the establishment while orthodox dissenters suffered disparagement by association, on account of the political and religious radicalism of Unitarians.¹⁰ New problems arose as the first heady days of the revival gave way to a more sober period of consolidation. Allegiance to a church and disregard of its discipline could not coexist interminably. Thus it became increasingly difficult for Wesleyanism to masquerade as a society within the established church.¹¹ The growing

8. There is a detailed list in F K Brown, op cit ch ix 'Ten thousand compassions and charities'.

9. See above p 67.

10. In 1791 there were rumours that George Burder was sheltering Dr Priestley. Fearing attack Burder packed his plate and writings ready for immediate flight (H F Burder, op cit p 149). For the hardening of Anglican attitudes see Soloway, op cit pp 359 ff: Bishop Horne of Norwich who had supported mixed Sunday Schools in 1785, in 1791 expressed concern about Anglican and dissenting co-education.

11. While the plan of pacification of 1795 permitted societies and individuals to remain in communion with the established church it also allowed societies to

regularity of Evangelicals was but one expression of this new denominational consciousness. Whereas in the early days of the revival some had chafed against denominational limitations, as time went on there was increasing awareness of the inadequacies of undenominational bodies: beliefs held dear by particular groups were neglected, in some cases challenged. Thus, Anglican evangelicals felt that there was need for a missionary society and a periodical which would propagate both Anglican and evangelical principles, founding in 1799 the Society for Missions to Africa and the East (later the Church Missionary Society) and in 1802 the Christian Observer.¹² Similarly in 1809 a group of Baptists, irritated by the assertion of paedobaptist principles in the Evangelical Magazine, established the Baptist Magazine.¹³ The early undenominational foundations, the Missionary Society and the Evangelical Magazine came increasingly under Independent leadership and ceased to represent the whole gamut of evangelicalism.

The pages of the latter provide ample evidence of the divisions that continued to beset the evangelical world.

apply to Conference for the administration of the sacrament by their own preachers. That many societies were availing themselves of this right was noted, with regret, by CO ii (1803) p 571.

12. The plausibility of both ventures was discussed at meetings of the largely Anglican and largely clerical Eclectic Society: see J H Pratt, Eclectic Notes... (1856) pp 92 - 93, 95 - 103. See also E Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society (1899); and on the foundation of the Christian Observer, Knutsford, op cit pp 250 - 57; Hennell, op cit pp 198 ff; Howse, op cit pp 105 - 08. For a useful general comparison of the Christian Observer and other religious periodicals see F E Mineka, The Dissidence of Dissent, The Monthly Repository 1806 - 1838 (1944) ch ii.
13. See the prefaces to BM i (1809); EM i series xx (1812).

The bitterness evoked by the Calvinist controversy of the 1770s had long since died down and evangelicals of different schools were prepared to recognise the faith of others. Nevertheless the debate over hyperCalvinism, moderate Calvinism and Arminianism flourished well into the new century.¹⁴ Much space was accorded too to the continuing argument concerning the proper subjects and mode of baptism.¹⁵ Dissenting dislike of Anglicanism was reinforced by the activities of Lord Sidmouth who attempted to restrict dissenting religious liberty, and of individual clergymen and magistrates who refused to marry or bury dissenters, were often unwilling to grant licences to dissenting preachers, and dealt leniently with offenders who stormed dissenting meeting houses and disrupted services.¹⁶ While Anglican evangelicals did not condone such activities they nevertheless sometimes failed to appreciate that dissenters still had a conscientious objection to establishment and castigated them for wilfully inciting others to commit the sin of schism.¹⁷ The growing divergence between the two is clearly revealed in the responses to James Bean's book Zeal without innovation which received a

14. See for example EM i series xii (1804) pp 205, 269; xvi (1808) p 458; xvii (1809) pp 56 f, 101 ff, 149 f, 232 f; xviii (1810) pp 61 ff; xxiii (1815) pp 352 f, 443 ff; xxiv (1816) pp 125 ff ...
15. The subject was of prevalent interest between 1814 and 1819, and additional articles were printed in the following decade.
16. See for example EM i series xviii (1810) pp 201 - 03, 238 - 40; xix (1811) pp 194 - 95, 237 - 48, 320 - 21, 443; xx (1812) pp 37, 114 ff, 194; xxiv (1816) p 28; xxv (1817) p 111. An account of these and other forms of discrimination is given in B L Manning, The Protestant Dissenting Deputies (1952) pt ii chs i, iii.
17. CO ii (1803) pp 224 - 26; vii (1808) pp 223 - 26.

largely favourable review from the Christian Observer but was criticised by the Evangelical Magazine and the Eclectic Review for misrepresenting dissent.¹⁸ The Eclectic Review, designed as an evangelical counterpart of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, was founded in 1805 on non-party principles but its sponsors soon found that dissenters would only support them on terms which Anglicans found unacceptable. Disclaiming their predecessors' belief that they were bound to neutrality on controversial issues, the editors of the second series, launched in 1814, proclaimed 'The proper exercise of charity and candour, is found in the maintenance not in the concealment of a conscientious difference of opinion'.¹⁹

Nevertheless the undenominational spirit was far from dead for there was much co-operation between evangelicals of different theological, political and ecclesiastical persuasions. Thus one later commentator recorded that

For many years it was the habit of the Secretaries of some of the chief Missionary Societies, the Church Missionary, the London, the Wesleyan, to meet at one another's offices. They then mutually imparted the result of their experience, in the conduct of their Missions, in the selection and training of Missionary Candidates, and the course to be pursued with heathen converts. They discussed the methods of avoiding

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18. CO vii (1808) pp 732 - 41, 781 - 92; viii (1809) pp 30 - 40, 101 - 09, 168 - 77; EM i series xvii (1809) pp 73 ff; ER i series v (1809) pp 497 - 511, 616 - 29, 850 - 63, reprinted in The Miscellaneous Works and Remains of Robert Hall (1846). Hall castigated Bean, a staunch churchman, as an 'artful, bigoted partizan'. The CO praised his approbation of evangelical life and doctrine, but felt that he overemphasised charges of enthusiasm and was unduly fearful lest Evangelical organisations undermine the authority of the Church.
19. ER ii series i (1814) Preface. For the founding and early disputes about the ER see T P Bunting, The Life of Jabez Bunting (1859 - 87) i pp 235 ff.

collision at home, or any matter which might excite jealousy or discontent with their own Society in the minds of their Missionaries abroad. They were all engaged in one great work ... 20

A reading of evangelical wills and subscription lists reveals that many supported missionary societies other than those sponsored by their own denomination, while speakers from other communions were welcomed to the rostrums at annual meetings. 21 The Christian Observer, Evangelical and Methodist Magazines were wide ranging in their reports of missionary meetings and activities, by no means restricting their coverage to those societies with which they were most intimately connected.

New undenominational societies continued to be founded alongside the more denominationally orientated bodies: thus 1804 marked the establishment of the Bible Society, the most notable expression of evangelical unity in mission. 22 Like the missionary societies, the BFBS co-operated very closely with its continental counterparts, utilising not only Protestant but Catholic agents to expedite the effective

20. T R Birks, op cit i p 388.

21. Wilberforce spoke at the 1819 WMS meeting while William Ward of Serampore, a Baptist, was a leading preacher the following year (MM xlii, 1819, pp 472 - 73; T Jackson, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev Richard Watson, 2nd edn 1834, pp 295 - 97). Joseph Hughes subscribed not only to the BMS but also to the LMS, CMS, WMS, Moravian and Scottish Missions (Leifchild, op cit p 436). In her will Hannah More made donations to the LMS, Moravian and Baptist missions as well as to Anglican and interdenominational foundations (H Thompson, op cit pp 325 - 26). The Christian Remembrancer disturbed by such indiscriminate munificence was pleased to report 'that the various bequests to Dissenting institutions ... were not hers, but those of her sister, Mrs Martha More, who left these sums for Mrs Hannah's use during her life, and at her death to be assigned as directed in the accounts which have gone abroad' (xv, 1833, pp 637, 698).

22. The standard account is W Canton, A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1904).

distribution of the Scriptures. For in this campaign, as in that to abolish the slave trade and slavery, early nineteenth century evangelicals proved to be essentially pragmatic: they sought and acquired influential patronage, mobilised mass support by constructing a network of local auxiliaries, and co-operated with any who shared their aims regardless of belief. ²³

The resulting success of such campaigns gave rise to an optimism and excitement abundantly reflected in eschatological expectation. Apocalyptic studies were of perennial interest throughout this period in circles far wider than the purely evangelical, as men attempted with fearful fascination to deduce the cosmic significance of the cataclysmic events in France, and of the subsequent dominance of Napoleon, contender with the Pope for the popular title of anti-Christ. ²⁴ Britain's stance against this embodiment of evil gave rise to much patriotic exultation. The Evangelical Magazine of 1810 proclaimed ecstatically

Thou art the barrier alone that stays the ravages of military despotism, and puts bounds to insatiable ambition! Like the rocks which encircle thy sea-girt shores, against thee the rage of Corsican malignity foams, dashes, and impotently retires. ²⁵

If such eulogistic invocation was in part an expression of relief after the paralysing fear of imminent invasion which

23. On the methodology of evangelical charity see F K Brown, op cit passim. On co-operation of missionary societies with continental Protestants see I Fletcher, 'The Fundamental Principle of the LMS', Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society xix (1962) pp 138 ff. For co-operation with Catholics see C I Foster, An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front 1790 - 1837 (1960) p 103.

24. Soloway, op cit pp 39 ff.

25. EM i series xviii (1810) p 431.

occasioned fasts and prayer meetings during 1803, it also reflected the belief that God was graciously at work using the British as his chosen people. No period in British history, the same writer continued, had been more auspicious than the last ten years: godliness had substantially increased at home, the slave trade had been abolished, and Britain had led the way in the diffusion of light and truth throughout the world. The unprecedented expansion of Christian preaching and activity therefore confirmed evangelicals in the common belief that mankind was living through the last days. In 1808 the Christian Observer devoted many of its leading articles to eschatological inquiry while other periodicals likewise engaged in apocalyptic arithmetic and prophetic interpretation, seeing in the events of the day the long-expected fulfilment of predictions such as that of Revelation xiv 6 - 7.

I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made Heaven, and earth, and sea, and the fountain of waters. ²⁶

As time went on however evangelical confidence and optimism became tarnished, for within the churches, as within the nation at large, euphoria was replaced by depression, as victory was followed by hardship. The commercial crisis of 1825, the cholera epidemics of the early 'thirties seemed to evangelicals clearly to prove that the British were no longer in God's good books. On the contrary an Evangelical Magazine contributor of 1831, who listed the national sins of a

26. As cited in EM i series xiv (1806) p 210.

people who were free and highly favoured but not godly, expressed no surprise that they should be suffering the outworkings of divine judgment.²⁷ While the shortcomings he cited were those of the nation at large evangelicals were uneasily aware that they were not themselves exempt from censure. Success appeared to have taken its toll of the original spirit of the movement: by the 1820s respectability and even a measure of respect had been achieved, but in consequence there was widespread fear that the distinctiveness of evangelicalism had been diluted, that the religious were becoming contaminated by worldliness, that the impetus of the revival had been lost. Such unease prompted a yearning for former glories and many began to look for further revival: prayer meetings were held to this end, articles on the subject proliferated in the Evangelical Magazine of 1828 and 1829, and considerable attention was paid to reports of contemporary American awakenings.²⁸

Their dissatisfaction led evangelicals to exult less over what they believed God had achieved through them, and to worry more about the massive task that lay ahead. The continent was still predominantly Catholic while European Protestants seemed to evangelicals to be mere Socinians. The affluent and influential Scottish itinerant preacher, Robert Haldane, visited Geneva and various French towns in the years following 1816 and was horrified at the state of the Protestant churches. When the Genevan church authorities

27. EM ii series ix (1831) pp 136 ff.

28. See particularly the preface to EM ii series vi (1828) and for earlier expressions of concern i (1823) pp 12 ff; CO xvi (1817) pp 213 - 17. Note however the continuation of optimism about the future in eg CMS 1819 report quoted T Birks, op cit i pp 353 - 54.

refused to ordain Haldane's converts, they formed a Protestant Evangelical Church on the Congregational model which was subjected to considerable persecution, physical and verbal. The Evangelical Magazine gave sympathetic coverage to their plight as to that of Caesar Malan, an ordained minister who had suffered dismissal on account of his evangelical belief.²⁹ Malan subsequently forfeited support by his adoption of apparently hyperCalvinist and antinomian doctrines, but at the end of the second decade charges of puritan immorality made by the French press were refuted even by The Times.³⁰ At the instigation of Haldane and Henry Drummond of Albury, an enthusiastic young patrician, a Continental Society was formed for the evangelisation of Europe.³¹

The Socinianism and Catholicism of the continent were reflected only to a lesser extent in the United Kingdom. There was increased concern about the prevalence of the former

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29. EM i series xxv (1817) p 489; xxvi (1818) pp 121, 211, 391, 438, 525; xxvii (1819) pp 27, 103; xxviii (1820) p 241. Cf ER ii series ix (1818) pp 12 ff; CO xvi (1817) pp 712 - 14. There is a detailed, if partisan, account in A Haldane, The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his brother James Alexander Haldane (2nd edn 1852) chs xviii & xix.
30. The Times 16 November 1818. For criticism of Malan see EM ii series vi (1828) p 477; CO xxvii (1827) pp 73 - 77, and for the ensuing discussion pp 257 - 67, 321 - 29; xxxiii (1833) pp 733 ff. Malan greatly influenced the evangelical novelist Mrs Sherwood: S Kelly, The Life of Mrs Sherwood (1854) pp 547 - 49.
31. On Haldane and Drummond, grandson of Henry Dundas, MP for Plympton Earle 1810 - 13, and West Surrey 1847 - 60, see DNB. Born an Anglican, Drummond asked for believer's baptism at the hands of James Harrington Evans for whom he built John St Chapel; he subsequently became a leader in the Irvingite Catholic Apostolic Church.

while the campaign for Catholic emancipation which spanned the 1820s evoked much latent anti-Catholic feeling.³² Much evangelistic attention was directed towards Ireland and in 1827 the British Reformation Society was formed to convert Catholics.³³ In England however the main evangelistic task was not to counteract beliefs regarded as unchristian, but to reach the unchurched millions. Faced with the mushrooming growth of industrial towns and above all of London evangelicals became aware that many, even in their own land, had still never heard the gospel. In 1826/27 the Evangelical Magazine contained articles 'On the present state of our large cities',

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32. Dr P Sangster points out that Rowland Hill, author of the popular Village Dialogues (1801 - 03), introduced counterblasts to Socinianism into later editions: see for example the preface to the 1824 edn. ('The life of the Rev Rowland Hill...' Oxford D Phil, 1964, p 385). Other instances of anti-Socinianism can be found in EM i series xxii (1814) pp 353 f; xxiv (1816) pp 22, 169 ff; ii series ii (1824) pp 263, 309 f; iii (1825) pp 23 f, 377 f. The controversies over Unitarian control of chapels and charities endowed by Trinitarian believers are outlined in Manning, op cit pp 64 - 66 and C G Bolam et alii (eds), The English Presbyterians (1968) pp 245 - 50. While Catholic emancipation was supported by some evangelical leaders, there was much popular opposition both to Catholics, against whom the otherwise urban EM inveighed with particular venom in 1825 (ii series iii pp 94 ff, 111 f, 150, 187), and to their emancipation: J Hexter, 'The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England 1778 - 1829', Journal of Modern History viii (1936); R W Davis, 'The strategy of "dissent" in the repeal campaign 1820 - 28', Journal of Modern History xxxviii (1966). Regarding discussions on political measures as outside its brief (i series xxx, 1822, p 193) the EM merely noted the passage of 'this extra-ordinary and, to most, unexpected measure' (ii series vii, 1829, p 196). Cf its brief (approbatory) reports of the campaign against the test and corporation acts (ii series vi, 1828, pp 21 - 22, 65 - 66, 155, 258 - 59, 311).
33. See eg EM ii series v (1827) pp 296 f, 433 ff.

while a Christian Instruction Society was founded with the aim of christianising the masses by systematic house-to-house visitation and the distribution of religious literature. Immense though the task was, some evangelicals believed, in the self-critical temper of the later 1820s, that they had been culpably indolent in failing to convert the nation. ³⁴

The pessimism of this period like the euphoria of earlier decades was reflected in apocalyptic studies. Dr Ian Rennie has pointed to the emergence of a less optimistic eschatology which maintained that the last days would be marked not by evangelistic success but by the decline of the church; the millennial period of Christian victory, far from heralding the second coming, would only be inaugurated when the Lord returned. ³⁵ The propagation of these 'premillennial' beliefs was both the product and the cause of an intensified interest in Biblical prophecy, manifested both in periodical discussions and in the summoning in 1826 of the first of a series of annual conferences at the home of Henry Drummond. ³⁶ But while the premillennial scheme became increasingly acceptable there was considerable criticism of the eschatological obsessions of some of its proponents. Some who had attended the first Albury conference refused later invitations. ³⁷ The BFBS president, Lord Teignmouth, and

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34. See eg EM ii series iv (1826) pp 109, 236 f, 290, 375 ff, 384 f; v (1827) pp 19, 509 f.
35. I Rennie, 'Evangelicalism and Public Life 1823 - 50' (Toronto Ph.D 1962) pp 19 - 22, 54 - 60. A copy is lodged in Cambridge University Library.
36. In contrast to postmillennialists, premillennialists believed that the second advent would precede the millenium. For discussion of millennial systems see EM ii series v (1827) pp 68, 464 ff; vi (1828) pp 142, 186 f, 347 ff, 387 ff. A list of those attending the five Albury conferences is given in P E Shaw, The Catholic Apostolic Church (1946) pp 19 - 20.
37. See A biographical sketch of Alexander Haldane ... communicated to the 'Record' of July 28 1882 p 12 where it is stated that J Haldane Stewart, an Anglican anxious

Edward Bickersteth, secretary of the CMS, criticised the confidence with which mere speculations were propounded, the latter complaining:

Men get full of their own views, and press them as all-essential, and speak as positively as if futurity were as open to them as what is past; and then others speak publicly against them; and so the dividing spirit of the age increases and spreads. 38

Charles Simeon and the Christian Observer protested that undue attention was devoted to prophecy at the cost of central doctrines of the faith, while even the Evangelical Magazine, which had devoted much space to such discussions, reduced its coverage in the years after 1829. Its contributors contrasted the 'wild effusions' of the Albury school with 'sound and temperate' discourses on the subject, which it, like Simeon and the Christian Observer, continued to regard as proper. 39

Disagreements over eschatology were part of a wider and more fundamental division of evangelical opinion over the nature of present Christian activity, a matter for much debate as men sought to diagnose and counteract the acknowledged worldliness of the movement. Albury participants were among those who laid the blame upon pragmatic policies which they equated with worldly compromise: the premillennialist belief that Christ would personally supervise the evangelisation of the world was therefore but one expression of the growing conviction that divine sovereignty had been unduly

for revival, attended only once while William Marsh, one of Simeon's protégés, James Stratten, a London Independent, and Haldane himself (for whom see below p 88) refused the third invitation.

38. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 372; Birks, op cit i p 437
Bickersteth later studied prophecy more himself and came to believe that the second advent would precede the millenium, ibid ii pp 44 - 49.
39. Carus, op cit pp 629, 657 f; CO xxix (1829) p 474; EM ii series vii (1829) p 404. Cf ER ii series i (1829) p 446.

subordinated to human endeavour, faith to human machination. Most vocal exponent of such views and outspoken critic of evangelical worldliness was the Scot, Edward Irving, intimate of Albury, minister of the metropolitan Caledonian church and, paradoxically, the most popular preacher in fashionable London.⁴⁰ In his notorious LMS sermon of May 1824 Irving protested

This is the age of expediency, both in the Church and out of the Church; and all institutions are modelled upon the principles of expediency, and carried into effect by the rules of prudence. I remember, in this metropolis, to have heard it uttered with great applause in a public meeting, where the heads and leaders of the religious world were present, 'If I were asked what was the first qualification for a Missionary, I would say, prudence; and what the second? Prudence; and what the third? Still I would answer, Prudence'. I trembled while I heard, not with indignation but with horror and apprehension, what the end would be of a spirit, which I have since found to be the presiding genius of our activity...⁴¹

The antithesis of such worldly wisdom seemed to be renewed reliance upon divine provision. Irving sarcastically suggested that 'those who have accustomed themselves to carpet warfare, cannot like the conflict of naked steel', and acknowledged that he would meet with the opposition of 'those who have built up a system of administration on which they have set their hearts to call it perfect and infallible, and which I charge as exceedingly imperfect'.⁴² Nevertheless he issued his challenge to Christian missionaries to obey

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40. For the views of Albury participants, maybe coloured by the convenor's idiosyncracies, see H Drummond et alii, Dialogues on Prophecy (1827 - 29), Preface. Further accounts of the conferences can be found in the biographies of Irving, viz: M Oliphant, The Life of Edward Irving (1862); A L Drummond, Edward Irving and his circle (1937); H C Whitley, Blinded Eagle (1955). There are numerous contemporary tributes to Irving eg Thomas Carlyle, Reminiscences (1881, 1972 edn) pp 170 - 307.
41. The sermon was expanded in E Irving, For missionaries after the apostolical school, a series of orations (1825) pp xiv - xv.
42. ibid pp 126, 129.

the dominical command, going out without 'purse or scrip' in reliance upon the true weapons of Christian warfare which were 'not carnal, but spiritual'.⁴³ In accordance with similar beliefs some of Irving's contemporaries in due course formed Brethren assemblies and encouraged 'faith missions', attempts to eschew institutionalisation and to emulate the supposed direct dependence upon God of the early church.⁴⁴ More immediately such thinking proved congenial to the emergence of a short-lived charismatic revival. Those present at the Albury conference of July 1830 concluded that they should pray for the gifts of the Spirit, and find out more about those already manifested in some Scottish congregations.⁴⁵ A year later members of Irving's congregation were among the Londoners who began to speak in tongues and to 'prophesy', practices which Irving eventually felt bound to permit within the context of church services, fearing that the repudiation of the revival for which he had prayed would constitute disobedience.⁴⁶

Few concurred in his belief that this was the desired revival. The great had proved to be fickle supporters and had ceased to attend his ministry in any great number when the Caledonian church had moved to Regent Square in 1827. If the excessive length of services deterred many from regular attendance, almost all sympathy was forfeited by the indecorum

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43. ibid p 40. Irving argued that the instructions given in Matt. x 5 - 42 were of perpetual obligation.
44. For a detailed examination, incorporating discussion of the relationship between the early Brethren, premillennialist thinking, and Irvingism see H H Rowdon, The Origins of the Brethren (1967).
45. A L Drummond, op cit p 135.
46. ibid pp 153 ff; Oliphant, op cit ii pp 185 ff.

of the 1830s. Charismatic practice both within and without Irvingite circles was widely disapproved, the evangelical press responding with uniform hostility to glossolalia and the supposed miraculous healing of Miss Fancourt.⁴⁷ In May 1832 the London Presbytery ruled that Irving had violated the trust deed by allowing unauthorised persons to participate in services, and had thus shown himself unfit to be minister of Regent Square Church.⁴⁸ A year later his views on the peccability of Christ were deemed heretical and he was defrocked, dying shortly afterwards, discredited within the orthodox evangelical world and demoted even by his own Catholic Apostolic Church to which pentecostal practice was now largely confined.⁴⁹

Charismatic activity was but one response to the feared worldly expediency of evangelicalism. Of far greater moment was the attempt to stop the rot by a more rigid definition of doctrine which would serve to differentiate evangelicals from others and hence make the movement more

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47. CO xxx (1830) pp 810 - 19; xxxi (1831) pp 63 - 64, 109 - 119, 154 - 68, 192, 256; ER iii series iv (1830) pp 417 ff; v (1831) pp 231 ff. In a rare error David Newsome suggests that the Evangelical Magazine represented the views of Irving and Drummond (op cit p 10). The periodical was however strongly opposed both to tongues and to 'modern miracles' which it suggested were often linked with premillennial belief: EM ii series viii (1830) pp 437 ff, 572 ff; ix (1831) pp 68 ff, 486, 522; x (1832) pp 58 f, 476 f. The organ of Irvingism as Newsome properly notes was the Morning Watch founded by Drummond in 1829.
48. Oliphant, op cit ii pp 254 - 98; A L Drummond, op cit pp 208 - 10.
49. Oliphant, op cit ii pp 342 - 50; A L Drummond, op cit pp 217 - 20. On the Catholic Apostolic Church see Shaw, op cit.

exclusive. Among those who attended the early Albury conferences was Alexander Haldane, nephew of Robert Haldane, whose visit to Geneva had inculcated him with an indelible fear of theological liberalism. Uncle and nephew were at the centre of all subsequent campaigns to prevent similar developments in Britain. ⁵⁰

The first major controversy arose over the continental circulation of Bibles containing the Apocrypha. ⁵¹ The Bible Society committee had long been uneasy about apparently sanctioning the Catholic belief that the Apocryphal books were as inspired and authoritative as those which Protestants recognised as canonical. On the other hand they acknowledged that since European Protestants and Catholics alike expected Bibles to include the Apocrypha, only such Bibles would prove acceptable to the continental Bible societies and their clients. Distribution of the Apocrypha seemed a small, if distasteful, price to pay for the widespread dissemination of the Scriptures. The 1820s saw protracted discussions and the passing and rescinding of numerous motions on the subject. A compromise between principle and expediency was reached in 1824 when the decision was taken to refuse grants for the publication of Bibles in which canon and Apocrypha were intermixed, but to support the production of those in which the Apocryphal books were grouped together at the end. British grants, however, were to be spent exclusively on the canonical part of the work.

50. See above pp 80-81. For the nephew who was to become Shaftesbury's mentor see DNB and A biographical sketch of Alexander Haldane ... communicated to the 'Record' of July 28 1882.

51. For expanded accounts written from different points of view see Canton, op cit i. pp 334 - 50; A Haldane, op cit chs xxi and xxii; Teignmouth, op cit chs xxiii, xxiv, Appendix I.

Such an attempt casuistically to salve consciences satisfied no one: there was, the Eclectic Review pointed out, no principled middle course between the belief that the Apocrypha should in no circumstances be supplied and the conviction that the parent body should in no circumstances interfere with the independence of foreign societies.⁵² It favoured the latter stance as did twenty-six Cambridge men who in February 1825 protested that the rescinding of some grants constituted a violation of the society's fundamental principle to unite with other Christian efforts. Signatories included Charles Simeon, the evangelical professors Lee and Farish, the patriarchal pamphleteer Legh Richmond, the future CMS secretary Henry Venn, and the Rev Baptist Noel who in later controversies was briefly to support the Haldanes.⁵³ Opposed to them was the Edinburgh auxiliary which issued remonstrances to the national executive, as did Robert Haldane and G C Gorham, later famous for his denial of baptismal regeneration.⁵⁴ The matter was eventually brought before a special committee which deferred to the anti-Apocryphal views of the society's president Lord Teignmouth. A resolution was passed that all Bibles printed partially or totally at the society's expense at home or abroad should be issued bound without the Apocrypha.

Despite this victory the Edinburgh auxiliary was still not satisfied: it demanded a change of executive to

52. ER ii series xxiv (1825) p 401.

53. A list of those who signed is given in Canton, op cit i p 338. For Lee and Farish see below pp 365-66; for Richmond and Venn see T S Grimshawe, A Memoir of the Rev Legh Richmond (4th edn 1828); W Knight, Memoir of Henry Venn (2nd edn 1882). For further illustration of belief in 'catholic Christianity' see D W Bebbington, 'The Life of Baptist Noel: its setting and significance', Baptist Quarterly . . . xxiv (1972).

54. For Gorham see DNB and on the later controversy, O Chadwick, The Victorian Church i (1966) pp 250 - 69.

ensure that the society's resolutions were obeyed, and the termination of all connection with those continental societies which continued to circulate the Apocrypha. It further required that those who had supported the discontinued grants should confess that they had violated a fundamental principle. The failure of such efforts caused the secession of most Scottish auxiliaries, while the virulence of the campaign waged by the Edinburgh society left a residue of much hard feeling even among those glad that the BFBS no longer condoned the production of the Apocrypha. The Scotsmen had refused to concede the good faith of those who favoured a course of action different from theirs, castigating their opponents as 'Apocrypha-lovers', and manifesting in the words of the Evangelical Magazine an 'unholy temper'.⁵⁵ Their strident tone and simplistic attitude became the miserable badge of a new and increasingly influential form of evangelicalism. If the Christian Observer typified Anglican evangelicalism of the earlier period, the publication of the Record can be seen as a token of the new era. A newspaper founded in 1828, it was at first moderate and conciliatory

55. EM ii series iv (1826) p 301. For discussion of the issue in the EM see ii series iii (1825) pp 383 - 84, 408 - 09, 458 - 59, 557; iv (1826) pp 182 - 84, 475; v (1827) pp 247 - 51. Arguments on both sides of the case were given: while the periodical was not sorry to see the end of pro-Apocryphal grants, it supported the BFBS committee against the continued vituperation of the Edinburgh auxiliary. Cf. Lord Teignmouth's complaint concerning the vehemence of Edinburgh pamphleteer Andrew Thompson (Teignmouth, op cit pp 501, 517). The general desire to restore peace is reflected in the failure of Edward Irving to find a seceder for his last-ditch proposal that the Edinburgh demands be accepted (EM ii series v, 1827, p 249).

in its views; coming under the control of Alexander Haldane, it became gradually more rigid in its attitudes, less catholic in its appeal, and more vituperative in its tone, frequently in conflict with the older organs of evangelicalism, the Christian Observer and the Evangelical Magazine.⁵⁶ For even when the latter agreed with its views they challenged its spirit. Daniel Wilson, future Bishop of Calcutta and Christian Observer contributor, commended the Record for its boldness but regretted its lack of discretion: 'nothing has more impeded the revival of a holy and consistent Christianity, than unmeasured charges, over-statements on doubtful matters...' ⁵⁷ Similarly the Evangelical Magazine of 1831 applauded the opinions expressed in Robert Haldane's book on the inspiration of Scripture but protested against the asperity of his tone, particularly when directed against people who revered the 'Word of God' just as much as he did. The work, the reviewer concluded, manifested 'Scottish fever'. ⁵⁸

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56. The Record was initially welcomed by the older periodicals (EM ii series vi, 1828, p 111; CO xxviii, 1828, p 788). Under its first proprietors it was not opposed to Catholic emancipation and as late as 1831 it was prepared to support constitutional reform. It was not until 1832 - 33 that it adopted a uniformly brash tone and rigid theological and political position, and thus came into constant conflict with other publications. For earlier examples see CO xxxi (1831) pp 106, 510, 576 - 78, 600 - 02, 711 - 12. It is significant that half of the 'Retrospect of the Record' reprinted from the edition of 27 May 1882 in the Biographical Sketch of Alexander Haldane comprises a list of the people and practices which the paper over the years assailed. Considerable use is made of the paper by I Rennie, op cit.
57. The Record 11 April 1831. On Wilson see J Bateman, The Life of the Right Rev Daniel Wilson D.D... (1860).
58. EM ii series ix (1831) pp 15 - 16.

Haldane's book was, like the Apocrypha controversy, but one of a number of attempts to safeguard what he regarded as the authentic view of the authority and inspiration of Scripture. In so doing he perpetrated a much more rigid and precisely defined doctrine than had previously been current, for as Canon Smyth has argued, 'at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Bible was simply accepted as authoritative, ... it was not until its veracity was challenged that the hypothesis of its verbal inspiration was adduced'.⁵⁹ While the language of verbal inspiration was employed prior to the 1820s it cannot be assumed that it carried the connotations it was later to develop. Thus Simeon could claim that 'the whole Scripture was as much written by the finger of God, as the laws were, which he inscribed on two tablets of stone, and delivered to his servant Moses', but at the same time he allowed that 'there are inexactnesses in reference to philosophical and scientific matters, because of its popular style'.⁶⁰ The connotations of language depend upon the context of contrasting and complementary ideas: the language of verbal inspiration in Simeon's day did not so much define a mode of inspiration as assert the fact of inspiration.

One of the theories currently accepted by men such as Simeon was that provided by the eminent eighteenth century dissenter, Philip Doddridge, who differentiated between three different modes of inspiration.⁶¹ Under the inspiration of

59. Smyth, 'The Evangelical Movement in Perspective', loc cit p 163.

60. Quoted Hennell and Pollard (eds) op cit pp 44 - 46.

61. P Doddridge, 'A dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament', Works (1803 edn) iv pp 168 - 98; 'Lectures on Divinity', nos. cxxxvii - cxi, ibid v pp 93 - 106; Rennie, op cit pp 15 - 16, 48 - 53.

elevation, human faculties

are...raised to some extraordinary degree, so that the performance is more truly sublime, noble, and pathetic, than what would have been produced merely by the force of a man's natural genius. ⁶²

This form of inspiration was not necessarily peculiar to the writers of Scripture. On the contrary since they were often free to express themselves in their own words, their writings no less than secular works contained 'some imperfection in the style and method'; they were however safeguarded from factual and doctrinal error by the inspiration of superintendency. ⁶³ Thus Doddridge argued that the evangelists who failed to quote verbatim from the Old Testament could nonetheless be regarded as subject to divine superintendence when they preserved the sense of the passages to which they referred. ⁶⁴ Some parts of the New Testament, he believed, were the product of a yet higher form of inspiration, that of suggestion

when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does as it were, speak directly to the mind ... so that a person ... is no other than first the auditor, and then, if I may be allowed the expression, the secretary of God. ⁶⁵

But Doddridge denied that this mode of production was common to the whole New Testament canon: 'it does not seem reasonable to believe, that every word which the apostles wrote was dictated to them by an immediate revelation'. ⁶⁶

The Recordites categorically opposed this theory. Critics of Robert Haldane's early work on verbal or plenary

62. Doddridge, op cit iv p 172.

63. ibid iv pp 170 - 71

64. ibid v pp 103 - 04.

65. ibid iv p 173.

66. ibid v p 105.

inspiration were characterised by his nephew as

... those whose minds had been perverted by the unwarrantable theory of a graduated scale of inspiration, which Doddridge had imported from the German innovators who proceeded Semler, the father of modern neology. ⁶⁷

The assumption that Doddridge's views were tantamount to German liberalism is but one instance of the Haldanes' tendency to regard all who disagreed with their doctrine as denigrators of 'God's Word written' of which they were the self-appointed champions. ⁶⁸ The Eclectic Review which was itself critical of German theology was nevertheless subjected to attack and abuse because it denied plenary inspiration and cast doubt upon the inspired status of some canonical books. In the opinion of the Record to hold such views was to commit sin, for any critical comment was construed as a culpable concession to neology. ⁶⁹ The Christian Observer and Daniel Wilson were therefore similarly assailed as, in a vehement and strongly worded campaign, was William Greenfield, whose appointment in 1829/30 to the superintendency of the BFBS editorial department met with the paper's unqualified disapproval. Greenfield had edited Bagster's Comprehensive Bible and his annotations were deemed to be

67. A Haldane, op cit p 548.

68. The phrase is from the Biographical Sketch of Alexander Haldane ... p 27.

69. The Record 29 August 1831; ER ii series xxiv (1825) p 390; iii series i (1829) p 417. The ER doubted whether it could be proved that Chronicles, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ezra and Esther were inspired since they satisfied none of the periodical's four criteria of inspiration viz i) they were not described as inspired by Christ or the apostles; ii) their writers did not claim to be inspired; iii) their writers were not prophets; iv) they lacked the obvious inspirational qualities of books like Job. For a further discussion of the ER's views and evangelical reactions to neology see below pp 407 ff.

neological in tendency. ⁷⁰

An obvious corollary of such efforts to protect doctrine was the attempt to ensure that only those who were impeccably sound participated in evangelical activity. The seeds of this attitude too can be seen in the early controversy, for it was complicity with continental Catholics which in the strict view necessitated the circulation of the Apocrypha. Thus the Haldanes had long campaigned for the dismissal of Leander van Ess, a Catholic priest who until 1829 served as a Bible Society agent. ⁷¹ Following the attack upon Greenfield, a further attempt was made to secure a 'purer system of management' by excluding Socinians. ⁷² In 1830/31 various auxiliary societies submitted resolutions urging that the BFBS dissociate itself from any who denied the divinity of Christ, and when the committee advised against any such measure, amendments were moved to the annual report for the introduction at various levels of a Trinitarian test. ⁷³

In the tumultuous debate that followed neither chairman nor speakers could make themselves heard. Indeed if the opening of the Exeter Hall in March 1831 symbolised evangelical achievement, the Bible Society meeting, held there for the first time only weeks later, exposed the depths of the movement's divisions. The octogenarian Rev Rowland Hill, representative of the older order,

rebuked the unseemly display of party spirit; expressed the wish that all the Roman Catholics and all the

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70. The Record 3 March, 23 and 30 June, 28 July, 11, 15 and 25 August, 1 and 12 September, 27 October 1831; 2 and 16 January, 5 April 1832. On Greenfield see DNB; Canton op cit i p 382.
71. A Haldane, op cit pp 558 - 59; Canton, op cit i 438 - 41.
72. The phrase used by A Haldane, op cit p 571.
73. For accounts of the tests controversy see A Haldane, op cit ch xxiii; Canton, op cit i pp 354 - 61; Teignmouth, op cit ch xxv.

Socinians in the world belonged to the Bible Societies for there they would find the truth to convince them of their errors ... ⁷⁴

Against this the isolationist sectarianism, always latent within evangelicalism, found expression among those who shared the Record's view that Socinians should be anathematised:

'God directs us not to receive a heretic of this stamp into our house, or to offer him any courteous salutation'. ⁷⁵

Almost imperceptibly the evangelistic impulse was being replaced by an inward-looking desire to protect what had already been gained. The exuberantly offensive movement of the 1790s was becoming self-consciously defensive.

Nevertheless much of the original spirit remained. The amendments were put and lost, and the annual report approved by a majority of six to one. ⁷⁶ Supported by the Record, the attempt to introduce a doctrinal test met with almost universal opposition from the rest of the evangelical press. The Evangelical Magazine stressed that Socinians contributed to the society for one purpose only - and that purpose was praiseworthy. The Christian Observer animadverted upon the impossibility of devising a universally acceptable test, an argument developed by the dissenting periodicals, which made acid reference to the failure of religious tests to keep the Church of England free from Socinianism. They added that, while tests would not necessarily keep out those they were designed to exclude, they would undoubtedly debar a number of theologically sound dissenters who disapproved in principle of credal statements. ⁷⁷ A similar determination

74. Canton, op cit i p 358.

75. The Record 29 August 1831.

76. Canton, op cit i p 359.

77. The views of the various periodicals were summarised in CO xxxi (1831) pp 443 - 46. For its own views see pp 532 - 37, 579, 642 - 43, 705 - 07, 822. Cf EM ii series ix (1831) pp 186 f, 255 ff, 352f; x (1832) pp 98 ff, 193.

to maintain the carefully preserved unity of the society greeted the parallel attempt to introduce regular prayer into meetings, a practice which, it was feared, would alienate Quakers. ⁷⁸ Defeated, some of the dissentients withdrew from the BFBS and, with the approbation of the Record, formed their own Trinitarian Bible Society. ⁷⁹

The venture proved to be short-lived. It never gained the allegiance of Robert Haldane who objected to its name, and when it refused to exclude Irvingites from its committee, it lost even the imprimatur of the Record, which suggested to its readers that they dissociate from it. Irving's charismatic practice and denial of the impeccability of Christ were no less distasteful to the majority of evangelicals than the Socinianism which the new society was at such pains to avoid. When men began to drift back to the BFBS the Record did not object. ⁸⁰

Such setbacks and the strength of the continued opposition show that the new modes of thought were far from dominant within evangelicalism. Nevertheless their exponents

While Record editorials were opposed to Socinian participation in the society (31 January, 28 April, 5 May 1831) correspondents expressed views on both sides of the question (eg 7 October 1830, 3 January 1831).

78. EM ii series ix (1831) p 199. Again letters to the Record reflect both points of view (21 October, 27 December 1830; 13 January, 3 February 1831) while editorials supported 'public prayer' (2 May 1831). The editors were however anxious that the disputed issues should be discussed at a special meeting, rightly fearing that the premature proposal of the motions would disrupt the general meeting: like their opponents they thoroughly disapproved of the resulting 'unbecoming display' (14 and 18 April, 2 and 5 May 1831).

79. The Record 5, 8, 12 and 22 December 1831.

80. ibid 16 April, 3 May, 26 July, 13 August 1832. The difficulties of the Trinitarian society and the growing hostility of the Record to it were noted with glee by the EM ii series x (1832) pp 152 f, 196.

were sufficiently vocal to cause considerable discomfort to the editors of the Christian Observer, who disliked not only the intense modern interest in prophecy and charismatic experiment, but also the tendency of some evangelicals constantly and uncharitably to detect heresy even in the most orthodox. In the past, they maintained, they had enjoyed the support of the religious world; now, although their attitudes had not changed, they suffered attack for supposedly frustrating the work of God. Whereas opposition had once emanated from the bastions of 'worldliness and barren formality', now it came also from those of 'false zealotry':

...We have now to oppose the harsh ultraism of those who would make a man an offender for a word, and who find heresy and infidelity in the best writings of the best men who do not respond to all their shibboleths. 81

The hard line attitude, congenial to those frightened by the proliferation of German doctrine, was to become increasingly common.

The gradual change of tone within evangelicalism was evident not only in the religious but also in the political sphere. Dr Bradley has usefully differentiated three distinct groups of early nineteenth century evangelical MPs: the activists who rallied behind Wilberforce and kept themselves free of party commitments, the more passive 'conservative evangelicals' who served largely as Tory party hacks, and from 1830 - 31 the

81. CO xxxi (1831) preface. The CO was not altogether just in bracketing together the Recordite and Morning Watch schools. While Irving, Drummond and some of their followers, eg Spencer Perceval (see below p 105), had been involved in various of the Haldanes' campaigns for doctrinal purity, the Record was highly critical of Morning Watch theology, and in particular of the group's high church doctrines and high regard for prophecy (28 October 1830; 24 March, 24, 27 and 31 October 1831).

small but vociferous group of Recordites who combined the activism of the former with the conservatism of the latter.⁸² The Record regarded theological and political liberalism as two facets of one ill, and inveighed vehemently against its manifestation in any sphere of life. The Church and the English confessional state had to be defended against the liberal/infidel threat. Thus the Record carried its policy of refusing to co-operate with non-evangelicals into politics: it opposed attempts to admit Jews to the legislature, and upheld Christian faith as the primary qualification for membership of Parliament.⁸³ Whereas Wilberforce and his friends had worked with and respected Brougham and other non-evangelicals anxious to abolish slavery, the Record informed its readers that a determined slave-owner was ten times more worthy of a Christian's vote than an infidel.⁸⁴ The popular novelist, Charlotte Elizabeth, whose works were frequently quoted by the newspaper, commented:

Interested as I was in the abolition of negro slavery, and working with heart and hand for its accomplishment, until it pleased God to crown our efforts with success, still from the moment I heard that Daniel O'Connell had been permitted to stand forth at the anti-slavery meeting, and enrolled with acclamation as a helper in the work, I wholly withdrew from all connexion with the society, and laboured alone, uncontaminated by so degrading an alliance.⁸⁵

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82. I Bradley, 'The Politics of Godliness: Evangelicals in Parliament 1784 - 1832' pp ii, 251 ff.
83. ibid pp 257 - 58; The Record 16 July 1832; 15, 18, 22 and 29 April, 2 May and 27 June 1833. The paper described the bill proposing the admission of Jews to the legislature as the 'national unchristianisation bill'. It noted with disapproval that it was moved by one son of Clapham, Robert Grant, and supported by another, Tom Macaulay.
84. The Record 15 October, 13 December 1832 and editorials throughout the latter month. In contrast the Congregational Board urged electors to vote only for anti-slavery candidates (EM ii series x, 1832, pp 484 ff).
85. Charlotte Elizabeth, Personal Recollections (1841) p 360.

Such alliances were regarded by the Haldanes as part and parcel of 'the system of worldly policy and false expediency' which in every sphere they were concerned to combat. Thus they believed that

Mr Wilberforce himself, and what has been termed 'the Clapham sect', had associated too much with Socinians and ungodly men, as well as with mere worldly politicians, for the purpose of promoting the abolition of slavery and other objects of philanthropy.⁸⁶

The pragmatic approach to politics of the Clapham sect was therefore increasingly challenged by a more doctrinaire conservatism, as all other evils faded into insignificance in comparison with the liberalism which the Recordites could see looming ominously wherever they looked. Indeed even the slavery campaign, so long a component part of evangelical activism, was not above suspicion of liberalism, for some of the arguments used to support it smacked of the philosophy of revolutionary France.⁸⁷ Ian Rennie has pointed out that in the final parliamentary campaign Buxton's son-in-law Andrew Johnston was the only evangelical to speak in his support. The carrying of the slavery bill in 1833 was both the greatest triumph of the older evangelicalism and a mark of its increasing debility: in his attempt to achieve a more absolute emancipation than the government was prepared to grant, Buxton was supported by fewer than half the evangelical MPs.⁸⁸

The year 1833 is frequently chosen to mark the end of an evangelical era because with the preaching of Keble's

86. A Haldane, op cit pp 585 - 86. Cf H Drummond et alii, op cit p vi.

87. The Record 20 June, 1 and 4 July, 26 August, 7 October, 28 November 1833. For the opposition of the CO to this stance see xxxiii (1833) pp 636, 710 - 25.

88. Rennie, op cit pp 198 ff.

assize sermon church historians transfer their interest from evangelicalism to the Oxford movement. The date is however only retrospectively significant. Evangelicalism was in due course to react very strongly to the threat of Tractarianism but in 1833 the barely embryonic movement seemed a far less potent danger to the Record than liberalism in its various forms. During December of that year the paper devoted space in several numbers to a discussion of the first tracts, but maintained that the 'Oxford business' should not be allowed to destroy Anglican harmony. How foolish it would be when the Church was under radical attack to be divided by arguments relating to the exact value of apostolic succession. While disagreeing with Oxford views on this matter the Record expressed the hope that the movement would be the germ of much good. Societies should be formed in every town and village in support of the established church ...⁸⁹

Such militant denominationalism inevitably contributed to a worsening of Church/Chapel relationships. While members of the Clapham sect were staunch churchmen, saddened and puzzled by the wilful obduracy of dissenters, they were on the whole content to live and let live.⁹⁰ Not so the Recordites, who saw dissent as destructive of the English Church/State, and who launched bitter invectives against it,

89. The Record 2, 5, 9, 12, and 23 . December 1833. Cf the anti-liberalism of Newman, op cit pp 52 ff. The CO gave little consideration to the tracts until 1834 at which time it objected not only to the Catholicism but more particularly to the anti-erastianism of the Oxford school: xxxiv (1834) pp 88 - 89, 124 - 27, 186 - 87, 244, 515.

90. See above pp 23 - 24, 75.

attacking particularly orthodox dissenters' political and educational unions with Unitarians.⁹¹ Nor was the breakdown in relationship one-sided: dissenters increasingly repudiated the quietism characteristic of their eighteenth century predecessors, and even the Evangelical Magazine which paid little attention to political matters reflected the growing concern over dissenting disabilities.⁹² As the 'thirties progressed, the interests of some dissenters centred more and more upon political campaigns, and disestablishment became as much a theological principle for them as erastian conservatism was for some Anglicans.⁹³ The need to secure dissenting rights was one of the factors making for the foundation of the Congregational Union in 1831 and for the reconstitution of the Baptist Union in the same year. Solicitous though both bodies were to preserve the traditional autonomy of local congregations, their establishment inevitably reinforced growing denominational consciousness.⁹⁴ When Rowland Hill, Anglican deacon and minister of a chapel neither established nor strictly dissenting, died in 1833, the older form of united undenominational evangelicalism which he represented was already anachronistic.⁹⁵

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91. E.g. The Record 17 and 26... December 1832; 21 January, 1 and 15 April, 26 and 30 December 1833.
92. EM ii series x (1832) pp 388 - 89, 576 - 77; xi (1833) pp 160, 266, 300.
93. For this and other developments see I Sellers, Nineteenth Century Nonconformity (1977), and two books of extracts: D Thompson, Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century (1972) and J Briggs and I Sellers, Victorian Nonconformity (1973).
94. On the former see A Peel, These Hundred Years (1931); on the latter E A Payne, The Baptist Union, a Short History (1959).
95. See pp95-96 above. Hill applied abortively to six Bishops before finding one willing to ordain him deacon; he was refused priest's orders on account of his irregularity. The original trustees of Surrey Chapel were all Anglicans and the full Anglican liturgy was used - along with extempore prayer. But the increasing lack of Anglican sympathy for Hill is evidenced in his failure after 1810 to attract Anglican clerics as supply preachers to one of the best filled chapels in London. I am indebted for these details to Dr P E Sangster whose unpublished thesis provides a wide-ranging study of a long period of evangelical history.

The same year also marked the death of Bishop Jebb, representative of another outmoded order. As Tractarianism developed evangelicalism could no longer claim to be the only spiritually-minded party: men like Jebb could in future find a more natural home for their religious activity. Moreover, once the publication of the Tracts began to evoke suspicions of Romanism, the evangelical movement became more stridently low church: the age was past when an evangelical like Hannah More could identify herself with a scion of the non-juring tradition. ⁹⁶

Hannah More was but another of the many evangelicals who died in and around 1833. Those who had come into prominence in the 1790s were frequently mourned in the 1830s. William Wilberforce just survived to hear the glad news that his life's work had been achieved on 25 July 1833. ⁹⁷ Another indefatigable opponent of slavery, James Stephen, also of Clapham, had died the previous year as in 1831 had the Rev Basil Woodd of Bentinck chapel London. Other influential Anglican evangelicals were nearing death: Lord Teignmouth, first president of the BFBS, died in 1834, Bishop Henry Ryder and Charles Simeon in 1836, and Zachary Macaulay, editor of the Christian Observer in 1838. ⁹⁸ The connexional year 1832 - 33 'proved to be a season of great and affecting mortality among

96. See above pp 44 - 45.

97. Wilberforce died on 29 July and Hannah More on 7 September 1833.

98. All are cited in DNB. There is no complete biographical account of Stephen but his early life is covered in M M Bevington (ed), Memoirs of James Stephen written by himself for the use of his children (1954). On Woodd see S C Wilks, Memoir of Rev Basil Woodd (1831).

the Wesleyan Ministers of England, no less than thirty of them being called from their work to their reward...' 99

Prominent among these were missionary secretaries John James and Richard Watson, and the writer and thinker Adam Clarke, who had been three times President of Conference. The death also occurred in 1833 of Samuel Drew, Methodist shoemaker turned scholar, who was predeceased by two years by the Methodist artist, John Jackson. 100 George Burder, Independent minister and editor of the Evangelical Magazine, died in 1833, as did two respected Baptist ministers, Joseph Kinghorn of Norwich and William Anderson of Bristol Baptist College. 101 Three other Baptist ministers, Robert Hall the denomination's leading intellectual, Joseph Hughes secretary of the BFBS, and William Carey, the first Baptist missionary, were widely revered outside their own communion when they died in 1831, 1833 and 1834 respectively... 102

99. T Jackson, The Life of the Rev Robert Newton DD (1855) p 127. Jackson who had started to travel in 1804 was able to take a long perspective.

100. All save James are cited in DNB. See also W Naylor, Miscellaneous Musings...a tribute of friendship to the memory ... of John James ... and Richard Watson (1835); T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834); J B B Clarke (ed), An Account of the infancy, religious and literary life of Adam Clarke, LLD FAS (1833); J T Wilkinson, Samuel Drew 1765 - 1833 (1963); H C Morgan 'The Life and Works of John Jackson, RA, 1778 - 1831' (Leeds MA 1956).

101. Kinghorn and Burder are cited in DNB. NB also CO xxxiii (1833) pp 758 - 63. For Anderson see BM xxv (1833) pp 445 - 50, 489 - 92.

102. A good biography of Robert Hall is a major desideratum. He is cited in DNB and a brief memoir by Olinthus Gregory is included in The Miscellaneous Works and Remains of the Rev Robert Hall (1846). Anglican appreciation can be found in CO xiv (1815) pp 664 - 85; xxxi (1831) pp 427 - 33; and Methodist in MM liv (1831) p 328: 'In him was exhibited one of the most remarkable examples of sanctified talent, learning, and genius, that the Church of God has ever witnessed'. Tributes to Hughes were reproduced in CO xxxiii (1833) pp 699 - 700, 763 - 64; The Record 17 October 1833. Hughes deserves an entry in DNB which does however cite Carey whose death was noted in The Times 28 November 1834. See also S Pearce Carey, William Carey (1923). For non-evangelical approbation of these men see below pp 366, 372 - 75.

Outside the movement there was some suggestion that evangelicalism was past its prime. In September 1833 The Times noted that the recent death of Hannah More would cause a sensation in 'not altogether youthful circles of a religious character, in which at one time she bore a very potent sway'. The school of which she was a leader, the writer continued, was not as flourishing as it had been, for the deaths of Hannah More and of William Wilberforce had deprived it of two distinguished names which would not adequately be replaced by those of Spencer Perceval, Sir Andrew Agnew and the Earl of Roden.¹⁰³ Taking a longer perspective but writing of the years around 1833 John Henry Newman commented 'the Evangelical party itself seemed, with their late successes, to have lost that simplicity and unworldliness which I admired so much in Milner and Scott'.¹⁰⁴

103. The Times 11 September 1833. See also 10 and 17 September 1833. Andrew Agnew, 7th Baronet of Lochnew and MP for Wigtonshire, Ireland, 1830 - 37, was leader of the parliamentary campaign for Sunday observance. Robert Jocelyn was MP for Dundalk 1810 - 20, prior to his succession to the Earldom of Roden; the third Earl, he was active in the Orange Society. Both are cited in DNB. For Spencer Perceval see Boase, Modern English Biography (1965). Son of the assassinated prime minister he was an able but indolent youth (D Gray, Spencer Perceval, The Evangelical Prime Minister, 1963, pp 429 - 31), MP Ennis 1818 - 20, Newport (Hants) 1827 - 31, Tiverton 1831 - 32. A regular attendant at Albury, he was active in the foundation of the Trinitarian Bible Society and was a member of the Irvingite Catholic Apostolic Church. The Record regretted that having rightly eschewed the 'sinful silence' of some Christian MPs he had subsequently adopted fanatical views (26 March 1832. NB also 8 December 1831).

104. Newman, op cit p 52. Newman was referring to Thomas Scott (1747 - 1821), author of the autobiographical The Force of Truth, and to Joseph Milner (1744 - 97), whose claim to fame was his History of the Church of Christ. Both are cited in DNB.

Be that as it may, there was widespread recognition both within and without evangelical circles that the movement was changing and that a generation was passing. In the preface to the 1833 edition of the Evangelical Magazine the editors commented that the last five years had seen the deaths of thirteen early supporters, the last year being more fatal than any preceding. Now none of 'the fathers' survived ... Looking back over a century of evangelical activity the historian of the Bible Society was to comment 'A natural line of cleavage separates the year 1833 - 34 from the remainder of the first half century, and may be said to close the era of Early Men'. 105

105. Canton, op cit i p 319.

3. THE THEOLOGY OF EVANGELICALISM.

The attitude of any group of Christians to 'non-religious' activities is influenced by their theological assumptions about creation, about the nature of man, of faith, and of life on earth. But views about such activities and the theology underlying them can only properly be studied within the context of contemporary opinion. Evangelicals believed that they were children of God, but although they less readily acknowledged it, they were also children of the society that bred them, and their attitudes to cultural and intellectual pursuits were moulded by the practices and thought forms of the age as well as by the teaching of the Bible. Moreover, evangelical theology and understanding of the Bible was itself clearly related to that of the age. The traditional portrayal of evangelicalism as a reaction against the cold philosophy of the eighteenth century requires modification both as regards the backcloth - for to characterise the eighteenth century merely as the age of reason is to caricature - and more particularly as regards the primary subject matter, for as Dr Willmer has shown evangelicalism was firmly rooted in that against which it was reacting.¹ While some facets of contemporary thought were clearly and consciously rejected, many formed the maybe subconscious substructure of evangelical thinking. Modified in part where they could not wholly be reconciled with Biblical emphases, they conditioned both the interpretation of Scripture and the application of Scriptural precepts to life.

1. Willmer, op cit.

a. The World of Nature.

Nowhere is this dual process of modification and conditioning more obvious than in evangelical thinking about creation. Along with the vast majority of other Christians of their day evangelicals accepted the work of evidence theologians, believing that if man would only use his reason and look at the world around him he would find incontrovertible evidence of a Creator. That God wrote in two books, his Word and his Works, was an evangelical commonplace. Paley's Natural Theology was highly praised in both the Christian Observer and the Evangelical Magazine, while the Methodist Magazine of 1801 quoted at length from it.² The assumption underlying the same periodical's sub-section 'The Works of God Displayed' was that no reasonable creature having surveyed his works could disbelieve in God.³ Evidence theology was written by evangelicals - by Anglicans such as Daniel Wilson and Thomas Gisborne, by dissenters such as Olinthus Gregory, and by Quakers such as J J Gurney.⁴

But evangelicals were not content with evidence theology of the type put forward, however well, by Paley. There were two opposite errors in relation to evidences, the

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2. MM xxiv (1801) pp 23 - 29, 76 - 82, 123 - 29, 171 - 78, 208 - 15, 253 - 61, 299 - 305, 344 - 50, 393 - 99, 435 - 40, 487 - 92; EM i series xi (1803) p 494 'this excellent work'; CO ii (1803) pp 162 - 66, 240 - 44, 369 - 74. Cf p 151 where a delight in natural theology is cited as one of the characteristics of the model character, Eusebia.
 3. Eg MM xxvii (1804) pp 29 ff.
 4. D Wilson, The Evidences of Christianity (1828 - 30); T Gisborne, The Testimony of Natural Theology to Christianity (1818); O Gregory, Letters to a Friend on the evidences ... of the Christian Religion (1811); J J Gurney, Essays on ... Evidences (1825).

Christian Observer commented in 1817: it was wrong to undervalue them but equally it was wrong to conceive of them as constituting the whole of religion.⁵ 'Have you read Paley's Natural Theology?' Wilberforce asked his parliamentary colleague Lord Muncaster:

To a mind already pious, it will, I hope, be serviceable, by multiplying his recollections of the Supreme Benefactor, by accustoming him to see God in every part of his curious frame, and in all nature around him. But the view of the divine character which is there exhibited is very erroneous and mischievous. His wisdom, power and goodness, are indeed enforced by many new proofs, but another grand attribute of the Supreme Being, as He is represented to us in the Scriptures, I mean His justice or His holiness, is entirely overlooked or neglected.⁶

Nature therefore, as described by Paley, revealed some but not all of the attributes of God, and failed to point to man's need of salvation. Consequently the Evangelical Magazine was afraid that Paley despite his excellencies might encourage people to feel oversecure.⁷ Natural theology studied independently of revelation was an inadequate guide in matters religious. Nor was it essential to religious understanding. The Methodist Magazine of 1812 praised Gregory's Evidences but hastened to point out that a man could live and die a witness to the truth without ever reading evidence theology.⁸

A further criticism concerned the assumption that nature was in its pristine and unspoiled state, a view that

5. CO xvi (1817) pp 101 - 02.

6. R I and S Wilberforce, The Correspondence of William Wilberforce (1840) i pp 285 f. On Muncaster see DNB (Sir John Pennington) and J C Colquhoun, op cit pp 136 - 39. Colquhoun, a hagiographer, regarded Muncaster as an Evangelical. A more scholarly estimate is that provided in the appendix to Dr Bradley's thesis: 'Although Muncaster was Wilberforce's closest confidant and also enjoyed a close friendship with Isaac Milner there is no definite evidence that he was an Evangelical himself'.

7. EM i series xii (1804) p 321.

8. MM xxxv (1812) p 665.

evangelicals were prepared substantially but by no means entirely to accept. The Christian Observer questioned Paley's thesis at its weakest point at which it was subsequently to prove so vulnerable when confronted with evolutionary claims. The existence of venomous and predatory animals could not easily be reconciled with a general benevolence of design.⁹ Biblical hints that the natural world as well as man had suffered as a result of human depravity provided evangelicals with an easy answer to this perennial problem: the flood was but an archetypal expression of the wrath of God upon sinful humanity.

Thus, in the words of the Christian Observer

When Scripture tells us of a curse, the curse of God pronounced upon nature ... Reason ... looks round, and sees nothing to disprove and everything to corroborate the fact, that Nature is not as she first came forth from the hands of her Maker ...¹⁰

It was a common evangelical practice to take this reasoning a stage further and, extending Paley's work, to find in nature proof not only of God's creative but also of his judicial and redemptive activity.¹¹ Thus, while the intricacy and beauty of the natural world were assumed to reveal his benevolence and wisdom, the prevalence of natural disasters, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and hurricanes, were regarded as equally clear indications of his wrath. Truly 'acts of God', they confirmed evangelical teaching about man's apostasy:

Can we ... suppose, that so many engines of terror and destruction, dispersed over every quarter of the globe,

9. CO ii (1803) p 371.

10. Ibid xvii (1818) p 550. Cf Charlotte Elizabeth, The Wasp (2nd edn 1831) p 11 where Romans viii 22 is quoted to support the view that animal suffering results from the sinfulness of tyrannical man.

11. EM i series xi (1803) p 494 had regretted Paley's failure to show that the Christian scheme of redemption was confirmed by the doctrines of natural theology which he displayed so admirably.

are consistent with the conduct of a Benevolent Creator towards an innocent race of men? ¹²

Such conclusions were treated with disdain by the Quarterly Review which scorned Gisborne's suggestion that '... had man been in a state of innocence, and the use of metals been necessary for him in that state, they would have presented themselves on the surface in a fusible state', and the accompanying belief that 'all the labour and research, all the skill of subduing the stubborn qualities of ore by fire or otherwise, are proofs of the wrath of God'. ¹³

Prepared to accept on Scriptural authority that death and the flood were divine punishments for human sin, the reviewer objected to Gisborne's assumption that all other disasters could similarly be explained, and complained of his failure to pay any heed to contemporary scientific discoveries. ¹⁴

The Christian Observer, while vastly more approbatory of Gisborne, an associate of the Clapham sect, was nevertheless concerned lest by filling the gaps left by Paley his work should encourage the assumption that natural theology was of equal value to Biblical revelation: Gisborne, the reviewer rightly noted, could not have made from nature the deductions he did concerning the attributes of God had he not previously imbibed them from the Bible. ¹⁵

On the one hand therefore the role of natural theology however amplified was in evangelical eyes never more than corroborative and confirmatory. On the other, the fact that evangelicals like Gisborne sought to extend Paley's

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12. MM xlvi (1825) p 242 in an article entitled 'Depravity of man illustrated by the present system of nature'.
 13. Quarterly Review xxi (1819) p 57, in a review of The Testimony of Natural Theology to Christianity.
 14. For a comparison of the attitudes of evangelicals and others to the work of geologists see below pp 413 - 17.
 15. CO xvii (1818) pp 533 - 51.

teachings in the light of their own doctrinal emphases is clear testimony to the strong hold that evidence theology had upon them. They might earn the disapprobation of Christians of different theological persuasions in the process, but they still thought and wrote within the same tradition: the natural world, partially - but only very partially - marred by God's punishment of man consequent upon the fall, revealed the character of the Creator to those who had eyes to see.

It followed that it was both right and proper to use eyes and mind to examine and investigate physical phenomena for the study of these could be a means of grace. But while evangelicals' belief about creation thus justified and provoked some forms of cultural and intellectual activity, it also served to disparage them. Believing that natural theology was a poor sister to the revelation of God as redeemer in his Word, evangelicals deprecated the work of creation in comparison with that of redemption, and, regarding God's activity in relation to man's salvation as all important, adopted a paradoxically homocentric view of the universe: the Christian Observer praised God for creating a world of such beauty 'for rebels'.¹⁶ The natural theologians' emphasis upon the fitness of all created objects for their peculiar function served to reinforce a utilitarian approach to creation: evangelicals praised the divine condescension that combined beauty with utility, implying that beauty was an optional extra kindly bestowed by the deity for the benefit of his creatures. 'I am a passionate admirer of whatever is beautiful in nature, or exquisite in art' wrote Hannah More. 'These

16. ibid xxii (1822) p 14; W Cowper, The Task (1785) bk v 753 - 54.

are the gifts of God, but no part of his essence'.¹⁷ The concept of a God who delighted in creativity and beauty for their own sake was alien to evangelical thinking, and even to that of the most cultured and intellectual of evangelicals: applying the common belief in a characteristically idiosyncratic fashion the Baptist John Foster argued that other planets must be inhabited for to conceive of them as

desolate and dead, and merely running vast circles in space, would really suggest something like the idea (we speak with reverence) of the Creator's amusing himself with an ingenious contrivance.¹⁸

Human creativity could not therefore be justified by reference to the character and activity of the godhead.

b. The nature of man.

Nor could human creativity be justified by reference to the faculties and aptitudes with which man was endowed at creation. While misrepresenting the extent of evangelical world-rejection, the Edinburgh Review of 1817 rightly implied that evangelicals did not readily sanction the guilt-free and spontaneous use of created powers:

... the entire abnegation of worldly views and enjoyments which this creed inculcates, being unobtainable by mortal man, the belief that it is necessary to eternal salvation must be attended with misery, unless accompanied by frequent self-deception. That no such system is agreeable to the analogy of the universe, or can be pleasing to the Author of our being - the creator of all our senses, and feelings, and faculties - we hold to be a position as certain as that virtue itself is becoming, and the pursuit of truth rational.¹⁹

17. Roberts, op cit iv p 139.

18. J Foster, Critical Essays (1888 - 95) ii p 359 reprinted from ER ii series viii (1817). On Foster see J Ryland (ed) Life and Correspondence of John Foster (1846) and for a further discussion of his views pp 125, 283 - 84, 360 ff below.

19. Edinburgh Review xxviii (1817) pp 339 - 40.

Thus to justify secular activity as concordant with the created nature of man was completely alien to evangelical belief in the ravages wrought by the fall. Evangelicals rarely referred to man as originally created by God for they assumed that the image of God in unredeemed man was entirely erased. True Simeon admitted that 'all good is not so obliterated', while a Christian Observer reviewer asked

... unless we suppose some tendency towards perfection to be still inherent in our nature, some traces of our original greatness, some lineaments of our divine origin, how shall we explain the preference which has been shewn in all ages for those actions which tend to the general good, over those which have for their object the advancement of the individual? ²⁰

But such suggestions are rare for few evangelicals were prepared to presuppose even the slightest continuation of prelapsarian goodness, perhaps out of fear that any acknowledgement of virtue, albeit of virtue incapable of effecting salvation, might be construed as justification by works. The moral turpitude of man was such that creative grace was a thing of the past. Thus the virtue of non-Christians was attributed by the popular evangelical novelist, Harriet Corp, to education in a Christian and civilized society which upheld Christian values for emulation. Civilization and the restraint of Providence cast a veil over the deformity of total depravity. ²¹ The Record was even less

20. Hennell and Pollard (eds) op cit p 95; CO xi (1812) p 665. Cf the view of the influential Scottish evangelical, Thomas Chalmers, quoted in MM xl (1817) p 354.

21. Harriet Corp, A Sequel to the Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life (1809) p 87. Between 1807 and 1817 Harriet Corp's novels received high commendation in the evangelical press. Coelebs Deceived (1817), in which the ministerial hero lives with a woman to whom he is not married, was not however reviewed save by the ER (ii series ix, 1818, p 486) which commented 'It was surely unnecessary to have recourse to such an incident, as an illustration of practical Antinomianism'. Her only subsequent publications seem to have been articles in annuals (ER ii series xxiv, 1825, p 553, where she is cited as Miss Corp), and a late book, Travellers in search of truth (1849). Very little is know about her but see Notes and Queries clxiii (1932) p 314: a friend

prepared to admit any remnant of prelapsarian grace. Although originally divine the moral principles of human nature were now Satanic in origin. Slavery would not be abolished by 'the high moral principles of our nature' as some asserted, but by the operation of divine principles lost at the fall and subsequently restored.²² Even Simeon in a sermon ostensibly on the creation of man laid emphasis not on human potentiality but on human sinfulness.²³ In evangelical thinking the only relevant starting point for the history of man was the fall for in all save the purely physical world God's creative work had been diabolically undone.²⁴

Thus, while evangelicals shared the common belief that the natural order still bore the marks of divine creation, they differed from their contemporaries in refusing to make a similar affirmation about man. The dichotomy between their attitudes to the physical world and to the world of humanity is evident in the assertion of a Christian Observer contributor that the word 'nature' was approbatory when used of the former, pejorative if applied to the latter.²⁵ Men's 'natural' 'senses, and feelings, and faculties' severely tarnished by the fall were no longer 'pleasing to the Author of our being'.

of Mrs Barbauld and Dr Aikin, she kept a preparatory school at Stoke Newington, and died 23 December 1853 aged 86.

22. The Record 24 March 1831.

23. Simeon, Horae Homileticae (1819 - 20) i no. 1.

24. Cf ER ii series i (1814) p 442 where a reviewer criticised the belief that 'in the infancy of the world, there prevailed, in the human race, a simplicity, a peacefulness of character, analogous to that of childhood', and argued that on the contrary the Scriptural picture was 'of outrageous wickedness'.

25. CO xxix (1829) p 682.

But some were more pleasing than others.

Evangelicals' evaluation of the different facets of the human personality reveal the extent to which even their view of man reflected the assumptions of their age. For evangelicals like their contemporaries laid a high premium upon reason. Its congruity with revelation was asserted time and time again by the faithful of all denominations who believed, as had the influential Scottish philosopher James Beattie, that atheism was essentially irrational.²⁶ Religion in contrast was a 'reasonable service'. Admittedly no evangelical would give to reason so unquestioned an imprimatur as did some of his contemporaries. The limitations of reason were emphasised: unaided it could not lead men to divine truth.²⁷ Revelation not reason was all-important. Warnings were given about the dire consequences of over-reliance on reason which could give rise to pride, blasphemy, and irreligion. The ill-effects of rationalism were sketched graphically in some evangelical novels and more soberly elsewhere.²⁸ Periodical contributors and others wrote on 'the use and abuse of reason in matters of faith'.²⁹ Yet it is significant that it was not reason itself but only its abuse which was thought to challenge the faith. Reason could

26. Ralph S Walker (ed) James Beattie's London Diary 1773 (1946) pp 86 - 87. Cf EM i series xviii (1810) pp 344 - 47. For Beattie see DNB.
27. EM i series xxix (1821) pp 93 - 96.
28. See for example R Hill, Village Dialogues ii (1802) pp 135 ff where rationalistic belief and argument facilitates the seduction of a married woman.
29. CO xxvi (1826) pp 65 - 71, 129 - 35; MM xxxvi (1813) p 867.

wander along paths on which it had no right of way and when it did so it misled, directing men to Arianism, Socinianism and deism. Reason, it was constantly stressed, had no authority to judge the evangelical doctrines themselves: these were to be accepted as revealed.³⁰ But reason might legitimately examine the evidences of revelation: when the authenticity of a record was believed to be established by reason, to accept its contents in faith was to be supremely rational. Moreover, as Julia, a contributor to the Evangelical Magazine of 1800, pointed out, the Christian used reason as he sought to understand the Scriptures. He should use it to ensure that he was holding to opinions and not to prejudices, and to defend the faith: non-believers would not be convinced of the truth by a Christian's experience.³¹ That Julia and others found it necessary to write in this vein indicates that many evangelicals were still very wary of and disparaged reason. Nevertheless that so many defended it and lauded it shows that an equally common belief within evangelicalism was that reason properly used within its rightful sphere was, like evidence theology to which it testified, a handmaid of religion.

Such approbation of reason carried with it a respect for man's rational faculties which were thought to distinguish him from the beast. Yet such respect was not always easily compatible with belief in total depravity. Some evangelicals, acknowledging that when reason was not obscured by sin

30. See R Cecil, Ms Diary of Reflections and Prayers p 10 'The great difference between us and the Socinians is that we apply Reason to the evidence of Revelation and not to the Doctrines, but they apply Reason both to the evidence and doctrines too'.

31. EM i series viii (1800) pp 16 - 18.

it supported revelation, suggested that only the regenerate could reason properly since unenlightened reason depraved by the fall was untrustworthy.³² Others, however, inclined implicitly rather than explicitly to the view that the intellect was not so deeply affected by the fall as were some other facets of the human personality. The Christian Observer quoted without any apparent disagreement the opinion of the Rev J Davies

The understanding retains somewhat of its original brightness. Reason is not wholly extinct. The intellectual faculties, in general, even in their fallen and ruined condition, may be raised by a course of discipline and education to a considerable degree of elevation. The mind may be so expanded by reading and reflection as to form theoretic views of Divine truth, not so far from correct. But the heart has received a deeper wound and labours under a more incurable distemper.³³

Some of the more educated evangelicals accorded to the intellect a yet more exalted position by using the terms 'mind' and 'soul' interchangeably. In a synthesis of Biblical and Platonic concepts, the evangelical Quaker J J Gurney argued that

... we cannot rise too high in a just contemplation of the spiritual nature of the human mind - a spark of the divine intelligence, breathed into man by his Creator, and formed after the image of his own eternity. Between the known capacities of the soul of man, and its revealed everlasting existence, there is a perfect fitness.³⁴

Similarly John Foster maintained that the intellect alone could apprehend and communicate with the spiritual world and

32. ibid xxi (1813) p 331; J Satchell, Thornton Abbey (2nd edn 1814) i p 177, ii p 100.

33. CO xxviii (1828) pp 773 - 74. While the reviewer had earlier (p 704) criticised Davies for overstating the moral and religious benefits of learning in An Estimate of the Human Mind (1828) (discussed in two successive months) he spoke approvingly of the way in which this passage illustrated the dire effects of the fall upon the human heart. For Davies, future honorary Canon of Durham, see Boase, op cit.

34. J J Gurney, Substance of an address on the right use and application of knowledge lately delivered to the mechanics of Manchester ... (1832) p 4. On Gurney see below pp 383 - 84. There is a recent and definitive biography by D Swift, Joseph John Gurney, Banker, Reformer and Quaker (1962)

asked rhetorically whether his readers would grant

that the mind, the intellectual imperishable existence, is the supremely valuable thing in man? It is then admitted, inevitably, that the discipline, the correction, the improvement, the maturation, of this spiritual being, to the highest attainable degree, is the great object to be desired by men. ³⁵

If few evangelicals thus regarded 'mind' and 'soul' as synonymous, evangelical language was sufficiently ambiguous to blur the distinction between intellectual and spiritual activity. Terms such as 'serious' normally used of the former were by evangelicals applied to the latter. In Biblical terminology words like 'mind' and 'knowledge' took on a wider meaning than the purely intellectual. Moreover many evangelicals shared the view that intellectual development was a necessary part of human growth and was second only to religious belief in raising civilized man above the level of beast and barbarian. A Christian Observer contributor asserted

As religion calls upon us to be continually advancing in holiness, so does the happiness of our nature require that society and individuals should be going forward in moral and intellectual cultivation: and notwithstanding all the evils, inseparable from civilization, man is most happy in that state...³⁶

The juxtaposition of moral and intellectual cultivation is illustrative of evangelicals' vague assumption that the two were somehow, although not necessarily, associated: the word 'education' was used to imply at one moment the task of 'laying a foundation of firm principles', at another the dissemination of knowledge. Here again the ambivalence of terminology served to identify operations that were sometimes distinct. ³⁷

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35. J Foster, An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance (1820) p 294.
36. CO xvi (1817) pp 573 - 74; xx (1821) p 776. Cf xiii (1814) pp 133 - 43 'On the Connection betwixt the intellectual and moral powers', and for Simeon's view, H D McDonald, op cit p 219.
37. For examples and comment see CO xix (1820) pp 776 - 78; BM xii (1820) pp 422 - 23; xxv (1833) p 416.

Many evangelicals further agreed with Foster and Gurney that the mind was a non-physical attribute of man and could therefore be assumed to survive death. Believing that heavenly delights were non-sensual, evangelicals were forced to conclude that they were 'intellectual'. Thus the popular preacher John Styles suggested that

He who lays greatest restraint on his passions and appetites, and contemns upon principle, every merely sensual gratification, increases, in a wonderful degree, his powers of intellectual enjoyment, and opens to himself boundless resources of spiritual delight. His happiness is seated in the mind; it is pure and refined; it is the happiness of angels. ³⁸

In contrast, as Styles implied, man's senses and passions were to be repressed, for they were believed to relate to physical life alone and to make no contribution to the well-being of the non-corporeal everlasting soul.

Thus George Burder quoted the view that

The most innocent of our carnal pleasures, such as eating, drinking, sleeping and the like, are the badges of our weakness, and a sort of reproach upon our nature; and it is our inclination to them, rather than any excellence in them that makes them alluring. ³⁹

When man was in heaven and resembled the angels he would not require such pleasures. Few were quite so disparaging but many were wary of instinctive action. The senses and the passions, acting under no clear religious motivation seemed to be closely associated with man's lower nature and might easily lead him astray as they had archetypally in Eden. ⁴⁰ He had to be constantly on his guard for the devil and his own depraved nature joined battle against his religious resolves and his better judgment.

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38. J Styles, The Temptations of a Watering Place and the Best Means of Counteracting their Influence (1815) p 26.
 39. G Burder, Village Sermons (1843 edn) p 224.
 40. James Edmeston's poem 'Reason and the Passions' illustrative of this mode of thought is quoted in Appendix 1.

Thus evangelicals presupposed a spectrum of human endowments ranging from the non-corporeal rational faculties which would still characterise man in heaven and which were therefore under God to be cultivated, through to the senses and the passions. Reason could be of service to religion; the latter's religious function was more questionable for they were frequently seen to be of service to the devil rather than to God. While they did not laud the intellect nor condemn the senses and the passions without qualification, evangelicals tended to regard the one as more concordant with spirituality than the other. And so there was a tendency to assimilate to the Christian doctrine of progressive sanctification the more widespread concept of progression from bestiality to rationality.

It followed that cultural activities which appealed to the senses and the passions were eschewed by evangelicals, as by a number of their more intellectually inclined contemporaries.⁴¹ At the same time both groups encouraged those pursuits which nurtured the mind rather than the senses. In her pre-evangelical days Hannah More was active in blue-stocking circles, disapproving of the ethos of a society which encouraged sensual dissipation. In the life to come she maintained 'we ... shall be still less encumbered with body, and flesh, and sense ... we shall be all pure intellect'.⁴² In the meantime mental activity was the road to moral reformation. The amendment of life by Florio, the title character of one of her early poems, begun by his love of a virtuous woman, was

41. See for example the discussion on the novel at pp 344 ff below.

42. Roberts, op cit i p 330.

furthered when instead of frittering away time or reading trash, he turned, ironically, to the more serious reading of the Idler. Within hours his engagement to the pious Celia was effected and his religious awareness was increased.⁴³ As an evangelical Mrs More continued to assert the superiority of intellectual over sensual activity:

... to multiply and to exalt pleasures, which being purely intellectual, may help to exclude such as are gross, in beings so addicted to sensuality, is surely not only to give pleasure but to render service.⁴⁴

The approval thus given to intellectual pursuits was by no means the product of Mrs More's unusual background but was endorsed by evangelicals of a very different stamp. 'It deserves our notice' commented the Evangelical Magazine in 1794, in a review of Amusement Hall; or an easy introduction to the attainment of useful knowledge, 'that whatever tends to inspire with a contempt for what is frivolous, and to give the mind a taste for rational pursuits, promotes the interests of Christianity'.⁴⁵

c. The life of faith.

Highly though evangelicals approved of reason they were quick to assert that intellectual competence was not necessary to the life of faith. In reaction to the intellectualism of much eighteenth century religion they stressed that the purely intellectual route to salvation was a cul-de-sac. Reason could direct a seeker some of the way but was an inadequate guide unless supplemented by revelation.⁴⁶ Intellectual prowess could be disadvantageous

43. H More, Florio: A tale for fine gentlemen and fine ladies (1780), Works (1834 edn) vpp 279 - 311.

44. H More, Coelebs in search of a wife (1808, 1809 edn) ii p 32.

45. EM i series ii (1794) pp 480 - 81.

46. Ibid i (1793) pp 246 - 51; MM xli (1818) pp 502 - 04, 814 - 20.

if in consequence a man relied on his intellect alone in his perception of truth and excellence. Thus Joseph Kinghorn, one of the more intellectual of evangelicals, wrote

Much as I esteem literature, and much as I have seen of the effects of ignorance in our ministers, I cannot at all think that any influence of education can be set against the evil of a speculating temper, that should fill our churches with cold, careless ministers - mere moralisers in their sermons, or Unitarians in their doctrines. ⁴⁷

Anglican evangelicals, regarding eighteenth century moral homily and urbane apologetic as inadequate statements of faith, urged patrons to look for more than 'mere scholars' when appointing to livings. Only so would a drift to revitalised dissent be prevented. ⁴⁸

At the heart of evangelical preaching was the conviction that something more than intellectual concurrence with Christian doctrine was necessary if a man was to become a believer. 'Do not suppose' wrote Simeon

that the faith of Christ is bare assent to truths which you have been taught by your parents, or that it is that kind of conviction that is founded upon a consideration of evidence, such as you would feel respecting any common report which was substantiated to your satisfaction ...

He revived the Lutheran distinction that 'Assent is an act of the understanding only: but true faith is a consent of the will also, with the full concurrence of our warmest affections'.⁴⁹ Hence the agonising of many potential evangelicals who had considerable intellectual comprehension of the faith, for an

47. M Hood Wilkin, op cit p 336.
 48. This view was expressed by Rev J W Cunningham in a letter to Lord Harrowby dated 17 December 1823, Harrowby mss xiv pp 217 - 20. On Cunningham see below pp 150 - 57.
 49. Quoted Hennell and Pollard op cit pp 86, 92. Cf McDonald, op cit pp 234 ff; J S Whale, The Protestant Tradition (1955) pp 18, 69.

'interest' in the blood of Christ, an emotional and practical acceptance of the personal implications of belief. 50

To the attaining of such an interest intellectual ability was totally irrelevant. The lower class composition of some branches of evangelicalism proved conclusively to its adherents that saving faith was in no way related to prior intellectual competence. Thus, Josiah Conder, editor of the Eclectic Review, a work that prided itself on uniting religion and learning, argued nonetheless that knowledge was 'entirely unconnected with the permanent realities of the soul':

'As for knowledge it shall vanish away'. I certainly would not remain willingly ignorant of any of the wonders of natural science or human wisdom; I would not part with the thirst for knowledge, which is as essential a concomitant of mental health, as the appetites are of physical vigour. But shut out as the greater part of society are from intellectual pursuits, often being compelled to sacrifice them to the considerations of duty, it would be discouraging to think that on this account they would suffer any material loss. 51

A similar statement was made by the Anglican Richard Cecil, reputedly the most cultured of all evangelicals:

However desirable and useful in various respects learning may be, it is not essential to the Christian. I have met with poor and illiterate men, who having the grace of God in their hearts, could state the doctrines of the Gospel with admirable distinction and accuracy. 52

Inherent in Cecil's statement was the qualification upon his thesis. Illiterate some Christians might be but to

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50. The supreme example is of course Wesley but see also J Bateman, The Life of the Right Rev Daniel Wilson D.D. (1860); pp 8 - 29, and, at grass roots level, EM i series ii (1794) pp 78 - 79, 405.
51. E R Conder, Josiah Conder (1857) p 97; on the aims of the Eclectic Review see for example the prefaces to the two volumes of 1806, i series iii and iv.
52. C Cecil (ed), Original Thoughts on various passages of Scripture being the substance of sermons preached by the late Rev Richard Cecil AM (1848) p 649. For approbation of Cecil see Balleine, op cit p 61.

live the life of faith they had to familiarise themselves with 'the doctrines of the Gospel'. And as a doctrinal faith evangelicalism both demanded and engendered abstract thought. In his essay On the Evils of Popular Ignorance (1820) Foster propounded the view that some intellectual aptitude was a prerequisite of conversion. The uneducated he believed were governed solely by sense impressions, were interested only by the immediate, responded only to that which was palpable, and were incapable of abstract thought. In these circumstances he could not conceive how they could respond to religion. Inability to think in abstractions and aversion to intellectual exercise would prevent them from apprehending religious truth: language of atonement would be meaningless to them; their concern for the immediate would prevent them from seeing that the welfare of the soul was important; their lack of mental exercise would debar them from the practice of self-examination.

Foster's conclusions derive largely from his inability to appreciate or even to conceive of a non-intellectual approach to life, and possibly too from personal experience of failure in the pulpit. Nevertheless overstated though some others believed his case to be, his emphasis upon the role of the intellect in the life of faith was in tune with much evangelical thought.⁵³ Far from appealing to the heart rather than the head, evangelicals were highly critical of those whom they felt did just that. The novelist Mrs Sherwood

53. For criticism of Foster's book see EM i series xxviii (1820) p 467.

criticised her father because his religion centred on emotive 'benevolence' rather than on doctrinal affirmation:

I do not think that his ideas of doctrine were over clearly defined; neither he nor my mother had any distinct ideas of human depravity: hence neither of them until the very last, could see all that the Saviour had done. ⁵⁴

The frequently repeated charge that evangelicalism, particularly in its Methodist forms, was anti-doctrinal is therefore totally fallacious. ⁵⁵ Those who were received into full Wesleyan connexion had not only to testify to their conversion and call to preach, but also to undergo a public oral examination on 'all the Doctrines preached by Methodists', listed by Adam Clarke as original sin, the divinity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, the witness of the Spirit, Christian perfection, and the eternal duration of rewards and punishments. ⁵⁶ Fiducia was not an alternative to assensus but a corollary of it.

Approbation of the role of intellect in the life of faith can clearly be seen in evangelical critiques of Catholicism, another form of Christianity condemned for appealing solely to the heart and the passions. Evangelicals had no doubt that the Catholic hierarchy disapproved of the exercise of the mind. The evangelical emphasis upon 'religious knowledge', a familiarity with the doctrines and duties of the faith thought to be essential for salvation, was contrasted with the presumed teaching of Catholicism that ignorance was the mother of devotion. ⁵⁷ The Catholic Church,

54. S Kelly, op cit pp 47 - 48.

55. Such an assertion is made in the otherwise useful work of Gertrude Himmelfarb, op cit p 279. For a repudiation of it see T P Bunting, op cit ii pp 132 - 33.

56. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit ii pp 95 - 96. Cf the description of preaching in the MM's approbatory review of Simeon's Horae Homileticae, xliii (1820) pp 582 - 90.

57. EM xii (1804) p 227; MM xxxv (1812) p 68; CO xxx (1830) p 248.

evangelicals argued, had flourished in the dark ages of learning: the reform of religion and the renaissance of letters had been contemporaneous; the reformation had removed the shackles from men's minds. ⁵⁸ The Catholic was prevented from reading the vernacular Bible; if he could only do so he would discover that the faith it proclaimed, in contrast to that which he practised, was supremely reasonable, appealing not only to man's heart but to his mind. Thus the Independent, John Burder, wrote:

We know that mankind are intelligent beings. This is a fact relative to the whole human race, which is questioned by none. Since, then, man is a rational creature, it may be expected, that a true system of religion will recognise and be suited to this his character. Hence if any system shall be observed to abound in senseless ceremonies and foolish pageants, with little or no food for the mind of man, it may be presumed, without hazard, that such a system has no claims to be considered true religion, how well soever it may be adapted to purposes of juvenile recreation. On the other hand, if a system presented to our examination is found to be calculated to employ, improve, and enrich our minds, there is, so far, a presumption in its favour, as being in this respect, at least, adapted to human nature. ⁵⁹

Evangelicals' typically eighteenth century claim that theirs was a rational faith is one that historians have tended to ignore, maybe because they have found it hard to credit at a time when rationality is presumed to preclude belief in divine intervention. But to think in this way is to neglect the changing connotation of terminology. In a brief essay on 'John Wesley and the age of reason' Stuart Andrews has stressed the coexistence in the eighteenth century of a rationalistic ethos and a frame of mind which a positivistic age would class as superstitious. ⁶⁰ Wesley was not alone in

58. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit ii pp 23 - 25, iii pp 64 - 65; H More, Hints towards forming the character of a young princess (1805) ch xxxv.

59. Quoted ER ii series ix (1828) p 555 in its review of J Burder, Lectures on Religion. John was the son of George Burder, EM editor.

60. History Today xix (1969).

believing in both witches and electricity. The most intellectually able of his followers used the language of charismatic inspiration alongside that of academic analysis for in that age 'reason' and 'enthusiasm' could be combined, without incongruity and without loss of integrity. 61

The case can be substantiated by reference to the Analogy of Bishop Butler, the most widely read of the eighteenth century apologists. Butler sought to reconcile the potential conflict between the deistic claim that God always worked through natural means which were within the comprehension of man's reason, and the orthodox belief in divine revelation. In a chapter entitled 'Of the supposed presumption against a revelation, considered as miraculous' Butler denied that there was any more reason to disbelieve in miracles and hence in revelation than in extraordinary natural phenomena. Indeed the analogy of nature, much of which lay beyond man's comprehension, suggested that it was eminently reasonable to accept that miracles had once happened.

Butler accepted however that miracles were phenomena characteristic of the first age of the church only, divine

61. Adam Clarke's record of his experience of assurance is shortly followed by a statement of his belief that reason and revelation went hand in hand and of his determination always scrupulously to examine everything that professed to come from God, J B B Clarke (ed) op cit i pp 100 - 04. Cf Mrs T G Tyndale, Selections from the correspondence of Mrs Ely Bates ... (1872) i pp 78ff, 237 ff: Mrs Bates, an intellectually very able woman, engaged in much technical theological discussion, appealing to Greek and Hebrew texts to ascertain the exact meaning of passages. Closely associated with the Moravians she shared their belief in the guidance of inner peace.

endorsements of the authority of Christ passed on to his first disciples. Along with most of his contemporaries he asserted that the God who had once worked through miracles in subsequent ages utilised human means. And until the late 1820s there was wide evangelical concurrence in this opinion. 'Divine assistance' proclaimed a Methodist 'never supersedes the use of means. On the contrary, it is never promised in any other way'.⁶²

While the charismatic movement of the third and fourth decades of the century constituted a challenge to this belief, mainstream evangelicalism continued to assert along with the rest of Christendom that God worked through human means. When in 1828 Henry Venn of the CMS preached a university sermon on 1 Corinthians xiv he made no reference to any charismatic understanding of the chapter. On the contrary, adopting the title 'Academic studies subservient to the edification of the church', and defining spiritual gifts as those abilities and intellectual powers which were necessary in every age, he argued that the acquirements in which the Corinthians were exhorted to excel were those that academic study produced. Thus the gift of tongues bestowed spontaneously at Pentecost because of the exigencies of the time was that linguistic proficiency which subsequent generations were charged to acquire through diligence.⁶³ That most evangelicals thus dismissed pentecostalism is clear testimony to the congruity of their faith with that of the church at large.

62. MM xxxi (1808) p 613. Cf EM i series viii (1800) p 520.

63. Venn's title derived from verse 12 'seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church'. For a similar statement see An Account of the life, ministry and writings of the late Rev John Fawcett DD (1818) p 274. Fawcett (1739/40 - 1817) was a leading northern Baptist educator and a prolific writer.

While their belief that intellect was not essential to faith gave rise to some considerable disparagement of intellectual activity, evangelicals' certainty that God worked through human means was a significant incentive to study. The Christian Observer urged its readers to remember

that we are under an ordinary, not an extraordinary, dispensation of the Spirit; and that we cannot attain, but by his blessing on our diligent research, that knowledge which in the miraculous ages was conveyed by immediate inspiration. Where the degrees of piety, diligence, and all other circumstances are equal, the best theologian, and most learned man will make the most useful divine. 64

The same point was made in the Eclectic Review:

Without zeal and piety, nothing, it is very true, can be well done in religion: - but vastly more than zeal and piety are indispensably requisite, when the time comes for clearing the ground of absurdities and errors fifteen hundred years old ... a work so great and difficult demands, not merely an assemblage of intellects of a superior order, but of intellects slowly and thoroughly matured by the most arduous processes of education. The Head of the Church has never yet employed (the miraculously endowed Apostles alone excepted, and not all of them) any other sort of men for bringing about extensive renovations of religious sentiment. 65

Dangerous though reason misused might be, the exercise of consecrated intellects was essential to the propagation of the faith. It was therefore incumbent upon Christians of any ability to cultivate their minds. When the young Jabez Bunting founded in 1796 a Society for the Acquirement of Religious Knowledge, he and his fellow members affirmed

It is at once our absolute duty and our invaluable privilege, to cultivate, by every means in our power, the rational and moral faculties, with which God has graciously endowed us. For those faculties are all

64. CO xxv (1825) pp 143 - 44. Cf xix (1820) pp 433 - 438 'Wisdom, a necessary qualification in a minister of the Gospel'.

65. ER iii series x (1833) p 44.

talents to be improved; and the delivery of the talent is itself a sufficient call upon us to use it. The supply of the means is the requisition of the duty. ⁶⁶

d. Life in this world.

Contemporary practices and forms of thought, so often a subliminal influence upon evangelicalism, became matters of open consideration when evangelicals turned their attention to the question of conformity to 'the world'. The subject was one of major importance. J B Sumner, who devoted five chapters of his book, Apostolical Preaching, to theological themes and a sixth to 'The personal application of the Gospel', saw fit to entitle his next chapter 'On intercourse with the world'. The same topic was one of only four included by William Hey of Leeds, an Anglican with Methodist associations, in his dying address. ⁶⁷ A contributor to the Christian Observer of 1821 wrote of 'worldly conformity'

The subject is indeed not a trifling one, but demands the most serious inquiry and examination. I, at least, consider it as involving within its compass some of the most essential points in religious principle and practice ... ⁶⁸

The subject was important because the New Testament made clear that Christ and 'the world' were essentially opposed: Christians renounced 'the pomps and vanities of this wicked world' at their baptism. Sumner produced a series of texts illustrating the distinction as did George Burder in his sermon 'Nonconformity to the world'. The words of Christ

66. T P Bunting, op cit i pp 57 - 58.

67. J Pearson, The Life of William Hey (1822) ii pp 35 - 39.

68. CO xx (1821) p 136. Cf xxv (1825) p iii which speaks of 'the absolute obligation ... not to the conformed to this world'.

'They are not of the world even as I am not of the world', of St Paul 'We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God', of St James 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God' all pointed conclusively to the same end. The way of the world was the way of destruction. The Gospel both effected the separation of the Christian from the world and required him to validate this separation - 'to keep himself unspotted from the world'.⁶⁹

The term 'the world' in evangelical parlance referred both to type (non-Christian as opposed to Christian) and to time (this world as opposed to the next). This world with its pomps and vanities was the kingdom and playground of the devil. Miranda, a character in the Baptist John Satchell's novel, Thornton Abbey, utilised Biblical imagery to convey her belief that she was in an alien land: Christ was her ark, like Noah's dove she could find nowhere to rest unaffected by the curse. The earth, she was told, 'is an enemy's country a parched wilderness, a barren desert'.⁷⁰ Consequently evangelicals were constantly encouraged to look beyond the perversions of the present. Required to serve a probationary period on earth, the Christian was merely a stranger and a sojourner there: heaven not earth was his home. The time-honoured analogy of the pilgrim was popular. Like the pilgrim, John Venn suggested, the Christian merely passed through

69. G Burder, op cit no li; J B Sumner, op cit ch viii.

70. J Satchell, op cit i pp 34 - 35, 145. Little seems to be known of Satchell (1757 - 1829) but a memoir in BM [unclear] xxi (1829) pp 317 - 23 records that he was a member of Andrew Fuller's church at Kettering 1795 - 1817, serving as deacon for the last eleven years, and having moved to London was BM editor 1819 - 23.

this world; like a traveller, he enjoyed refreshments on the way but he was not tempted to loiter or to forget that he was still far from home; looking to his goal he did not seek for ultimate satisfaction en route. To attempt to do so could only be abortive: 'God has pronounced a curse upon the earth, and upon the man who looks to it for happiness, and foolish is he who thinks to evade that sentence'.⁷¹ Indeed temporal happiness was an irrelevance to the Christian whose one task was to prepare for heaven, and who should live with death and eternity constantly in view. 'The one thing needful' was a favourite evangelical text, the subject of many sermons, of letters from parents to children, and of meditations by individuals. Gladstone's confirmation prayer included the petition that he might live 'not seeking after vain things, but making the One Thing Needful the great, the supreme, the paramount object of my pursuit and my desire'.⁷² 'After all', T F Buxton wrote to a business acquaintance 'the main purpose of our living here is to prepare for eternity. It matters little how we fare in this world providing a better awaits us'.⁷³

The belief that this world was but 'the ante-chamber of the next', and the accompanying conviction that eternal

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71. J Venn, Sermons (1814 - 18) i no xxi 'The Christian's State of Pilgrimage on Earth'.
72. M Foot (ed) Gladstone Diaries i (1968) p 97. Cf A M Wilberforce (ed), The Private Papers of William Wilberforce (1897) p 208; G Burder, op cit no Ivii; T P Bunting, op cit i p 140, ii p 277.
73. C Buxton, Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (3rd edn 1851) p 286. Cf Bunting, op cit i p 189 in which Jabez writes to his fiancée 'Amidst all, let us try, my best beloved, to be increasingly attentive to the one great business of life, - the preparation for eternity'.

life was essentially a future experience, caused many evangelicals seriously to devalue secular activity. ⁷⁴

Ultimately only religious pursuits were important for anything that pertained to this world alone was vanity. The pastimes of mankind seen in the light of eternity were mere trivia. Burder, deeply affected by the death of one of his daughters, noted that all her improvements and accomplishments were now of no consequence. In the last resort only grace mattered. ⁷⁵

Indeed, as the Christian grew in grace, so, evangelicals believed, the depraved nature's delight in the things of earth was replaced by the new nature's delight in the things of heaven. Exuberance and utter satisfaction in heavenly joys are reflected in the writings of J V Hall, author of a best-selling tract, who recorded that in June 1823 he

... spent half an hour at the bedside of a dying saint, who said he was happier than a king. To behold a dying saint beckoning death to approach, and looking upon his dart with unutterable delight, what a pleasure! No murmurs, though nothing but bare walls and parish-allowance! One cannot call this dying. Happier than a king! I think I shall never forget these words and the animation with which they were uttered. This is the grandest sight I ever beheld - better than a coronation! ⁷⁶

John Newton was equally enthusiastic:

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, City of our God ...

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74. The phrase used by Haddon Willmer in "Holy Worldliness" in Nineteenth Century England, in D Baker (ed), Sanctity and Secularity: Studies in Church History x (1973) p 197. Dr Willmer seeks to explain why 'the possibility of worldliness ... long ... present in the Christian tradition ... was always seriously inhibited'. For the view that evangelicals of this period thought in terms of future rather than present salvation see J H Townsend (ed), Edward Hoare (1896) p 66 where Hoare (1812 - 94) comments on the faith of his mother Louisa (for whom see below p 208).
75. H F Burder, op cit pp 208 - 09.
76. Newman Hall (ed), The Author of 'The Sinner's Friend' An Autobiography (2nd 1000, 1865) p 133.

Let the world deride or pity,
 I will glory in thy name.
 Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
 All his boasted pomp and show;
 Solid joys and lasting treasure,
 None but Zion's children know. 77

Newton's hymn is a characteristic statement of evangelical otherworldliness. Here is the tendency to look to heaven for satisfaction, the antagonism to the hostile world, the dissatisfaction with earthly joys. But this is no mere negative rejection but rejection resulting from the positive affirmation of something believed to be far better. Newton's words convey the exhilaration of the vision of eternity, the invigorating challenge of a battle in which one fought on the minority but victorious side, and the fulfilling satisfaction of joys which evangelicals believed to be lasting, in contrast to which the provisions of earth were essentially vacuous.

Fade worldly pleasure might, but this did not mean that it was totally illegitimate. There were some passages in Scripture which seemed to encourage enjoyment of the things of this world. In a sermon on 1 Corinthians iii 21 - 23, 'All things are yours ...', John Venn argued

Yours is the world, who use it for those ends for which its gracious Creator formed it; who survey its delightful scenery, its mountains, its valleys, its rivers, and feel that they are yours, who receive the bounty of heaven with a thankful heart, and employ it, as God intended, to your own lawful advantage and the good of others. The world is yours to enjoy it with moderation, thankful for the convenience it affords you while a pilgrim and a stranger in it, in your way to a better and heavenly country. 78

Similarly, when Simeon preached on 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity' he insisted on qualifying his text:

If we give ourselves up to creature comforts, we shall be dreadfully disappointed ... But if we enjoy them in

77. J Newton, Works (2nd edn 1816) iii, Olney Hymns, bk i no lx.

78. J Venn, op cit iii p 193. Cf ii p 137.

subserviency to God, and in subordination to higher pursuits, we shall not find them so empty as may be imagined. For God has 'given to his people all things richly to enjoy' and provided only we enjoy God in them, they are both a legitimate and an abundant spring of pure delight ... Our enjoyments are elevated and sanctified ... Only let them be sought in their proper place, and they are comforts in the way to heaven, though they can never stand to us in the place of heaven. ⁷⁹

He was even more positive when advising the young men who attended his conversation parties:

Serve God in your recreations, and enjoy him; but we are too often like the Jews or like the monks, afraid of God's blessings. We have the spirit of 'touch not, taste not, handle not', but this is wrong. 'God giveth us richly all things to enjoy', (1 Tim vi 17), and we ought to do so ... our rule should be to enjoy God in everything; to feel the delight of affluence, science, friends, recreations, children, in fact, of everything, as coming to us from God, who gives its sweetness, and for whose sake and glory it is. ⁸⁰

That Simeon found it necessary to speak in such a way is indicative of the ascetic emphasis of most evangelical theology, an emphasis evident even in his preaching and that of John Venn. Their pulpit appeals to evangelicals to enjoy themselves were placed within the context of otherworldly teaching: 'creature comforts' were to be enjoyed only 'in subordination to higher pursuits'. While they possessed a coherent doctrine of world rejection, evangelicals laid too little emphasis upon the creation of man and upon the incarnation of Christ to develop a balancing doctrine of world affirmation, a process which in any case demands a deductive rather than a literalistic approach to Scripture. ⁸¹ In consequence the rare appeals to evangelicals to embrace the things of this world tended to be based upon isolated texts. Nor was evangelical language

79. C Simeon, Horae Homileticae (1831 - 32) vii no dcccxxvii.

80. A W Brown, op cit pp 251 - 52.

81. For further discussion of this issue see H Willmer, "Holy Worldliness" in Nineteenth Century England, loc cit; A R Vidler, 'Holy Worldliness' in Essays in Liberty (1957); A M Ramsey, Sacred and Secular (1965).

of world affirmation inclusive of even the majority of secular activities: no evangelical would have assumed that Simeon was giving sanction to theatre-going when he said that God had given men all things richly to enjoy.

'Whatsoever you do do all to the glory of God' was used to show that many activities were illegitimate since they could not be done to God's glory.⁸² Interpretations in terms of renunciation thus came more readily to evangelicals' minds than those of a more positive nature. Indeed it would not have occurred to them as it did to Dr Vidler to endorse 'the Jewish saying that "a man will have to give account on the judgment-day of every good thing which he has refused to enjoy when he might have done so"'.⁸³

Evangelicals' sense of accountability operated in exactly the opposite direction. It was itself in part the product of their otherworldliness: although they regarded this life as a mere prelude to the next, they were not able to dismiss it as an unfortunate irrelevance which God might well have omitted from his schema, or at least reduced from the traditional three score years and ten. Evangelicals did not desire to 'depart and be with Christ' prematurely: one had to be prepared for death. Thus, the otherworldly view of life as a time of probation in which man prepared himself and was prepared for heaven created an intensive concern for the way in which this life was spent. Time, evangelicals believed, was a sacred trust from God, and God 'expects his own with usury'.⁸⁴ In consequence many took the belief

82. See for example J Satchell, op cit i p 35. The CO family sermon on this verse (xvi, 1826, pp 8 - 12) was, significantly, largely concerned with religious pursuits.

83. Vidler, op cit p 99.

84. T Gisborne, An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex (9th edn 1813) pp 114 ff; EM i series xxiv (1816) p 7.

that each moment should be profitably used to a near pathological extreme - particularly in the early days of their discipleship. Hannah More who eschewed almost all non-religious pursuits in the 1790s rebuked herself for not meditating during a migraine.⁸⁵ 'I have lived twenty-two years' wrote Edward Bickersteth, as he began to feel his way towards evangelical faith,

that is near two hundred thousand hours and twelve million minutes; for the employment of every one of those minutes I am accountable to God. In every minute it was my bounden duty to love God with my whole heart and strength. What a mountain of iniquities does this at once discover⁸⁶

Evangelicals were therefore firm believers in the ordered day and in constant self-examination as a means of monitoring personal progress. Nightly analyses of the way in which time and talents had been spent were universally encouraged, and many attempted to facilitate this enquiry by keeping spiritual journals.⁸⁷ The activities of each day were carefully scrutinised so that their legitimacy and spiritual utility might be determined. Even practices deemed innocent in themselves were sometimes eschewed on the grounds that time might thus be redeemed for matters of greater moment:

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85. W Roberts, op cit iii p 62. While continuing to regard herself as a highly accountable being, Miss More adopted a more relaxed attitude to life as she grew older and resumed activities which she had dropped such as her literary correspondence with Sir William Weller Pepys. See below p 309.
86. Birks, op cit i pp 9 - 10. Cf T S Grimshawe, A Memoir of the Rev. Legh Richmond (1828) p 287: 'For all the sermons you have heard you will have to render an account on the last day'.
87. Teignmouth, op cit ii pp 216 - 17. His regretted failure to keep a journal is recorded on p 172. Cf Simeon's difficulties in this respect. R I and S Wilberforce note that in December 1788 Wilberforce began to keep a tabular account of how he spent his time, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) i pp 193 ff. Birthdays, anniversaries of deaths and the beginning of each new year were regarded as particularly appropriate seasons for self-examination. See for example H F Burder, op cit pp 240, 266 ff; BM ix (1817) pp 1 - 5; EM ii series v (1827) p 19.

Jabez Bunting maintained that men should ask not whether there was any harm but whether there was any good in a particular pursuit; Daniel Wilson regretted even the kind visits of friends because they interrupted his reading and meditation, while Adam Clarke noted that by giving up tea and coffee over some four decades he had saved several years of time.⁸⁸

If tea-table chatter with the godly marked a misuse of time in the eyes of some evangelicals, leisure time association with the ungodly was universally construed as a much more serious misdemeanour, for, in the words of Henry Thornton of Clapham

Religion consists much in ... passing over from the company and fellowship of wicked and worldly men, to the society and communion of those who fear and love their God ... We should carefully observe who are truly religious, in order that we may choose them for our friends; and we should flee from the wicked doers.⁸⁹

That not all non-Christians were downright wicked was recognised by at least some evangelicals: Thomas Babington, close friend of the Clapham sect and Christian Observer contributor, acknowledged that there was much in their lives that was commendable. Nevertheless he urged that the distinction between decent and even religious 'worldly characters' on the one hand, and the truly religious on the other, should not be overlooked: the one class lived; the other though it appeared to live was dead.⁹⁰ To the chagrin and

88. H More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799), Works (1834 edn) iii p 291, enunciated the view: when in doubt, don't; T P Bunting, op cit i p 190; J Bateman, op cit i p 229; Clarke (ed), op cit i p 191.
89. Quoted in Meacham, op cit p 27. Cf 'Advice to a new married couple', EM i series xiii (1805) p 256. The extent to which evangelicals engaged in table chatter is discussed below pp 169ff.
90. T Babington, A Practical View of Christian Education ... to which is added A Letter to a Son soon after the close of his education on the subject of not conforming to the world (7th edn 1826) pp 251 - 52. The letter was reprinted from the CO xvi (1817) pp 277 - 88. On Babington, after whom his wife's nephew Macaulay was named, see J C Colquhoun, op cit ch xi.

perplexity of their contemporaries evangelicals used the language of theological state to describe actual practice: hence the tendency to describe their own (pre-conversion) lives and those of non-Christians as heinously depraved.⁹¹ Hence too the equation of the opprobrious theological concept 'the world' with particular recreations, most notably those favoured by the fashionable who seemed in their frivolity singularly insensible of man's eternal destiny. The pleasures and pursuits of such 'people of the world' were condemned as totally antagonistic to those of 'the people of God'.⁹²

The regularity with which evangelicals made such statements points to a confusion in their thinking between what Dr Ramsey has called 'the duality of heaven and earth' and 'a dualism which regards the world or flesh or sex or pleasure as intrinsically evil'.⁹³ Thus a Christian Observer contributor referred in what was in evangelical parlance a tautologous statement to 'the mean and degrading nature of worldly things'.⁹⁴ The dichotomy between religion and the world was such that God was assumed to be absent from parts of the world that he had himself made.

'The Holy Spirit' maintained John Styles

is infinitely delicate. If his first motions are not welcomed ... he silently withdraws. If we rush into situations where devotion receives a check, and the spiritual tone of the soul is relaxed by the foul

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91. For T B Macaulay's recognition of this see his review of Southey's edition of The Pilgrim's Progress with a Life of John Bunyan, Edinburgh Review liv (1831) p 456, reprinted in Works vii (Albany edn 1898, reprinted 1906).
92. See for example BM iv (1812) p 103.
93. Ramsey, op cit p 17.
94. CO xiv (1815) p 77.

polluting damps of the world, our holy guide and monitor is offended, and the want of his cheering presence indicates to us the mournful fact. ⁹⁵

That Christ joined in the festivities of publicans and sinners was a matter of embarrassment and carefully explained away. Christ mixed freely with the world, Thomas Babington admitted to his son, but 'he mixed with it only to lead it to God, and to perform the sacred duties for the sake of which he came upon earth'. ⁹⁶ So effectively did evangelicals convince themselves of this that they frequently argued that Christians should not frequent those places to which Christ could not also go. ⁹⁷

To associate with the world, its perverting practices and contaminating company, was to endanger one's soul: Charles Grant, a Director of the East India Company, pointed out that it was difficult to have much to do with the world without being the worse for it. ⁹⁸ 'Familiarity with worldly men' George Burder maintained, 'has a bad influence upon the mind ... if professors needlessly associate with wicked and vain persons, they will soon resemble them, learn their manners, and go back from Christ'. ⁹⁹ It followed that 'as ... there is in general but little probability of doing good to carnal men by our company, it is far wisest and safest for us to keep our distance'. ¹⁰⁰ John Clayton, dissenting member of

95. J Styles, op cit p 19. While assumptions concerning the vulnerability of the Holy Spirit are implicit in much evangelical writing, it needs to be noted that Styles' statement was criticised as improper by the BM vii (1815) p 472.

96. Babington, op cit p 266.

97. See for example BM xiii (1821) p 156.

98. H Morris, The Life of Charles Grant (1904) p 271. Cf. Henry Venn's 'Prayer for a Student', quoted Hennell, op cit p 274. On Grant see further DNB.

99. G Burder, op cit p 395.

100. ibid p 473.

the Eclectic society, took the argument a stage further, and sought unconvincingly to justify 'Scriptural separation' as evangelistically beneficial:

We lessen our influence by losing our decision of character. The jackdaw is seen in all companies. This separation is calculated to do good to others. It is a specimen of the future and eternal separation. An anticipation of that eternal separation. It is calculated to set men thinking. ¹⁰¹

Abstention from worldly company thus became an evangelical shibboleth. Joseph Benson, a Wesleyan minister, wrote to his undergraduate son John,

You need to have, and you must have, no intimacy with those that fear not God. If I thought you formed intimacies of that kind, it would induce me to withdraw you from Cambridge; because it would be a certain sign that you had not true religion ... ¹⁰²

While evangelicals themselves failed to recognise the insidious cliquishness which resulted from their belief in esoteric society, their critics were quick to draw attention both to it and to the unfortunate terminology in which it found expression. Attempts to provide a weekly packet for the explicit use of 'the followers of a crucified Redeemer who are in the habit of visiting the Isle of Thanet' were among the practices derided by Sydney Smith in a damaging compendium of extracts from the Evangelical and Methodist Magazines. ¹⁰³ But if evangelicals were thus

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101. J H Pratt, Eclectic Notes (1856) p 379. On Clayton see T W Aveling, Memorials of the Clayton Family (1867).
102. J MacDonal, Memoirs of the Rev Joseph Benson (1822) p 476.
103. Edinburgh Review xi (1808) pp 341 - 62, reprinted in The Works of Sydney Smith (1839 - 40) i. Smith's allegations were met by John Styles, whose Strictures on two Critiques in the Edinburgh Review on the Subject of Methodism and Missions (1809) Smith also condemned (xiv, 1809, pp 40 - 50). For a further instance of the cavalier attitude adopted towards non-evangelicals see R Hill, Village Dialogues iv (1803) p 51: 'While Mr Considerate and Mr Worthy were thus in conversation, Lord Rakish's carriage drove up to the door. Mr Worthy rang the bell immediately, and ordered his boots, that

ludicrously scrupulous in their attempts to avoid the profanities of the worldly, they were well aware that avoidance of worldly company did not automatically carry with it avoidance of worldliness. The danger, preachers reiterated, lay in a worldly spirit, that was in vanity, pride, self-indulgence, in the assumption that one was basically acceptable in the sight of God. This spirit could invade the hermitage as much as the metropolis and certainly did invade religious meetings. Constant watchfulness was needed to ensure that one did not fall into worldliness even in the security of the sanctuary. ¹⁰⁴

The question of worldly conformity was therefore much more complex than at first appeared and consequently caused much heart-searching. Sumner maintained that it was more invidious than profitable to speak of a pronounced division between church and world when the two could merge so imperceptibly, a view increasingly difficult to refute as evangelicalism gained in respectability. ¹⁰⁵ Simeon acknowledged that the legitimacy of particular practices might well depend upon individual circumstances. ¹⁰⁶ If they were less doctrinaire than many, few believed that this life, preparation for death though it might be, either could or should be spent exclusively on spiritual exercises within

he might appear as if he were going out, that his Lordship might think it necessary to shorten his visit. Mr Considerate was very glad to make his escape from the interview, while the poor flimsy conversation of his Lordship would be as uninteresting to the reader to peruse, as it would be unpleasant for the writer to narrate'.

104. CO xvi (1817) p 499.

105. Sumner, op cit pp 287 - 88.

106. Carus, op cit pp 582 ff. Cf CO xiv (1815) p. 80.

the evangelical fold. Most evangelicals had of necessity to engage in secular employment in the company of men of different convictions. 'Preserve me' prayed Charles Wesley, 'from my calling's snare', a statement which revealed both evangelicals' fear that they might be led astray, and their unshakeable conviction that their daily occupation, however menial, should be regarded as a divine calling.¹⁰⁷ However close they might come to it, they regarded monastic seclusion, tarnished by its Catholic associations, as unchristian.

A further reason for this was the tension inherent in their faith between belief in the rejection of the world as the stamping-ground of the devil, renounced by the Christian when he passed from its darkness into light, and belief in its transformation into that which was well-pleasing to God, a transformation to be consummated in the second advent. The Christian Observer condemned those who said that

because a Christian is not to make the present world his final home and rest, he is to retire to the abstraction of his closet, or the indolence of a cell and to shun that share of responsibility in the great movements of the world for which his abilities fit him, or which his station requires of him ... in this respect some good men have betrayed a culpable degree of moral cowardice.¹⁰⁸

Sumner argued along similar lines. St Paul's comments on shunning the world could no more be interpreted literally

107. The opening line of the 3rd verse of Wesley's hymn 'Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go' Hymns and Sacred Poems (1749). Verse 3 was omitted, perhaps on aesthetic grounds, from A Collection of Hymns for the use of the people called Methodists (1780) but the sentiment remained common. See for example CO xxxi (1831) p 173.

108. CO xxxii (1832) p 60; cf pp 555 ff; xxxii (1831) Preface; xxxiii (1833) p 437.

than his remarks on the avoidance of marriage could be applied universally. ¹⁰⁹ To withdraw from politics allowing the world to be run by those beyond the pale of God's favour would be to fail in Christian responsibility and to invite God's judgment as did the favoured but ever-sinning Israelites of old. The reiterated comparison with Israel was all-important for even the most pietistic of evangelicals believed that the actions of God in relation to the nations of Old Testament times provided a model for interpretation of his actions in subsequent eras. If the nation failed to accord to the religious and moral standards believed to be acceptable in the sight of God, it would suffer the outpouring of his wrath. The world might be the devil's stronghold but Christians were still to seek to run it as God's vicegerents in his chosen land.

The Old Testament concept of the godly nation thus encouraged evangelicals to engage in political and philanthropic activity. The latter was reinforced by the example of Christ who went about doing good, temporal as well as spiritual. Missionary activity also threw evangelicals back into the life of the world: the future life might be all-important but men were to be saved in this. The danger of contamination, so pronounced in political involvement, was less marked here for evangelicals were mixing with unbelievers only on their own terms. ¹¹⁰

109. Sumner, op cit pp. 263 - 64.

110. Cf Charlotte Elizabeth, The Museum (1832) pp 52 ff where a father tells his children 'as for those who are not religious the less you have to do with them the better, except in the way of instructing those who are willing to let you speak to them of Christ'.

Nevertheless the fact remains that they were mixing with them: the Biblical imperative would not allow them to hide in safe seclusion, however desirable, 'till the storm of life be past'. 111

Biblical teaching was not the only factor encouraging involvement in the world. Underlying the comments of Sumner and the Christian Observer was the assumption widely held within society that the higher classes should participate either nationally or locally in the ordering of community life. Evangelicals, the product of their society as well as of grace, were influenced in common with others of their age by deeply-rooted traditions which encouraged attitudes and activities so automatically accepted that little thought needed to be given to a substantiating theology. Society as a whole recognised a close alliance between politics and religion evidenced in the politico-religious celebration of the 1688 centenary and in the fear of the 1790s that radicalism and irreligion were two sides of one coin. That evangelicals shared such views and acted upon them was due to their social as well as their religious background. So

111. A line from Wesley's hymn 'Jesu, Lover of My Soul', which reveals the pietistic inclinations of even those evangelicals firmly committed to evangelistic enterprise. Cf R Cecil, *Ms Diary of Reflections and Prayers*, p 96. Believing in the importance of Christian witness Cecil opposed monasticism while at the same time suggesting that 'the more exquisite a man's judgment and sentiments are the more likely he is to withdraw from the world'.

too was their support of various political groupings. Forced by the demands of subsistence or of social responsibility to mix to some degree with the irreligious, they shared many of the political and social views of those among whom they were educated and with whom they worked. In addition evangelicals were influenced by the traditions of their denominations even where they disagreed with the theological emphases of some of their predecessors. Hence the condemnation of schism and support of the establishment by many Anglican evangelicals. Dissenters influenced by the evangelical revival inherited the interest in political matters which was part of the social tradition of old dissent. Determination to redress their abhorred status as second-class citizens and hereditary concern for religious liberty were part of, and gave rise to, a wider interest in liberty and reform, an interest shared with others of like social and ideological background.

The extent to which evangelicals shared the assumptions of their age is perhaps most evident in the social ideology of the movement's leaders so criticised by the Hammonds.¹¹² It is sometimes argued that those who claim to avoid conformity with the world should subject even the fundamental principles of their society to the critical scrutiny of Scripture. But while evangelicals sought to make Scripture the effective plumbline by which all else was measured, their understanding of the Bible was itself inevitably moulded by the thought forms of the world they

112. See above pp 48 - 49.

sought to criticise. Thus contemporary assumptions concerning the value of a hierarchically structured society were reinforced by an interpretation of Scripture which they had themselves conditioned: Scripture could be used to prove that all that happened was ordained by God, that hardship was a form of judgment best counteracted by repentance, that established authorities should be respected and obeyed, arguments that seemed all the more compelling since the apostolic command that each man remain in the state in which he had been called appeared to justify the status quo ...

And so there was a limit upon evangelical efforts to avoid conformity with the world. As far as was Biblically permissible and socially possible evangelicals sought to evade that which they recognised as 'the world'. But unavoidably conditioned by the society which had nurtured them they did not so regard many of its assumptions and attitudes. Here again the thought forms of their age constituted the subconscious substructure of their thinking.

4. FAITH AND FASHION

a. God and Mammon.

According to novelists of the next generation whose portrait of Evangelicalism was rarely favourable, the contemporary assumptions which Evangelicals accepted most readily were those concerning living standards and social status. In the words of a later historian they 'did not appreciate the virtues of asceticism and holy poverty'.¹ On the contrary at his Clapham home, significantly 'separated from the outside world by a thick hedge of tall trees', Thackeray's Tommy Newcome was required to repeat the horrific hymns of evangelical childhood 'to his step-mother after dinner, before a great, shining, mahogany table, covered with grapes, pineapples, plum-cake, port-wine, and Madeira', while in *Middlemarch* George Eliot's more sympathetically portrayed Mrs Bulstrode happily combined 'the nothingness of this life and the desirability of cut glass, the consciousness at once of filthy rags and the best damask ...'²

In the eyes of their contemporaries this easy juxtaposition of religion and good living was a sign of, at best, extreme equivocation, at worst, sheer hypocrisy. For all their religious talk Evangelicals seemed to be motivated by just the same considerations as everyone else. Claiming

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1. V H H Green, *Religion at Oxford and Cambridge* (1964) p 223.
 2. W M Thackeray, *The Newcomes* (1853 - 55), *Works* (1869 edn) v pp 19 - 20; G Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1872, Penguin edn 1965) p 302.

other-worldly interests and a distinctive lifestyle they appeared in no way to curtail the domestic comforts common to their class. Similarly though scorning the world, they apparently sought after its riches and the respect of the great. Thus Hazlitt while acknowledging Wilberforce's religious sincerity, argued that he was equally anxious to preserve his reputation and maintain good relations with those in high places: 'He acts from mixed motives. He would willingly serve two masters, God and Mammon'.³ William Empson, future editor of the Edinburgh Review, hinted that a similar desire to make the best of both worlds was characteristic of Evangelical clergy 'whose success in marrying fortunes has become a proverb'.⁴

One who was undoubtedly successful in this respect was the Rev John William Cunningham, curate to John Venn at Clapham from 1809 to 1811, and Vicar of Harrow from 1811 until his death in 1861.⁵ Cunningham's first wife, Sophia, who died in 1821, was the daughter of Robert Williams of Moor Park, Hertfordshire, MP for Dorchester, and a partner in the successful banking firm that was eventually to become Williams Deacon's Bank Ltd.⁶ In 1827 Cunningham remarried. His bride,

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3. W Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age (1825), P P Howe (ed), op cit xi pp 147 - 50.
 4. Edinburgh Review lii (1831) p 448. Cf criticism of Evangelical attitudes to wealth in liv (1831) p 103. On Empson see DNB.
 5. Cunningham, cited in DNB, richly deserves a biography. Much scholarly research was undertaken for a lecture 'Cunningham of Harrow' by Miss A L Wyatt of the same borough. Her finished account is however informative and descriptive rather than analytical. The text, her notes, and correspondence, are deposited in Lambeth Palace Library, Ms 2238.
 6. Copies of Cunningham's marriage settlement with Sophia Williams, by which a trust fund was established, are deposited at the Hertfordshire County Record Office (Acc 526), and at the Dorset County Record Office (D4). After due investigation Miss Wyatt concluded that the Williams's

Mary Calvert, was twenty-one years his junior, the daughter of General Sir Harry Calvert, Bart. ⁷ An urbane but zealous man Cunningham was perhaps second only to Wilberforce in attracting abuse. Attacked in The Times, The Examiner, and Cobbett's Political Register for supporting the government in the Queen Caroline affair, he was depicted by cartoonists as a time-server, 'the Cunning Man of Harrow', who hated Catholicism yet supported emancipation. ⁸

The most vituperative attack upon Cunningham came from one of his parishioners, Frances Trollope, mother of the Victorian novelist. ⁹ The title character of her scurrilous novel, The Vicar of Wrexhill, William Jacob Cartwright, insinuates himself into the affections of a wealthy widow whom he eventually marries, provides an opportunity for his accomplice cousin to abduct his step-daughter, and - incidentally - turns out to have fathered an illegitimate child. Ever justifying his plans for his own worldly advancement on religious grounds, he tells his erstwhile mistress

To a man like myself, whose soul is altogether given to things above, the idea of making a marriage of love, as

were well-to-do, citing as further evidence the fact that according to the local Church rate book Williams's property had a rateable value of £500. Sophia and Cunningham were married on 30 July 1805; an obituary was printed in The Times 22 January 1821.

7. For Calvert see DNB. A brief family history is provided in the biography of Cunningham's son, M M Verney, Sir Henry Stewart Cunningham K.C.I.E. (1923) pp 1 - 8, 27, 44 - 48. Mary Calvert's brother inherited the property of Mrs Verney of Claydon in 1827 and adopted her name; his second wife was Parthenope Nightingale.
8. The Times 18 September 1820; The Examiner 24 September 1820; Political Register 30 September 1820; M D George, Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum: political and personal satires (1952) x 13914, 13982, 15392. For Cunningham's views see his ...Letter to S C Whitbread Esq. MP for the County of Middlesex on the Subject of Female Meetings to Address the Queen (1820); 'On the Practical Tendency of Popery' in B W Noel et alii, Lectures on the Points in Controversy between Romanists and Protestants (1828).
9. On Mrs Trollope see the rather laudatory biography by her daughter-in-law, F E Trollope, Frances Trollope her Life

it is called, would be equally absurd and profane. My object in the connection I have formed, was to increase my sphere of influence and utility; and nothing, I assure you, can be more opportune and fortunate than my having found this very worthy and richly endowed person. ¹⁰

In similar casuistic fashion he gives full support to a 'serious fancy fair' in aid of charity at which are manifested all the gluttony and quarrelling common to its secular counterparts. According to his daughter, in whose spiritual well-being he has no interest, evangelicals 'value pleasure fully as much as other men ... they struggle for riches with anxiety as acute and hold it (sic) with a grasp as tight, as any human beings can do'. ¹¹ Nevertheless she believes that their prime desire is for power, and says of her father, whom she despises, 'To touch, to influence, to lead, to rule, to tyrannise over the hearts and souls of all he approaches, is the great object of his life ...' ¹² Emulating the authority of the God whom he professes to serve the Vicar domineers over the life of his family and the village alike, imposing his will upon them, until, with the thwarting of his plans, he exchanges livings and 'the pretty village of Wrexhill once more became happy and gay'. ¹³

Many of Mrs Trollope's charges can be immediately dismissed. One of her son's biographers, a man by no means sympathetic to Cunningham, maintains that she became obsessive

and Literary Work (1895). The more recent work by Eileen Bigland, The Indomitable Mrs Trollope (1953) is chatty and unscholarly.

10. F Trollope, The Vicar of Wrexhill (1837) iii p 33.

11. ibid iii p 98.

12. ibid i p 286.

13. ibid iii p 343. For a contrasting account, as eulogistic as Mrs Trollope's is vindictive, see J W, Harrow on the Hill, a narrative founded on facts (1821).

about baiting the Vicar and, in company with members of the Drury family, masters at the school, conducted a 'crude and foolish vendetta' against him.¹⁴ Her pique can in part be attributed to the fact that having lived beyond their means the Trollopes sought to solve their financial problems by letting to Cunningham the house which they had leased while themselves renting a smaller and shabbier abode.¹⁵ Her son implied that the Druries' campaign against their evangelical Vicar, the dominant feature of Harrow social life, had some religious basis for they were of the 'high and dry' school. In an account more judicious and discriminating than many, Trollope described the Rev Henry Drury as more talented and able than Cunningham, but suggested that he was a coarse man whereas the Vicar, who had a commanding presence, was more handsome and gentlemanly in appearance than most of the Harrow masters. He was, however, suspected of insincerity on account of his suavity.¹⁶

Such suspicion was clearly not universal. There was a substantial Cunningham as well as a Drury faction. An historian of the school points out that in 1818 relationships with the Vicar were sufficiently cordial for him to be elected to the board of governors.¹⁷ The poor flocked to his first wife's funeral and by 1851 Cunningham could attract a morning congregation of 1,500.¹⁸ Within evangelical circles he was

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14. M Sadleir, Trollope a commentary (1927, new edn 1945) pp 58 ff. L P and R P Stebbins, The Trollopes, the chronicle of a writing family (1946), add little to Sadleir's work which they praise highly. They too describe Cunningham as a good and kindly man.
15. Sadleir, op cit p 64.
16. T A Trollope, What I remember (1887 - 89) i pp 72 - 89. Presumably out of filial piety Trollope made no reference to The Vicar of Wrexhill. On Cunningham's correspondence with Byron which is unjustly assumed to support the charge of servility see below p 343.
17. T F May, 'A Study of Harrow School in its relationship to its neighbourhood throughout the nineteenth century' (London M Phil 1969) pp 79 - 82, 115 - 17, 127 - 33, 181.
18. Gentleman's Magazine xci (1821) pt 1, p 93. The Victoria

highly revered. A life-governor of the BFBS and CMS, he was invited to become secretary of the former society, a post he declined, and was the most regular anniversary speaker of the latter.¹⁹ Extant letters reveal, however, that while he travelled regularly for both societies, he often refused requests to speak in distant towns on account of the needs of his family and parish.²⁰ While this reveals a commendable rejection both of the Jellyby syndrome and of any temptation to further his own reputation in a wider sphere, his belief that there were few men to whom he could safely entrust his pulpit suggests that he was perhaps over-conscientiously possessive about his parish, over-conscious of his own role as evangelical Vicar. There is some hint of this in his opposition to the construction of a school chapel on the grounds that this would weaken the traditional association of church and school.²¹ Sincere keepers of the faith evangelicals could all too easily, maybe without realising it, gratify the perennial human desire for power.

County History for Middlesex iv pp 255 ff cites as the attendances at the three census Sunday services 1,500, 750, 750. As the morning figure would presumably have included the boys from the school who continued to attend mattins at the parish church until 1857 the afternoon and evening figures, themselves impressive, are maybe the more significant.

19. Canton, op cit i p 312; Stock, op cit i p 277 where Cunningham is described as being by the 1840s one of the Evangelicals' 'foremost leaders' et passim. For his refusal of the BFBS secretaryship see his letter of 1 January 1823, BFBS Archives, Home Correspondence Inwards.
20. Many such letters are lodged in the BFBS Archives, Home Correspondence Inwards, and in the CMS Archives, G/Ac3.
21. W W Druett, Harrow through the Ages (1935, 3rd edn 1956) p 162, but see May, op cit p 129 where it is pointed out that although Cunningham had reservations about the school chapel scheme he eventually concurred in it and subscribed to it.

There was also some truth in Mrs Trollope's equally exaggerated suggestion that Cunningham moved with marked ease among the affluent. His influence extended even over the pockets of his wealthier parishioners, for he raised by subscription the money for one of the two new churches built in the parish during his ministry.²² Numbered among his friends from undergraduate days were the Noel brothers, whose mother Lady Barham had helped confirm his faith. Gerard Noel was but one of several titled persons whom he was entertained by and entertained in the summer of 1825 for his diary of that year refers also to Lady Beaufort, Lord Lilford, Lord Harrowby, and Lord and Lady Radstock.²³ This can hardly be classified as indiscriminate mixing with the rich for all were firm supporters of evangelical societies. Nevertheless Cunningham's familiarity with them suggests that he possessed the bearing requisite for high society, what Trollope calls 'suavity', what evangelical obituarists more generously but more eulogistically labelled 'courtesy' and 'geniality'.²⁴

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22. Victoria County History for Middlesex iv p 257.
23. For Cunningham's debt to Lady Barham see CO lxi (1861) p 879. Three volumes of Cunningham's diary covering the years 1822 - 28 and 1830 are lodged in the Dorset Record Office, D289/F38 - 39. The visitors listed are all cited in F K Brown, op cit passim. For Lord Lilford see The Complete Peerage vii (1929) and for Lords Harrowby and Radstock DNB (under Ryder and Waldegrave). Lady Beaufort whose husband did not share her faith was sister-in-law of Lord Harrowby (Hopkins, op cit p 202).
24. T D Bernard, Departure into Rest, a sermon preached ... on the occasion of the death of Rev J W Cunningham (1861) p 8.

Geniality is the chief characteristic of the elderly Vicar who is the central character in Cunningham's most successful religious novel, The Velvet Cushion (1814). Inside the venerable pulpit cushion of his church the Vicar finds a roll of paper, 'My own history', an account of the cushion's experience in, and opinions of, the various churches and meeting houses in which it has passed its long and checkered career. Out of this rather unpromising material, Cunningham produced a deservedly popular tale.²⁵ Its strength lies in the characterisation of the Vicar and his wife: by investing his descriptions with a delicate touch of humour Cunningham succeeded in the difficult task of making goodness attractive, a task other evangelical novelists frequently evaded, merely informing their readers of the merits of the virtuous. Moreover, while evoking the ire of dissenters by portraying Anglicanism as the ecclesiastical ideal, Cunningham was far from censorious of other groups.²⁶ Neither he nor his fictional spokesman set themselves up as mentors: the latter is shown to be genuinely humble, a tolerant man who frequently

25. Cunningham's first novel, A World without Souls (1805) was well-received by the evangelical press (CO iv, 1805, pp 543 - 51; EM i series xiv, 1806, p 79) but neither it nor his subsequent fictional works, Sancho or the Proverbialist (1816) and De Rance (1815), a narrative poem, were either as polished or as popular as The Velvet Cushion which went through seven editions in two years.
26. For the EM's objection to this facet of the book see i series xxiii (1815) pp 17 ff, 64 ff. The CO's praise was similarly qualified (xiii, 1814, pp 585 - 96). For a general discussion of the periodicals' changing attitude to religious fiction see below pp 352 - 58.

qualifies the asperities of the cushion; the writer's style is, with only a rare lapse, urbanely descriptive rather than didactic. ²⁷

While Cunningham's literary technique was more sophisticated than that of some of his fellow evangelicals, the difference in his style of writing can also be attributed to a different clientele and a different philosophy. Aiming at an upper/middle class readership, he neither put pressure upon his readers, nor talked down to them, as did many authors of works for the lower classes: the more oblique approach was, perhaps, not only more congenial to his temperament, but also more appropriate to an educated audience unlikely subserviently to accept the dictates of presbyteral authority. But those who like Cunningham and Wilberforce thus sought to be 'all things to all men' in order to reach the upper classes inevitably ran the risk of being charged with hypocrisy, compromise and equivocation.

The assumption that evangelicals were hypocrites owes much to the stereotyped evangelical ministers of Victorian fiction, about whom in dissenting form Valentine Cunningham has written

The stereotypes are sufficiently in touch with reality, sometimes more and sometimes less, to convince the

27. Cunningham's style can be favourably contrasted with that of the dissenters who replied to him in The Legend of the Velvet Cushion (1815) published under the pseudonym Jeremiah Ringletub, and A New Covering to the Velvet Cushion (1815) attributed in the British Library Catalogue to John Styles.

unknowing reader that he has truly met a Dissenter. But novelists who only employ this signal system, and never go beyond its limited resources in their fictional treatment of Dissent, are really evading extensive contact with, or new thought about, Nonconformity. ²⁸

The charge is particularly well-brought against Mrs Trollope who presented in William Cartwright not the, perhaps excusable, thumbnail sketch of evangelical hypocrisy, but a sustained image, unqualified, extending through three volumes. The strength of her satire, like that of Thackeray, lies in the exaggeration of recognisable evangelical traits, its weakness in their continued isolation from equally important balancing characteristics. Thus she quite rightly drew attention to evangelicals' practice of identifying the religious utility of everything they did, a practice which could easily have led to widescale antinomianism had it not been balanced by that equally typical sensitivity of conscience, which Cartwright so signally lacked.

If the charge of hypocrisy can be dismissed, that of equivocation must at least be qualified. Hazlitt who explicitly absolved Wilberforce from the former, suggested that his tendency towards the latter could be seen in the selection of causes likely to win him the approbation of the high and mighty, an argument hardly concordant with the abolitionists' twenty year struggle to persuade Lords and Commons to end the slave trade. ²⁹ The scarcity of Evangelical

28. V Cunningham, op cit p 200. Instances of evangelical fictional hypocrisy are given on pp 210 ff.

29. Hazlitt, loc cit.

Bishops points to an equal unwillingness on the part of Evangelical clergy to compromise in order to gain place for themselves: they were, according to their contemporary James Bean, 'fully aware that inferiority of rank and straitness of income are the certain consequences of their fidelity'.³⁰

On the other hand there can be no doubt that evangelicals deliberately - and astutely - cultivated the patronage of the influential for their societies and sought entrées among them for religious ends. In A Practical View Wilberforce suggested that Christians 'ought to have a due respect and regard to the approbation and favour of men' in so far as these could be used 'as furnishing means and instruments of influence'.³¹ At pains to rectify false impressions of evangelicalism, he at one time gave free meals to MPs, a practice which, as he told his son, made him popular and put paid to the idea that he was motivated by a narrow-minded desire to save money.³² Wilberforce and Mrs More were prepared to admit that in seeking ultimate felicity evangelicals were to some extent motivated by self-interest, 'a principle of an inferior order' 'though often unreasonably condemned'.³³ Moreover they acknowledged that religion often (although not always) brought temporal benefits, a theory that lies behind many of Mrs More's tracts for the poor.³⁴ Yet the very

30. Quoted in Hopkins, op cit p 215.

31. W Wilberforce, op cit p 214.

32. Reginald Wilberforce, Bishop Wilberforce (1905) p 7.

33. W Wilberforce, op cit p 150; H More, Christian Morals (1813) i pp 77 ff.

34. H More, Cheap Repository Tracts (1795 - 98) passim; W Wilberforce, op cit pp 421 - 22, a reference to the well-being of states easily extended to that of individuals. For the complementary opposing view, however, see EM ii series xi (1833) p 452, a blatant instance of the belief that temporal well-being was dangerous and certain forms of suffering signs of divine favour: the patriarchal John Newton called on a friend whose business was flourishing to warn him lest he be carried away by worldly prosperity; on being told that a child was upstairs dying Newton

ingenuousness of such statements militates against the charge of equivocation, as does the reiterated fear that simplicity might be lost as a result of royal patronage. Wilberforce regularly warned his readers against reliance on temporal well-being and upon the approval of the affluent.³⁵ While their life-style constantly exposed them to these temptations, Evangelicals were far more self-aware than Hazlitt was prepared to admit: 'What doest thou here Elijah?' Hannah More asked herself, ill at ease in the society in which she had once held such sway, and added the confessional plea 'Felt too much pleasure at the pleasure expressed by so many accomplished friends on seeing me again. Keep me from contagion'.³⁶

Evangelicals could not always agree, however, on what was contagious, their sensitivity of conscience inviting lengthy - and sometimes casuistical-discussions about the legitimacy of charity feasts, balls, and bazaars, those 'serious fancy fairs' so derided by Mrs Trollope.³⁷ Some correspondents of both the Christian Observer and the Record regarded them as commendable means of raising money for spiritual causes, activities which, far from leading young ladies into the ways of the world, enabled them to devote useless accomplishments to good purpose.³⁸ Others however

reputedly responded 'Thank God, thank God! I see he has not forsaken you yet!'

35. W Wilberforce, op cit ch iv section iii. Cf M Milner, The Life of Isaac Milner (1842) p 558.
36. W Roberts, op cit ii p 415. Cf R Coupland, Wilberforce (1945) p 286.
37. Frances Trollope, op cit iii ch x.
38. CO xxiv (1824) pp 753 - 54; xxviii (1828) pp 95 - 96; xxix (1829) p 221; The Record 21 December 1829, 16 December 1833.

were no less critical than Mrs Trollope of the tendency to worldliness shown at such gatherings, and objected to doing 'evil' that good might follow. According to one Christian Observer contributor practices were either right or wrong and 'we ought as by a kind of spiritual instinct, to avoid even the semblance of giving a sanction to the life wasting diversion of the idlers around us'.³⁹ Charity balls were therefore condemned by some as attracting the worldly and the dissipated, charity feasts as encouraging luxury and excess, charity bazaars as appealing to the vanity of young sales girls. All gave the gratification of zeal divorced from self-denial.⁴⁰

Evangelicals were further concerned lest charity bazaars diverted trade from the poor, a matter discussed in several numbers of the Record, which also condemned those who in times of distress continued to lavish money on expensive meals.⁴¹ The same point was regularly made in the Evangelical Magazine which maintained that Christians should deny themselves not only luxuries but conveniences and necessities in order to bear the burdens of others. They should therefore cease to give dinner and supper parties, cut down on or abstain from wine, spirits, tobacco, and snuff, and

39. CO xxviii (1828) pp 244 - 48; xxix (1829) pp 221 - 27. Cf the similar objections to charitable 'aquatic excursions' in MM xlvi (1823) pp 666 - 67; BM xix (1827) pp 367 - 68.

40. CO xiv (1815) pp 804 - 09; xxiv (1824) pp 548 - 50; xxviii (1828) pp 377 - 80; xxx (1830) pp 356 - 60.

41. The Record 29 March, 30 November, 21 December 1829; 28 November 1833.

generally seek to buy cheap provisions. Travelling expenses could be reduced if families did without unnecessary horses and carriages, while superfluous pieces of furniture, jewels, and trinkets could also be sold. ⁴²

Alongside the need to identify with and help the poor was the desire for nonconformity with the world. No amount of charitable giving, the Record maintained, could compensate for luxury and extravagance which should be alien to those who were pilgrims and strangers on earth. ⁴³ Both the Evangelical and Methodist Magazines criticised those who in furnishing their homes vied with the worldly. ⁴⁴ In particular dissenters objected when Christians followed 'vain fashions in dress', the inordinate love of which, a Methodist writer of 1817 feared, was becoming increasingly common among them. ⁴⁵ Those who dressed as the world dressed did so in order to be seen of men; they therefore ran the risk of pride and tended to mix with those who would appreciate their finery, itself a sign that they were not taking their religion seriously, and a stumbling block to others who might think that the way to heaven was wide. ⁴⁶ Thus while some opposition

42. EM i series ix (1801) pp 27, 54 - 55, 111 - 12; xxi (1813) p 97. Note however that in 1801 (pp 159 - 60) a contributor urged that public dinners while as frugal as possible should be continued for as long as they successfully added new members to charitable societies.
43. The Record 29 March 1829.
44. EM ii series vii (1829) p 445; MM xli (1818) p 939.
45. MM xl (1817) pp 380 - 82. Cf BM vii (1815) p 103.
46. BM xiii (1821) pp 154 - 56; xiv (1822) pp 378 - 79; MM xl (1817) p 381.

to contemporary fashion stemmed from a commendable belief that too much attention should not be paid to appearance alone, avoidance of fashionable extremes tended to become a dissenting shibboleth. So much was this the case that Jabez Bunting hesitated before proposing to his future wife because (among other shortcomings) her dress was 'by far too gay and costly and worldly'. He later wrote to her 'I cannot but be pleased to hear that you have disposed of your gaudy cloak'.⁴⁷ Similar pressure was placed upon other preachers' wives, denounced in a private memorandum at the Conference of 1802 for sporting 'double, triple, rows of buttons', a criticism which suggests that Methodist ladies did not altogether support the sobriety of appearance apparently favoured by the men of their society.⁴⁸

A few similar complaints were included in the Christian Observer particularly in the second and third decades of the century when evangelical religion was becoming ever more respectable among the affluent. Thus a contributor of 1817 expressed concern about the 'spirit of profuse expenditure' that abounded, noting that the furniture, food, and dress of Christians were indistinguishable from those of the fashionable.⁴⁹ Nevertheless Anglicans of the Clapham school appear to have been considerably less concerned about such matters than dissenters and Recordites. In 1832 a correspondent accused them of speaking out against many tyrannies, but not against

47. T P Bunting, op cit i pp 155, 173.

48. ibid p 326. For a further instance of dress constituting an evangelical shibboleth see Satchell, op cit i p 107. Satchell also recommended an abstemious and vegetarian diet, iii pp 6 f, 37 f.

49. CO xvi (1817) pp 215 - 16.

that of fashion, discussion of which, the editors tamely protested, might do more harm than good. ⁵⁰

The difference between dissenting and Evangelical views can largely be attributed to social status. While Evangelical and Baptist Magazine contributors acknowledged the propriety of dressing according to station, the main concern of those periodicals was to dissuade their lower and middle class readers from aping new fashions which for them were synonymous with upper class worldliness. ⁵¹ Anglican evangelicals in contrast, maybe in reaction to the dissenting assumption that a middle class Quakerish simplicity was the Christian norm, found it necessary to urge that Christians dressed up to their class. Thus, a contributor to the Christian Observer of 1806, adopting the pseudonym φιλο-πρεπον argued that the Gospel forbade not ornamentation but its excess. On the one hand the dress of Christian women should reflect the virtues of modesty, simplicity, and economy; the female form 'which is particularly pleasing' should be properly concealed but not disfigured. On the other, while Christians should neither be in the van of sartorial change nor dress in such a way as to associate themselves with the excessively worldly, a reasonable degree of regard to fashion was perfectly acceptable, particularly when new styles were more feminine, convenient, and cheap, than old. Providing

50. ibid xxxii (1832) pp 646 - 48: 'Offences which involve indecorum can scarcely be treated of in print, but at some risk'. This argument was not applied to the indecorum of theatrical performance.

51. EM i series iii (1795) pp 146 f; BM xiii (1821) p 155.

neither modesty nor decorum were thereby infringed, a woman should adopt the style of dress appropriate to her class. It was no part of Christian humility to be taken for the maid. ⁵²

To dress below one's station was believed to be both an affectation and evangelistically counterproductive. It was wrong, Wilberforce maintained, to be 'singular'; in manners and appearance Christians should be like the rest of the world. ⁵³ Henry Thornton recognised that either austerity or ostentation might prevent evangelicals from influencing their fellows and therefore required his wife to dress modestly but fashionably and elegantly. ⁵⁴ Piety, Hannah More proclaimed, was not at war with elegance. Those fashions which were not hostile to virtue could most certainly be pursued providing only that they were kept in their proper (subordinate) position. ⁵⁵

The same mode of thought extended beyond dress to the comforts of life generally. In a letter of 1823 to the Duchess of Beaufort Simeon questioned the assumption that Christians should necessarily deprive themselves of the luxuries common to their class:

If a person in my situation were to affect the pomp and grandeur of a Duke, I should not hesitate to denounce him as violating his baptismal engagements. But does a

52. CO v (1806) pp 472 - 76.

53. A M Wilberforce, op cit p 228.

54. E M Forster, Marianne Thornton, 1797 - 1887, A Domestic Biography (1956) p 27.

55. H More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799), Works (1834 edn) iii p 60.

person of your Grace's rank come under that anathema, because of the elegances that are around you? or if the King were to become truly alive to the best things, must he dismiss all that adorns his palaces? ⁵⁶

According to a Christian Observer contributor, evangelicals might legitimately seek to promote their worldly prosperity for there was nothing in Scripture to check 'the use of means whereby a man may render himself respectable and happy as to outward circumstances'. On the contrary Scripture commanded men to be industrious and to provide for their families, warning them only to avoid undue absorption in worldly business. ⁵⁷ Similarly in her novel, Coelebs in search of a wife, Miss More admitted that Christians might properly enjoy wealth and grandeur but stressed that they should not set too much store by them. ⁵⁸ The argument is open to both commendation and criticism. On the one hand Miss More recognised that it was not possessions in themselves but the love of possessions that militated against spirituality. On the other hand by enabling Evangelicals comfortably to assume that as true Christians they did not overvalue their possessions she perhaps facilitated that complacent and uncritical acceptance of material well-being against which her exemplary characters were arguing. These showed no real awareness that they might themselves fall into this particular sin, maintaining in opposition to undue asceticism that 'at a mansion where an affluent family actually live (sic), all reasonable indulgences should be allowed'. ⁵⁹

56. Carus, op cit p 583.

57. CO xvi (1817) p 10.

58. H More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808, 1809 edn) i p 277.

59. ibid ii p 344.

There seems good reason to believe that 'all reasonable indulgences' were allowed in the homes of the Clapham sect and like-minded Evangelicals. 'Debarred from worldliness', G W E Russell has suggested, recollecting his childhood, 'the Evangelicals went in for comfort'.⁶⁰ In York the evangelical artist John Russell attended a meeting of 'religious people who drink tea and spend the time in religious exercises', and noted that the apartment in which they met was 'very elegant'.⁶¹ Lord Teignmouth who left Clapham in 1808 described the house in Portland Square to which he had moved as

airy, cheerful, and comfortable. I have perhaps paid about £2,500 more than I ought in prudence; but the difference of a comfortable or inconvenient house, of a bad and good situation, to such a family as ours, is so great, that I would save in any way for the accommodation. An inconvenient house is a perpetual temptation to discontent; and subject as I am to long bilious fits, it ought not to be risked.⁶²

Charles Simeon was no less willing to pay out for the comforts of life: he was, as his latest biographer has shown, something of a dandy, decidedly partial to 'the pleasures of the table', and 'like many a bachelor don ... extremely house-proud and very fussy about his carpets'. His horses too were a matter of pride and intense concern.⁶³

Any criticism of evangelicals on these grounds must be carefully qualified. Their charities were so extensive as necessarily to reduce the standard of living that they might

60. G W E Russell, The Household of Faith (1902, 2nd edn 1903) p 234.

61. J Russell, Ms Journal of Visit to Leeds, York, Burleigh, Tedcaster 27 August - 24 November 1799, p 65. The journal is lodged in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum (86 EE 68). On Russell see below pp 294 - 97.

62. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 151.

63. Hopkins, op cit pp 12 - 13, 17 - 18, 153 - 54, 157 - 58, 164, 211.

otherwise have enjoyed. It is well known that prior to his marriage Henry Thornton regularly gave away about a third of his income, while Mr Hopkins has calculated that Simeon in the early days of his ministry donated up to a similar sum. ⁶⁴

The sheer number of evangelical charities as listed by Ford K Brown and the recurrence of the same names on subscription list after subscription list reinforces the belief that Evangelicals were by the standards of almost any other group in any other period exceptionally generous. The willingness to give away large sums is of itself proof that they were not unduly possessive.

It is possible that contemporaries and those who later criticised Evangelicals for seeking the best of both worlds were not altogether aware of the extensiveness of their charity. The nature of their criticism however suggests that they were primarily concerned with the apparent discrepancy between what Evangelicals said and what they did. The real attack therefore was not so much against their enjoyment of worldly comforts as against their theological disparagement of that enjoyment. The charge cannot easily be refuted, for it can be questioned whether even Simeon's theology was sufficiently affirmative fully to embrace so whole-hearted an endorsement of the good things of life. At table and on horseback Simeon by his practice emphatically proclaimed that life was good in itself: his theology while not denying this failed to give it comparable importance. ⁶⁵ John Venn of Clapham like Simeon gained much enjoyment from life and urged his hearers against

64. ibid. p.160; Meacham, op cit pp 137, 197 - 98.

65. See above pp 135 - 37.

undue asceticism. Nevertheless when he attempted in the pulpit to define '... the value of human life', he only mentioned 'temporal enjoyments' in order to deny their importance. Life on earth was valuable because it provided opportunities to fulfil God's will, not just to eat and drink; it was infinitely important because it determined man's future well-being; and it was ennobled by the solicitude which God had expressed for it: 'Are men made in vain when the only begotten of the Father gave his life as a ransom for theirs?'⁶⁶ Whereas preachers in the period after Maurice would have elaborated this point by arguing that the Incarnation was itself an affirmation of human existence in all its fullness, Venn developed it into an evangelistic appeal: many by failing to avail themselves of that ransom gave every appearance of indeed being 'made in vain'. It would be anachronistic to suggest that Venn's contemporaries criticised evangelicals by reference to incarnational theology as such. Nevertheless they recognised that Evangelicals' theology was not altogether congruent with their lifestyle.

A more damning criticism is that Evangelicals appeared to condemn in 'the world' activities and attitudes which were acceptable within the household of faith. In particular they failed to recognise how closely their own social round mirrored that of the fashionable whose habit of passing from social engagement to social engagement they despised as a misuse of time. Yet Sophia Cunningham's diary for 1808 can easily be construed as a religious variant of the same theme, for interspersed with the texts of all the sermons

66. J Venn, op cit i p 331.

her husband preached and accounts of his visits to the poor, are the details of the frequent journeys they made from Moor Park to Surrey to Clapham, how they travelled, whom they visited and dined with, and who visited and dined with them...⁶⁷

The scene in Coelebs in search of a wife is frequently set at a dinner table, at which Evangelicals discuss the doctrine of substitutionary atonement - and the merits and demerits of other people, including previous guests, a practice justified on religious grounds. The exemplary Mr Stanley, father of several daughters, tells his family

I would on no account speak so freely of a lady whom I receive at my house, were it not that, if I were quite silent, after Phoebe's expressed admiration, she might conclude that I saw nothing to condemn in Miss Sparkes, and might be copying her faults under the notion, that being entertaining made amends for every thing.⁶⁸

Similar double-standards operate in Rowland Hill's Village Dialogues in which on the one hand scandal - and particularly scandal about the innocent-is condemned, while at the same time exemplary characters with no hint of authorial criticism engage in an eight page discussion of the various bad marriages which have recently taken place.⁶⁹ The only justification would presumably be that the latter gossip was 'true' and capable of being 'improved' to religious edification. Yet this only serves to reinforce contemporary complaints that evangelicals were self-satisfied, and used religion as a cover

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67. Mrs Cunningham's diaries for 1808 - 11, 1813 - 14, 1818 - 20, along with her commonplace book, and an account of her death are lodged in the Dorset Record Office, D 289/ F 41 - 44.
68. H More, Coelebs in search of a wife (1808, 1809 edn) ii p 98.
69. R Hill, Village Dialogues (1801 - 03) ii p 126; iv pp 127 ff.

for every sin. It is hard to believe that prurient delight was totally absent from such discussions, while the liability of evangelicals to lapse into language perilously close to that of pharasaism is indicated in the description of Wilberforce provided by his sons:

'Thank God' was his common exclamation after parting with those who had drawn prizes in the lottery of worldly schemes; 'Thank God that I was led into a different path ... how much rather would I be living as I am on the wreck of my fortune, than have fattened as he has done upon the public!' ⁷⁰

The evidence of the novels cannot of course unquestionably be assumed to reflect evangelical practice. But there seems reason to believe that it probably did. The authors need not have put criticism of the irreligious into the mouths of their exemplary characters, and had such gossipy denunciations been generally disapproved presumably would not have done so. The tendency of evangelicals to gossip was noted by one of the few who spoke out against the practice: 'You are well aware' wrote Isaac Milner 'that there are few things which I dislike more in religious people, than that spirit of gossiping which prevails among them a great deal too much'. ⁷¹ Extant letters supply some confirmation of his observation, for when evangelicals could not talk to their friends they wrote copiously to them. Mrs Thornton asked the Grants to give her all the latest gossip and contributed her

70. R I And S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) v pp 343 - 44.

71. M Milner, The Life of Isaac Milner ... (1842) p 637. For Milner, President of Queen's College Cambridge, and a close friend of Wilberforce, as also of Bishop Pretyman-Tomline who presented him to the Deanery of Carlisle, see DNB.

own quota: the Barclays seemed to be enjoying Bath in a way incompatible with Quakerism - she wished they would drop their profession; the Hoares had not yet dined with her, an inevitable event to which she did not look forward for it was not very convenient and although 'she' was sweet, 'he' was surly ... ⁷²

The Thornton letters are in many respects very refreshing for they are chatty and frequently unguarded. Religious reflections are juxtaposed with wry accounts of their children's escapades and opinions. ⁷³ And yet their very ease goes some way towards confirming the charges levelled against evangelicals, for Mrs Thornton appeared to have no qualm either about criticising others or about the accuracy of her own sometimes snide judgments. Her letters suggest that Clapham Evangelicals conformed to the standards of the world as much in conversation, as in clothing, comfort, and consumption.

This apparent heedlessness of the worldly conformity which they were generally so anxious to avoid can be explained in two ways. In the first place within the security of their own homes, Evangelicals were on the whole protected from

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72. The Thornton papers were deposited by E M Forster in Cambridge University Library, Add. 7674. The letters quoted are from L9 pp 64, 95 - 99, dated November 1803 and September 1807. The Barclays were a long established Quaker family; the Hoares referred to were probably Samuel and Louisa (née Gurney). See below pp 185, 208, 222, 228.
73. See for example Thornton Papers, I16; L9 pp 101 - 05.

contaminating company, which many regarded as the essence of worldliness: they were therefore free to relax - and lapsed into gossip. Secondly, clothing, food, and furnishings, could all be regarded as necessities of life. Questions concerning the use of time and legitimacy of leisure, so central to discussions on 'lawful' and 'unlawful' pleasures, did not therefore so immediately arise, as Evangelicals sat comfortably around their well-stocked tables. If they were blind to the extent to which they resembled the world which they professed to despise, they were for once giving their over-taxed consciences a rest. 74

b. Public amusements.

Preachers were loath to allow any such relaxation in respect of 'public', 'worldly', or 'fashionable' amusements, the common subject matter of denunciatory sermons and articles, tracts and cautionary tales. In Lawful Amusements, a sermon preached at Fetter Lane on Thursday 10 January 1805, George Burder described the sinfulness of theatrical attendance, dancing, and card-playing, practices which along with horse-racing, hunting, and the playing of

74. Such myopia did not characterise all Evangelicals. According to Colquhoun, (op cit p 209) Thomas Gisborne was embarrassed by the mode of life at Clapham, but Colquhoun is not always an accurate guide and Gisborne's unease may have been as much due to social disorientation as to religious disapproval. William Hey's home was described by his biographer as plain and simple and his diet as markedly temperate, for Hey strongly disapproved of ostentation and self-indulgence. But Hey was a life-long provincial, had strong Methodist associations, and as a doctor may have had medical as well as religious reasons for abstemiousness - he generally ate only one course and rarely had any wine (Pearson, op cit i p 110).

secular music, were similarly condemned in Rowland Hill's A Warning to Professors containing aphoristic observations on the nature and tendency of public amusements...

'Public amusements' were invariably equated with the communal leisure activities of the more affluent sectors of society. Evangelical periodicals occasionally warned against the dangers inherent in the pleasures of the poor, attendance at fairs and prize fights, while in open letter and fictional tract Hill drew attention to the temptations of public houses and sought to prevent performances of strolling players.¹ But the weight of complaint in these and similar sources was always directed against the frolics of the fashionable, an emphasis which does much to qualify Sydney Smith's view that evangelicals were anxious only to curtail the recreation of those earning less than £500 a year.²

That the Vice Society was predominantly concerned with the behaviour of the poor is only to be expected: any attempts to effect the prosecution of the gentry or aristocracy by magistrates of their own class would have been doomed to failure. A parliament strongly antagonistic to state interference was loath to legislate even against

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1. For evangelical opposition to fairs and fights see EM i series xxx (1822) p 349; CO xviii (1819) pp 510-12; xxii (1822) pp 418-20; The Record 10 June 1830. Hill warned against public houses in Village Dialogues (1801-03), passim, and issued An Expostulatory Letter... in which the bad tendency of stage amusements... is seriously considered (1795) to a clerical magistrate urging him to refuse strolling players permission to perform in Wotton Underedge.
 2. Edinburgh Review xiii (1809) p 342, an article on the Society for the Suppression of Vice, reprinted in The Works of Sydney Smith (1839-40 edn) iv.

the cruellest sports of the poor, let alone against those in which Lords, Commons and Prince Regent were more intimately involved: those who, in sparsely attended debates, complained of the class-bias of bills against bull-baiting, were certainly not expressing any desire for comparable legislation against the pastimes of the rich.³ On the contrary they may have been seeking to preempt any such move. In concentrating their legislative and judicial attention upon the lower classes, Evangelicals and their associates in the Vice Society were simply being realistic. While they were over-sanguine in conceiving that moral suasion would effectively combat the immorality of the affluent they had no other tools at their disposal.⁴

There were of course other reasons for the different treatment accorded to rich and poor. Evangelicals shared to the full contemporary assumptions concerning the pedagogic and paternalistic responsibilities of the upper classes to the lower. Likewise they believed that the morality of the poor was an essential safeguard against revolution and characteristically acted upon their belief. Nevertheless while the viciousness of the lower orders was regarded as more immediately dangerous than that of their superiors, the latter was assumed to be indirectly subversive of the social order. In A Practical View, aimed explicitly at

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3. For the debates on bull-baiting in 1800 and 1802 see The Parliamentary History of England (1806-20) xxxv pp 202-14; xxxvi pp 829-54. Wilberforce's disappointment that other evangelicals did not share his desire for a legislative solution is expressed in R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) ii pp 448-51.
 4. L Radzinowicz, A History of English Criminal Law... iii (1956) p 160. Part iii of this volume contains a detailed analysis of various attempts at legislative and judicial control.

'the higher and middle classes', Wilberforce attributed the sufferings of the French to the corruption of their manners and morals, the dissipation and irreligion of their society.⁵ His writings and those of Hannah More testify to Evangelicals' anxiety to reform the rich as well as the poor.⁶ Their belief that God judged erring nations was too firmly fixed for casual disregard of upper class behaviour.

Wilberforce and Miss More were however unusual in possessing the literary expertise, and more significantly the social respect, which alone made feasible a direct appeal to the non-evangelical upper classes. Whether realistically or evasively most evangelicals tended to assume that at this level of society example was the best form of persuasion. Most writings on public amusements therefore were addressed explicitly to those already within the household of faith.

The desire to effect general reformation was however strictly subordinate to preachers' and periodical writers' primary aim, the safeguarding of the purity of the flock. In view of this, their obsession with 'fashionable' amusements is indicative of an unspoken assumption that the pastimes of the affluent were more tempting and more dangerous to evangelical well-being than those traditionally practised by the lower classes. With the advent of industrialism the latter were already coming under attack, and had from the beginning been anathematised by those

5. W Wilberforce, op cit p 388.

6. H More, Thoughts on the Manners of the Great (1788); An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World (1790).

converted in the revival. In areas where evangelicals were in a minority, the pietistic tradition of old dissent and the stringent discipline of Methodism made improbable any participation in the dissipation and drunkenness of working class recreation. On the other hand, as John Rule has shown with reference to Cornwall, in areas where Methodism was strong and socially coherent, traditional festivities were translated into religious forms, which replaced and rendered obsolete the original practices.⁷ In either case involvement in church or society provided alternative leisure pursuits with which dissenters could amply fill their scant non-working hours.

These differences in lifestyle were but a reflection of a more fundamental distinction, for membership of a dissenting community of itself served to differentiate a dissenter from his social equals. In contrast Evangelicals could often only be distinguished from non-evangelicals of similar status by their behavioural shibboleths, of which anathematization of common pastimes was the most obvious and hence the most significant. As the movement became more respectable, attracting adherents accustomed to the leisure pursuits of the affluent, both the threat to and the need for this one symbol of separation became ever more acute.

The consequent concern was not restricted to Anglicans, for dissenting leaders too, delighted by the

7. J Rule, 'Methodism and Recreational Conflict in West Cornwall', loc cit. For an account of the restraint placed by industrialism and evangelicalism upon popular pastimes, see R W Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850 (1973)

growing respectability of their congregations, watched apprehensively for the first erosions of nonconformist peculiarities. Among Anglicans and dissenters alike the theological tendency to equate 'wordly' and 'fashionable' amusements was thus sociologically reinforced.

The increasing respectability of dissent and the fears attendant upon this are clearly revealed in discussions on The Temptations of a Watering Place and the Best Means of Counteracting their Influence, the title of a sermon preached by John Styles at Union Street, Brighton on 13 August 1815. Anglican families such as the Grants regularly attended such resorts and there is no indication of Anglican unease about this.⁸ The willingness of dissenters to follow suit was implied in the Evangelical Magazine of 1816 which lamented the tendency of spa-going 'professors' to conform to the world, and, disregarding their religious duties, to attend worship only once each Sunday.⁹ By 1827 a critical Baptist writer was reconciled to the fact that many Christians frequented watering places for health and recreation, and noted the provision of piers, promenades, and libraries, which facilities might safely be enjoyed - save on the sabbath. But he regretted that church members and even ministers were to be found in public gardens, the haunts of the frivolous, in culpable conformity to the world and worldly ways.¹⁰

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8. Morris, op cit passim. For the highly cultured but reclusive Grant family see further Colquhoun, op cit pp 309-16.
9. EM i series xxiv (1816) p 261.
10. EM xix (1827) pp 412-13. The BM issued Biblical hints to those who attended watering places as early as 1809 (i pp 256-59) but implied that the practice was not very common.

It is impossible to determine the extent of such laxity. Some biographies suggest that mainstream evangelicals responded to greater respectability by adopting more rigid behavioural codes, a process which in the case of certain Anglican families has been convincingly traced by Canon Hennell.¹¹ Among dissenters Ann Taylor later excused her attendance at the theatre in 1799 on the grounds that 'at the time the line had not been so strictly drawn in the case of amusements as it came afterwards to be in many Christian families'.¹² But the pulpit and periodical exhortations which caused families like the Taylors, firmly established in the faith, to shun the theatre, and other such dens of vice can be interpreted as a response to the tendency of fellow-travellers to frequent them. The young Etonian, W E Gladstone, who recorded his attendance at plays in his diary, may well be representative of other churchmen who, influenced in varying degrees by Evangelicalism, did not necessarily follow its behavioural precepts.¹³ Indeed it must not be assumed that these were universally obeyed even by those clearly aligned with the party.

On the other hand it needs to be noted that in some areas even those newly attracted to evangelicalism were persuaded or forced by influential preachers to adopt stricter

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11. Hennell, 'Evangelicalism and Worldliness 1770-1870', loc cit.
 12. J Gilbert, Autobiography of Mrs Gilbert (1874) i p 130. Ann Taylor never attended again.
 13. Foot (ed), op cit i pp 113-14, 144, 151-52. NB also p 38 where a game of cards (which he lost) is mentioned, and p 28 where his first visit to a ball is recorded by a series of exclamation marks. All references are to 1826-27.

codes of behaviour than those common in their society. In 1826 Francis Close was appointed by the Simeon Trust to a vacant living at Cheltenham, where he quickly gained unrivalled popularity and immense influence. 'The Pope of Cheltenham', he made the town strictly sabbatarian, and attacked both its races and its theatre: when the latter burned down in 1839, it was not rebuilt.¹⁴

The difficulty of determining evangelicals' practice from their polemic is further exacerbated by the, admittedly slight, range of opinion expressed in their written remains. While they were in greater agreement over fashionable amusements than any other form of leisure activity, even in this sphere consensus was not complete. The recurrent and often acrimonious periodical correspondence on the legitimacy of particular pursuits is testimony to the very real problems involved in translating theological anathemas into action, problems openly admitted by some, but by no means all, evangelicals. H F Burder argued that Christians could not expect to think alike on the application of principles.¹⁵ The tendency of the Record to condemn those who attended balls and races without further consideration of their character and circumstances, was criticised by a correspondent of that paper, while a contributor to the Christian Observer similarly objected to the 'excessive scrupulousness indulged by many religious persons ... Straining at gnats is the very best preparation for swallowing camels'.¹⁶ Thus while some tended

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14. G Berwick, 'Close of Cheltenham; Parish Pope. A study in the Evangelical background to the Oxford Movement', in Theology xxxix (1939) pp 193-201, 276-85.
 15. EM ii series iii (1825) p 65.
 16. The Record 27 Sept 1830; CO xxxiii (1833) p 660.

towards a blanket condemnation of worldly amusements, others were more discriminating and sought to determine different levels of heinousness. Simeon and Wilberforce both differentiated between activities evil in themselves and those which were merely highly undesirable on account of their 'attendant circumstances'. The former had invariably to be shunned; the latter might occasionally be practised on grounds of expediency 'not as amusements to be enjoyed but as temptations to be undergone'. ¹⁷

Card-playing, unless accompanied by gambling which was vehemently reprehended, was, in the eyes of some, one of the less profligate pursuits. John Venn tentatively suggested that 'there may be no absolute evil, perhaps, in my playing at cards with my friend' but concluded that because of its worldly associations 'it should be considered ... unlawful'. ¹⁸ While the appeal to example was potent, Simeon and Gisborne nonetheless maintained that there was nothing wrong in playing cards with an elderly sick relative. ¹⁹ That they needed to make such statements is evidence of the strictness of others: He sent his daughter a six-point missive against card-playing, while Hill cited instances of 'innocent' games which nevertheless led to quarrelling. ²⁰ Warnings and cautionary tales abounded: the Methodist Magazine asked its readers if they could really envisage

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17. Carus, op cit pp 465 ff; R I and S Wilberforce, The Correspondence of William Wilberforce (1840) i pp 43ff.
 18. J H Pratt, op cit p 336.
 19. Hennell and Pollard (eds) op cit p 105; Gisborne, op cit p 107.
 20. Pearson, op cit i pp 217ff; Hill, Village Dialogues ii (1802) p 31. Cf MM xxv (1802) p 435.

Paul and Silas playing cards. ²¹ The Evangelical Magazine masked as an obituary the dreadful case of the Rev Mr Porter who, warned by intestinal pains, nevertheless continued with his game, collapsed, and died, 'hurried from the amusements of a card table to the bar of the righteous God'. ²²

Dubious argumentation shrouded in scandalised expression is but one indication of the hypersensitivity of some evangelicals who objected even to the possession of a pack of cards. They however in their turn were rebuked by Isaac Milner, who dismissed such objections as cant and warned an acquaintance 'Never be afraid of bugbears'. ²³ But even Milner, who was fascinated by card tricks, had long given up games of cards because of the time thus wasted. Neither Simeon nor Gisborne suggested that cards should be a regular part of evangelical living for it was widely agreed that they were suited only to empty minds, to be used by those who had nothing better to do. It seems probable therefore that Benjamin Jowett was describing an experience common to many when he wrote in mock seriousness of his evangelical childhood:

No day passes in which I don't feel the defects of early education. I was never taught how to play at cards, or even at billiards, and it seems too late to repair the error now. Do you think I could learn to waltz? ²⁴

21. MM xxxiv (1811) p 389.

22. EM i series i(1873) p 32. For further discussion of this form of argument see below pp 188-89.

23. M Milner, op cit pp 53f.

24. E Abbott and L Campbell, The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett (1897) i p 42. For further discussion of the Jowett family see below pp 258-59.

In some families he might have been taught to do so for there was a slightly more diverse range of opinion about the legitimacy of dancing than card-playing and correspondingly greater variations in practice. While opposition to balls, scenes of mixed company, was widespread, some believed that dancing in itself was right and proper. Thus Gisborne and Simeon shared Wilberforce's view that there was no harm in 'domestic dances', his objection to balls being not to 'the act, the saltus, but the whole tone of the assembly'.²⁵ Elizabeth Fry's daughter, Katharine, recalled that after the strict Quakers had left a family wedding, the young people danced quadrilles.²⁶ The common complaint that even such dances encouraged undue intimacy between young gentlemen and young ladies was met by Mrs Ely Bates, who was among those to approve of single sex dances, which she maintained improved a girl's health far more effectively than attendance at a watering place.²⁷ That dancing aided deportment was further argued by one Christian Observer contributor, while another sought to justify the activity by reference to Biblical precedent.²⁸

This apparent blurring of the sacrosanct division between church and world was vehemently opposed by other correspondents who denied that the religious act of dancing before the Lord could be compared with fashionable cavorting.

25. A M Wilberforce, op cit p 231; Gisborne, op cit p 99; Hennell and Pollard (eds), op cit p 105.

26. J Vansittart (ed), Katharine Fry's Book (1966) p 122.

27. Tyndale, op cit i pp 261 ff.

28. CO xxviii (1828) pp 95-96, 380.

Anxious to discredit anything that smacked of worldliness, Anglican and Baptist writers pointed out that grace and health could be otherwise attained, while the Methodist Magazine, typically, provided a cautionary tale to prove that dancing could injure the body as well as the mind.²⁹ The same periodical argued - irrefutably - that if children of Christians were taught to dance, they could join in balls, a circumstance which would be avoided if they were happily ignorant of the requisite skills.³⁰

While scarcity of evidence precludes definite conclusions, the range of opinion, and hence of practice, concerning dancing appears to have been to some extent denominationally defined. Dissenting support for dances was rare: even Adam Clarke, in many respects the most liberal of dissenters, employed what was for him unusually strong language against them.³¹ The Christian Observer, significantly, regarded his as an overstatement, and while denying any brief for the defence of dancing, implied that Clarke was writing from ignorance, unjustly associating 'alehouse hops' with the more decorous eurhythmics of the refined.³² The criticism was just for the 'domestic dances' approved by the Anglican and Quaker élite were probably as far removed from the experience of most dissenters as the bacchanalian routs of the local village.

29. ibid. xii (1813) pp 434-36; xxii (1822) pp 563-66; BM i (1809) pp 357-58; iv (1812) pp 103-05, an attack 'On the Impropriety of Dancing being taught at Religious Seminaries of Education'; MM xlii (1819) p 141.

30. MM xli (1818) p 940.

31. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit i pp 65-67.

32. CO xxxiii (1833) pp 677-78.

The debate on dancing was confined to the Anglican periodicals. ³³

Evangelicals may similarly have been denominationally divided over certain field sports, although evidence for this is minimal. The Methodist Magazine objected to shooting on the grounds that it was both cruel and dangerous, considerations which do not seem to have daunted the Anglican brothers-in-law, Samuel Hoare and Fowell Buxton. ³⁴ Their shooting records have been analysed by Viscount Templewood who draws attention to the remarkably high level of the bags, and the almost unbroken series of shooting days, interrupted only for a religious meeting (and not always then) or on account of bad weather or illness. ³⁵ Buxton was willing to pay any price to make his stud more complete, took great pains in rearing his pheasants, and was responsible for reintroducing the Caperceilzie into Scotland. ³⁶ Ford K Brown's assumption that his love of game placed him on the periphery of the Evangelical party cannot be given uncritical credence. ³⁷ In an invaluable cameo of the way in which one family casuistically discriminated between different forms of worldly amusement, G W E Russell suggested that the Evangelicals among whom he was bred were

33. The editors of the Record spoke out vigorously and at length against balls in the later months of 1830. For the view of some readers that they overstated their case see above p 180.
34. MM xxxvi (1813) p 704. Hoare and Buxton married Louisa and Hannah Gurney. Both families moved from Quakerism to Anglicanism under the influence of Josiah Pratt, CMS Secretary, for whom see DNB.
35. Templewood, The Unbroken Thread (1949) pp 96ff where the 1828 comment of one of Buxton's sons is quoted 'Today for the first time for above twenty years which my Father has been the companion of Uncle Hoare, Uncle Hoare staid at home when it has been a shooting day'.
36. ibid ch ix; Buxton, op cit pp 170-71.
37. F K Brown, op cit p 406. For a further discussion of Buxton see below pp 240-41.

much opposed to fox-hunting but saw nothing wrong in shooting. ³⁸

The periodicals made no such distinction. There is however reason to believe that in worldly amusements as in worldly comfort, legitimacy was to some extent at least determined by the company that was kept: the Christian Observer's complaint that after a hunt participants were prevented by exhaustion from serious reflection was not applied to the more exclusive forms of physical exercise of which Evangelicals generally approved. ³⁹ 'I too should like to hunt', Russell's Vicar reputedly remarked, 'if I could hunt with a field of saints'. ⁴⁰ It was the possibility of dancing, playing cards, and maybe even shooting, with the elect which made these pursuits less dangerous and hence more acceptable in the eyes of some evangelicals than those in which mixed company was unavoidable. ⁴¹

Many however took the argument a stage further and assumed that the favour of the fashionable of itself proved the illegitimacy of worldly amusements such as hunting. Convinced of the spiritual gulf between the religious and 'irreligious' and of a corresponding differentiation in taste, some evangelicals readily assumed that any pastime which the fashionable found pleasurable was by definition evil. Thus the Methodist Magazine argued

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38. G W E Russell, The Household of Faith (1902, 1903 edn) pp 233-34.
39. CO xxiv (1824) p 552. For a discussion of riding, walking and similar activities see below pp 245-46.
40. G W E Russell, The Household of Faith, (1902, 1903 edn) p 234. The rebuke was addressed to Russell's father who was an inveterate fox-hunter, a salutary reminder of the risks of generalising about evangelical practice from polemic.
41. For condemnation of the company kept on hunts see CO xxiv (1824) pp 360-62. Cf BM iv (1812) p 200, an objection to ferocity of manners, profane language and infidel sentiments.

that it was inconsistent for a Christian to enjoy shooting because this was a sport followed by wicked and licentious men. 42

While such sentiments were not peculiar to dissent they enhanced dissenting disapproval of the established church, many of whose members and indeed ministers were happy to hunt. Professor Ward has pointed out that Methodist justification for separate communion 'was expressed overwhelmingly in terms of hostility to the fashionable habits of the clergy'. 43 According to the denomination's magazine, the minister's 'spirit not being secular, his amusements will not be such'. 44 Evangelical Anglicans could not but be aware of the challenge of such statements: fox hunting parsons, the Record proclaimed, aided dissent. 45 For ministers to attend balls, hunts, plays or races was a prostitution of the clerical character. 46 The Christian Observer's discussions on field sports were therefore invariably linked with clerical practice: in one of many articles the periodical maintained that it was undignified for ministers to hunt, unbecoming that they should value themselves primarily on their skill with a gun. 47

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42. MMxxxvi (1813) p 704. Cf a similar reference to public amusements in general: xxxiv (1811) p 388.
43. W R Ward, Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (1972) p 10.
44. MM xli (1818) p 11.
45. The Record 30 August 1832. Cf 23 April 1832.
46. ibid 17 June, 27 September and 4 October 1830; 9 February 1832. For the Record's disapproval of races see 19 September 1828; 23 July 1829; 16 September 1830; 26 March and 24 November 1831; 5 September 1833. For discussion on the theatre see below pp 190-97.
47. CO x (1811) pp 556-57; xviii (1819) pp 288-95; xxv (1825) p 488. On the dignity of the cloth see below p 320.

If these statements reflect the respect in which evangelicals held the ministry, their primary significance lies in the fact that ministers were expected to set an example to their congregations. If a minister took one step, Richard Cecil suggested, his hearers would take two. If a man of the world expressed surprise at meeting a clergyman in a particular venue that was a sure sign that he should not have been there.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding some slight variations in practice, Anglicans like dissenters believed that evangelical faith combined uneasily with the amusements enjoyed by the worldly, upon whom they imposed their own expectations concerning the incompatibility of the two. The participation in worldly amusements of a man set aside for the service of God merely highlighted this essential incongruity.

Nowhere are evangelical assumptions more clearly exposed than in the rhetorical questions with which writers attempted to shock recalcitrant readers. The Methodist Magazine asked whether they would really like to die on the hunting field, a query regularly repeated with respect of other locations.⁴⁹ 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' demanded a Baptist; did Christ 'reveal himself to you at the card table'?⁵⁰ The mock prayer which assumed what it supposedly proved was regarded as a useful test of legitimacy. No Christian, George Burder maintained, could pray before going to the theatre:

48. Josiah Pratt, Remains of the Rev Richard Cecil (1854 edn) p 44.

49. MM xxxvi (1813) p 704.

50. BM i (1809) p 103.

Lord! Go with me to Covent Garden. Bless the actors, strengthen the dancers, assist the musicians, let us have a merry evening, and render the whole performance useful to my religious interest. 51

When Rowland Hill asked his readers whether they would be prepared to allow plays in church he was similarly confident that an instinctive gut reaction would provide the horrified rejection he expected, thus 'proving' the illegitimacy of plays, in any circumstances. 52

The extent to which evangelicals thus reacted instinctively against worldly amusements must be stressed. Many of the arguments they presented against them sound like ex post facto justifications of an essentially emotive and conscience-derived certainty that such activities were beyond the pale of evangelical living. Second and third generation evangelicals inherited the shibboleths first and were only subsequently called upon to find reasons to explain their peculiarities. In the case of the mildly evangelical descendants of Clapham this appears to have led to less vigorous opinions but no less decided behaviour. Leslie Stephen recorded that his father taught him that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with plays and balls, although their abuse was to be condemned. But James Stephenⁿ adhered to the ways of his youth in eschewing both, categorising them as 'not convenient'. His son commented 'We no more condemned people who frequented them than we blamed people in Hind^ostan for riding elephants. A theatre was as remote from us as an elephant'. 53

51. G Burder, Lawful Amusements (1805) p 29.

52. R Hill, An Expostulatory Letter... (1795) pp 15ff.

53. L Stephen, The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen (1895) pp 61-62.

Evangelicals' aversion to the theatre must be distinguished from their dislike of other worldly amusements for two reasons. In the first place their complaints against card-playing and dancing, fox-hunting and racing, were directed against pastimes regularly enjoyed by the fashionable. While it would be wrong to suggest that early nineteenth century theatres attracted only the lower orders it was widely recognised at the time that the class-balance of audiences was changing and that respectable and fashionable persons who had predominated in the eighteenth century were now in a minority. The Select Committee on Dramatic Literature which reported in 1832 attributed this change not only to 'the supposed indisposition of some religious sects to countenance Theatrical Exhibitions', but also to 'the prevailing fashion of late dinner hours', and the lack of royal encouragement.⁵⁴ An historian of the theatre stresses that in competition with opera and ballet, plays may simply have become unfashionable in the highest circles, while the raucous presence of the crowd in the new large theatres of early nineteenth century London served to deter the more respectable classes.⁵⁵ Whatever the reasons for non-attendance evangelicals' disparagement of the theatre to some extent mirrored that of their social equals.

The Select Committee implied however that they had a formative influence upon the attitudes of the age.

54. Report from the Select Committee on Dramatic Literature with the Minutes of Evidence (IUPS edn 1968) p 3.

55. M R Booth in Booth, Southern, Marker, and Davies (eds), The Revels History of Drama in English vi pp 11-12.

While there is some slight evidence to suggest that eighteenth century evangelicals, like their contemporaries, were less antagonistic to the theatre than their descendants, there are firm grounds for believing that they were in the van of those condemning attendance at plays. T B Shepherd, who traces the process within Methodism, points out that in 1799 the denominational magazine saw fit to presume that 'no Methodist attends a theatre'.⁵⁶ A year later the Anglican Eclectic Society adopted as its topic for discussion the question 'On what grounds should a Christian discountenance theatrical amusements?' a form of words which precluded any defence of the theatre. In the opinion of one contributor to the debate 'Frequenting plays affords a proof of the depravity of human nature beyond most other things'.⁵⁷

The ubiquity of this opinion provides the second reason for differentiating between theatrical attendance and other worldly amusements. The Christian Observer of 1805 noted that the Christian world was divided over the legitimacy of balls, concerts, and other such activities, but united in condemnation of the theatre, a conclusion reiterated in subsequent numbers and condoned by even the least doctrinaire of evangelicals.⁵⁸ Attendance at plays was one of the first pursuits which Wilberforce felt called to drop in his quest for evangelical assurance, and while he

56. Shepherd, op cit p 203.

57. J H Pratt, op cit pp 157-62. Cf J Bull (ed), Letters by the Rev John Newton (n d) p 147.

58. CO iv (1805) p 13. Cf xxxi (1831) pp 422-27 which quoted the opinion of Rev T Best (Sermons on the Amusements of the Stage, 1831) that the theatre not only failed to promote spirituality but was incompatible with it. Best is described in the British Library catalogue as the incumbent of St. James, Sheffield.

prevaricated in 1787 when asked whether parental injunctions to attend the theatre should be obeyed, forty years later he had little doubt that in this one instance disobedience was a duty.⁵⁹ A lady who in 1817 asked Simeon for guidance on the same issue was similarly advised to disobey even the husband to whom she had vowed her obedience, for Simeon was inclined to believe that evil was integral to the theatre and not merely circumstantial.⁶⁰

Attendance at 'the devil's temple', providentially the subject of frequent gutting by fire, was therefore assumed to be incompatible with Christian profession for reasons more specific than its popularity with the ungodly.⁶¹ Evangelicals had no doubt that plays inculcated values antagonistic to religion and all too often masked evil in the garb of good. Dashing young heroes, ambitious and revengeful, attracted the audience's uncritical admiration. Pride was presented as greatness of mind, honour and romance as the all-important determinants of action. Blasphemy, adultery, duelling, murder, and suicide, were depicted without censure, and when associated with the hero, with implicit approbation. Pagaentry and spectacle, tableaux, interludes, dancing and music intoxicated those who watched, distracting them from moral judgement. Theatregoers were thus familiarised with sin, and, enjoying its

59. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) i p 88; The Correspondence of William Wilberforce (1840) i pp 49ff; A M Wilberforce, op cit p 234.

60. Carus, op cit pp 465ff.

61. For a report of a fire see EM i series xvii (1809) p 169. The EM believed however that victims of theatrical accidents should be aided, and expressed pleasure at the public response to an appeal for financial assistance for those injured by the 1828 collapse of the Brunswick theatre (ii series vi, 1828, p 158).

exhibition, lost that 'holy indignation' over immorality which the Evangelical Magazine believed should be a Christian characteristic. 62

Heightened though evangelicals' horror might be, it was not altogether peculiar to them. George Colman, the strict and, in the opinion of many, capricious examiner of plays in the Lord Chancellor's office, showed a sensitivity to impious ejaculation, to Biblical (and sexual) allusion, that surpassed that of many evangelicals. 63 While he argued that incest, murder, adultery, and parricide should be censored 'only where there is something so shocking as to justify exclusion', a decision presumably influenced by the constraint of his office, theatrical proprietors and trustees who gave evidence before the Committee maintained maybe partially that public opinion would permit neither gross immorality nor blasphemy. 64 Evangelicals' dislike of theatrical display was echoed by a playwright who regretted the tendency of the new large theatres to concentrate on spectacle rather than literary masterpieces, while their fear that immorality portrayed on stage was particularly potent was shared by J Payne Collier, who drew the Committee's attention to the visual appeal and attractive presentation of plays. 65

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62. EM i series xiii (1805) p 171. Cf CO viii (1809) pp 295-97; MM xlix (1826) pp 153-61; Pearson, op cit ii pp 242ff; W Wilberforce, op cit pp 306-08; H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) iii pp 17-18, 28-32; Hill, A Warning to Professors... (1833 edn) pp 9ff.
63. Report ... on Dramatic Literature (IUPS edn 1968) pp 59-70, 160, 178. On Colman who objected to a lover addressing his mistress as 'angel' see DNB. For evangelical criticism of such religiosity see below pp 321-22.
64. ibid pp 51, 66, 81, 225.
65. ibid pp 21-36, 41-42, 118-22. For Collier who was critical both of 'persons who are usually considered Methodists' and of Colman, who refused to resign in his favour, see DNB.

Evangelicals however extended their criticism far beyond the admittedly dubious productions of Regency England, and complained even of plays which they acknowledged to be morally irreproachable. Many appealed to past practice in an attempt to show that the wise and pious of all ages had discountenanced the theatre, however 'pure' the plays of their day might have been.⁶⁶ Acting was believed to be morally harmful in itself for it encouraged a thirst for admiration and destroyed female diffidence by facilitating too intimate a connection between the sexes; Thomas Gisborne therefore refused to allow his children to perform plays together at home.⁶⁷ Hannah More who as a young teacher had condoned this and had written plays for the purpose, in later life significantly condemned even the performance of the least objectionable on the grounds that 'love being the grand business of plays', young ladies who attended them would conclude that 'love is the grand business of life also...'⁶⁸

Herein lay evangelicals' fundamental objection to the theatre: it portrayed life as they did not wish to see it.

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66. G Burder, Lawful Amusements (1805) p 10; J H Pratt, op cit pp 157-58; EM i series xlii (1805) pp 355ff; MM xli (1818) pp 300-01. Reference was frequently made to the antagonism to the stage of i) the early church; ii) writers of classical antiquity; iii) seventeenth and eighteenth century divines: Archbishop Tillotson, John Witherspoon a Presbyterian, the non-juring Jeremy Collier, and the high church mystic William Law; iv) contemporary evangelicals particularly John Styles, An Essay on the Character and Influence of the Stage (1806). The CO iv (1805) pp 239-40 also drew attention to the opposition of Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot.
67. Gisborne, op cit pp 95-96.
68. H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) iii pp 36-37. Miss More decided to republish her plays after some deliberation, on the grounds that it was dangerous to watch but permissible to read drama. For further discussion of the distinction see below pp 332-33.

Plays depicted styles of living which they daily sought to avoid, and more particularly emphasised experiences which they devalued. By displaying the passions and appealing to the senses, the theatre nurtured just those facets of the personality which evangelicals believed it was the task of religion to suppress. Works which, by appealing to the mind, were more congruent with the religious lifestyle as evangelically conceived, were, as evangelicals never tired of pointing out, better appreciated in the quietness of the closet.

The prevalence of this belief is clearly seen in the evangelical response to the Rev James Plumptre's Four Discourses on the Stage, published in 1809. Reviewers were scathing and derisive of his attempts to show that the theatre was capable of reform, could be an agent for good, and was by no means inherently anti-Christian.⁶⁹ In a sarcastic review the Evangelical Magazine maintained that anyone who reformed the stage would annihilate the audience - for who would go to the theatre to see virtue and religion? John Foster, for the more liberal and cultured Eclectic, argued that successful theatre catered for the tastes of those devoted to amusement, and that such people would not attend plays which mirrored Christian sentiments.⁷⁰ Similar views were regularly expressed: Joseph Kinghorn denied that the theatre

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69. For Plumptre see DNB and N Perrin, Dr. Bowdler's Legacy, a history of expurgated books in England and America (1969) ch vi. For evangelical criticism of another of his works on rather different grounds see below pp 321-22.
70. EM i series xvii (1809) p 426; ER i series v (1809) pp 1031-44 reprinted in J Foster, Critical Essays (1888-95) i; BM i(1809) pp 464-66. Cf MM xxxvi (1813) p 632. Plumptre's book was not reviewed by the CO, Edinburgh or Quarterly Reviews.

could be both 'unexceptionable' and solvent, while Hannah More explained that

If the sentiments and passions exhibited were no longer accommodated to the sentiments and passions of the audience, corrupt nature would soon withdraw itself from the vapid and inappropriate amusement, and thin, I will not say empty, benches would too probably be the reward of the conscientious reformer.⁷¹

The common and unembarrassed assumption that pure or religious amusement, the latter in evangelicals' opinion a contradiction in terms, would be vapid and uninteresting is indicative of a significant desideratum within evangelicalism. Lacking confidence in their own product when confronted with the glittering ware of the world, evangelicals readily admitted that values could more effectively be communicated from the stage than from the pulpit. By the use of dramatic technique a play easily undermined the effects of sermons and parental admonitions: according to John Owen, Secretary of the BFBS, 'the stage more than counterbalances the impressions of virtue, by stratagems of the happiest contrivance'.⁷² More specifically Hannah More explained that the doctrines taught on Sundays were presented in the forms of axioms, principles and precepts. Every other night of the week attitudes diametrically opposed to these were

realised, embodied, made alive, furnished with organs, clothed, decorated, brought into sprightly discourse, into interesting action; enforced with all the energy of passion, adorned with all the graces of language, and exhibited with every aid of emphatical delivery, every attraction of appropriate gesture. To such a complicated

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71. Wilkin, op cit p 343 (Kinghorn expressed this view in 1812 to a lady of his church who had once seen Siddons and Kemble in Henry VIII. This may be a further instance of the earlier laxity of dissent towards the theatre); H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) iii pp 7-8. Cf Satchell, op cit i p 228.
72. Quoted ER i series i (1805) p 27, from The Fashionable World Displayed (1804), On Owen see DNB.

temptation is it wise voluntarily, studiously, unnecessarily to expose frail and erring creatures? Is not the conflict too severe? Is not the competition too unequal? ⁷³

While these comments reveal a commendable awareness of artistic techniques, they reflect too the pusillanimity of spirit consequent upon evangelical belief. Josiah Pratt admitted that a sermon was 'the essence of dullness' after a play, but the only conclusion he drew was that this illustrated the evil of the latter which should therefore be eschewed. ⁷⁴ The possibility of fighting the world with its own weapons was not in this context seriously considered for many evangelicals were properly critical of preachers who sought to impress congregations with their oratorical prowess and cultural competence and, maybe more superstitiously, antagonistic to liturgical pageantry, which was invariably associated with the Catholic appeal to the senses rather than the intellect. ⁷⁵ Others shared their suspicions but non-evangelical Christians, however austere their churchmanship, were less fearful of the world and less constrained by the need self-consciously to examine every action; they could therefore satisfy the emotional and aesthetic demands of their nature with secular provision. ⁷⁶ The tragedy of evangelicalism was that it rightly stressed the importance of applying

73. H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) pp 24-25.

74. J H Pratt, op cit p 160.

75. EM ii series x (1832) pp 473-74. See above pp 126-27 and for objection to the use of secular tunes in hymn singing below pp 262ff.

76. See for example the condemnation of evangelical attitudes to worldly amusements in the Edinburgh Review (liv, 1831, pp 100-14), a critical discussion of The Drama brought to the Test of Scripture and found wanting (1830) a work highly praised in EM ii series viii (1830) p 195.

faith to the whole of life while lacking a theology capable of being so applied in any but the most negative fashion. Evangelical faith was therefore liable to appear unattractive when challenged by anything appealing to the totality of the personality. Hannah More was clearly aware of the danger but was inevitably unable to produce a satisfactory solution within the context of a theology which slighted certain facets of human existence: the house might have been cleansed of devils, but evangelicals who could only subjugate and not sanctify the senses had no option but flight from new and worse invaders.

These regularly took religious form. Expelled from mainstream evangelicalism the senses took up residence with a vengeance on the peripheries of the movement, in 'enthusiastic' preaching and the excitement and drama of Irvingism, the latter a conscious reaction against the intellectualism of evangelical faith.⁷⁷ More generally, condemned within church they found expression in extra-ecclesiastical activity, in the multiplicity of May meetings, and other such jamborees. The growing worldliness of evangelicalism can thus be explained in psychological as well as sociological terms, for if, as evangelicals argued, religious practices amply replaced the frivolity and exhibitionism of worldly pursuits, this was in part because they increasingly conformed to their nature. Evangelical children, forbidden

77. See below pp 428ff

to show off accomplishments in traditional fashion to the admiring guests of their parents, displayed their fine clothes and musical abilities at annual Sunday School celebrations to the disgust of the Evangelical Magazine which feared for their modesty. ⁷⁸ The prevalence of such complaint shows that evangelicals were far from blind to what was happening. Few however, possessed either the insight or the detachment of Marianne Thornton who recognised that the ever-escalating May Meetings provided unparalleled opportunities for 'religious dissipation', dazzling displays of oratory by the greatest preachers of the day, histrionic disputes and cordial reconciliations, 'very amusing to we good people who do not go to plays but seriously speaking it is sad to see such tricks played before High Heaven'. ⁷⁹

The phrase 'the religious world' was therefore potentially very ironic. Evangelicals conformed far more closely than all cared to admit to the ways and spirit of those they despised even in 'public amusements'. ⁸⁰

78. EM i series xviii (1810) p 105; xxvi (1818) p 240.

79. Meacham, op cit p 135; Forster, op cit p 133.

80. The irony was recognised in CO xiv (1815) p 82, but the writer like many others failed to recognise how deeply rooted religious worldliness was, and on the contrary assumed that it characterised those who were not fully committed to the faith.

5. FAITH AND FAMILY LIFE

In view of evangelicals' professed dislike of 'public amusements', any analysis of their leisure patterns must properly begin in the home. It was within the home that evangelicals, wary of the contamination of the outside world, felt most free to relax and have fun. It was within the confines of the home that evangelical children had largely to seek their recreation. And it was within the home that the influence of evangelicalism was most signally felt, for the home was the fulcrum of all evangelical activity. 'The real strength of Evangelicalism', Canon Smyth has claimed,

lay not in the pulpit or the platform but in the home ... The Evangelical was not shy about his religion because he had grown up into it from his mother's knee ... Evangelicalism was the religion of the home. ¹

Notwithstanding their concern for the poor and the oppressed, their anxiety to convert the unbeliever, evangelical parents believed that their primary responsibility was towards their children, for whose religious nurture they were accountable to God. 'My own soul should doubtless be my first object', reflected Wilberforce, 'and combined with it my children'. ² His fellow Anglican, the Rev William Goode junior, pointed out that the superintendence of one's family was a primary duty which should not be neglected for more public responsibilities. ³ Parenthood, Standish

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1. Smyth, 'The Evangelical Discipline', loc cit pp 103-04.
 2. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iv p 166.
 3. W Goode, Memoir of the late Rev William Goode (1828) p 85. Both father and son are cited in DNB.

Meacham has well said, was a mission.⁴ Thus while evangelical parents were occasionally criticised by their mentors for neglecting their children, such charges were rare for, contrary to Dickens' suggestion, evangelicals believed more firmly than most that mission began at home.⁵ 'It is through the institution of families' wrote Henry Thornton, 'that the knowledge of God and of his laws is handed down from generation to generation'.⁶

It was imperative that such knowledge be imparted to children from their earliest days, for life was uncertain, child and adolescent deaths were common, and few parents saw all their children reach maturity. A child's eternal felicity depended upon the response he made to God in the few years that remained to him once he attained the age of accountability, the determining of which caused evangelical parents much anxiety.⁷ The Methodist Magazine of 1833 issued 'An earnest and affectionate appeal to Christian parents' warning them that unless their offspring were converted 'they cannot possibly enter the Kingdom of heaven... Their precious souls are on the slippery verge of destruction; and, dying in their present state, they will be eternally undone...'.⁸ It followed that evangelical children were exposed to intense parental pressure well into maturity: 'You will say there is no end of my recommendations', Teignmouth wrote to a son about to take up a post in India, 'But can

4. Meacham, op cit p 52.

5. Dickens, Bleak House (1853) ch iv. See above p 154 and for criticism by evangelicals CO xviii (1819) p 528, and a letter dated 17 October 1817 from Charles Hoare to J W Cunningham, Dorset Record Office, D 289/C 87.

6. Meacham, op cit p 52.

7. See for example EM i series xxii (1814) p 462 and for belief in the salvation of those dying in infancy xxix (1821) pp 371-73; ER ii series xviii (1822) pp 216-25; T P Bunting, op cit i p 334.

8. MM lvi (1833) p 405.

I cease to be anxious for your eternal welfare? If I were my profession of Christianity would be a mere pretence'.⁹

Children were expected to respond to the Gospel in essentially the same way as adults. 'Except ye be converted and become as grown people', E E Kellett has suggested, was a common evangelical distortion of Scripture.¹⁰ Religious precocity was welcomed and encouraged. Thus when in 1818 Legh Richmond met a twelve year old converted through reading one of his tracts he commented:

I never before, except in the case of 'little Jane' herself, saw so clear and so early an instance of decided grace, and of a truly enlightened mind: you would have thought her conversation equal to eighteen at least.¹¹

Children's death bed testimonies frequently mirrored those of adults, a source of consolation to bereaved parents, and a challenge to those whose living children had not yet manifested any similar signs of grace.¹² Typically over-anxious, evangelical parents seized upon the slightest sign of religious response with relief, convincing themselves in one instance that a thirteen month child had listened attentively when addressed on spiritual matters.¹³ More harmfully they responded to the slightest sign of declension with horror. A father who was informed that his three year old

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9. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 339.
 10. E E Kellett, Religion and Life in the Early Victorian Age (1938) p 73.
 11. Grimshawe, op cit p 380.
 12. See for example EM i series xxii (1814) p 100, and a letter from Richard Watson to a fellow Methodist 'The glorious preparation of your daughter's mind for a heavenly world is a most consoling reflection. Not that any fear could be entertained at her years; but that work which might have been done in a moment, by the sovereign grace of God, in the article of death, was suffered to commence and proceed under your own observation..' (T Jackson, The Life of the Rev Richard Watson, 2nd edn, 1834, p 492).
 On death beds see below p 209-12.
 13. ...and indeed was so delighted with the conversation that his father had difficulty in holding on to him, EM i series ii (1794) p 549.

son had told a lie commented:

I was thunderstruck and almost distracted; for the information seemed to blast my most cherished hopes. This might, I thought, be the commencement of a series of evils for ever ruinous to our peace. I am not - I never was - naturally of a temper to augur the worst; but the first grand moral delinquency even at such an age, must commit a breach on the noblest sensibilities of the heart, which cannot but threaten a catastrophe at which a parent may well shudder... I am not sure that my agony, on hearing of his death, was much more intense than that which I then endured, from an apprehension of his guilt. ¹⁴

This nightmarish fear of the implications of any departure from the evangelical norm derived from the belief that early evil propensities, unchecked, would develop and destroy: thus Hannah More argued that those who believed in Scriptural denunciations dared not overlook the fault that might be the germ of unspeakable miseries. ¹⁵ Furthermore, many evangelicals assumed that the irregularities of children were inherently hateful as offences against God incurring divine punishment. ¹⁶ Hence the tendency to judge childish misdemeanours with a seriousness appropriate only to adult commission of the same crime.

But if evangelicals expected their children to act as little adults, they tried to keep them as children. The world presented many snares to those passing through the dangerous period of youth: many evangelicals responded by being over-protective, by exerting too overbearing a control, and by failing to trust their children. They justified their excessive watchfulness in terms

14. ER ii series xviii (1822) p 71.

15. H More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808, 1809 edn.) ii pp 89-90.

16. Cf MM xlvi (1823) p 367; Pearson, op cit i p xliii.

of their evangelistic mission, in fulfilment of which they adopted a priestly role towards their children, regarding themselves as divinely appointed spiritual supervisors. It was their task to make upon their children that continuing assessment of spiritual development which they would constantly make upon themselves when mature. Thus Richard Cecil wrote to his son Israel:

The truth is, my dear, that your mind is greatly improved and we cannot but notice it and rejoice in it; and you may depend upon it we shall not fail to encourage a right disposition to the utmost of our power. 17

In order so to monitor a child's development the parents required detailed accounts from absentee sons of their companions, of how they spent each hour of the day, of their reading, of their use of Sunday...

Particular anxiety was felt when sons who had previously been permitted to mix only with other evangelicals went up to university. The Macaulay and Thornton families went out of their way to ensure that even the Cambridge laundress who served their sons was exemplary. 18 Macaulay's parents paid heed to the slightest rumour about his behaviour and wrote to him in great concern about his (supposed) democracy and (actual) novel-reading. Convinced of the rectitude of his own conduct, able to argue his case without resorting to over-statement or emotionally charged language, Tom sent reply after reply justifying

17. Josiah Pratt, op cit p 109.

18. Knutsford op cit p 339.

his activities, dispelling inaccurate rumours. Courteously but firmly he put his parents in their place. 'My dear Father', he wrote from Wales in 1821,

I have just received your letter and cannot but feel concerned at the tone of it. I do not understand how I can be said to have written only two letters within the last five weeks, since not one week has elapsed during that time in which I have not sent a letter to Cadogan Place. Nor do I think it quite fair to attack me for filling my letters with remarks on the King's Irish expedition. It has been the great event of this part of the world.

Firm Macaulay might be but he was anxious for mutual understanding. He continued:

To me it is of little importance whether the King's conduct were right or wrong; but it is of great importance that those whom I love should not think me a precipitate, silly, shallow, sciolist in politics, and suppose that every frivolous word that falls from my pen is a dogma which I mean to advance as indisputable. ¹⁹

Implicit in Macaulay's argument was the belief that to demand carefully prepared scripts was to deny and to stultify the spontaneity of love which felt free to pass onto loved ones the most 'fleeting and unformulated thoughts'. Yet he could appreciate that his parents' letters too were a product of love: 'I value, most deeply value, that sollicitude (sic) which arises from your affection for me - but let it not debar me from justice and candour'. ²⁰

While Macaulay possessed the self-confidence and strength of character not to be over-awed by the priestly authority of parenthood, some of his contemporaries were

19. T Pinney (ed), The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay 1 (1974) pp 160-61.

20. ibid p 142.

intimidated into submission. One father recorded how his son had been charged with a theft at school, and, when his father had refused to believe his pleas of innocence, had confessed to the crime which he had not committed in the belief that nothing but confession would ward off paternal displeasure. ²¹

It is clear that in exercising their priestly role evangelicals sometimes resorted to something perilously close to religious terrorism. A Baptist writer recommended that the story of Ananias and Sapphira should be read to children who were not strictly truthful. ²² The dire consequences of disobedience were graphically described, for evangelicals believed that parents were representatives of God and that undutifulness was therefore akin to impiety. ²³ Legh Richmond reminded his children that parents

watch over you for God, and are entitled to great deference and cheerful obedience. You may easily shorten the lives of affectionate and conscientious parents, by misconduct, bad tempers, and alienation from their injunctions. Let not this sin be laid to your charge. ²⁴

Believing that children would be held responsible by God for any departure from the principles in which they had been educated, evangelicals resorted to the most underhand of methods to ensure that such judgment was avoided. In a series of letters a mother told her daughter that if she failed to be converted she would break her parents' hearts. ²⁵

21. CO i (1802) p 685.

22. BM ix (1817) p 50.

23. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 163: 'Consider your duty to your parents, who are to you Gods on earth...'

24. Grimshawe, op cit p 287.

25. EM i series xxvi (1818) p 8. Cf Babington, op cit pp 262-65 where a boy is urged to count the cost to others before departing from the principles of his education.

Not all evangelicals approved of moral blackmail of this type. That the story of the enforced confession was printed in the Christian Observer reveals a willingness on the part of some evangelicals to recognise the potentially harmful consequences of some of their educational practices. John Foster opposed the habit of threatening future judgement on children for the slightest misdemeanour.²⁶ Similarly William Goode senior, while watching carefully over his children, allowed trifles to pass as trifles. Both his letters and his son's testimony reveal that as his children grew up, he unlike the Macaulays gradually yielded his authority.²⁷ Thomas Gisborne opposed great strictness which caused children to tremble before their parents, maintaining that while 'pert loquacity' should be discouraged, children should feel free to join in parental conversations.²⁸ Adam Clarke's children received long chatty letters from their father of which only a small portion was monitory, and even there the tone was neither hysterical nor pressurising.²⁹ Thomas Fowell Buxton's rare reprimands to his children took the form of advice rather than rebuke and were very tentatively given. He and his wife, Hannah Gurney, unlike some evangelical parents, assumed that the children whom they had committed to God would hold to the faith and far from haranguing them encouraged them accordingly.³⁰

26. J. Foster, Critical Essays (1888-95) i p 382.

27. Goode, op cit pp 84-90.

28. Gisborne, op cit pp 208-215.

29. See for example J B B Clarke (ed), op cit ii pp 126-27, iii p 217.

30. Buxton op cit passim.

Their confidence was shared by Hannah's sister, Louisa Hoare, who possessed a sympathetic understanding of children and wrote manuals for parents that abounded in common sense.³¹ She took thought for the possible consequences of words and actions, the danger of frightening children and losing their affection, the risk of making religion dull. She opposed the practice of terrorising children into obedience by threatening immediate divine retribution, and by incautiously exposing them to funerals and corpses. She urged her readers to let children be children and not to punish them for being so. She expected a great deal of parents, and emphasised that children had rights.

While it is significant that Mrs Hoare found it necessary to criticise certain presumably common practices, the popularity of her works precludes the conclusion that her views were in any way exceptional.³² Moreover, it would be wrong to divide evangelicals into those who were according to twentieth century standards 'enlightened' and those who were not. On the contrary the evidence suggests that those who engaged in some of the practices most abhorrent to twentieth century thought, also showed what would now be regarded as great insight.

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31. L Hoare, Hints for the Improvement of Early Education and Nursery Discipline (1819); Friendly Advice on the Management and Education of Children (1824).
32. Hints... was highly praised in CO xviii (1819) pp 518-30; ER ii series xiii (1820) pp 185-89. A Methodist author of an essay on education was greatly indebted to it: MM xlv (1822) pp 298-300, 362-64, 643-47, 783-86; xlvi (1823) pp 365-68.

The Thornton family is a case in point. Marianne Thornton recorded that her fear of the dark was sympathetically soothed, indulged, and gradually overcome. As a child she was with her brothers and sisters free to engage in all the idiosyncracies of childish play, bringing any number of stones, flowers and other miscellaneous playthings into the nursery. As she grew older her father treated her as his intelligent equal, discussed his political interests with her, and allowed her to act as his amanuensis. Her biographer, E M Forster, certainly no sympathiser with evangelicalism qua se, concluded that

Battersea Rise was anything but a 'Victorian' establishment ... For an intelligent good-tempered child, life there must have been very pleasant, and in after days, with the nineteenth century cramping her, she looked back on it as golden. 33

But Marianne's parents took her sister, Lucy, to see the coffin of a child acquaintance and, no less than other evangelicals, exposed their children to a macabre glorification of death.

Death beds had an almost sacramental function in evangelical experience. The questions of onlookers were carefully designed to prompt dying testimonies, for, while it was recognised that assurance was sometimes lost under the pressure of illness, this was regarded as the supreme moment to witness to the truth of the Christian gospel. Adam Clarke and Jabez Bunting were among those who visited Joseph Benson:

33. Forster, op cit pp 30-35.

Dr Clarke said, 'You have an all-sufficient and almighty Saviour, and you now maintain your trust in him'. He replied 'Yes'. The Doctor then prayed with him; after which he said, 'You feel the power of those great truths you have for so many years so fully declared to us: We have not followed a cunningly devised fable'. He answered 'No, no; I have no hope of being saved but by grace through faith. I still feel the need of the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit'. To Mr Bunting he said, 'I am very weak, I feel my infirmities; I feel that I have no sufficiency for any thing good in myself'. He observed also, 'I consider that we must not only be pardoned and accepted through Christ, but also for his sake, and by his Spirit, be fully renewed, and made partakers of the Divine nature'. Mr Bunting replied, 'You now realise the truths which you have so frequently pressed upon us'. He answered, 'Yes, O yes'.³⁴

To be present at such a death bed was believed to be invariably edifying, for the final power of the gospel was confirmed by those who in the words of a frequently repeated refrain showed that 'Jesus can make a dying bed/Feel soft as downy pillows are'.³⁵ The occasion served moreover to challenge all present to prepare for the transition to eternity, and the obituaries which dealt in such loving detail on the dying moments, enabled a far wider congregation vicariously to hear both the comfortable words and the challenge to recommitment.

To twentieth century minds the practice of recording for posterity every word and every physical spasm was both morbid and sentimental. Yet when, rarely, as with the unpublished account of Mrs Sophia Cunningham's death, such descriptions rise above the stereotyping model, they suggest

34. J Macdonald, op cit p 507. For instances of loss of assurance see EM i series i(1793) pp 124, 211.

35. See for example EM i series xii (1804) p 82.

that the prevalent sentiment was not so much morbidity as wonder.³⁶ Moreover, early nineteenth century mourners were perhaps free to indulge in such an excess of emotion over the physical separation simply because they believed that this was the only separation that was involved. When George Burder wrote that his daughter was 'now a cold lifeless corpse in a leaden coffin, much changed', he was able to speak with such earthy realism because he believed that his daughter's essence was no longer encased in her body.³⁷

But Burder was addressing a thirteen year old son and there can be little doubt that he was trying to scare him into deepened Christian commitment. Yet even such abrasive methods may well have left psychologically unscathed the child who was growing up into a society which still practised the rituals of birth and death, and, far from placing a taboo upon the latter, accepted it as the fundamental fact of life, its proper coda. This certainly seems to have been the case with Lucy Thornton who showed herself to be impervious both to the harmful consequences predicted by modern psychology, and to the inept moralising which her mother hoped would be beneficial:

Our Lucy stared rather than wept at the scene.
 'Why Lucy', said Mama, 'perhaps the next burial may be yours. This little girl was just your age'.
 Lucy: 'It is a very pretty coffin, Mama.
 I had no idea that they made coffins so pretty'.
 'Should you like to be in it?' 'Oh no, I should be very sorry to die and be shut up in a coffin'. 'Why, little Maria Venn is now an

36. Dorset Record Office, D 289/F 44. For a comparison of early nineteenth and twentieth century attitudes see Forster, op cit p 71.

37. H F Burder, op cit p 201.

angel, she is happy with God'. 'But how do you know that, you cannot be sure for you have never been dead yourself ?'38

Lucy's concluding comment could only have been made by a child on very easy terms with her parents. Indeed it was the easiness of the relationship between parent and child which protected children against the worst manifestations of evangelicalism. Within the security of a loving relationship, a child could face even a visit to the gallows with equanimity.³⁹ Educational methods might seem horrific but there was Father's hand onto which to hold. The demands of God might appear inexorable but Father loved and served God and Father was not an ogre. If parental demands were a foretaste of the demands of God, parental love was a very real manifestation of that of the Deity.

It is this context of love and security which is the all-important qualification upon any criticism of evangelical educational methods. For evangelical children did not regard their homes as prisons from which they longed to escape and their parents as unwelcome task masters. Too much attention has been paid to the few who left the fold and inveighed against it. Others who moved away from parental belief nevertheless spoke of home and parents

38. Quoted Meacham, op cit p 23.

39. For the belief that such visits were edifying see John Venn's article on the execution of Lord Strafford, quoted Hennell, op cit p 195, from CO ii (1803). I have found no instance of Venn's contemporaries taking their children on this kind of excursion: the notorious description in Mrs Sherwood's The History of the Fairchild Family... (1818-47, 1876 edn) i pp 35ff, may not therefore reflect evangelical practice. For further discussion of the book see below pp 235-36.

in tones of deep affection. Rev Brewin Grant wrote his autobiography when full of bitterness towards nonconformity on account of his expulsion from the Congregationalist ministry. Yet his portrait of his dissenting childhood and particularly of his father is sympathetic:

I have no doubt I can say for my four brothers... that if ever...we were disposed to say with the Psalmist, 'all men are liars'... the remembrance of this sterling example would silence our scepticism ... My father came home on the Saturday evening, and Sunday was a good day to us. The first thing for which we felt before quite awake was 'a plumb bun' by our pillows. ⁴⁰

The most striking example is Tom Macaulay, who adored his home, suffered intense homesickness at school, and lived for the holidays. ⁴¹ His passion for domesticity which his most recent biographer avers, was a passion aroused in an evangelical home. ⁴² Admittedly Macaulay's relations with his father were uneasy: constantly aware of the responsibility of directing Tom's undoubted talents aright, anxious to curb in his son the only too obvious manifestation of his own worst faults, fearful of ministering to the boy's conceit, Zachary only criticised, never praised, thus depriving Tom of the paternal approbation which his sensitivity may have required. ⁴³ But Tom's submission to the parental conscience was not just the outworking of his need for approval, nor just a response

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40. Brewin Grant, The Dissenting World: an Autobiography (2nd edn 1869) pp 12-13.
 41. G O Trevelyan, Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (1876) i pp 46ff.
 42. J Clive, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1973) pp 39-40.
 43. ibid pp 34, 52-53; J Millgate, Macaulay (1973) pp 6-7. The likeness between father and son is clearly revealed in the early chapters of Knutsford, op cit.

to pressure, for he made plain to his parents even when obeying that he disagreed with their demands. Rather his acquiescence indicates the value he placed upon the family tie. In 1823 he promised to discontinue his contributions to Knight's Quarterly Magazine of which his father disapproved, writing to the editor "... gratitude, duty, and prudence, alike compel me to respect prejudices which I do not in the slightest degree share". 44

The closeness of the bond was most obvious in 1833, a time of family financial stringency in which Tom required the emolument of office if he were to continue in politics. His colleagues urged him to follow the party line on the slavery bill rather than suicidally to offer his resignation. A loyal party man Macaulay was loath to help defeat the ministry at so crucial a time, but political affiliations were subordinate to those of the family, and so he insisted tersely 'I cannot go counter to my father. He has devoted his whole life to this question, and I cannot grieve him by giving way when he wishes me to stand firm'. 45

Macaulay's relations with his mother were far easier than with his father as the greater spontaneity

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44. Pinney (ed), op cit i p 189; Trevelyan, op cit i pp 112ff; Clive, op cit pp 58-59; Millgate, op cit p 10. The second number of this undergraduate periodical founded in 1823 was free of those elements against which Zachary had protested and he absolved his son from his promise.
45. Trevelyan, op cit i pp 306ff. Macaulay sent in his resignation and spoke for Buxton's amendment limiting the apprenticeship period which was to precede full emancipation. The abolitionists however subsequently accepted a government compromise reducing the period of apprenticeship to seven years, and since the Cabinet had refused to accept Macaulay's resignation he had, as he explained to his father 'the singular good luck of having saved both my honour and my place'. Cf Clive, op cit p 235 where his sister's comment that Tom acted as he did for his father's sake alone, is quoted.

of his letters indicates.⁴⁶ As late as 1821 when as a student he had moved far from her beliefs and concepts of conduct he wrote to her

I am sure that it is well worth while being sick to be nursed by a mother ... How well I remember with what an ecstasy of joy I saw that face approaching me, in the middle of people that did not care if I died that night, except for the trouble of burying me... The sound of your voice, the touch of your hand are present to me now, and will be, I trust in God, to my last hour. The very thought of these things invigorated me the other day...⁴⁷

The fervency of Macaulay's love was shared by many who, unlike him, later accepted their parents' beliefs. John Venn's nephew Henry Venn Elliott, wrote to his sister while a student:

You ask me what is the most frequent train of my thoughts. I answer, HOME... Home is the companion of my solitude ... I do not think there was ever a being loved his home more than I do. I have so much treasure there, that my heart must needs be there also.⁴⁸

It was parents who made home so very appealing. George Burder's sons commented: 'The very sight of ... Father seemed always to impart delight to his children. Where he was ... there was home'.⁴⁹ Samuel Wilberforce, looking back in 1872 upon his boyhood recollected his unhappiness at Hodson's school: 'I perfectly remember I (sic) not happy like the others there; wanting a τέλος and

46. See Clive, op cit p 35; Millgate, op cit p 9.

47. Pinney (ed) op cit i p 155.

48. J Bateman, The Life of Rev Henry Venn Elliott (1868) p 29.

49. H F Burder, op cit p 377.

worshipping my father'.⁵⁰ The Venn children too adored their father. Marianne Thornton recorded 'The first time I realised that this was a world of sorrow was when Mr Venn died. I was a great deal there, and their sorrow was beyond all control'.⁵¹ J B B Clarke, who wrote an appendix to his sister's life of their father, concluded 'My God I bless Thee that I had such a Father', a sentiment exemplified in the plethora of filial biographies.⁵²

If the biographies testify to the sometimes sentimentalised but no less genuine affection of children for parents, they do not always clearly reveal the characters of those parents. In common with most of their contemporaries evangelicals believed that the function of biography was example. Thus in any biography unedifying information was regarded as at best uninteresting, at worst counterproductive. 'Of what consequence can it be to any creature on earth' asked an Eclectic reviewer 'how Miss Robinson, seventy years ago, danced and joked...'.⁵³ The same principle was applied even more stringently to religious biographies: John Ryland's declared aim was, in so far as Andrew Fuller had followed Christ, so to encourage others to follow him, an aim which would have disturbed his subject since Fuller denied that his life was worthy of such emulation. While Ryland admitted that Fuller had faults he refused unnecessarily

50. Reginald Wilberforce, op cit p 3.

51. Forster, op cit p 39.

52. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit iii p 482.

53. ER i series vi (1810) p 1113, a review of The Letters of Elizabeth Montagu (3rd edn 1810). It is a mark of the ER's liberality that it reviewed a far wider range of biographies than the purely evangelical.

to expose them, arguing that the imperfections of Paul and Barnabas were in no way emphasised by the writers of Scripture. ⁵⁴

By no means all evangelicals agreed with him. In a leading article on 'The Difficulties of Christian Biography', a contributor to the Christian Observer of 1832 quoted Thomas Scott's view that faults as well as virtues were fully recorded in Scripture, although its final verdict was often approbatory. The writer believed that it was essential to point out the faults of great men, not only because indiscriminate eulogy was meaningless, but more particularly in order to exemplify the truth and influence of Christianity which taught both that all men were sinners and that sin could be overcome. ⁵⁵ The same point was made in the Methodist Magazine where it was argued that the aim of religious biography was to magnify not man but Christ, to illustrate the providence and the grace of God. The biographer's duty, therefore, far from concealing human infirmities was to paint an absolutely correct and recognisable picture. ⁵⁶

But like all biographers evangelicals were sometimes blind to the faults of their favourites and loath to admit their failings, a tendency which the Christian Observer

54. J Ryland, The Work of Faith... in the Life and Death of the Rev Andrew Fuller (1816) pp vi, 145, 559-60.

55. CO xxxii (1832) pp 693-98.

56. MM liii (1830) p. 289.

contributor condemned as a form of self love.⁵⁷ Furthermore the theological aim of biographers, no less than that of the Gospel writers, ensured that the resulting descriptions were more theological than historical, a distinction which evangelicals living in a pre-critical period would probably not have recognised. The variety of religious experience, described in terms of its theological significance, was quickly codified into a set form of words which conditioned both interpretations of the past and expectations of the future. Thus evangelicals tended to seek experience which conformed to the established pattern and to understand that of others in its light. The stereotyping both of experience and of its description was further encouraged by the assumption, articulated in the biography of Adam Clarke, that no 'great variety in the experience of religious people' was to be expected:

Repentance, faith, and holiness are unchangeable in their nature, and uniform in their effects... Novelty, therefore on such subjects, cannot be expected: he who has read the conversion and religious experience of one sensible man, has, in substance, read that of ten thousand. 58

The extent to which theological expectations blurred any 'recognisable picture' is nowhere more clearly exemplified than in the depictions of evangelical women. In the Christian Observer's review of Coelebs in Search of a Wife the suggestion that the heroine lacked distinctive character was countered by the reply:

57. CO xxxii (1832) p 697.

58. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit i p 79.

There is no helping this; very good people are apt to seem insipid. Religion is such a neutralizer of the character, that, unless pious women are loved for their piety, they must often be content to be passed by altogether. 59

While their unpublished writings reveal that some evangelical mothers retained a very real individuality, they frequently appear in the biographies of their husbands to be in their self-effacing seclusion rather shadowy figures. The characters of evangelical women, rarely themselves the subjects of biographies, cannot always easily be discerned. 60

Those of their husbands, despite all the qualifications that have been made, can to a considerable extent be deduced from published memoirs. Evangelical biographers did not necessarily, in the words of A O J Cockshut, abdicate in the face of a mass of documents, but they did follow the common practice of telling the story through the sometimes expurgated diaries and letters of their subjects. 61 While the diaries and letters may themselves sometimes reflect fantasy rather than reality, they reveal something of the character of the author, and in some cases facets of his personality which have not always been

59. CO viii(1809) p 113.

60. Among the exceptions are Mrs T G Tyndale, Selections from the Correspondence of Mrs Ely Bates and Incidents of her Early Life (1872) and J Gilbert (ed), Autobiography and other Memorials of Mrs Gilbert (1874). These late works both describe women of literary achievement: Mrs Gilbert (née Taylor) published poetry and contributed to the ER, Mrs Bates to the CO and MM. For unpublished papers which reveal the inability of faith to swamp female individuality see above pp 169-72

61. Cockshut, op cit pp 12-13, 16ff.

glossed by the biographer. ⁶² Furthermore the general lack of discrimination of biographers who thought nothing of producing weighty tomes, containing many virtually identical letters and reflections, enables the reader the more easily to make his own judgment upon the matter in hand. ⁶³ Secondly the belief that the aims of biography were to glorify God and to provide examples for emulation necessitated many illustrative details. The point was explicitly made by the children of Adam Clarke who were concerned not only to preempt inaccurate accounts of their father's life, but also to show how divine providence and human industry had gloriously overcome defects of birth and education:

Few men can be said to have inimitable excellencies: let us watch them in their progress from infancy to manhood, and we shall soon be convinced that what they attained was the necessary consequence of the line they pursued, and the means they used. But these things are not known, because we have not the history of their lives in any consecutive order. ⁶⁴

The Clarke biography throws much light upon evangelical family life. The reverence which children felt towards their parents is revealed in the account of the

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62. ibid pp 38-40. Jill Tweedie has argued that love letters in particular 'are for the most part written out of a fantasy world that bears little or no relationship to the facts of the love affair' (The Guardian 17 March 1975). Her argument can appropriately be applied to the letters written home by schoolchildren, and perhaps too to letters concerned with the state of the soul; it is not however by any means universally true.
63. The most striking example of an indiscriminating biographer is Mary Milner, who, in recording the life of her uncle, adopted a strictly chronological approach and therefore repeated at regular intervals that he went to Carlisle for the summer as was his annual custom.
64. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit i p xv.

family celebration on the completion of Clarke's eight volume commentary, in commemoration of which his children presented him with a large silver vase. His daughter described the occasion:

His eldest son then filled the vessel with wine, which his Father raised first to his own lips, then to those of his beloved Wife's, and afterwards bore it to each of the family present: he then put it down, and in a strain of the most heartfelt eloquent tenderness addressed his children in the name of their revered Mother and Himself in terms which they will never forget. ⁶⁵

The stateliness and dignity of family relationships are here communicated in the adjectives used, the capitalisation, the religious aura of awe and respect. These indicate too that acceptance of symbol and ritual which enabled George Burder formally to address his family on his seventieth birthday and William Hey to deliver a 'dying address' on the last occasion when his children were likely to be gathered together. ⁶⁶

Later generations, embarrassed by such solemnity between those so intimately acquainted, have tended too easily to assume that such stately patriarchalism could not have coexisted with close father/child affection. Yet Clarke loved to frolic with his offspring and 'gained a game at marbles with as much delighted satisfaction as any of the children with whom he played':

after the labours of the study were over, he used to amuse himself with his little ones, who quickly assembled to his well-known call of 'Come all about me - Come all about me'. Then

65. ibid iii p 117.

66. H F Burder, op cit pp 266ff; Pearson, op cit ii pp 35ff, 297ff.

was to be heard the joyous shout, and the rush of the youngsters to claim the first kiss, or obtain the best seat upon his knee; often would he dispose of them on his person: one round his neck was his collar; one hanging on each shoulder were his shoulder-knots; one round his waist was called his girdle; and one seated on each foot, clinging their little arms around his knee, formed his clogs; and with an infant in his arms would he, thus equipt, walk about the room, the happiest of the group. The sports of the evening finished, each alternately kneeled at the mother's knee to say its prayers: and when quite prepared for bed, Mr Clarke, when not out preaching, invariably carried them himself up to bed, put, or playfully threw them in, and tucked them up for the night; but before retiring himself, he always visited each bed to see if all was right...⁶⁷

If the biography of Adam Clarke is more wide-ranging in its detail than many, it is not alone in testifying to the attractive and winsome personalities of evangelical fathers and their friends. Touches of fun are evident even in the letters of the most pensive and intense of evangelicals, Henry Thornton, Zachary Macaulay and Richard Cecil, while gaiety and humour abound in the correspondence between John Styles, inveterate opponent of watering places and the theatre, and Daniel Parken sometime editor of the Eclectic Review.⁶⁸ A similar enjoyment of life and a delightful sense of humour characterises the letters from Edward Hoare to his father, who replied in like vein plotting with his son to pacify Mrs Hoare who was anxious lest rowing injure his health.⁶⁹ Nephews and nieces testified to

67. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit ii p 38; iii p 469.

68. See for example Thornton papers, N 274-76; Knutsford op cit p 289. Josiah Pratt, op cit pp 103-04; J Styles, Early Blossoms (1819) pp 153-262, a memoir of Parken including numerous letters. Parken is only otherwise noticed in EM i series xx (1812) pp 373-79.

69. Townsend (ed), op cit pp 22ff.

the liveliness of Mrs Hoare's childless sister, Richenda, whose vicarage home at Lowestoft they frequently visited.⁷⁰ Hannah More, the 'Bishop in petticoats', was a welcome guest at Clapham for she never lost the vitality which made her in her youth the toast of London society. Marianne Thornton recollected that

'May is coming and then Hannah will be with us' was one of the earliest hopes of my childhood, and when she did arrive I always felt I had a fresh companion just my own age... She was in many ways a charming companion for children, but she had very little power of resisting either persuasion or fun.⁷¹

Hannah More's home, Barley Wood, was for Marianne, 'that Paradise of my childhood', a place where children were welcome - and pandered - guests, where they could enjoy the fascinating novelty of village and kitchen tasks. Tom Macaulay revisiting the house in 1852 described it as 'the place where I passed so many happy days in my childhood'.⁷² Macaulay was pleasantly surprised to enjoy the company of another evangelical notable, Isaac Milner of Cambridge, whom he had expected to be a severe and imperious old man. But Milner introduced him to the works of Molière and Richardson, and made the 'gravest sciences', to which Macaulay was not addicted, 'as agreeable as an Arabian tale'.⁷³ Insatiably curious to know how contraptions worked, fascinated by card tricks and those of jugglers, he had an inexhaustible fund of anecdotes about ventriloquism,

70. ibid pp 55ff; A Hare, The Gurneys of Earlham (1895) i pp 260-62; ii pp 129-30. Richenda Gurney married Francis Cunningham, brother of the Vicar of Harrow, whose diaries reveal that his children often stayed with her in the years after the death of his first wife.

71. Forster, op cit p 46.

72. Millgate, op cit p 4; Knutsford, op cit pp 278-79.

73. M Milner, op cit pp 561ff.

legerdemain, the performance of automatons, and optical illusions. Wilberforce was no less entertaining: volatile and incorrigibly cheerful, he delighted in the noisy exuberance of playing children and was always ready to join in even in the midst of serious business, to their delight and the frustration of his more business-like friends. Adults as well as children were infected by his charisma: 'One cannot have a short uninterrupted walk' he wrote from Buxton, 'People join me'.⁷⁴ His popularity belies any suggestion that evangelicals were necessarily narrow-minded killjoys. On the contrary Sir James Mackintosh noted

Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit one that does not. I never saw anyone who touched life at so many points; and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state.⁷⁵

Any assessment of evangelical family life has to balance this weight of evidence alongside that of sermons and improving books which evangelicals read with such avidity. When Hannah More and Wilberforce wrote for the upper and middle classes their vitality was completely shrouded by didacticism.⁷⁶ While their written remains are one important source for the study of evangelicalism, it must not be assumed that they epitomise the whole tenor of evangelical life.

74. Colquhoun, op cit p 76. Cf Coupland, op cit p 192.

75. ibid p 415. For Mackintosh see below p 373.

76. Cf D Newsome, The Parting of Friends (1966) p 31. The opening chapter of this work is the most balanced secondary account of evangelical family life of which I know.

Still less can evangelical novels be taken as an adequate depiction of evangelical family life. Evangelical writers failed as dismally as those of far greater merit in their attempt to depict vital goodness, which in Coelebs in Search of a Wife appears as pious insipidity, in The History of the Fairchild Family as sententious virtue. Mr and Mrs Fairchild show none of the vivacity, the humanity, or the human weakness evident in evangelical letters and diaries. They are portrayed as paragons who have already achieved the pedestal of perfection. There is no suggestion that they are themselves still battling against human frailty, still striving to live as they ought. Consequently descriptions of their effortless virtue fail to convince while their attempts from a position of vast superiority to force their offspring to be virtuous appear sadistic. That such a work was published (although not reviewed) is a disturbing indication of the ideal at which some evangelical parents were perhaps aiming: there was always the temptation to present to children a perfect persona.⁷⁷ But there is evidence to suggest that at least some evangelicals resisted such temptation: when his daughter Fanny turned to him for help, Legh Richmond responded '...we will begin religion together. We will set out in the first step, for I have as much need as you to begin all again. We must go to Jesus Christ to be set right'.⁷⁸

77. The first part of the work which was published in 1818 does not appear to have been reviewed in any of the evangelical periodicals.

78. Grimshawe, op cit p 607.

The occasion was memorable for Fanny, who had for long been the most recalcitrant of Richmond's children, recalled that her father had talked very little about religion to them, urging seriousness upon them primarily by letter.⁷⁹ Her comment shows how even the more personal writings of evangelicals can mislead if they are divorced from the personality of the writer which they do not always fully convey: the letters printed in Richmond's biography give the impression that he like Mr Fairchild was for ever subjecting his children to religious harangue. But letters are no guide to conversation. When evangelicals chose to commit themselves to paper they were often at their most serious. Moreover, the selectivity of the recipient may well have led to the retention of only those letters regarded as particularly helpful and important. The more mundane letters and the day to day conversations which might well have redressed the balance tend by their very nature not to be preserved for posterity.

Samuel Wilberforce, however, cherished 600 letters that his father wrote to him in the twenty years before his death in 1833.⁸⁰ His example is informative for it confirms that evangelical children did not receive the thick

79. ibid pp 599ff. I am assuming that the signature F R, clearly that of one of Richmond's children, was Fanny's. Cf. Gilbert (ed), op cit ii pp 156, 200: Mrs Gilbert exerted pressure in her letters but was hesitant about speaking to her children on spiritual matters.

80. Newsome, op cit p 32.

didactic screeds which their parents showered upon them with expressions of unrelieved gloom, perusing them only as in duty bound. On the contrary there appears to have been a ready acceptance on the part of at least some evangelical children of the religious concerns of their parents and of the reiterated plea to regard them as spiritual advisers.⁸¹

Samuel asked his father to tell him of his faults, consulted him regularly about spiritual matters, and, to Wilberforce's delight, reciprocated the practice by questioning him critically about his principles.⁸² Edward Hoare and Jane Taylor, like Fanny Richmond, turned to their parents in times of personal religious crisis, and Fanny implied that it was her father's example which in the long term caused his children to keep the faith: 'Religion was unfolded to us in its most attractive form. We saw that it was a happy thing to be a Christian', a conclusion shared by many other children of evangelical homes.⁸³

That there was some kicking against the religious pricks was only to be expected: 'I do not want to go to heaven', protested three year old James Fitzjames Stephen, 'I would rather stay on earth ... I don't want to be as good

81. See for example Teignmouth, op cit ii p 217: 'Consider me ever, My dear Charles, as your best friend: tell me, without reserve, your feelings ... Consult me with a freedom you would use to a friend of your own years. Avail yourself of the benefit of my experience, and confide in my affection'.
82. A M Wilberforce (ed), op cit pp 183, 195-97, 299-30.
83. Grimshawe, op cit pp 598 ff; Townsend (ed), op cit p 31. I Taylor (ed), op cit i p 125. It is noteworthy that so many adhered to the faith of their fathers, and sought to pass it on to their own children. The regime of the Clayton family appears to have been strict and austere but all three sons followed their father into the Independent ministry: an account of two generations is provided in Aveling, op cit.

and wise as Tom Macaulay'.⁸⁴ Macaulay, paradoxically held up as a paragon, was bored by the evangelical 'Sabbath' with its prohibitions on desired activities.⁸⁵ Over Sunday observance which evangelicals regarded as the bastion of godly nationhood, children were given least leeway. Even Louisa Hoare, generally so understanding, failed here. Her husband read 'some good religious book' to their children every Sunday but failed to distinguish between adult and childish capabilities with the result that his son later confessed

I fear sometimes one at least of his pupils greatly tired his patience by supineness and inattention but there was not then the same interesting books for young people that there are now, and such books as Wilberforce's Practical View and Doddridge's Rise and Progress were not calculated to attract the attention of a set of boys whose hearts were set on cricket.⁸⁶

But complementary with this reaction of healthy childhood was the equally normal acceptance of family prayers and Sunday services as part of the unquestioned fabric of family life, part of the child's secure routine. Leslie Stephen, writing after he had moved away from the family faith, told how sermons and church services were in his childhood part, and a not unwelcome part, of the order of

84. L Stephen, op cit p 70.

85. Trevelyan, op cit p 93. On the use of the Jewish term see T Jackson, Recollections of My Own Life and Times (1873) p 238: 'The French and Belgians have a Sunday, but they have no holy Sabbath'.

86. Townsend (ed) op cit p 5. L Hoare, Hints... (1819) pp 161-67; Friendly Advice... (1824) ch xii. Like many parents Mrs Hoare was anxious that Sunday, although markedly different from other days, should be enjoyable. It can however be questioned whether Scriptural research along the lines she advocated would appeal to any but the most intellectually able child. For an instance of evangelical failure to appreciate that repressive sabbatarianism could be counterproductive see MM liv (1831) p 118.

nature.⁸⁷ The Sundays which were such 'good days' for Brewin Grant would have contained a full quota of chapel services. The child of another evangelical home reminisced over childhood Sundays, admittedly with much retrospective idealisation, and on this subject alone achieved eloquence:

The personal recollections of childhood now come to my aid, and recall the quiet Sundays which the mother and the little children spent together; the father, when at home, very grave and silent, during the short meal times; shut up, then, in his study except when in the pulpit... then, after service, the only two hours leisure of the week; the children - other than those in arms - permitted to sit up and keep the festival; and the supper of cheap luxury as hard times allowed, and the friends who came in, and the hoarse but cheerful voice which spoke to us all, and the very short family prayers, and the softly creeping weariness, and the bed!⁸⁸

Evangelical religion provided not only security but excitement. Adam Clarke's eldest sons sometimes accompanied him on summer preaching appointments, their imaginations stimulated by the stories of the Old Testament, their experience of Methodist persecution giving spice to their expectations of an exciting life: '...each, a Goliath (sic) in his own estimation, furnished himself with a stout stick, in order to defend their father, should he be attacked'.⁸⁹ By thus broadening children's horizons, evangelicalism, as Professor Altick has pointed out, developed their imaginative faculties:

The child's imagination ... was constantly stirred... by the denominational magazines' tales of travel

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87. L Stephen, op cit p 62.
 88. T P Bunting, op cit ii pp 99-100. The idealisation of Sunday was perhaps due to the fact that this was the one day when evangelicals were free of the tension arising from their attempt to be in the world but not of it.
 89. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit ii p 34.

and lives of missionaries. Even in bleak Yorkshire there was no lack of exotic atmosphere and adventuresome narrative so long as Methodist periodicals kept arriving from City Road...⁹⁰

Even in bleak Yorkshire there was the additional excitement of meetings of the auxiliaries of numberless evangelical societies, which gave to evangelicals of however lowly a background a sense of participation in campaigns of cosmic moment. The excitement was intensified for the children of the evangelical patriciate who were able to attend meetings which involved entertainment on the grand scale: Hannah More invited 101 people to dinner and nearly 200 to tea during an 1818 Bible Society bonanza.⁹¹ Freed from immediate parental supervision the children could engage in illicit activity and shared caustic comment: Catherine Marsh surreptitiously handed round to her friends a packet of almond sugar plums to ameliorate the tedium of a missionary meeting while the Thornton girls were always ready to pass flippant and penetrating comments on speeches and speakers.⁹² Small wonder that Anna Gurney should look forward to the Bible Society meetings at Earlham as great treats, regarding them as epochal events of her childhood.⁹³

It was not only at such meetings that evangelical children were able to congregate. The Methodist Clarkes and

90. R Altick, The English Common Reader (1957, 1963 edn) p 118. For a further discussion of the contents of periodicals see below pp 397-99.

91. A Roberts (ed), Letters of Hannah More to Zachary Macaulay (1860) p 120.

92. L E O'Rorke, The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh (1917) p 26; Forster, op cit passim.

93. Hare, op cit ii pp 21-22.

Butterworths regularly had supper together as did the Newtons and Buntings when stationing permitted.⁹⁴ At Clapham the children, like the parents, were constantly in and out of each other's houses, with the Common as a readymade playground. The Clapham families threw large children's parties which boasted the attractions of electrical contraptions, puppet shows (written and performed by the parents), magic lanterns, and that most ubiquitous of childhood pleasures, 'dressing up'. New Year, Christmas and birthdays were times of adult self-examination, but they also provided opportunity for childish festivity. If Wilberforce urged Samuel 'You must take pains to prove to me that you are nine not in years only, but in head, heart, and mind', he let his children celebrate Robert's ninth birthday by dressing up in his court garb to play at King and Queen.⁹⁵

Families went on holiday together, and there were also visits to more distant evangelical homes: each year Thomas Babington kept open house for his nephews and nieces with the result that Rothley Temple was in summer the scene of noise, fun, youth, and gaiety.⁹⁶ Similarly the Gurney clan - or parts of it - holidayed together, sent children to stay with various aunts and uncles, and congregated regularly at each others' homes. Samuel Gurney 'used to beam with joy as he saw the lads running wild over the grounds, free

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94. J B B Clarke, (ed), op cit ii p 30; T P Bunting, op cit i pp 337ff.
95. A M Wilberforce (ed), op cit p 177; R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iii pp 563-64; Coupland, op cit p 306; Forster, op cit p 58; Newsome op cit p 36.
96. Trevelyan, op cit i p 179.

from the restraints and discipline of school-life, or joyfully rambling through his parks and gardens'.⁹⁷ His brother-in-law, Fowell Buxton, took pains to provide amusements for young people, organising large parties to go on excursions to beauty spots, masterminding charades and Christmas games, and at one time starting a family newspaper.⁹⁸ If evangelicals denied themselves and their children indiscriminate association with their social equals their élitism by no means led to loneliness and boredom.⁹⁹

On the contrary as E M Forster was to stress life was far from dull for the child whose family entertained negro boys from Sierra Leone and whose table was graced by a Mohawk chief, prepared to put on native dress, brandish a tomahawk and demonstrate a war dance.¹⁰⁰ There was political excitement too, for the children shared with all the partisanship of childhood in their parents' parliamentary concerns and on occasion watched the shouting crowds at stormy elections with curiosity, trepidation, and delight.¹⁰¹ At a lower level of society the persecution the Clarke children hoped and feared to meet was actualised for the Taylors when a 'Church and King' mob threatened to burn down their home...¹⁰²

97. Hare, op cit ii p 236 et passim.

98. Buxton, op cit p 172.

99. For the refusal of some Evangelicals to allow their children to mix regularly with those from non-evangelical homes see Goode, op cit p 84; Josiah Pratt, op cit p lvii.

100. Forster, op cit pp 57-58.

101. Meacham, op cit pp 67, 84ff. Cf Buxton, op cit pp 180ff, 194ff and for an instance of evangelical children's interest in slavery, Knutsford, op cit p 318.

102. I Taylor (ed), op cit i pp 109-11. The Taylors vulnerably situated in East Anglia experienced the common fear and excitement deriving from expectation of a French invasion: in 1803-04 some of the children were evacuated from Colchester to Lavenham, while the more affluent Gurneys made detailed plans for removing the whole household to Ely (Gilbert ed, op cit i pp 171ff; Hare, op cit i pp 130-31).

The experience of the Taylors exemplifies that of a third group of evangelical children, removed both from the camaraderie of the Methodist circuit and connexion, and the large scale conviviality characteristic of Anglican Clapham and Quaker Earlham. In the seclusion of Suffolk the Taylors were deprived of evangelical company for their father's Independent church verged on the antinomian; some of their leisure was therefore passed in more indiscriminate company than might otherwise have been permitted. ¹⁰³

Similarly removed from more appropriate companionship, Branwell Bronte, maybe - but not necessarily - more indulged than other Evangelical sons, mixed with the village lads. ¹⁰⁴ Most of his leisure, however, like that of the Taylors, was focussed within the family: Ann and Jane Taylor spent hours together in imaginative play, and were regularly entertained by their father, who made them toys and took them out for picnics, sharing with them in the family festivities which went in winter by the name of 'the Parnassian evening', in summer 'the Gipsy Ramble'. ¹⁰⁵

As they grew older the Taylors acquired a circle of evangelical acquaintances with whom they interchanged letters and visits. During her first visit to London Ann spent some

103. I Taylor (ed), op cit pp 122-23. Isaac Taylor sen. resigned his Colchester charge in 1810 because of the dominance of antinomian and Socinian factions, which had similarly existed alongside evangelicalism at Lavenham where he had been deacon prior to accepting the call to Colchester in 1796.

104. W Gerin, Branwell Bronte (1961) pp 22ff.

105. I Taylor (ed), op cit pp 89-91; Gilbert (ed) op cit i pp 39ff, 156-58.

time at the home of the Rev Richard Cecil and later commented

There was no family in which we were thenceforward more at home, or enjoyed ourselves with greater zest. Our friends, the Forbeses and the Condors, were already intimate there, with many other young people of about our own standing... 106

'...of about our own standing'. Evangelical élitism was but a gloss upon that of a rigidly divided society. The greater restrictions placed upon the Bronte sisters than upon their brother were probably as much socially as religiously determined, for socially, if not always religiously, evangelicals' contemporaries had a clearly circumscribed round of acquaintances. If England, as Professors Habakkuk and Perkin have proposed, was a federation of country houses, so too was English Evangelicalism, while the movement as a whole comprised at different social levels numerous, sometimes interlocking, federations of godly families. 107

Measured against that of their contemporaries the home life of these families does not merit unduly harsh judgment. The tendency to treat children as adults was a long established upper and middle class habit. 108 Patriarchalism was not peculiar to evangelicism but was equally characteristic of the upbringing of the young Charles Darwin, whose father was religiously sceptical, and of many others of like social status. 109 If, as Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt suggest, evangelicals helped perpetuate these practices, they also in their anxiety to associate

106. ibid i p 155.

107. Professor Habakkuk is quoted in Perkin, op cit p 42.

108. I Pinchbeck and M Hewitt, Children in English Society (1969) i pp 298-99.

109. G Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (1959) pp 7-10.

religion with 'domestic tenderness' did much to encourage a more sympathetic understanding of childhood, which, no less than the 'blasphemy' of parental omniscience, is reflected in the literature they produced. ¹¹⁰

Children's literature was a comparatively new genre and evangelicals played a significant part in its development. F J Harvey Darton pays tribute to Mrs Sherwood's 'masterly prose', the economy and vividness of her descriptions, while Gillian Avery suggests that she came closer to describing childish naughtiness than any previous writer. ¹¹¹ If her children sometimes request permission to 'say some verses, about mankind having bad hearts', they also show more universal childish characteristics. ¹¹² Full attention is paid to matters of central juvenile concern: acutely observant, Mrs Sherwood included in her stories an abundance of homely minutiae, realising for her young readers every detail of the family's surroundings, whetting their appetites by describing what the children had to eat, bringing vividly to life the animals that properly formed part of the Fairchild entourage: 'Miss Puss stood with her head out at the door of her house, mumping her parsley after the manner of hares, and looking at Henry'. ¹¹³

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110. Pinchbeck and Hewitt, op cit i p 305. The last phrase is borrowed from P Sangster, Pity my Simplicity: the evangelical revival and the religious education of children (1963) p 56. For Wilberforce's concern to link religion and 'domestic tenderness' see R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iv p 205.
111. G Avery, Nineteenth Century Children: heroes and heroines in English children's stories 1780-1900 (1965) pp 84ff; F J H Darton, Children's Books in England (1932, 2nd edn 1958) p 175. Cf his tribute to the Taylor sisters, (pp 187-92) whose poems for children included 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'.
112. Sherwood, op cit i p 13.
113. ibid i p 156.

After depriving his son of food as a punishment for theft and lying, 'Mr Fairchild cut a large piece of bread-and-butter for Henry, which he was very glad of, for he was very hungry'. ¹¹⁴ It is this ability to look at life through a child's eyes and to communicate that experience in language which is both simple and evocative, that gives The History of the Fairchild Family, and particularly its later less brazen volumes, its peculiar charm. The book so often taken to typify family life at its most terrifying, testifies too, more subtly but no less surely, to the underlying happiness of many evangelical homes.

114. ibid i p 43.

6. FAITH AND FUN

While memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies, reveal that evangelicals gained much pleasure from what they described as 'domestic intercourse', they yield only sparse information about their enjoyment of more specific forms of recreation. In many cases consideration of leisure pursuits was irrelevant, or at best peripheral, to the writer's main theme, the depiction of the inner or public life of his subject. In other instances, however, absence of description may well testify to absence of activity for many evangelicals accorded recreation a low priority.

Andrew Fuller is an archetype of an evangelical whose religious interests caused him to despise all else. Escorted round the principal buildings of Oxford, he

viewed them with little emotion; and on being requested to notice one object of peculiar interest, he said 'Brother I think there is one question, which, after all that has been written on it, has not yet been well answered...What is justification?' It was immediately proposed to return to the fireside and discuss the subject; to which Mr F gladly acceded saying 'That inquiry is far more to me than all these fine buildings'.¹

The tendency to depreciate non-religious matter in order to emphasise the over-riding importance of things spiritual, if more common among them, was by no means peculiar to dissenters, for parallel instances can be cited from within Evangelicalism. 'There is a beautiful Cathedral in this city'

1. J Ryland, The Work of Faith...in the Life and Death of the Rev Andrew Fuller (1816) p 574.

Edward Bickersteth wrote from Lincoln, 'and a little company that love our Saviour, far more beautiful in Papa's eyes than all the beautiful cathedrals and churches in the world'.² The most striking example is Richard Cecil, concerning whom Daniel Wilson commented 'Though his relish for the arts was exquisite, he had such infinitely more sublime interests before him, that they were forgotten in the comparison...'³ Notwithstanding his love of art, music, and literature, Cecil eschewed these and all other non-religious pursuits as 'vanity'.⁴

Another, equally important, factor militating against evangelical enjoyment of recreational activities was the belief that 'serious Christians' both could and should be identified by their 'gravity' and 'soberness', the antitheses of which were not only 'levity' and 'frivolity' but even 'vivacity' and 'vitality'. John Satchell's heroine, Miranda, had once been 'too vivacious', but her growing 'sense of eternal things' had given her 'a becoming gravity'.⁵ According to Hannah More Wilberforce had 'as much wit as if he had no piety'.⁶ Jabez Bunting was anxious lest his wife's vitality should cause her to become a 'trifler', and both his biographer and Isaac Milner's took pains to show that in these rare instances wit and light-heartedness in no way impaired religious seriousness.⁷

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2. Birks, op cit ii pp 52-53.
 3. D Wilson, The Blessedness of the Christian in Death... (1810) p 28. For further tribute to Cecil's artistic taste see J Jerram (ed), The Memoirs...of the late Rev Charles Jerram (1855) p 266.
 4. Josiah Pratt, op cit pp 28, 145. Cf 90-91. See further below pp 260, 298-99, 304, 426.
 5. Satchell, op cit ii p 256. Cf iii p 11.
 6. W Roberts, op cit ii pp 140-41.
 7. T P Bunting, op cit i pp 180, 340; M Milner, op cit p 419.

Suspicion of light-heartedness and trifling was inevitably accompanied by suspicion of amusement, which evangelicals tended to equate with a hedonistic disregard for matters of eternal moment. 'Whatever dreams the votaries of amusement and pleasure may cherish', John Pearson commented,

It may be seasonable to remind them that...nothing can be more stupid and senseless, than to live and act as if the world were made for intelligent beings as we are told the sea was for the Leviathan, 'that he might take his pastime therein'.⁸

According to the Christian Observer, which stressed that the Christian would be divinely protected in the course of duty but not of pleasure, 'The good like the great man...will ever seek his pleasures in the field of his duties, and though he suffers mere amusement will seldom court it'.⁹

The emphasis upon duty recurs in all discussions on the place of leisure activities in evangelical living. Some finding full satisfaction in family life and religious calling denied that Christians needed any more specific forms of recreation.¹⁰ Others, however, believed that 'innocent amusements' might properly be followed - in order to equip evangelicals the better to perform their various responsibilities; 'There can be no dispute' wrote Wilberforce 'concerning the true end of recreations. They are intended to refresh our

8. Pearson, op cit ii pp 241-42.
9. CO vi (1807) p 669; xii (1813) p 145. Cf MM xli (1818) p 774; liv (1831) pp 551-52.
10. See for example EM i series xxii (1814) p 175 where students were advised to use any intervals from study to instruct the ignorant, to encourage those on the brink of Christian commitment and to reclaim backsliders.

exhausted bodily or mental powers, and restore us with renewed vigour, to the more serious occupations of life'.¹¹

Even those who thus legitimised some leisure pursuits were anxious lest they trespass upon time which should be devoted to duty: 'How hard it is for corrupt creatures to enjoy the most lawful pleasures in a lawful degree' lamented Daniel Wilson.¹² Hannah More's exemplary heroine delighted in gardening, that most innocent of evangelical pleasures, supposedly sanctioned by Milton's Eve, but Lucilla was nevertheless aware that 'An enjoyment which assumes a sober shape may deceive us, by making us believe we are practising a duty when we are only gratifying a taste'.¹³ Her mother dissuaded her from giving up 'so pure a pleasure', and elsewhere in the novel the author inveighed against excessive asceticism, but Lucilla's qualms of conscience were obviously designed to endear her not only to Coelebs in Search of a Wife but also to an evangelical readership. It was altogether in accordance with evangelical priorities that she should compromise by hanging her watch upon a tree, a constant reminder to limit the time spent in the garden.¹⁴

Unease about their use of time impinged even upon the recreation of those evangelicals most confident of the value of leisure. Fowell Buxton both worked hard and

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11. W Wilberforce, op cit p 453. Cf ER i series iii (1807) p 338; MM xxxiv (1811) p 388.
 12. J Bateman, The Life of ... Daniel Wilson (1860) i p 90.
 13. H More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808, 1809 edn) ii pp 49 ff, 109, 115.
 14. ibid i pp 215-22; ii pp 112-13.

played hard, but occasionally wondered whether he was right to do so:

The world and the spirit of the world are very insidious, and the older we grow the more inclined we are to think as others think, and act as others act;... I speak here feelingly, for the world has worn away much of the little zeal I ever had... I have more game and better horses and dogs than other people, but the same energy, disposed of in a different way, might have spread Bible and Missionary Societies over the Hundred of North Erpingham...No man has a surplus of power - time, talents, money, influence...It is therefore, arithmetically true, that so much as he devotes to the secular object he withdraws from the spiritual. 15

Notwithstanding such qualms Buxton continued both to support the Bible and Missionary Society auxiliaries he had been influential in establishing near his holiday home, and to shoot with immense glee and exuberance. Moreover, within clearly defined limits, he was prepared to justify his activity:

I feel about shooting that it is not time lost if it contributes to my health and cheerfulness. I have many burthens, and it is well to cast them off, lest they should so dispirit and oppress me that I become less capable of active exertion. But now my holiday is nearly ended; shooting may be my recreation, but it is not my business... 16

Attitudes such as Buxton's were perhaps more common within Anglicanism, natural home of the more leisured classes, than within dissent, Any meaningful comparison is however made impossible by the shortage of biographies of dissenting laymen, and the total absence of biographies of lay Anglicans

15. Buxton, *op cit* pp 187-89.

16. *ibid* p 281. Cf pp 179-80 for his involvement in auxiliary societies. On Buxton's love of shooting see above p 185.

of similar social status to the average dissenter. Whereas biographers of Evangelical clergymen occasionally describe the hobbies of their subjects, their dissenting counterparts rarely refer to any 'recreational' pursuit other than reading. The apparent difference between Methodist and Evangelical practice can be attributed to a difference in opportunity: Anglican incumbents could if they wished make time for leisure activity; the exigencies of the preaching plan left Methodist ministers with little time even to read.¹⁷ The contrasting workloads may reflect not only the demands which Wesley made upon his followers but also the secular work experience of the classes from which the two ministræ were respectively drawn. But since old dissenters are depicted as deploying their spare time in much the same way as Methodists, it seems probable that the congregations for whom dissenting biographers old and new alike were writing, if not also the ministers themselves, were less ready than Evangelicals to grant recreation a place in ministerial and hence in lay Christian living.¹⁸

This impression is reinforced by the Christian Observer's critique of a work by the editor of the Evangelical Magazine: George Burder's Lawful Amusements, as his Anglican critic rightly suggested, might more appropriately have been entitled Unlawful Amusements, for Burder always found it easier to condemn than to recommend leisure pursuits.¹⁹

17. See below p 400.

18. For the suggested relationship between ministerial and lay practice see above p 188.

19. CO iv (1805) p 234. See above p 173.

The reviewer criticised Burder for being too censorious and for lacking discrimination, and while not explicitly relating his comments to the book in question, warned against the dangers of over-seriousness: those who opposed 'amusements' should be careful that they did not also condemn cheerfulness and 'rational enjoyment'.²⁰

While any denominational comparison remains highly tentative, it is clear that Evangelicals at least often shared the positive attitude towards recreation practised by Buxton and recommended by the Christian Observer's reviewer. Unpublished papers reveal not only the liveliness of their writers, but in some cases categoric approval of 'amusement'. In 1807 Mrs Henry Thornton told Charemile Grant that she 'took courage and told Mrs R that she and her friend would be more amiable if they amused themselves a little, and I hope in time to convince her of it'.²¹ Her sentiments, if not her tendency gratuitously to proffer advice, were shared by Charles Hoare who told J W Cunningham

I think we want amusement. In fact every thing is so, that is not business; and all work and no play makes Jack etc. In fact Jack has been a dull boy many a day for wanting...a good game at chess. The mind covets occupation and is not always able to rouse itself. The Quakers admit their poetry, gardening etc. and even condescend as we know from Nancy to joke - and all these are but modes of amusement: and I cannot think that real bona fide amusement for amusements' sake would be often carried to excess, by those who have any rational pursuits besides. If they have not these we must not attack their amusements but their want of rational pursuits.²²

20. CO iv (1805) p 306.

21. Thornton papers, I 9 p 94. Letter dated January 1807. Cf above pp 218-19.

22. Letter dated 16 January 1817, Dorset Record Office, D 289/C 27.

If in their published writings Evangelicals were less outspoken, there too they regularly stressed the importance of 'rational' pursuits and enjoyments. It was widely acknowledged that those who chose to indict the pernicious play of the world had to provide some acceptable alternative; that other forms of recreation, both innocent and rational, were available was a powerful - and valuable - argument against fashionable amusements. It was moreover an argument employed by Anglicans and dissenters alike: while there was clearly room for variation in definition, the dissenting press was just as anxious as the Evangelical to urge what it regarded as rational recreations upon its readers. ²³

Reading was universally regarded as the most rational and enjoyable of leisure pursuits, while other cultural activities, the practice of music and the enjoyment of art, were also recommended. ²⁴ The concern of this chapter is to outline those recreations which cannot properly be classified as either cultural or purely academic, but which a number of evangelicals regarded as both innocent and rational. Information that can be gleaned from periodicals and biographies, largely Anglican but occasionally dissenting, reveals that these were not only

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23. See for example ER ii series xxiii (1825) p 183: "'Teach your children," it might be said, "to love Nature, to love home, make them your companions, provide them with innocent delights, cultivate their affections, cherish in them a taste for intellectual pleasures; and then you may safely lay your parental interdict on those fashionable amusements which are the bane of youth".'
24. Evangelical attitudes to cultural and intellectual recreations are discussed in chs 7-10 below.

widely approved as harmless alternatives to fashionable frivolity but also thoroughly enjoyed.

'Bodily exercise' was one of the few Lawful Amusements recommended by George Burder.²⁵ It appears similarly to have been encouraged by some Sunday Schools. The famous Whit Walks, which date from the turn of the century, were designed to distract scholars from the attractions of wakes, fairs, and races: Dr Laqueur records how by the 1830s and 1840s they had expanded into full-scale excursions, incorporating boat trips and sports days.²⁶ Upper class Anglicans were equally concerned to promote appropriate amusement for their children: thus Thomas Babington organised long walks and excursions, and, according to a mid-Victorian chronicler, sought to prevent pusillanimity by encouraging sea and river swimming, 'manly sports', and 'active exercises'.²⁷ Charles Simeon, mentor of so many young Evangelicals, maintained that 'exercise, constant regular and ample, is absolutely essential to a reading man's success'; an enthusiastic horseman, he went out for a ride every day 'unless my work or the weather render it particularly inconvenient'. He recommended tennis as well as riding to his students, and a daily six mile walk, a practice followed by Lord Teignmouth, independent of Simeon's advice, as late as his eightieth year.²⁸

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25. G Burder, Lawful Amusements (1805) pp 30ff. Burder also cited intellectual exercise, music (in moderation), occasional conversation with the intelligent and pious, philanthropic activity. The CO (iv 1805, p 234) denied that the last was an 'amusement', and expressed surprise at his omission of drawing and gardening: the classes for which Burder was primarily writing may not have had the opportunity to garden, or to take drawing lessons.
26. T Laqueur, Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and working class culture 1780-1850 (1976) pp 235-36
27. Colquhoun, op cit pp 222ff.
28. Hennell and Pollard (eds) op cit pp 105, 145; Teignmouth, op cit ii p 525.

One Simeonite who needed little encouragement was Buxton's nephew Edward Hoare whose one complaint about his school life under Henry Venn Elliott, himself an enthusiastic athlete, was that 'as he only took six pupils there was the same difficulty that we found at home in getting good play, first class cricket', a defect removed when he went to Cambridge 'although I could not play much of it, as it took too long a time'. Like John Venn before him, whose passion afforded him the nickname 'the admiral of the Cam', Hoare had no difficulty in finding time for boating... 29

A love of sport, if sometimes indulged more excessively than was strictly necessary for bodily health, could always be justified on those grounds. Isaac Milner's scrupulously honest but highly defensive biographer had a more difficult task when she attempted to vindicate her uncle's enthusiasm for scientific experiment. But Milner who adopted a different 'hobby horse' each year, inventing a lamp in 1808 and a waterclock in 1810, experienced no such qualm about his activity nor apparently did many other evangelicals who like him played around with mechanical devices and were fascinated to understand how things worked. 30 The extent of the interest is indicated by the periodicals, for both the Record and the Christian Observer regularly listed recent inventions while brief reports on curious scientific happenings were common.

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29. Townsend (ed), op cit pp 9-10, 19, 22-23; J Bateman, The Life of Rev Henry Venn Elliott (1868) pp 109-10; J Venn, Annals of a Clerical Family (1904) p 122; Hennell, op cit pp 42-43, 52.
30. M Milner, op cit pp 51-52, 325, 364-65, 416. Isaac Taylor junior like Milner provided himself with a workshop: I Taylor, op cit i p 72.

One of the most enthusiastic was again John Venn, whose early diaries refer to the machines he assembled, and who combined his mechanical with his sporting interests when he built a boat in his student rooms, which he was sadly unable to get out of the door. According to a descendant he lacked 'philosophical capacity' but 'had a decided taste for trying practical experiments': both the taste and, from time to time, the incapacity, were reflected in the introduction of the latest domestic equipment into Clapham rectory. ³¹ Venn was interested in the experiments of pure as well as of applied science, for his student notebooks contain details and diagrams not only about optics, hydrostatics and mechanics but also on astronomy, about which he later corresponded with his former boating companion, the evangelical scientist Francis Wollaston. ³² Astronomy was also the hobby of John Russell, who from 1785 spent time delineating a lunar map, and in 1797 patented a selenographia for exhibiting lunar phenomena. ³³ Daniel Wilson, future Bishop of Calcutta, developed an interest in chemistry during his final year at Oxford, while the particular interest of Legh Richmond and his son was mineralogy: when the boy's lessons were over they would frequently engage in scientific study and experiment. ³⁴

31. J Venn, Annals of a Clerical Family (1904) pp 121-24, where reference is also made to Venn's interest in heraldry and antiquarian research.

32. Hennell, op cit pp 42, 52. Venn's interests were inherited by his son Henry who introduced popular scientific lectures on subjects such as astronomy to St John's Holloway (Knight, op cit p 76). On Wollaston see below pp 365-66.

33. G C Williamson, John Russell R A (1894) ch xiii. On Russell and the son who shared his astronomical interests see below pp 294-97, 302.

34. J Bateman, The Life of... Daniel Wilson (1860) i p 62; Grimshawe, op cit p 602.

Richmond was one of a number of evangelicals to take full advantage of the sight-seeing opportunities provided on journeys of evangelical duty. During a preaching tour in the summer of 1814, he went to see his host's

great iron-works, near Rotherham. Saw a cannon cast, and went through the whole manufactory. It is most ingenious and interesting. Saw the rolling mill and manufacture of tin plates. Observed on our return in the evening, the effect of the many surrounding blazing furnaces.

A week later he saw 'the ruins of Fountains Abbey; it far exceeds everything I have seen or shall see; - imagination is filled, and more than filled...' 35

Richmond's ecstasy and obvious enjoyment was matched by that of the most constitutionally curious of Methodists, Adam Clarke. The journals of his tours show that he was fascinated by the history, antiquities, monuments, geography, agriculture, mode of life - indeed by everything relating to the places he visited. He wrote to his wife after a visit to Warwick Castle:

I saw some bronze cups, from the ruins of Herculaneum, some of which I found cost 150 guineas... We likewise got into the armoury, where...I was permitted to fit on some of the armour, and felt almost the spirit of a knight errant coming upon me. In short, we went through all this interesting and magnificent place; but I must reserve till I get home, to tell of Guy, Earl of Warwick's sword, which I endeavoured to wield, twenty pounds weight; also of his spear, his shield, his breast-plate, his tilting pole, &c. all enormously gigantic: nor can I wait to mention particularly the rib of the dun cow; the shoulder blade, and back-bone of the wild-boar, all of which I suspect are bones of large fish... 36

35. ibid pp 235-36.

36. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit ii p 28.

Visiting Stonehenge some years later, he took pains to ascertain its original formation and marvelled over the ingenuity of our ancestors who transported such huge stones of a rock that he identified as not being local. On an Irish tour he visited the Giant's Causeway 'one of the most celebrated basaltic formations perhaps in the universe', and, as ever, recounted the history of all the places he visited, imaginatively reconstructing the events at the battle of the Boyne. Intrigued by the Round Towers he requested permission to visit one, made deductions from it about their origins and purpose, and sought to confirm his conclusions by inspections of several more. Far from criticising historical monuments and antiquities as the mere products of fallen man, Clarke delighted in them and was properly concerned for their preservation. Enraptured by the extensive collection of antiques at Wilton House he was horrified

at seeing many of these invaluable relics of antiquity injured...by the joiners, plasterers, &c. &c., who had even erected their benches against some of the finest productions of the sculptors of ancient Greece. ³⁷

The curiosity of most evangelicals had of necessity to be restricted to the sights and monuments of England, but some few had the opportunity to visit Europe. ³⁸ The

37. ibid ii pp 125-28, 132-33, 255-75.

38. Zachary Macaulay visited France to negotiate slave trade agreements in the Treaty of Vienna (Knutsford, op cit pp 313ff). The Buxtons, Gurneys and Francis Cunninghams went abroad to establish foreign branches of the Bible Society and to examine continental systems of prison discipline (Hare, op cit i pp 271-72). Priscilla Buxton and the children of Lord Teignmouth were among those able to enjoy foreign holidays (M Pryor Hack, Faithful Women, 1885, p 224; Teignmouth, op cit ii pp 275ff).

fascination of continental travel is well communicated
by a contributor to the Eclectic Review:

Cross a river, or a mountain, or an arm of the ocean, and a new and unexpected system of manners, - new modes of life, - and a new series of conventional usages burst upon you...All is surprise and delight, as soon as this new world reveals itself in its first gloss and freshness. It can hardly be conceived by those whom long and frequent wanderings over the continent have deadened to the excitements of curiosity... with what a restless, delighted eye and beating and enlivened heart, the untravelled stranger hails the objects that rush upon his senses when he first arrives in a foreign country. 39

Exploration abroad often involved evangelicals in more indiscriminate company than they might otherwise have chosen. Whereas those who holidayed in England immediately sought out fellow evangelicals, there was, in the words of Henry Venn Elliott, no place in continental travelling society for a religious man as such. 40 That he was not thereby deterred from a three year grand tour is testimony to the depth of his interest in matters other than the purely religious: he was an inveterate, and often extravagant collector of medals and rare coins. Enamoured by the Venus de Medici, he was anxious to view not only the arts and antiquities but also the people and customs of the countries he visited, differing in this respect from some fellow travellers, the Calthorpes, who, he recorded, abstained

39. ER ii series xxiii (1825) p 332.

40. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit ii p 129 records how when the Clarkes and Butterworths went on holiday together in 1806 'almost our first enquiry was, "are there any religious people here?"' They immediately went out to find the religious baker who so pleased them as to be invited back to supper at the inn; J Bateman, The Life of Rev Henry Venn Elliott (1868) p 80.

in principle from society. By involving himself in fashionable company

I saw many things that I would not have seen, and heard much that I would have rejoiced not to hear. But if my intention in travelling was to see not merely things, but men and manners, there was no alternative. I must have done, as I did. Whether this speculation has been injurious to me, is a question as yet unsolved. 41

He was as pragmatic in his attitude to the church as to the world, and thus refrained from indiscriminate condemnation of Catholicism: he was prepared to attend mass and while he refused to prostrate himself at the elevation of the host, he was happy to join in the psalms and many of the prayers, and described the Christmas masses at Rome as solemn and impressive. He frequently stayed in monasteries and developed an affection and respect for his Catholic hosts: in no doubt where he stood in a courteous dispute with a Roman Catholic priest on the doctrine of the immaculate conception, he was far from exhibiting the horror and hysteria of some Protestants at the slightest sight or mention of anything Catholic. 42

By no means all Evangelicals, however wide their interests, condoned such exposure to things continental and Catholic. J W Cunningham believed that it was detrimental for Englishmen to stay on the continent long enough to be infected by foreign manners and religion, while Hannah

41. ibid p 80.

42. ibid pp 53-54, 59, 61-62, 71-72, 88. For fervid anti-Catholicism see a novel by another continental traveller Mrs Sherwood, The Nun (1833)

More was fearful lest the habit of much-travelling should cause dissatisfaction with the plainer pleasures of country living and encourage further absenteeism. ⁴³

While there was a clear political component to the Clapham sect's belief in the virtues of country life, its members had no doubt that real religious advantages were to be gained from regular rural residence. ⁴⁴ In the country a Christian was removed from the worst temptations of fashionable life, and was able to develop domestic predilections. ⁴⁵ Above all he had abundant opportunity to study the works of God. His faith might curtail some pleasures but evangelicals of all schools were agreed that it enhanced a Christian's delight in the natural world. Indeed it was repeatedly argued that he enjoyed nature more than his unconverted neighbour for it was his privilege to look 'through nature up to nature's God'; in the lines from The Task which evangelicals quoted most frequently, the natural scenes around him were

His to enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel
But who with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling say - 'My Father made them all!' ⁴⁶

The enjoyment of nature was perhaps the one pleasure in whose innocence all evangelicals believed, and one of the

43. J W Cunningham, Cautions to Continental Travellers (1823); H More, Moral Sketches (1819) pp vi ff.
44. On Evangelicals' desire to preserve the old rural patriarchal society, the peace and well-being of which was dependent upon resident local gentry, see further R I and S Wilberforce, Correspondence of William Wilberforce (1840) i p 219.
45. Gisborne, op cit pp 112-13.
46. Cowper, op cit book v 743-47, quoted CO xxii (1822) p 14; J Styles, The Temptations of a Watering Place (1815) pp 27-28.

few in which the majority were probably able to indulge. In some cases religious presuppositions may have obstructed spontaneous enjoyment: 'I am ready enough' said Rose, a character in Charlotte Elizabeth's tale The Swan, 'to admire the beauty of God's works, but I do not always seek rightly to be instructed by them'.⁴⁷ Modes of instruction were outlined in the popular press: those who looked at the sloth were prompted to condemn idleness, while the beaver was an object lesson in the virtues of diligence and watchfulness; the changing seasons were a constant reminder that time was passing...⁴⁸ But genuine enjoyment of nature could easily coexist with such analogical casuistry: a letter sent to the Evangelical Magazine by 'Thomas Lovegood', a mechanic, reveals not only the religious benefits which derived from children's scavenger hunts for rural objects mentioned in the Bible, but also the very real pleasure experienced on such outings.⁴⁹ Moreover many evangelicals felt no need to turn their love of nature to such obvious religious use. Jane Taylor, enraptured by Devon, wrote exuberantly to Josiah Conder:

I promise not to detain you long with descriptions of the scenery around us...it is not the most agreeable thing to be told that 'you can form no idea - you can't imagine - you never saw anything like it,' &c. So then to do the thing more politely, I must tell you that I had formed no idea of the kind of scenery with which we are surrounded; and that I had never before seen anything like it...Ilfracombe is situated in a deep valley, surrounded on one side by barren

47. Charlotte Elizabeth, The Swan (1829) pp 13-14.

48. EM i series xi (1803) pp 69ff, 193. For an extended illustration see Appendix 2.

49. ibid xiv (1806) pp 212, 358.

hills, and on the other by stupendous rocks which skirt the sea...Our rambles among the rocks I enjoy most; though at first they excited new sensations of awe and terror, rather than of pleasure. But now we climb without fear amid a wilderness of rocks, where nothing else can be seen, and nothing heard but the roar of the distant sea... 50

Statements such as this suggest that evangelicals were often genuine nature lovers, delighting like their favourite poet in what they could actually feel and smell, hear and see.⁵¹ A similar assessment can be made of their reaction to other recreations, to sport, to scientific experiment, to sight-seeing. All were no doubt conducive either to health or to education, and this knowledge may have enhanced the pleasure gained from them. But the enthusiasm with which they were described suggests that they were in practice thoroughly enjoyed not just as means to ends, but in their own right.

Thus while some evangelicals condemned all pursuits but the purely religious, and while all were liable to occasional qualms about their use of time, a number - and certainly more than can be listed - threw themselves wholeheartedly into those recreations which could be

50. I Taylor, op cit i pp 260-61.

51. Cowper, op cit book i 109-122:

For I have lov'd the rural walk through lanes
Of grassy swarth, close cropt by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs; have lov'd the rural walk,
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,
E'er since a truant boy I pass'd my bounds
T'enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;
And still remember, nor without regret
Of hours that sorrow since has much endear'd,
How oft, my slice of pocket store consum'd,
Still hung'ring, pennyless and far from home,
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,
Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss
The bramble black as jet, or sloes austere.

labelled 'innocent' and 'rational'. The regular use of the latter term is significant for it associates evangelicals with the early rational recreationists who similarly opposed not recreation as such but only those recreations which they deemed to be irrational, demoralising, and socially dangerous. Moreover, parallels can be drawn between the pursuits of which the two groups primarily approved. While evangelicals provided Whit walks and Sunday school sports days as counter-attractions to wakes, fairs, and races, the 1833 Select Committee on Public Walks, anxious to wean the working classes from 'low and debasing pleasures', recommended the provision of open spaces and bathing facilities, so that they could walk, play games and swim, and thereby improve their health and their respectability.⁵² Brougham and others involved in Mechanics' Institutes were concerned to provide the poor with opportunities of understanding the world about them and in particular of gaining 'useful knowledge', an appreciation of those scientific and mechanical principles, which so fascinated John Venn and his early industrial contemporaries.⁵³ The provision of libraries at such Institutes, and of Literary and Philosophical Societies at which intellectual matters could be discussed, is symbolic of the prevalent belief in an increasingly literate society that reading was the most rational of all recreations.

Where evangelicals perhaps differed from other early rational recreationists was in the extent to which they sought

52. Report from the Select Committee on Public Walks with the Minutes of Evidence (1833, IUPS edn 1968) pp 8-9, 52, 58.

53. Altick, op cit pp 188-204; J F C Harrison, Learning and Living 1790-1960 (1961) pp 62-74.

to urge such pursuits upon the upper as well as the lower classes. Public walks and Mechanics' Institutes were in time to become very much the preserve of the increasingly significant middle classes, but they were explicitly designed for the lower orders, to deal with what J F C Harrison has described as 'a new and unfamiliar problem' the imperative need to fill the leisure hours of those who might otherwise resort to idleness and dissipation. ⁵⁴

In the eyes of evangelicals' contemporaries this was essentially a problem relating to the newly emergent urban working class. Evangelicals by condemning and eschewing the fashionable amusements of the day, believed that it related to all levels of society. While money, time, and opportunity obviously influenced the choice of leisure activities by evangelicals of different classes, recreation was perhaps less influenced by class within evangelicalism than without. Musical, artistic, literary and intellectual pursuits were in varying degrees recommended to and followed by rich and poor alike.

54. ibid p 76.

7. FAITH AND HARMONY

In 1831 the highchurch periodical the British Critic published a not uncomplimentary review of The Music of the Church by John Antes Latrobe, a Moravian by birth and upbringing, ordained into the Anglican communion. ¹ The reviewer paid tribute both to the author's piety and to the value of his suggestions for the improvement of praise, but was wryly critical of the way in which he yoked his faith and his 'favourite pursuit':

He not only seems to believe that our first parents passed much of their time in Eden in the practice of Duets, but also that 'the morning stars' not figuratively but bona fide, 'sang together' on the birthday of the world.

The exaltation of Music at the expense of the Sister Arts certainly appears to us to be a little hard. ²

Such statements reveal both the preeminence which some evangelicals accorded to music over other cultural pursuits, and the reasons for that preeminence. Instances of evangelicals eschewing music are rare. Far more common is the biographical affirmation that music was one of the rare leisure activities other than reading in which an evangelical engaged, a declaration made in respect of the Anglicans William Goode and William Hey (who played both the flute and the harpsichord), and of the Independents, Daniel Parken and Josiah Conder, sometime editors of the Eclectic Review. ³

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1. Latrobe and his father (see below pp 259, 266) are cited in DNB. The British Critic, Quarterly Theological Review and Ecclesiastical Record was formed by merger in 1827 (Mineka, op cit pp 51-53).
 2. British Critic x (1831) pp 120, 129. There was no similar complaint in the ER's review (iii series vi, 1831, pp 469ff).
 3. Goode, op cit p 17; Pearson, op cit i p 111; Conder, op cit p 343; EM i series xx (1812) p 377.

While the accuracy of claims, such as that made by Thomas Jackson concerning the musical taste and knowledge of his fellow Methodist, Richard Watson, cannot easily be assessed, it is significant that such attributes were considered worthy of mention and indeed of approbation.⁴ Occasionally the competence of whole families was praised: the Grants were described as excelling in music, while their latest biographer affirms that the Gurneys were an 'incurably musical family'. Although Elizabeth renounced music along with most other cultural activities when she became a 'Plain Friend', her example was followed neither by her husband nor by her Anglican evangelical sister, Richenda, who continued to gain great satisfaction from her piano.⁵

The family who most obviously and most notably combined a love of music with evangelical faith was the Jowetts. The evangelical tradition dated back to the conversion through Whitfield of Henry Jowett (1719-1801), two of whose four sons were to become famous evangelical teachers: Henry (1756-1830) taught the children of many leading Evangelical families at Little Dunham, while Joseph (1752-1813) was Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge. The eldest son John (1743-1800), like his father a wool-stapler, was involved in the foundation of the CMS; his son, William, was the first graduate to be sent out by the society, while his daughter, Elizabeth, married its future secretary Josiah Pratt. Their brother, Joseph, Rector of Silk Willoughby, was

4. T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 172.
 5. Swift, op cit p 29; Vansittart (ed), op cit pp 18, 30; Hare, op cit ii pp 6, 288; J P Grant (ed), Memoir and Correspondence of Mrs Grant of Laggan (1844) pp 159, 271. I have been unable to establish the exact relationship between Mrs Grant, author of the best-selling Letters from the Mountains (1806), and the Grants of Clapham, whose refinement and culture she regularly praised. For her association with the literary elite of the day see DNB.

for nearly seventeen years editorial superintendent of the BFBS. The least successful of old Henry Jowett's four sons, and possibly the least religiously committed, was Benjamin (1754-1836): accounts of the childhood of his more famous grandson reveal that the evangelical tradition, if somewhat vitiated, and a love of music was passed down through his stock too. ⁶

The musical tradition was as extensive as the evangelical: in the second generation Joseph organised concerts at Trinity Hall, while John's home was a centre of musical culture. A cameo of life there was provided by his friend, Christian Latrobe, father of the author of The Music of the Church, when he commented

What was my astonishment and delight, to find here a choir of vocal performers, the most perfect of its kind... They sang all Handel's Oratorios, or rather select portions of them with great precision... ⁷

John and Henry of Little Dunham sang tenor, the Cambridge Professor alto, John's two daughters treble, and their brother Henry base. Two other brothers no doubt also contributed for Joseph of Silk Willoughby was later to write hymn tunes, while Joshua sought to forget the business failures with which he, like his cousin Benjamin, was afflicted, by giving musical parties.

The Jowetts apparently felt no qualm about their musical activity. Occasionally and characteristically other evangelicals wondered whether they were right to devote their

6. Abbott and Campbell, op cit i pp 1-14; G Faber, Jowett (1957) pp 47-61. See above p 182.
 7. C Latrobe, Letters to my Children (1851) p 7.

limited time even to this 'delightful recreation', while Richard Cecil, unable to restrict himself to the daily fifteen minutes which he allowed for violin-playing, gave the instrument up entirely, a decision which testifies as much to the attractions of music as to evangelical strength of will.⁸ The status of music as a fashionable accomplishment caused others to fear that it might be one of the 'poms and vanities of the world': a Christian Observer contributor, ACG, warned that 'it would be...inconsistent... for...the child of God...to desire even the most elegant and refined of the pleasures of sense'.⁹ Nevertheless the vast majority of evangelical writers, including ACG himself, stressed that music was a gift of God, 'a relaxation so beneficial...that the time required for attaining a competent knowledge of the science would not be unprofitably employed'.¹⁰

A knowledge of music was profitable, evangelicals of all schools maintained, because music was an adjunct of worship and a means of enhancing devotion. In language clearly foreshadowing that of John Latrobe, DWH, another of the Christian Observer's correspondents, argued that music was

in the most elevated rank among her sister sciences...it is the only one which is to accompany us to another world, and to be a part of the employment of the blessed above... it is the only one which may be directly used in the worship of God.¹¹

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8. Josiah Pratt, op cit p 136; Teignmouth, op cit ii pp 327-28. Goode, Hey and Wilberforce were among those who curtailed the amount of time they spent on music: Goode, op cit p 17; Pearson, op cit i p 111; R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) v pp 165-66, 285; A M Wilberforce, op cit p 184. For the view that music wasted precious time see J H Pratt, op cit p 335.
9. CO xx (1821) p 352.
10. ER ii series xx (1823) p 222.
11. CO xx (1821) p 552.

Whereas the fashionable associations of many recreations caused evangelicals to dismiss them as essentially worldly, the over-riding example of the saints and angels in light enabled them to regard music as peculiarly innocent, 'a foretaste of that eternal bliss'.¹²

While its religious associations thus legitimised music, the cultural limitations reflected in those associations must not be overlooked. In an article in the Eclectic Review, reprinted in the Baptist Magazine, the study of music was justified on the grounds that 'if music were not capable of sub~~er~~ving a religious purpose, it would never have been made a part of Divine worship'. But the writer revealed both the inadequacies of his doctrine of creation and a consequent devaluation of culture, save as an instrument of religious utility, when he continued:

We might go further, and say, that we should not, in that case, have been made susceptible of the pleasures of music. He who created us what we are, as regards our physical capacities, has made us what we are for his own glory; and, in endowing us with this extraordinary faculty of giving melodious expression to our feelings, and in making us capable of the physical emotions produced by harmony, the Almighty doubtless had in view some end connected with that only worthy purpose of our being.¹³

Nevertheless, if evangelicals' interest in music centred upon and even stopped at its use in worship, this was in itself of cultural significance. By modern standards music played a negligible part in church services and

12. C Latrobe, op cit p 44.

13. ER ii series xx (1823) p 217; BM xvi (1824) p 108.

evangelicals deserve much of the credit both for enhancing its importance and for improving its quality. If the impetus came from dissenters, some Evangelicals were quick to follow their example, and produced their own psalm and hymn collections to replace the uncompetitive monotony of Sternhold and Hopkins: writing to his fellow Evangelical Edward Edwards in 1802, John Venn expressed the opinion that 'the singing has been a great instrument in the Dissenters' hands of drawing away persons from the Church, and why should we not take that instrument out of their hands. ¹⁴

Any attempt to appeal to the masses by the use of 'secular' hymn tunes was, however, vehemently opposed by Evangelicals and dissenters alike: according to the Evangelical Magazine the God of holiness should not be praised in the same style as the gods of licentiousness and vice. ¹⁵ The same article was printed in the Methodist Magazine, and its viewpoint clearly endorsed by the circular letter sent out by the missionary secretaries in 1832 which included the instruction:

discourage entirely the use of light and especially song tunes, which, though a very bad taste, have we regret to learn, been not only permitted, but encouraged, by the brethren on some of our stations. 'Christian psalmody' says a great authority, and a man of the finest taste, ought to be 'simple, and noble withal'. ¹⁶

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14. Quoted Hennell, op cit p 267. Cf The Record 26 September 1833. On Edwards see below p 288. Bickersteth, Cecil and Goode are among those whose published collections are cited in the British Library Catalogue.
15. EM ii series viii (1830) pp 53ff. Cf CO iv (1805) pp 212-14; ER ii series xxiv (1825) pp 122-23.
16. MM liii (1830) pp 96-99; T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 577.

Watson's disapproval may have been enhanced by the prevalent fear of worldliness, but he was merely reiterating common evangelical views, long held by the Methodist hierarchy. Wesley himself, as Dr Lawson has shown, favoured simple and stately measures, encouraged thoughtful rather than over-lusty singing, and was utterly opposed to fugues since the words could not be heard.¹⁷ Similar considerations presumably moved Conference of 1805 when it forbade the singing of different words at the same time, the use of recitatives and solos, and the introduction of any instruments other than the 'bass viol' into services.¹⁸

The passing of this legislation is but one indication of the extent to which public worship served as an encouragement to musical virtuosity. Fear that players would improperly seize the opportunity for display lay behind much of the debate on the use of instruments in worship.¹⁹ The need for some instrument to lead the singing, particularly that of larger congregations, was widely recognised; the growing preference for the organ can be related not only to its more stately tones, but also to the greater ease of controlling one rather than a multiplicity of instruments.²⁰

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17. Davies and Rupp (eds), op cit i pp 188-89, 201. Wesley's views were quoted in MM xxxviii (1815) p 866; xlvi (1823) p 809.
18. MM xxviii (1805) p 524.
19. That the possibility of abuse was no argument against the use of instruments was maintained in CO iv (1805) pp 212-14; EM i series xiii (1805) p 467; ER i series ii (1806) p 234. The two latter articles were reviews of a work condemning the use of instruments.
20. T P Bunting, op cit ii pp 230ff. Disputes over organs may thus throw light upon battles for power between clergy and laity in individual churches as well as in the connexion at large. For a discussion of the Leeds organ debate within the latter context see W R Ward, Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (1972) pp 144-45.

This was certainly the impression given by Thomas Jackson when he recollected Conference's by no means unanimous decisions to permit the construction of organs in certain chapels:

Into several of the Methodist chapels the choirs had introduced almost every variety of musical instrument, destroying the simplicity and devotional character of the singing, to the great annoyance of the preachers, and of the more sober part of the congregations; and they often threatened to withdraw their services altogether, unless they might be allowed to have their own way. In many places organs have corrected this evil; and when they are so used as not to overpower and supersede the singing of the congregation, but to guide and aid it, especially in large chapels, they are a real benefit; incomparably better than the 'flute, harp, sackbut, dulcimer, and all kinds of music', with which men of perverted taste used to stun the ears of our congregations when they stood up to sing the praises of God. 21

Jackson was able to support his claim that choirs and preachers were at odds by citing the example of Samuel Bradburn who locked his Wakefield choir out of their singing gallery in protest against their use of unsuitable tunes, and their practice of co-opting 'persons of lax morals'. 22 The case at Wakefield was not unique: in 1816 the Leaders' Meeting of the Canterbury society determined that 'No person shall be admitted into the Orchestra as a singer, who lives in

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21. T Jackson, Recollections of My Own Life and Times (1873) pp 133-34. For continued opposition see for example MM xli (1818) p 696, where it was argued that Paul and Silas managed to sing without instrumental accompaniment. The letter exemplifies the misuse of Scripture to substantiate a previously determined position: acknowledging that instruments were used in Old Testament times the writer denied that they were appropriate to the worship of 'that Being who is worshipped in spirit and in truth', Christ sang with his disciples but 'in what a ridiculous light would this solemn event appear, were we to imagine the Saviour of the world, pitching a sprightly tune, while as the manner of some in our day is, some of his disciples were screaming counter, and others of them roaring out the bass'.
22. T Jackson, Recollections of My Own Life and Times (1873) p 148. Samuel Bradburn, President of Conference 1799, was stationed at Wakefield in 1806 (K B Garlick, Mr Wesley's Preachers, 1977, p 11).

open habitual sin', and further that 'No person shall be permitted to retain his seat in the Orchestra whose behaviour is irreverent during Divine service'. Concerned to safeguard against every eventuality, the meeting also decided that choir members who subsequently fell 'into acts of immorality' should be subject to expulsion. ²³

The significance of these regulations, and of the more generalised complaints about the behaviour of choirs published in the periodicals, lies in the implication that Methodism and indeed evangelicalism in all its forms, provided musical opportunities for the community at large and not just for its own membership. ²⁴ Those tempted to irreverence during divine service presumably attended more to perform than to pray. Choral and instrumental classes were admittedly provided at the larger Mechanics' Institutes, but in view of the limited response to these organisations and the more numerous attendance at Methodist chapels, it seems reasonable to conclude that the latter were major centres for the dissemination of musical culture well into the nineteenth century. ²⁵ Indeed the contribution of evangelicalism to the popular appreciation of formal music may have been far more substantial than has yet been recognised: Dr Laquer points out that pieces by Handel and Haydn were performed by Ashton New Connexion Sunday School at their 1838 anniversary, and suggests in the words of a reviewer that classical music, 'as well as Milton and Bunyan, Watts and

23. J A Vickers, The Story of Canterbury Methodism (1961, 2nd edn 1970) pp 20-21.

24. For non-Methodist criticism of choirs see CO xxvi (1826) pp 19, 214-15, 340-41; ER iii series vi (1831) pp 478ff.

25. On the musical role of Mechanics' Institutes see E D Mackerness, A Social History of English Music (1964) pp 147-51. Dr Mackerness stresses the importance of eighteenth century Methodism in disseminating a taste for classical music, p 125.

Wesley, the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer' was instilled into Sunday School children. The case can however only be substantiated by many more local studies: until then, as David Martin sceptically implies, it remains unproven.²⁶

The contribution of Christian Latrobe to the popularisation of classical music, if less immediate, can be more easily confirmed. Believing that the English predilection for Handel carried with it an undue neglect of all other continental composers, Latrobe sought over a period of some twenty years to familiarise his countrymen with some of the 'works of the most eminent composers of Germany and Italy'. According to Gove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians 'many fine compositions, including much of Graun, Hasse, Haydn, and Mozart, were first introduced to the notice of the British public' by means of his six volume Selection of Sacred Music (1806-25).²⁷

The crucial - and unanswerable - question concerns the extent to which evangelicals' interests extended beyond 'sacred music' to classical music in general. Latrobe's early compositions were largely instrumental and included three sonatas, commended by Haydn. That he was however increasingly concerned with 'sacred music' is confirmed not only by the title of his magnum opus but also by his publication during the same years of several sets of anthems and a Moravian hymnbook.²⁸ There can be little doubt that

26. Laqueur, op cit pp xii, 86; D Martin, 'To School on Sunday', Times Literary Supplement, 29 April 1977.

27. For Latrobe's aims see the preface to the first volume. Works by C P E Bach, Glück, and Pergolesi were also included in his selection.

28. G Grove, Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1880, 5th edn 1954).

among his evangelical contemporaries many had a decided preference for compositions that aroused religious associations: one of Wilberforce's biographers recorded that it was the religious theme in music as in poetry that particularly moved him.²⁹ In some cases appreciation may have been as much associational as aesthetic, although it would be wrong to suggest that the two were in any way mutually exclusive: William Hey was critical of the acoustics during the first half of a performance of The Messiah, and (when he had located a more satisfactory position) deeply stirred by the Hallelujah Chorus, for it reminded him of his son who, he trusted, was even then 'singing that song with the happy spirits above'.³⁰

Some evangelicals assumed, in Rowland Hill's words, that all music should have a 'sacred end and design': the dissipations of Fribble, a character in his Village Dialogues, included violin-playing, and the exemplary Lovegood censured him for skipping and fiddling about the room like a monkey.³¹ Those who, like Hill, attempted to list innocent amusements often specified 'sacred' music: thus an Evangelical Magazine contributor of 1819 suggested that if a Christian needed a pleasing relaxation when he was not reading, he could properly turn to exercises in sacred music, instrumental and vocal.³²

29. Coupland, op cit p 209.

30. Pearson, op cit i p 111.

31. R Hill, Village Dialogues iii (1803) p 83; A Warning to Professors (1833 edn) pp 34ff.

32. EM i series xxvii (1819) p 537.

The context within which evangelicals were writing must however be noted. Much of the music available for family performance was vocal and evangelicals of all schools were agreed that Christians should not give voice to impure, immoral or impious ideas. Their unease about romance, evident in their attitudes to the theatre, may well have caused them to exclude many of the more popular songs from their repertoire: Hill was horrified that music should be used to celebrate 'the worst of passions'. Their concentration upon religious works was in part a reflection of a lack of 'unexceptionable' alternatives: according to the probably hypercritical Evangelical Magazine it was very difficult to find suitable songs to fill the vacuum between 'devotional psalmody' and 'light and trifling' airs. ³³

More positively evangelicals and evangelical periodicals assumed a responsibility to further the cause of religious as opposed to fashionable music, a responsibility which derived from their belief in the essential purity of the pursuit. ³⁴ Anxious to change the opinion of parents who indicted it as a fashionable accomplishment, they recognised the possibility of worldly corruption, and therefore, in the words of a Baptist Magazine poet, called upon Christians

33. ibid, xxix (1821) p 383, a review of Legh Richmond's 'The Gypsy's Petition' and 'The Negro Servant'; being the first Numbers of a Series of Songs of a Sacred Character, with an accompaniment for the Piano Forte; R Hill, A Warning to Professors (1833 edn) p 34. For the low calibre of 'trifling ballads' which Hill also opposed see the testimony given by Francis Place in Report from Select Committee on the State of Education with the Minutes of Evidence (1834, IUPS edn 1970) p 70.

34. See for example J Jowett, Lyra Sacra (1825), preface, highly praised in ER ii series xxvi (1826) pp 497ff. Cf the response to a similar work in EM ii series vii (1829) p 107.

to effect 'The Rescue of Music':

Listed into the cause of sin,
 Why should a good be evil?
 Music, alas, too long has been
 Prest to obey the devil.
 Drunken, or lewd, or light, the lay
 Flow'd to the soul's undoing,
 Widen'd and strew'd with flowers, the way
 Down to eternal ruin.

Who, on the part of God will rise,
 And innocent sounds recover;
 Fly on the prey, and take the prize,
 Plunder the carnal lover;
 Strip him of every melting strain,
 Of ev'ry melting measure;
 Music in Virtue's cause retain;
 Rescue the holy pleasure? 35

While sacred works were the most obviously innocent sounds, it would be wrong to assume that all evangelicals necessarily equated the latter with the former. The popular religious press was mandated to deal with specifically religious matters, with the result that non-sacred music was outside its area of responsibility. The failure of the Christian Observer and the Eclectic Review to discuss music other than the obviously religious can hardly be seen as significant when neither the Edinburgh nor the Quarterly Reviews wrote on musical matters. Moreover, the Eclectic did recommend The Harmonicum, a monthly journal of music which by no means restricted itself to sacred pieces. 36

It is impossible to draw any conclusions about dissenting practice for biographers make no mention of the nature of the music played by their subjects. Lives of

35. BM xiv (1822) p 528.

36. ER iii series vi (1831) p 252. The Harmonicum was published between 1823 and 1833. As very few articles are signed and the indexing is inadequate the nature and competence of any evangelical contributions cannot be assessed.

Anglicans yield little more information. There is reason to believe however that some Evangelicals far from restricting themselves to religious themes excluded from their repertoire only that which was regarded as 'exceptionable', and in so doing may have allowed themselves considerable latitude. While the Brontes were less constrained than some Evangelical children, it is not without significance that their extant albums of music contain 'not only the "Sacred Oratorios" but the "profane music" of the period, the fashionable arias and overtures from the romantic operas of Bellini, Donizetti and Auber'. 37

William Wilberforce, a more typical representative of the movement if only because others appealed to him for advice, told one such inquirer that 'the songs to be sung should be selected with some caution', but maintained that there was

nothing criminal in singing songs the words of which contain no sentiments improper for a Christian to utter. It must undoubtedly be our wish that they whom we most dearly love, should always have it in their view to please their God and Saviour, but this does not require us to be always speaking the sentiments or language of religion... 38

That others shared this viewpoint can be seen in one of the few debates about music in the Christian Observer. In 1821 the editors published a selection of five letters, which represented a cross-section of the viewpoints expressed in the substantial correspondence they had received in response to a query concerning the legitimacy of concert

37. W Gerin, Charlotte Bronte (1967) p 52.

38. Quoted Newsome, op cit pp 51-52.

attendance. None of the five condemned 'miscellaneous music' qua se: on the contrary even ACG, who was critical of concert-going, stressed the value of family performance and condemned any tendency to restrict children to sacred music alone.³⁹ For DWH, the belief that music was religiously sanctioned justified attendance not only at oratorios but also at symphony concerts.⁴⁰ The argument advanced by the later Eclectic reviewer, maybe in deference to the scruples of his readership, that men had been endowed with musical ability for specifically religious purposes, was explicitly repudiated by another contributor to the debate, on the grounds that beautiful scenery, architecture, sculpture, and painting, could all be innocently and lawfully admired without any religious feeling. Asked whether a Christian might legitimately attend a concert of secular music, he therefore responded

I cannot help thinking it might rather be asked, 'Why should it not be lawful for Christians?' as, surely, unless every kind of amusement unconnected with some positively religious duty be deemed unlawful, music cannot be so... 41

His conclusion, reiterated, if less confidently, by other contributors, constitutes yet another instance of the freedom of some Evangelicals from the religious constraints which so circumscribed others. It indicates too the extent to which some were influenced by cultural as well as religious-moral considerations in determining the legitimacy of pursuits.

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39. CO xx (1821) p 352: ACG was concerned that sacred music should not be thoughtlessly used for recreative purposes.
 40. ibid p 552. See above p 260.
 41. ibid p 349. Cf above p 261.

Card-playing, balls, and the like were condemned as frivolities: in these instances there was no benefit to be gained to compensate for the risk of worldly contamination. The risk at musical concerts was perhaps less acute. That it was run at all is proof of evangelicals' greater sympathy for cultural than for courtly pursuits: in the pre-Victorian age the one was markedly more concordant with seriousness and rationality than the other.

The obvious comparison however must be with the theatre. Evangelical suspicion of the senses was rarely voiced in reference to music, a fact which suggests that it was closely related to the fear of moral dissipation.⁴² Theatrical performances were conducive to immorality in a way that concerts of instrumental music were not. Paradoxically, the fact that music was in general a non-didactic art may have facilitated its acceptance by some evangelicals, who tended all too frequently to justify cultural activities because of the lessons that could be learnt from them. But arts which could communicate acceptable ideas could also be used to disseminate views of which evangelicals disapproved. If they did not always make it explicit evangelicals were aware of the synonymy of 'innocence' and 'harmlessness'.

It would be wrong however to suggest that fears of worldliness were completely absent from evangelical discussions on the public performance of music. But such

42. For exceptions see below pp 275-76.

fears were generally expressed in relation to performances of sacred rather than secular music, maybe because these, were the concerts most likely to appeal to the majority of evangelicals. From the beginning some evangelicals had been happy to support them believing that they were conducive to seriousness and a devotional frame of mind. Characteristically pragmatic, Wesley doubted whether an audience at a 1758 production of The Messiah 'was ever so serious at a sermon, as they were during the performance', and his approbation was shared by other patriarchs, Martin Madan, Thomas Haweis, and Henry Venn of Yelling.⁴³ Hey and Wilberforce attended oratorios as presumably did many of their evangelical contemporaries for the Record complained that 'many pious people' did not discern the evil in musical festivals, at which they were frequently performed.⁴⁴

The Record was no less in accord with patriarchal tradition than Wilberforce. In a laboured but often quoted analogy Newton was scathing about the behaviour of 'prisoners' who chose to sing about their plight and the offer of pardon, rather than availing themselves of it, while his close friend Cowper complained that 'ten thousand sit...content to hear...Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake':

Remember Handel? Who, that was not born
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,
Or can, the more than Homer of his age?
Yes - we remember him; and while we praise
A talent so divine, remember too

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43. Elliott-Binns, op cit p 81; A Skevington Wood, Thomas Haweis 1734-1820 (1957) p 89. All are cited in DNB.
44. The Record 1 October 1830; R I and S Wilberforce, Correspondence of William Wilberforce (1840) ii p 490, in which Wilberforce regretted the 'attendant circumstances' which were 'so sadly calculated to damp and dissipate those spiritual affections, which the music of itself is fitted to call forth'. For Hey's comments see above p 267.

That his most holy book from whom it came
Was never meant, was never us'd before,
To buckram out the mem'ry of a man. 45

Their view was shared not only by The Record, the most vocal and persistent antagonist of music festivals and oratorios, but also by the Evangelical Magazine, which, while appreciating the work of Handel because of the 'pleasing and instructive narratives it contains, all of which are taken from the Bible', was opposed to the theatricality of public performances. 46 And even the more cultured Eclectic Review was uneasy about 'the profanation of sacred music to mercenary purposes, as in oratorios'. 47 That four of the five Christian Observer correspondents were not opposed to oratorios scarcely balances out this weight of complaint. While written evidence provides no definitive guide to practice, it reinforces Canon Hennell's assumption that majority opinion operated against public performance of oratorios. 48

Some few evangelicals complained that when oratorios were performed in theatres they were polluted by the place, and in so doing showed how evangelical fear of the world could reach an almost pathological extreme. A Methodist Magazine correspondent denied that he would attend a theatre even to hear the Bible read; he therefore regarded oratorios as a subtle device of Satan for

If he can allure you to his own premises, he knows you will gradually become familiar with the place; and after having heard some Divine music there, you will, in time, without reluctance, listen to obscene songs. 49

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45. Cowper, op cit book vi 633, 635, 637, 645-52. Newton was quoted in EM i series xiii (1805) p 173; The Record 11 November 1829.
46. EM i series vii (1799) p 163; ii series x (1832) p 64.
47. ER i series ii (1806) p 234; ii series ii (1814) p 69; xx (1823) p 223.
48. M M Hennell, 'Evangelicalism and Worldliness 1770-1870', loc cit p 231.
49. MM xii (1818) p 856. Cf the views of ACG in CO xx (1821) p 349.

Oratorios were however opposed even when they took place in church. On more than one occasion the Record quoted with satisfaction Cobbett's theory that to hold festivals in churches was destructive of the establishment for it made them no different from playhouses.⁵⁰ As this suggests the fundamental complaint related not to the location but to the nature of the performance. Evangelicals' tendency to despise the senses was clearly revealed in the Record's refusal to accept that aesthetic appreciation could enhance devotion: if the plain majesty of the Word of God read silently and alone did not kindle fervour equal to that excited by songs and instruments, then the latter was nothing but the ebullition of a natural feeling in no way religious.⁵¹ The paper's belief that those who attended oratorios did not do so with a desire to worship was reinforced by the observation that afternoon performances at musical festivals were frequently followed by fancy dress balls which attracted the same clientele. Here at least 'the world' appeared 'in its own proper livery'.⁵² In this respect the balls were less insidious than the oratorios for it was the intermingling of sacred and secular in the latter that so horrified many evangelicals. For a hired singer to mouth words in which he did not believe, or to mimic the tones of the Almighty was blasphemy; for an audience to listen to the language of adoration for mere entertainment was profanity; devotion was

50. See for example The Record 14 October 1833. Cf CO ix (1810) pp 24-25. Musical festivals were forbidden on Methodist premises by the legislation of 1805. I have been unable to locate the statement quoted in Cobbett's writings. For an outline of some of his views which correspond closely to those of evangelicals see J W Derry, The Radical Tradition (1967) p 57.

51. The Record 1 October 1832.

52. ibid 11 November 1828; 20 September 1830; 24 and 28 October 1833.

being debased into an elegant pastime.⁵³ And so in 1809 the Baptist Magazine pointed out that Christ did not undergo his sufferings that man might be amused by them.⁵⁴ Two decades later Richard Watson, notwithstanding his love of music, warned his Methodist congregation that a forthcoming 'sacred musical festival' was but a reconciliation of Christ and Belial, an attempt to disguise the pleasures of sin under the garb of religion: 'Forsooth, these men are pledged to mime the sacrificial wailings of my blessed Lord; and to sound on catgut the groans which redeemed the world!'⁵⁵

Statements such as Watson's reveal how substantially some evangelicals' religious presuppositions inhibited their enjoyment of culture. Religion was for them not just a serious but a solemn matter, and as such could not easily be combined with anything that conformed to mere amusement. That cultural pleasures could be truly serious, albeit not necessarily in a narrowly religious sense, was not readily conceded. Thus the cultural exploration of a religious theme as in oratorios was discouraged save within a context of devotion. Believing that music was Biblically sanctioned some evangelicals appear largely to have restricted its use to those purposes to which it was apparently devoted in Scripture. When they elevated music above her 'sister arts' they were invariably concerned with religious utility not with cultural quality.

53. ibid 8 and 12 October 1829; 14 March, 18 November 1833.

54. BM i (1809) pp 367-69 'The nature of the evil of attending Oratorios'. The fear was also expressed that the mere moving of the passions might be mistaken for religious affection.

55. T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 459.

On the other hand the utilisation of music for religious purposes undoubtedly had cultural consequences. By emphasising the role of music in worship, evangelicals did much to extend the musical education and aesthetic experience of the communities in which they were involved. While most of the music which evangelicals enjoyed at church and at home was sacred, the door into the wider musical world had been opened for them. Moreover the belief that music was a peculiarly innocent recreation was one factor enabling some in the higher classes to disregard the constraints surrounding most fashionable pleasures and to attend concerts of both sacred and secular music. Thus if evangelical faith sometimes curtailed the enjoyment of any but the most obviously devotional pieces, it was also conducive to and compatible with the development of wider musical interests.

8. FAITH AND THE FINE ARTS

a. Evangelicals and art

Evangelicals who approved of musical concerts sometimes sought to convince those uncertain of their legitimacy by arguing that there was no more reason to condemn public performances of music than public exhibitions of art.¹ Similarly those who discussed innocent and rational recreations frequently bracketed drawing and music together as amusements appropriate for evangelical enjoyment.²

The parallel between evangelical attitudes to art and to music must not however be overstressed, for the fine arts lacked the Biblical sanction which was the motive force behind much evangelical appreciation of music. Whereas music played an important part in evangelical worship, it has traditionally been asserted that visual aids to devotion were eschewed, both on account of the priority which evangelicals accorded to verbal communication and as a residual reaction against Catholic 'idolatry': like the Puritans, Professor Horton Davies suggests, evangelicals 'exalted the ear-gate at the expense of the eye-gate of the soul'.³ A vehemently anti-Catholic Eclectic reviewer appealed 'to fact' - 'what devotion is produced by the works of art in churches in Italy?' - while John Russell, a

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1. Eg CO xx (1821) pp 348, 553.
 2. Eg Gisborne, op cit p 44.
 3. H Davies, Worship and Theology in England: from Watts and Wesley to Maurice (1961) p 236.

practising artist, denied that the pictures in Burleigh House Chapel did much to assist worship.⁴ Russell's appreciation of Gothic architecture was undoubtedly aesthetic, but the preference of others for it may well have derived as much from associational as from artistic considerations. Cecil regretted the use of any other style for he believed that the Gothic best evoked the desired associations: praise had echoed within such walls for generations.⁵ Dissenters, making a virtue of necessity, refused to allow the arts even this limited value, and denied that architecture had any part to play in enhancing worship. On the contrary one spokesman argued that

Any attempt to connect the arts with religion, and to blend the emotions which they inspire with the feelings of devotion, has been one of the great causes of destroying the simplicity and corrupting the purity of the gospel. The arts undoubtedly ought to be encouraged, they refine the pleasures of society and impart lustre and dignity to the national character: but the sanctuary of God is not the place for their display...⁶

A study of evangelical attitudes to the arts exposes many curious ironies. Evangelicals opposed any attempt to 'connect the arts with religion', but were apparently happy to connect religion with the arts. Religious paintings might not be acceptable in church, but they were among the artifices which 'refined the pleasures of society'. Objections to the use of religious themes in art are rare.

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4. J Russell, op cit pp 54-55; ER i series ii (1806) pp 389-90. The reviewer complained that falsehood was presented through the medium of art, and cited as instances the negro magus, the ox, and the ass, which he condemned as 'popish mysteries'.
 5. Williamson, op cit p 72; C Cecil, The Remains of the Rev Richard Cecil (1876 edn) p 50; 'the very damp that trickles down the walls, and the unsightly green that moulders upon the pillars are more pleasing to me from their associations, than the trim, finished, classic, heathen piles of the present fashion'.
 6. Jeremiah Ringletub, op cit pp 25f. Cf Satchell, op cit iii p 195.

On the contrary when the annuals flooded the market in the late 1820s, the Methodist Magazine urged its readers to pay particular attention to The Iris because its illustrations were exclusively concerned with Scriptural subjects.⁷ While evidence is necessarily scant, it is clear that some evangelicals displayed religious pictures in their own homes. The Brontes owned engravings of at least four of John Martin's highly dramatic paintings on Biblical themes.⁸ J W Cunningham listed in his will not only numerous family portraits, which the more affluent evangelicals like their contemporaries appear to have favoured, but also prints of St John and of Raphael's Virgin, and two 'of our blessed Lord', one after de Vinci.⁹

Evangelicals' apparent willingness to accept religious art in non-ecclesiastical contexts was confirmed by the Edinburgh Review, which condemned the cant and casistry of those who objected to the introduction of sacred subjects and expressions onto the stage but not onto canvas, condemning the one but not the other as 'a

7. MM lii (1829) p 835; liii (1830) p 833.

8. W Gerin, Charlotte Bronte (1967) pp 42-45, which includes a brief discussion of annuals, and of Martin's prolific contributions to them. On Martin see DNB and, the most recent work, C Johnston, John Martin (1974) which contains a brief memoir, bibliography and reprints of some of his paintings. The son of pious parents, Martin did not apparently share their faith, although his childhood familiarity with the Old Testament is reflected in his art. I have been able to discover very little about evangelicals' response to his work with which many would have been familiar through annuals. The absence of complaint implies acceptance. Praised by a correspondent of the Record, (6 June 1828), it was criticised by an Eclectic reviewer as much on aesthetic as religious grounds: 'it is irreverent at least to exhibit the Eternal Father in human form; but it is presumption which admits of no sort of excuse in an artist so inexpert in the management of the figure' (ii series xxiv, 1825, p 527).

9. A copy of the will dated 4 May 1861 is deposited in Dorset Record Office D 289/F 40.

blasphemous representation': 'Amusement is the object of both. And the instruments of communicating it, the artist and the actor, may be equally strangers to any serious impression'.¹⁰ The reviewer's criticism was not entirely just. Evangelicals who looked at pictures in the quietness of their own homes, or even perhaps at public exhibitions, were not exposed to those 'attendant circumstances' which rendered public performances so objectionable to them. More significantly there was a profound difference in nature between a picture which existed in its own right distinct from its creator, and a play or oratorio which in one sense only existed when given life by the performers. It was this distinction which the Edinburgh Review failed to consider when it complained that evangelicals approved of pictures of praying women, but disapproved of women praying on stage. But the one was a representation of a religious act, the other in evangelical eyes an imitation. Those who pretended to pray or who in oratorios aped the words of adoration were therefore regarded as impiously insincere, while the singer who took upon himself the role of God, impersonating the Almighty was adjudged guilty of blasphemy. In contrast the artist stood outside his work in a way not dissimilar to that of others who viewed it. Since the painting was not to be used in worship, there was no question of idolatry. On the contrary the artist who imaginatively reconstructed a religious scene merely enabled avid readers of the Bible more clearly to envisage events over which they had long exercised their imaginations.

10. Edinburgh Review liv (1831) pp 107-08.

This was the justification of religious art implicit in a brief discussion in an Eclectic Review article of 1821. The reviewer maintained that some Biblical events such as the act of Creation were beyond human representation and even the greatest artists consequently failed to depict 'so impalpable and inconceivable an energy'. The attempt 'transcended the legitimate boundaries of art'. Other Scriptural scenes, however, such as the Flood and the Last Judgment were 'capable of being elevated and expanded by the sublime delineation of poetry or painting', as the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, one of the 'proudest monuments of human genius' so supremely proved. ¹¹

The classical argument that it was the role of art to elevate and expand subjects of the highest order and hence to elevate and expand the human mind was regularly employed by Eclectic reviewers. ¹² The existence of a long established theory of art was perhaps one of the factors enabling evangelicals the more readily to accept the cultural exploration of a religious theme in that medium than in music. The models for western art were essentially classical. Western music in contrast was more immediately the product of the churches. Believing on both historical and Biblical grounds that music was an essentially religious pursuit, evangelicals tended to judge it by devotional criteria. Lacking any such rationale for art, they were more prepared to appraise it according to traditionally established aesthetic canons. Thus while oratorios, a comparatively novel form of culture, were sometimes condemned as religious

11. ER ii series xvi (1821) pp 220-21.

12. For a more extended discussion of evangelical appropriation and acceptance of classical theories concerning the arts see below pp 324-26, 336-37.

pursuits perverted to the purposes of amusement, religious paintings were praised as works of art which properly selected for their subjects themes which evangelicals regarded as the most important, sublime and interesting.

Evangelicals' interest in art was by no means confined to purely religious matter. Paradoxically, the fact that the fine arts lacked religious sanction of the sort accorded to music may have facilitated their wider acceptance. Since they were assumed to make no contribution to worship there could be no question of confining them to devotional purposes. In view of this some evangelicals rejected them as they rejected everything that served no immediate religious function.¹³ But the tendency of men like Fuller to judge all pursuits at the bar of moral and religious utility, and to depreciate anything that could not be so tested, was explicitly repudiated by John Foster in an article on the Elgin Marbles published in the Eclectic Review of 1812:

Put things in their right gradation, from the highest extreme to the lowest, and the man that gratefully exults in our having received so long from Judea, and indeed partly from Greece, the

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13. Eg J Hughes, A Tribute of Friendship (1829) p 3 where it is affirmed that Mrs Rebecca Wilkinson of Clapham Common, a Baptist, might have acquired a reputation as an artist 'had she not in the midst of a promising career, laid aside the pencil, and under a strong sense of duty, determined to occupy the leisure of a single life in a way most contributory to human happiness and the manifestation of the Divine glory'. Others sought to turn the arts to religious use. See for example the introduction to a series which ran for two years in the EM 'Of terms of art used by the apostle Paul derived from existing antiquities in the British Museum': 'My wish is - to suggest a few hints on the acquaintance of the apostle Paul with these very antiquities now in our possession as a nation; and by means of them to explain certain of his allusions hitherto imperfectly understood. It is true, they are but dead stones; yet with a little attention, we hear them speak, and bear a living testimony to the Gospel...' (1 series, 1818, p 13).

grand rectifier of our intellectual and moral faculties, in their most important relations - the Bible - will not therefore fail to acknowledge the value (though certainly small according to his scale) of these latest contributions of Greece to discipline our faculties to a more correct perception of beauty in forms. 14

Other Eclectic reviewers shared Foster's belief that the fine arts albeit of lesser value than religion, nevertheless enhanced life. Faced with the claims of an over-zealous practitioner, one denied that the study of Greek art was as valuable as the study of Greek 'poetry, history, philosophy, and theology, with all the light which they pour upon the character of man', but a genuine delight in painting, architecture and sculpture was regularly revealed in the periodical's artistic reviews.¹⁵ No attempt was made to provide a justification for the study of art; on the contrary reviewers assumed that their readers would like them regard the fine arts as inherently valuable. They were therefore vehemently opposed to iconoclasm. While appreciating that the Early Church had strong religious reasons for destroying pagan images, Foster, unlike Wesley, denied that Greek statues still evoked idolatrous sentiments, and criticised some of the early Christians for destroying them out of mere barbarism.¹⁶ Another reviewer was similarly disgusted by the

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14. ER i series viii (1812) p 357 reprinted in J Foster, Critical Essays (1888-95) ii. On Fuller see above p 237.
15. ER i series vii (1811) p 64. Reviewers' ready acceptance of the arts is reflected in i (1805) pp 783-86; iii (1807) pp 52-65; ii series vii (1817) pp 442-48; viii (1817) pp 539-47; xxi (1824) pp 216-24, 448-63; xxiv (1825) pp 519-27; iii series ii (1829) pp 233-40, 333-43, 'Publications of this kind (Flaxman's Lectures on Sculpture) are exceedingly to our taste; iii (1830) pp 58-64; v (1831) pp 369-70.
16. ER i series viii (1812) pp 357-60. On Wesley see Lecky, op cit iii pp 87-88.

philistinism of the Protectorate, and showed no awareness that this might have been religiously inspired:

The stern warriors and statesmen of the Commonwealth, had neither relish nor leisure for the pursuits of virtu; and we could have forgiven them their want of taste, had they not with mere sordid, money-making calculation, chosen to disperse those inestimable treasures, and dismiss to foreign countries productions of value too great to leave any hope of their re-acquisition.¹⁷

Far from aligning himself with the English Puritans, the reviewer attacked the present administration for similar short-sightedness and spoke out in favour of government spending on the arts:

The same absurd economy prevented the acquisition of the marbles of Egina (sic), of which the skill and enterprise of an Englishman had procured the right of refusal. We trust that the time of ill-judged parsimony, the constrained result of thoughtless extravagance, is gone by; and that a judicious application of the national resources will obtain for us those advantages, available on the spot, which our students have hitherto¹⁸ been compelled to seek in foreign capitals.

The other evangelical periodicals were perhaps more loyal to the established authorities than the Eclectic, but they too quietly echoed its concern to further the cause of the fine arts in Britain.¹⁹ The production of annuals, which owed their main attraction to the embellishments with which they were liberally bestrewed, was on the whole welcomed, in the words of the Evangelical Magazine, as a 'noble effort

17. ER ii series xxiii (1825) p 278.

18. ibid pp 279-80. The discovery of statues on Aegina 'not inferior to the celebrated sculptures of the Elgin collection' was noted with interest in CO x (1811) p 722.

19. Dissenting insistence on the right to criticise both the ecclesiastical establishment and the government of the day was a major factor causing Anglican withdrawal from the Eclectic Review (J E Ryland, ed, The Life and Correspondence of John Foster, 1846, i pp 374ff).

to improve the taste and to encourage the fine arts too much depressed in this great mercantile community'.²⁰ The Record especially in later years was predictably more critical, condemning annuals as frivolous, devoid of right principle, and sometimes indecent.²¹ It also objected to the exhibition of Titian's Venus.²² But the paper was by no means totally opposed to works of art: from time to time it communicated information about them, and a correspondent of 1833 who complained about the indelicacy of some of the pictures on display at the Dulwich Picture Gallery, argued that these should be kept in one room for those who wished to see them so that others could satisfy their love of the arts without blushing.²³

While the Eclectic Review was in general less moralistic in its outlook, some of its reviewers shared the Record's qualms. One questioned whether the publication of pictures of naked Greek gods was compatible with 'purity of mind and genuine delicacy', and criticised the Royal Academy practice of drawing from life, 'flattering the passion for nudity', as 'needless and pernicious'.²⁴ The staunch anti-Catholic complained about the display in church of 'heathen deities' and naked statues such as that of a renowned sea-captain, a sin 'against naval order, correct taste, national decorum, and Christian morality'. Nevertheless even he was not opposed to the exhibition of such

20. EM ii series vii (1829) p 495. Cf MM li (1828) p 834.

21. The Record 8 December 1831; 30 December 1833.

22. ibid 20 November 1828. Cf 19 September 1833.

23. ibid 5 September 1833. Cf 4 June, 24 August 1829.

24. ER i series vi (1810) pp 626-27.

works in the National Gallery where visitors knew what to expect: 'We are no fanatics; we can tolerate a little heathenism here'.²⁵

It is within this context of a substantial divorce between religion and art, the exclusion of the latter from churches but its ready acceptance often on its own terms in non-ecclesiastical contexts, that evangelical attitudes to art must ultimately be assessed. If the inconsistencies in those attitudes can to some extent be explained, they cannot entirely be dismissed. It was perhaps an attempt to impose consistency that led to the traditional assumption that evangelicals were aesthetically insensitive. It is probably true as their biographers have claimed that their tastes were in many cases literary and intellectual rather than artistic.²⁶ It is more certainly true that their appreciation of the written and spoken word and their dislike of Catholicism caused them sometimes indiscriminately to devalue non-verbal modes of communication in church. But it does not therefore follow that they emulated puritan philistinism by condemning the arts in every walk of life. On the contrary the evidence seems to suggest that save within the context of worship evangelicals welcomed the fine arts, regarding them as pleasurable and civilizing facts of life.

25. ibid ii (1806) p 390. For his anti-Catholicism see above p 278.

26. Eg Furneaux, op cit p 279. See further chapters 9 and 10 below.

b. The artists of evangelicalism

In accordance with this belief many evangelicals were happy to practise the arts. Moreover, whereas evangelical musicians were famed if at all for producing editions of sacred music, evangelical artists explored a far wider range of subject matter. Thomas Gisborne might recommend landscape drawing on the grounds that this enhanced awareness of the works of God, but neither Richenda Cunningham nor Edward Edwards, who nearly proposed to her sister, confined themselves to such obviously devotional material.²⁷ Mrs Cunningham's Nine Views of the Continent, the profits of which were to be devoted to 'charitable purposes, but particularly to the negro and Indian education, the Hibernian, and the female prison societies', are mainly of objects of architectural interest. Edwards favoured similar subjects: over one third of the drawings displayed in a 1973 exhibition 'The Town Scene' at the King's Lynn Museum came from his hand.²⁸

That his work was thus exhibited is some indication of its merit. Assessment is of course difficult for amateur standards were far higher in the early nineteenth century than in that which followed. To twentieth century lay eyes Mrs Cunningham's work is remarkably good: the

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27. Gisborne, op cit p 44. The Edwards papers at the King's Lynn Museum include his 'Vita Brevis': born 1766, BA (Cantab) 1787, 1788 Fellow of Corpus Christi, 1791 Lecturer of Lynn, 1799 Rector of St Edmund's, North Lynn, 1842 Vicar of East Winch, died 1849. For Edwards' friendship with the Gurneys whom he influenced towards evangelical faith see Hare, op cit i pp 190-92.
28. Nine of them are illustrated in the exhibition catalogue. I am grateful to Rev W Jacob of Salisbury who supplied me both with this catalogue and a photocopy of the 'Vita Brevis'. A copy of Mrs Cunningham's book is lodged in the British Library.

buildings at which she was most skilled are intricately detailed while the tiny figures are lively and natural. She had no doubt benefited from good teaching for the Gurney girls had enjoyed the instruction of John Crome, one of the founders of the Norwich School. ²⁹

The competence of other evangelical practitioners of the fine arts can be more confidently determined, for there were many professionals among them, who achieved royal or aristocratic patronage, and in some cases exhibited at the Royal Academy. Undoubtedly the evangelical whose reputation was to prove most lasting was Thomas Sheraton (1751-1806), a Baptist. As the editor of a recent work on Sheraton Furniture notes, very little is known about him, and virtually nothing about his first forty years, during which his name was established. He published religious tracts as well as his famous Cabinet Directory, and was ordained in 1800 to assist in the ministry of a religious community in Stockton. By 1804, Ralph Fastnedge suggests, his mind had given way... ³⁰

A study of evangelical artists is beset by similar tantalising silences. Thus little more is known about Sheraton's fellow Baptist, Thomas Holloway (1748-1827), who was born into a dissenting family and, after examining the doctrines and practice of various denominations, was baptised on profession of faith along with Joseph Hughes. ³¹

29. Swift, op cit pp 8-9. On Crome see DNB.

30. R Fastnedge, Sheraton Furniture (1962) is prefaced by a short account of Sheraton's life. See also DNB.

31. Leifchild, op cit p 33.

According to one of his executors, who published a brief memoir, lucrative business opportunities were open to him as the eldest son, but he rejected these and chose instead to be apprenticed to an engraver. His increasing reputation brought him into acquaintance with the leading artists of the day, one of whom, Benjamin West, gained him access to Windsor. Appointed royal engraver, he was given the sole right to make a new engraving of the Raphael cartoons. His biographer paid tribute to his charity, noted that he sometimes acted as a supply preacher, and promoted the dissenting interest wherever he went. His Christian zeal was however 'well-regulated'.³²

Even less information is immediately available on the Huguenot Rigaud family. John Francis (1742-1810) and his less renowned son Stephen Francis Dutilh (1777-1861), exhibited at the Royal Academy: the father, an academician and historical painter to Gustavus IV of Sweden, numbered among other commissions ceiling decoration at Windsor, and the restoration of ceiling and staircase paintings at the old British Museum.³³ A manuscript memoir was available to the compiler of the DNB entries: if still extant this is not listed at the National Registry of Archives.³⁴

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32. Memoir of the late Mr Thomas Holloway by one of his Executors (1827). See further DNB.
33. The works which Rigaud and other evangelical academicians (discussed below) exhibited are listed in A Graves, The Royal Academy of Arts: a complete dictionary of contributors and their work...1769 to 1904 (1905-06). The Rigauds are also cited in DNB and in Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (revised edn 1920-25).
34. The registry which is dependent upon the submission of information from personal and public archives, has attempted to compile an index of persons based upon DNB.

In view of this shortage of accessible material, the analysis which follows can be no more than a prologomenon towards a more substantial study of evangelical artists, a study based on any unpublished papers that may still exist, and preferably employing the skills of an art as well as an ecclesiastical historian. It is possible, even assuming the availability of material, that such a study would prove disappointing: the family biography of the Taylors of Ongar, engravers for several generations, yields little information about the attitude of evangelical artists to their work, and this may well reflect the extent to which art was automatically accepted as an appropriate profession for a Christian. ³⁵

Nevertheless there were bound to be some clashes between religious and professional demands, and discovery of the way in which evangelical artists responded to these is crucial to a full understanding of evangelical attitudes to art. Tentative suggestions only can be proffered on the basis of a brief preliminary examination of three of the evangelical academicians who were in their own day most renowned outside evangelical circles.

Relationships with fellow artists, with aristocratic patrons, generally essential for professional advance, and with clients inevitably brought evangelicals into close contact with 'the world'. When John Jackson (1778-1831), future

35. I Taylor, op cit i passim. In 1791 Isaac Taylor sen. won a Society of Arts award; he continued to engrave, exercising a tent-maker ministry after ordination, and trained his six children in the art. A list of Isaac Taylor jun.'s book illustrations is supplied in H Taylor, 'City Scenes' 1806 (1913). Before becoming an itinerant preacher George Burder was apprenticed to Taylor sen.'s father (H F Burder, op cit pp 10ff).

portrait painter to the Wesleyan Conference, moved to London seriously to commence his studies he informed his parents that he had made 'a serious acquaintance... which I am sorry to say I think is almost the only example amongst the great number of artists in London'.³⁶ The Methodist Magazine gives the impression that Jackson continued to feel this want, lamenting that the company which he was obliged to keep sometimes robbed him of his peace.³⁷

The pious obituarist, who certainly exaggerated Jackson's artistic ability, probably also over-estimated the extent to which he conformed to the expected evangelical pattern. The testimonies of his fellow artists give no indication that he was either ill-at-ease in mixed company or made non-evangelicals uncomfortable by his religious scrupulosity. On the contrary he appears to have maintained cordial relations both with his artistic colleagues and with the world at large. Benjamin Haydon a fellow student, recorded

It was impossible not to like Jackson. His very indolent and lazy habits engaged one. His eternal desire to gossip was wonderful. Sooner than not gossip, he would sit down and talk to servants and valets, drink brandy and water with them, and perhaps sing a song. He would stand for hours together with one hand in his trousers' pocket, chatting about Sir Joshua and Vandyke, then tell a story in his Yorkshire way, full of nature and tact, racy and beautiful, and then start off anywhere, to Vauxhall or Covent Garden, 'to study expression and effect'.³⁸

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36. Quoted H C Morgan, op cit p 24, a work which includes lengthy extracts from Jackson's unpublished letters.
37. MM liv (1831) p 511.
38. T Taylor (ed), Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon from his Autobiography and Journals (2nd edn 1853) i p 45. On Haydon who was eventually imprisoned for debt see DNB.

Francis Chantrey, who was Jackson's companion on a visit to Rome, regarded him 'as easy and accommodating to a fault' and apparently remained ignorant to the last of his friend's religious persuasion:

Since his death I have heard that latterly he spent much of his time with the Methodists - consequently some if not much of his money must have been swallowed by those holy sinners. So close was he on this subject that I never discovered his inclination either by his conversation or manner. 39

Such statements inevitably raise questions concerning the depth of Jackson's evangelical commitment. Dr Morgan who has studied Jackson's life and works argues that the charge of indolence must be understood in the light of Haydon's own excessively high standards; Haydon himself admitted that Jackson worked hard when his allowance was cut off. 40 James Northcote whose comments on Jackson were frequently barbed, acknowledged that his anecdotes were always innocent and agreeable, and suggested that it was this gentleness and gentility that gained him an affluent clientele. 41 Even granted these qualifications the fact remains that Jackson suffered neither from the tortured anxiety to spend every moment aright nor from a pressing evangelistic impulse.

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39. Quoted H C Morgan, op cit p 193, who suggests (p 132) that the penury in which Jackson left his second wife, Matilda (née Ward) was due to her own extravagance, On Chantrey see DNB and for the trip to Rome, A Cunningham, The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects vi (1833) p 282.
40. Morgan, op cit p 32 concludes that Jackson was 'fairly normal and somewhat lazy'.
41. E Fletcher (ed), Conversations of James Northcote RA with James Ward... (1901) pp 226-28. Northcote and Ward, fellow academicians with Jackson, who married the latter's daughter, are both cited in DNB. In a hagiographical article in MM cxviii (1895) pp 583-89, 649, which seeks to give Jackson preeminence even over Reynolds and Lawrence, in turn the leading portrait painters of the day, Ward is described as a sincere Christian. I have been unable to confirm this or to determine how fully Mrs Jackson shared her husband's faith.

Yet it would be wrong to cast doubt on his commitment for these reasons alone. Converted, according to the Methodist Magazine, in a 1793 revival, he remained a loyal Methodist, meeting in class, for the rest of his life, writing in 1826 to a brother

this world with all that it can offer is a mere bauble, and few persons of my age have experienced more of its frowns, its flattery, its goods, and its ills; we are well acquainted I can assure you and the more we are so, the less I feel disposed to court or to fear it. 42

The letter may provide a hint towards understanding Jackson. Unlike some evangelicals who jibbed even at the mention of Covent Garden or Vauxhall, he was not afraid of the world. While he retained a belief in its ultimate vanity, he accepted both 'its goods and its ills' rather than fleeing fearfully from them. He was perhaps typical of the many evangelicals, lambasted by their leaders and frequently neglected in a study of this kind, who, as the movement became more respectable, combined personal piety with a ready acceptance of 'the world'. Their faith if less fervent than that of others was also less fraught. For them there need be no conflict between religion and art.

If John Jackson showed some of the traits common to a certain form of second generation evangelicalism, characteristics associated with the first were well represented in another portrait painter, John Russell (1745-1806). 43

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42. Quoted Morgan, op cit p 143; MM liv (1831) p 511. A letter in Methodist Archives confirms that Jackson was in Joseph Butterworth's class. Allan Cunningham's suggestion (op cit p 291) that at the end of his life Jackson suffered from religious despondency 'frequenting prayer meetings' probably derives from Chantrey's inaccurate use of the word 'latterly'.
43. Russell recorded that he was converted at 7.30 p.m. on 30 September 1764 (Williamson, op cit p 9).

Russell's patrons, clients, and colleagues, could not but be aware of his faith, for he recorded in his diary for 1767 'Lord Montague said my manner was hateful so like a Methodist, and would frighten anyone from religion', and three months later,

We talked religion over tea. I perceived that he (Lord Aylesford) wanted me gone, but I thought fit to break through good manners rather than withhold any blessing from a child of God, and so staid four hours. ⁴⁴

This cannot simply be dismissed as the brashness of a new convert which would mellow as he matured, for in later life Russell still tended to take advantage of his subjects' captive position: on 25 November 1801 he 'endeavoured to speak a few words of instruction to an old lady sitting to me but could make no impression'. ⁴⁵

Russell might try to turn his profession to religious use but he nevertheless believed that it was hazardous to his own spiritual well-being: 'in much business all day' he noted earlier the same month 'but kept watchful being without temptation'. ⁴⁶ Social gatherings of fellow artists, such as the Royal Academy dinners, could to some extent be avoided: whenever he attended them Russell left early and noted in 1773 that he was 'nearly choked by a fishbone, because of going to the R A'. ⁴⁷ The company of potential clients could not however so easily be eschewed. Russell's diary entry for

44. ibid pp 13, 16.

45. J Russell, Ms Diary lodged in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum (86 FF 49).

46. ibid 5 November 1801.

47. Williamson, op cit pp 33-34.

4 December 1801, if more extended than some, is typical:

Was exposed to temptation at the house of Dr -----, a great, rich and highly related clergyman, but a proud man of the world, who had invited some distinguished men to meet me, but I escaped without injury tho (sic) I was in great fear - tried to avoid their company but could not. I thank God I received no harm praying for deliverance. Oh what a snare is the world to a Christian man.

But Russell never assumed that it presented greater snares to artists than to other Christians whose professions similarly necessitated involvement in worldly company. Throughout his writings his fears related to those with whom he was obliged to mix not to the nature of the work itself. Indeed whereas evangelicals tended to disapprove of biographies which commemorated the irreligious, unless moral lessons could be clearly drawn from them, they did not extend the same complaint to portraiture.⁴⁸ It can safely be assumed that Russell, an enthusiastic supporter of the Evangelical Magazine, for which he supplied portraits, shared that periodical's antipathy to the stage: in 1768 he took Miss Hannah Faden, to whom he was to propose a year later, 'to hear Romaine. I conclude ~~he~~ to be a converted person now, and I delivered her a letter concerning the stage'.⁴⁹ Yet by the end of his career Russell, like Jackson, had acquired an extensive theatrical clientele, painting among others the actress Mrs Scott Waring who, his biographer records, 'possessed a somewhat battered reputation'.⁵⁰

48. See above p 216.

49. Williamson, op cit pp 20-21, and for Russell's connexion with the EM p 95. Russell married Miss Faden on 5 February 1770.

50. ibid pp 80-81. Cf H C Morgan, op cit pp 95, 101, 109, 115, 125-26.

There is no indication that Russell whose sensitivity of conscience cannot be doubted, was aware of any inconsistency in his behaviour.⁵¹ While he seized every opportunity to further the cause of religion he does not appear specifically to have justified his portraits of the ungodly on the grounds that he might be 'useful' to them. Materially they were frequently of use to him and Russell was happy to accept any proffered assistance for his growing family. Colonel Grove was

a Deist, a man of very depraved morals, but has been raised up to serve me, when(sic) it shall not be accounted for but from Providence, who will feed his people by ravens as well as men.⁵²

It was clearly impracticable for an artist to pick and choose his clients, and it seems probable that Russell accepted the obligation to paint according to order, as an integral part of a job which was the divinely sanctioned means of feeding his family. If the profession itself was legitimate then no further thought need be given to the particularities of the exercise.

This attitude to artistic employment was made explicit by the sculptor John Bacon (1740-99) who formed a triumvirate with Russell and Francis Rigaud, living like them and Jackson after them in the artists' quarter of London, Newman Street. Bacon was a close friend of John Newton, a member of the original CMS Committee, and one of the few lay members of the

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51. Russell's diaries and journals are largely written in Byrom's shorthand. No sense of inconsistency can be detected in the few volumes of which transcriptions are available, nor does Williamson, who had access to a wider range of material, refer to any such unease.
52. Williamson, op cit p 81.

Eclectic Society. ⁵³ A brief memoir was written by Richard Cecil who asked his friend

'Upon what principle.. do you continually labour to meet the taste of such sickly wanderers?'... 'I consider' said he, 'that profession in which I am providentially placed, and prosperously and honourably succeeded, to be as lawful as any other that is not concerned in furnishing the necessities of life; besides which, part of it, especially the monumental, may be employed to an important moral purpose; but the truth is, if the work itself be innocent, the workman I hope is not accountable for the abuse made of it; and as the world will have not only its necessaries, but its toys, I may as well be the toy-man as any other'. ⁵⁴

Bacon's claim that the construction of monuments, in which he was primarily engaged, could be tuned to moral use, however sincerely believed, has to be condemned as unduly naïve. Even if, as Cecil claimed, he refused to execute memorials of which either the design or the inscription were unchristian, he was no more free than Russell or Jackson to refuse to commemorate individuals of whose morals he disapproved. ⁵⁵ Indeed the first of several commissions he received for Westminster Abbey was for a bust of Lord Halifax, who loved horse-racing and kept a mistress. ⁵⁶ Moreover it is difficult to believe that the easily comprehensible symbols of charity and other virtues which are the hallmarks of his monuments were so different from those commonly employed

53. J H Pratt, op cit pp 97-98, 130-31; Stock, op cit i p 69; B Martin, John Newton (1950) p 322.

54. R Cecil, Memoir of John Bacon esq RA with Reflections drawn from his Moral and Religious Character (1801) pp 93-94. The CO i (1802) p 521 denied that the last statement illustrated the religious principle by which Bacon was influenced and was afraid that it might be misconstrued. The objection constitutes yet one more instance of 'evangelicals' inability theologically to accommodate activity that was not obviously religious.

55. R Cecil, op cit pp 37-38.

56. A Cox-Johnson, John Bacon RA 1740-99 (1961) p 15. Bacon's most notable commission was for a monument of Lord Chatham erected in the Abbey. Subsequently the nation's heroes were commemorated in St Paul's Cathedral: Bacon's monuments of John Howard, Dr Johnson and Sir William Jones were among the first to be erected there.

as positively to further the cause of morality. ⁵⁷

It is possible that Bacon was pushed into defending his profession by the importunity of Cecil, who having given up even the leisure pursuits he dearly loved for the sake of religion, found it hard to comprehend how Christians could engage in any but the most utilitarian of non-religious employment. Characteristically when he came across lay Christians eminent in their professions, he suggested that God used this means of proving that the Christian faith was not merely exemplified in clergymen who had a vested interest in its dissemination. ⁵⁸ Notwithstanding his claim that his argument was 'not advanced to the prejudice of the arts ... but ... to shew the superiority of religion', he used an approbatory memoir of a leading sculptor to warn his readers against over-valuing artistic puruists. ⁵⁹

Bacon's preeminence in his own day can be confirmed both by reference to the numerous major commissions he received, and to the multiplicity of his works scattered throughout the country. Like Jackson he was perhaps aided by courtly manners, certainly by royal patronage, although his fellow artists who regarded him as unscrupulous became increasingly hostile as Bacon became ever more

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57. ibid p 16, where the symbol which Bacon most commonly employed is described: he invariably represented charity by a pelican feeding its young with blood from its own breast. For a cruel and possibly apocryphal anecdote on its use see A Cunningham, op cit iii (1830) p 243. Cunningham reprinted from Cecil three of the hundreds of epitaphs which Bacon composed in an attempt at graveyard edification (p226). He was a better sculptor than poet.
58. R Cecil, op cit p 88.
59. ibid pp 92, 100-10.

successful. ⁶⁰ Dr Ann Cox-Johnson concludes

In his own day, he was more than well-known; to many of the educated public his name would have been considered almost synonymous with the word sculpture. The demand for his work came not only from the capital but from all over the country and from abroad. ⁶¹

Yet if Cecil is to be believed Bacon was indifferent to his own work maintaining

that, if he worked on a thousand blocks, they remained but dead forms - that a few sparks of even natural life, which he could not produce, seemed to exceed them all. ⁶²

Here once again is exemplified the evangelical tendency unduly to depreciate human artefacts, because they could not compete with the work of God, a tendency all the more striking because attributed to one who spent his life in their production. The propriety of the attribution is confirmed by the epitaph which Bacon himself composed for his grave, an epitaph which suggests, that, if he did not altogether disregard his artistic achievements at the time, he was unable to grant them any meaningful place in his religious schema:

What I was as an artist, seemed to me of some importance while I lived: but what I really was as a believer in Christ Jesus, is the only thing of importance to me now. ⁶³

A brief consideration of the sons of Russell and Bacon who perpetuated the family friendship begun by their fathers, forms a fitting postscript to this chapter. Both

60. A Cox-Johnson, op cit pp 11-12, 19, where Bacon's suggestion that he should receive the commissions for all national monuments at a slightly lower fee is dismissed as a joke. Dr Cox-Johnson points out (p 21) that stories such as these derive from Cunningham who never knew Bacon, and who based his account on hearsay and the gossip of hostile artists. If it is true that Bacon used royal patronage to obtain the Chatham commission, circumventing the proper competitive channels then the charge of unscrupulousness is well-justified.

61. ibid p 43.

62. R Cecil, op cit p 94.

63. ibid p 21.

John Bacon junior (1777-1859) and William Russell (1780-1870) abandoned the professions to which they had been bred and in which both had shown considerable facility.⁶⁴ Bacon's diaries and letters reveal that he, like the sister whose memoir he published, was highly introspective, suffering from intense religious depression as a result of his reliance upon the fluctuations of feeling: 'a cold barren week' he recorded on 22 March 1817, 'though no actual sin'. A popular speaker at CMS and BFBS meetings he was terrified lest he gave the impression of being more godly than he knew himself to be.⁶⁵ If his apprehension testifies to his deep-rooted honesty, his conviction of his own sinfulness sometimes reached megalomaniac proportions:

O Lord thou Son of David, I will now put thy grace and power to a far more severe test than it was ever subjected to whilst Thou wast upon earth. I bring Thee the most diseased victim...I now put thy power and mercy to the greatest test it has known.⁶⁶

For a man of this temperament inheriting both his father's tendency towards miserliness and his unpopularity in the artistic world, the financial pressures of professional practice constituted a serious spiritual trial.⁶⁷ Bacon could not understand why God allowed him to be distracted by business

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64. For lists of their works exhibited at the Royal Academy see Graves, op cit. Bacon referred to their continuing friendship in his ms diary 25 January 1823.
65. See for example the entry for 26 April 1817: 'O how little are these public appearances a criterion of the state of the heart'. His Memoir of Miss Ann Bacon... (1813) is a useful illustration of experience-centred evangelical religion.
66. Bacon, Ms Diary, 27 (or 29) May 1817. Cf 4 August 1821; 15 February 1823.
67. Cecil sought to play down Bacon sen.'s closeness with money but Ann Cox-Johnson accepts that Cunningham was right to criticise him in this respect while pointing out that Bacon urged his family not to stint themselves on holiday (op cit p 20).

failures consequent upon his substantial investment in property:

The mysterious dealings of God in providence is I find ever from time to time my grand difficulty. I do not desire great things in this world, but I desire such competency and such temporal circumstances as shall not oblige me to think or care about the things of this life. And as we are warned against being choaked with the thorns and cares of this world, it is a difficulty with me to fathom the reason why worldly difficulties are conducive to the health of the soul; they cannot be experienced without more or less and of necessity engaging the mind and the attention. 68

While the firm that bore his name continued to churn out monuments at a great rate Bacon retired prematurely from active involvement.

William Russell ceased to exhibit at the Royal Academy after his ordination in 1809. According to his father's biographer he 'took a vow never to touch pencil or brush again, for fear that his love for art might interfere with or displace his spiritual duties'. He remained Rector of Shepperton, Middlesex, for the rest of his life, about which little is known. 69

Absence of information precludes firm conclusions. Evangelicals like Russell who gave up cultural pursuits to follow what they regarded as a greater calling have perhaps received an unduly harsh press: those who praise Schweitzer cannot logically condemn Russell. Moreover, if

68. Bacon, Ms Diary 9 May 1822. Cf 5 and 17 March, 30 August 1820; 26 October 1824.

69. Williamson, op cit p 99. There are no personal papers either at the Greater London Record Office, or among the parish records.

Williamson's report is accurate, Russell's decision to renounce painting even as a leisure pursuit was, like Cecil's renunciation of music, the product not of philistinism but of profound appreciation of an engrossing activity.⁷⁰ All the available evidence suggests that evangelicals approved of art both as an embellishment of society and as a profession proper for Christian pursuit. Some evangelicals, most notably Jackson, appear to have engaged in it without qualm. The unease felt by others, John Russell in the first generation and John Bacon in the second, related not to artistic activity itself but to its attendant worldly circumstances: John Bacon could no more have coped with any other profession, while his publications in the 1840s reveal that he retained an interest in the arts to the end of his life.⁷¹ Nevertheless some slight caveat has to be introduced. Art might be a desirable embellishment of society but it was no more than an embellishment, in the disparaging language of Richard Cecil and Bacon's father, a toy to be contrasted with true religious treasure. Bacon's epitaph remains sad testimony to the inability, even of an evangelical firmly committed to art, theologically to reconcile 'what I was as an artist' with 'the one thing of importance to me'.

70. See above p 260.

71. J Bacon, 'Remarks on Monumental Architecture', Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society i (1843) part ii pp 117-26; A Letter to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel...on the Appointment of a Commission for Promoting the Cultivation and Improvement of the Fine Arts with some Suggestions respecting a former Commission, denominated 'The Committee of Taste' (1843). Bacon revealed not only his continuing interest in the arts and approval of government sponsorship but also a forty-year grievance against the Committee of Taste, an amateur body which had sought to alter some of his designs and those of his father.

9. FAITH AND FANCY

a. To read or not to read: the spectrum of evangelical opinion

Richard Cecil's library and written remains testify to his widespread familiarity with secular literature. Nevertheless in the course of a serious illness, he determined in the event of recovery, to read nothing but the Bible. ¹ He noted in his diary some eight years later:

Dr Addison's Spect. and alii literati. There is one thing which I am not able to teach you - and that is to consider all these men and things as nothing. They talked and wrote about nothing...²

Cecil's was the most notable renunciation of literature but references to others recur in evangelical biographies and obituaries. Miss Ann Price had been converted through reading Thornton Abbey and delighted in Watts's poems but decided to discard them:

I have been so much afraid lest reading Poetry should produce spurious enjoyments and improper feelings, that I have determined to read nothing in future but the Scripture, in order that my sentiments and experience may be derived from a pure source, the Word of God.³

The motivation for such sacrifices is clearly discernible. Evangelical single-mindedness most evident in Cecil militated against the reading of literature unconnected with the 'one thing needful'. More seriously many works appeared not merely irrelevant but antagonistic to

1. Josiah Pratt, op cit p xxv. A typewritten list of c 240 volumes from Cecil's library is deposited at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.
2. R Cecil, Ms Diary p 46, entry dated 20 August 1806, held at Ridley Hall.
3. BM iv (1812) pp 339-43.

religion, being immoral, impious or both. The power of the imagination could render their pernicious ideas very attractive. Fear of imaginative facility was at the root of much evangelical suspicion of literature, not only Miss Price's, but also that of evangelicals less strict in their attitudes.⁴ Imagination was a 'a seductive faculty' which, unless controlled by reason, was all too liable to lead men - and more particularly women - astray. Henry Thornton like many evangelical parents regretted its predominance in his children, and claimed that it made many 'err long and much from the truth'.⁵ Assuming that religious truth was conceptual, a matter of doctrine and precept, evangelicals felt no need of an imaginative way of approaching and apprehending it. God had given not a book full of stories but a book full of statements.

Nevertheless the sanction of Scripture precluded categorical condemnation of the imagination. God had shown

That it is not only innocent, but laudable, to consecrate the powers of taste and fancy to his glory, by himself condescending to use the language of poetry, and the most splendid

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4. See for example a description of her childhood by Charlotte Elizabeth, written some time before she decided to give up fiction: 'And now, the chambers of imagery being well furnished, I became in thought the heroine of all the foolish, improbable adventures I met with. Shakespeare and others having furnished me with dresses and decorations, every day of my life had its drama. Adventures the most improbable, situations the most trying, and conversations the most nonsensical, among a visionary acquaintance of my own creating, became the constant amusement of my mind; or if I took a fancy to any new companion, that individual was metamorphosed into something equally unreal, and was soon looked upon in the light, not of sober reality, but of fanciful extravagance' (Personal Recollections, 1841, 4th edn 1854, p 63). Ann and Jane Taylor similarly condemned their childhood tendency to day dream (J Gilbert, ed, op cit i pp 57-58; I Taylor, op cit i p 174).
5. Forster, op cit p 65.

and impressive imagery, in his revelation of mercy to a sinful world. ⁶

Time and again evangelicals stressed that imagination, however tarnished by the fall, was capable of redemption. Its 'native wildness and deformity' had to be sanctified but then it could be used like reason in support of the truth. ⁷ God would not have given man such a faculty if it were not capable of good use. ⁸

The literary pre-eminence of the Scriptures was universally acknowledged, albeit on grounds of faith as much as of taste. For some the Bible provided ample and adequate imaginative stimulation for Scriptural characters were clearly as alive to evangelicals as those of novelists were to others. ⁹ But the Biblical example also legitimised other works: the evangelical periodicals all reviewed imaginative literature on religious themes.

The popular press largely limited its literary reviews to such works believing that religion alone was its proper concern and tending, in the words of a later critic, to 'regard nothing as religious in which religion is not the immediate direct object'. ¹⁰ Other subjects lacked interest. Purely secular poetry, a Methodist reviewer suggested, was of more interest to general readers than to Christians. ¹¹

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6. CO xxvii (1827) p 298. Cf ER i series i (1805) p 488.
 7. BM iii (1811) p 156. Cf CO xvi (1817) p 227; xxii (1822) p 159.
 8. ibid xxviii (1828) p 769.
 9. See for example CO xxxii (1832) pp 39, 581-88.
 10. Quarterly Review lxxii (1843) p 43, from a review of Mrs Sherwood's novel The Lady of the Manor (4th edn 1842).
 11. MM lv (1832) p 203.

Similarly a Baptist Magazine contributor regretted that there were not more extracts of a 'pious and evangelical kind' in an otherwise praiseworthy anthology of acknowledged poets. ¹²

But the popular press did not totally eschew secular literature; indeed reviewers expressed their appreciation of some and maintained that providing poetry was neither licentious nor effeminate it was welcomed into evangelical homes. ¹³ Few works seemed to satisfy these criteria, but from 1825 annuals were regularly recommended. Some might have 'little or nothing to do with religion' but at least they attempted to combine instruction with amusement, purity with taste. ¹⁴ With this reviewers of the late 1820s were on the whole content.

The Eclectic Review and, to a lesser extent, the Christian Observer, adopted a more liberal attitude to secular literature, and frequently asserted its congruity with religion. ¹⁵ Indeed the Eclectic regarded itself as the counterpart of contemporary literary reviews, differing from

12. BM xiv (1822) p 67.

13. EM ii series vi (1828) p 306: 'It is really amusing to witness the sheer ignorance of many of the literary journals, in regard to the taste and literary habits of evangelical Christians. It is taken for granted, and argued from as a matter of course, that they hate poetry, because they loath infidel and profligate poets; that they have no taste, because they dislike the theatre; that there is no music in their souls, because they are never seen in the Opera House'.

14. ibid p 524. Cf MM li (1828) p 832 ; liii (1830) p 764.

15. CO ix (1810) preface: '...it will not be denied, we think, that in the pages of our several volumes...some striking proofs have been given that there is no hostility between serious religion and Elegant Literature; and that Philosophy and Genius rejoice to take up their cross and follow Christ'. The 'striking proofs' do not appear to be very obvious.

them in that its values and criteria of judgment were specifically Christian: it aimed 'to blend with impartial criticism an invariable regard to moral and religious principle'.¹⁶ That it was concerned with non-Christian writings, and rarely suggested that time had been wasted in their perusal is indicative of a greater width of interest and a less rigid concept of accountability than that characteristic of the more popular evangelical press.

Similarly some biographies testify to evangelical appreciation of non-religious literature. Volumes of poetry were circulated for popular perusal by John Wesley who also wrote a novel for publication.¹⁷ Among his followers Adam Clarke delighted in the classics, Aesop's Fables, The Faerie Queen, Robinson Crusoe, and the works of Robert Burns, while Josiah Hill maintained a forty year correspondence with John Foster which covered many literary matters.¹⁸ A love of literature was nurtured even in remote Particular Baptist

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16. ER i series i (1805) prospectus. Cf iii series i (1829) preface: 'The original design of the Proprietors has never been lost sight of, which was, to reconcile those long divorced parties, Religion and Literature; to create or cherish the love of Literature in the Christian world, and to watch over the interests of religion as implicated in our literature'.
17. That Wesley made time for such work shows how important he believed the dissemination of literature to be. See further T W Herbert, John Wesley as Editor and Author (1940).
18. J B B Clarke (ed), op cit i pp 51ff, ii p 41; J E Ryland (ed), Life and Correspondence of John Foster (1846) passim. Little is known of Hill (1773-1844) beyond the character description supplied in an obituary in the Conference Minutes of 1844, p 10, and the list of circuits in which he served in W Hill, Alphabetical Arrangement of all the Wesleyan Methodist Preachers... (1819, 5th edn 1841). These sources also reveal that he withdrew from the Wesleyan ministry between 1803 and 1812, presumably like Richard Watson, with whom Jackson brackets him, to join the New Connexion (Recollections p 139). In 1815/16 Hill met the Taylor family who recorded that they would never have guessed that he was a Wesleyan minister: 'one does not often meet with a person so completely intellectual' (I Taylor, op cit i pp 295ff, 346). For a further account of Methodist literati see below pp 366-67, 374, 382-83, 400.

circles: an unsympathetic descendant conceded that W J Reade , a member of the church at Whitchurch, Shropshire, was 'a man of considerable culture and all his life kept up a study of French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew'.¹⁹

Within Independency extensive imaginative reading is indicated in the correspondence between John Styles and Daniel Parken, as also in that between the Conder and Taylor families.²⁰

Anglican biographers frequently advert to the literary interests of their subjects. Isaac Milner recited with enthusiasm passages from Shakespeare and Milton, relished the wit and humour of Swift, and perused with pleasure the works of Cervantes, Le Sage, and Moliere, Dryden, Pope, and Cowper.²¹ Despite his suspicion of the imagination, Henry Thornton read Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Scott, and his daughters admired Jane Austen.²² Wilberforce's favourites included Horace, Shakespeare, Cowper, and Scott, while Lord Teignmouth read during the last five months of his life along with much religious matter Moore's Life of Byron most of Don Quixote, and Scott's Tales of my Grandfather.²³ Hannah More maintained a lengthy literary correspondence with Sir William Weller Pepys who was not an evangelical.²⁴ Thomas Fowell Buxton loved poetry and encouraged others to develop a like taste. His eldest and closest daughter,

19. A L Reade, The Reades of Blackwood Hill... (1906) p 40. Reade also possessed 'a good knowledge of drawing...and even in his later years was very active at jumping and vaulting, as well as an excellent swimmer'. See further below p 344.

20. J Styles, Early Blossoms (1819)pp 153-262; I Taylor, op cit i passim.

21. M Milner, op cit p 719.

22. Forster, op cit pp 48ff, 82; Meacham, op cit p 54.

23. Coupland, op cit pp 412-13; Teignmouth, op cit ii p 565.

24. See above p 138; W Roberts, op cit passim. Cf A C C Gausson, A Later Pepys. (1904), a work which shows little understanding of Hannah More.

Priscilla, shared his enthusiasm and they sometimes vied with each other in memorising verses: in 1822 Priscilla recorded that they had learnt 230 lines of poetry in one and a half hours and that she had enjoyed it very much. ²⁵

It is clear that in some evangelical circles literary interests far from being thwarted, were fostered among the younger generation. This was particularly true of Clapham. In 1809 Hannah More wrote 'Tell Tom, I desire to know how "Olaus" goes on. The sea, I suppose, furnished him with some new images.' ²⁶ Olaus the Great or the Conquest of Mona was one of the ambitious Virgilian poems attempted by Macaulay, a prolific writer even in his youth. Mrs More founded his library and before he was ten suggested that as he had an almost complete set of epics he should now extend his reading to good prose. The Macaulay children had free access to their father's library and thus read widely and avidly in literature of all kinds including novels. ²⁷ Moreover secular works, albeit expurgated, were frequently chosen for family reading. Mrs Thornton wrote to Hannah More in 1810:

For half an hour after tea the older children sit to hear the proper parts of Don Quixote read. Of course they are much amused, though I do not imagine they understand one twentieth part of its exquisite wit. ²⁸

The extensiveness of permitted reading was acknowledged even by those unsympathetic to Clapham and all it stood for. Leslie Stephen wrote of his mother, daughter of John Venn,

25. Hack, op cit p 206; Buxton, op cit pp 410-11.

26. A M Roberts (ed), op cit p 32.

27. Trevelyan, op cit i pp 30-36, 130-32.

28. Meacham, op cit p 54.

Vicar of Clapham:

She was ... a rather romantic young lady. She knew by heart all such poetry as was not excluded from the sacred common; she could repeat Cowper and Wordsworth and Campbell and Scott, and her children learnt the 'Mariners of England' and the 'Death of Marmion' from her lips almost before they could read for themselves. 29

Yet as Stephen implied some proscription operated for the dangers inherent in reading secular literature were acknowledged as readily by evangelicals who accepted it as by those who did not. Most polite literature, commented John Foster, was hostile to Christianity. Few essayists or imaginative writers showed any real awareness of eternity; indeed they kept silent about Christian doctrines which, if true, were of seminal importance to man's eternal well-being. The values inculcated and the assumptions made about true greatness, goodness, and happiness were often antipathetic to Christianity. Yet so appealing was literature that these were often communicated with peculiar force,

as if an eloquent pagan priest had been allowed constantly to accompany our Lord in his ministry, and had divided with him the attention and interest of his disciples, counteracting of course, as far as his efforts were successful, the doctrine and spirit of the Teacher from heaven. 30

The appeal of literature was so great that even if it did not morally corrupt it might distract a Christian from matters of greater moment. 'Is it that my devotions are too much hurried,' asked Wilberforce 'that I do not read Scripture enough, or how is it, that I leave with reluctance the mere

29. L Stephen, op cit p 40.

30. J Foster, On Some of the Reasons by which Evangelical Religion has been Rendered Less Acceptable to Persons of Cultivated Taste (1805, 1st American ed from 3rd London edn, 1807) pp 78-79.

chit-chat of Boswell's Johnson, for what ought to be the grateful offices of prayer and praise?' ³¹

Much as he enjoyed literaturæ Wilberforce regarded it as a pursuit of secondary importance. Similarly the highly cultured Isaac Taylor junior who relished 'literary friendships...polished tastes, and the delights of fancy and wit and criticism' admitted that 'if the heart be rightly disposed, they will sink in estimation when we are called daily to administer relief to the urgent wants and the real sufferings of human life'. ³² It was important therefore that literary excellence should not be overacclaimed. 'Dieu sera clémant envers le génie' maintained Mme Necker, and was duly reprimanded by Hannah More:

The wisest and best stand in as much need to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and to be sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, as the most illiterate and the most unworthy. ³³

Poetry and art were not, as some had suggested, roads to God for 'the wounds inflicted by sin could not be healed by the grace of composition'. ³⁴ A decade and a half later the Christian Observer, disturbed by the popularity of the Waverley novels, spoke out against the tendency 'too widely acted upon among professed Christians and the men of this world, to meet as friends in the neutral temple of Genus.' ³⁵

31. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iii p 63.

32. I Taylor, op cit i p 310.

33. W Roberts, op cit iv pp 144ff. For Hannah More's friendship with the French politician and his wife see M G Jones, Hannah More (1952) p 31.

34. H More, An Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St Paul (3rd edn 1815) i p 289.

35. CO xxxii (1832) p 597.

Nevertheless individual evangelicals, the Eclectic Review, and the Christian Observer, continued to assert the overriding propriety of the study of literature, the last rejecting categorically the suggestion made by a correspondent in 1815 that it should concern itself solely with theological works.³⁶ One justification commonly given was that literature was a domestic occupation.³⁷ Another, revealing that evangelicals did not necessarily associate imagination with an appeal to the passions, was that non-sensual pleasures were superior to those of the senses. The Christian Observer was therefore critical of Quaker proscription of poetry and other arts:

We are fully persuaded that a well-regulated attention to the study of the fine arts may prove beneficial to the mind in a variety of ways, and that they are so far from being in themselves hostile to the great interests of religion, that in them religion herself may often find a powerful, because an engaging assistant. The fierceness of animal nature is as unfavourable to the growth of religious principle as the dense darkness of natural ignorance. If elegant pursuits, then, have but the power which has been assigned them of taming the natural fierceness of men, of tending to subordinate his physical to his intellectual powers, they are surely thus far not opposed to the spirit and purposes of religion, but rather the contrary.³⁸

A similar claim was made by Josiah Conder:

The contemplation of the beautiful in nature has a moral influence; at least in a well-ordered mind,

36. ibid xiv (1815) p 708.

37. ER ii series xx (1823) p 275: 'It is peculiarly gratifying to find a taste for elegant literature, and a susceptibility to the chaste and quiet pleasures of the home circle, prevailing among the higher classes...'

38. CO xxiii (1823) p 294.

these impressions are of a salutary nature. Independent of the suasive influence by which works of taste may be rendered subservient to the cause of truth, the sensations which they awaken are in themselves calculated to refine and soften the character. 39

Such explanations by no means legitimised all literature, but even works which evangelicals regarded as morally dubious were sometimes recommended. The Christian Observer logically argued that unless all non-religious works were to be banned worldliness of sentiment could not be regarded as an adequate reason for prohibition, and ingenuously revealed its true motives by admitting that it would 'regret the necessity of urging a doctrine which should tear us from Shakespeare and Corneille... Happily religion exacts ignorance of nothing that is really worth knowing'. 40 An Eclectic reviewer faced up to the problem more squarely:

We . . . deeply lament the grossness which so far deteriorates their high qualities, as to exclude a large portion of our wealthiest literature from the staple of safe and commendable reading. Still they must, to a certain extent be studied by all, who are anxious to ascertain the finest characteristics of English style, or the complete range of English genius. 41

Implicitly or explicitly some evangelicals assumed that imaginative literature like art could be assessed according to a code of values which was to some extent independent of religio-moral criteria.

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39. Jno Chas O'Reid (pseudonym), Reviewers Reviewed (1811) pp 16-17. Cf ER ii series v (1816) p 35; 'The cultivation of the imagination, provided it does not interfere with the development of other faculties, must be deemed beneficial, inasmuch as it is productive of a correspondent increase in sensibility, and is conducive to the exercise of the purest affections'.
40. CO xii (1813) p 229.
41. ER ii series xxv (1826) p 565.

b. '...mediocrity is not to be despised...': the quality of evangelical criticism.

Evangelicals' evaluation of literature was however more substantially influenced by their faith, than was their evaluation of art. Accustomed to read for edification, they had a profound belief in the efficacy of the written word. However anxious they might be to ponder the world's classics, they were unable totally to change their reading habits when they moved from Scripture to secular literature, and consequently produced some inadequate literary criticism.

According to evangelicals' assessment the best polite literature was that which was also pious, the work of Milton and Cowper, James Montgomery and Robert Pollok.¹ There was perhaps some slight preference for devotional writing as against works descriptive of Biblical events, for whereas Biblical paintings were readily accepted, some, but by no means all, evangelicals doubted the propriety of emulating the Bible in its own medium. A Methodist reviewer who praised Scriptural art, criticised 'fictitious narratives, founded upon Scripture facts, in which the divine simplicity

1. For Pollok (1798-1827) a Scot, as for his fellow countryman Montgomery (1771-1854), see DNB, which describes the former's poem The Course of Time (1827) as his 'one permanent contribution to literature'. Montgomery, a Moravian, reviewed regularly for the ER. For his standing as a poet see below p 373.

of the inspired volume is lost'.² The crucial factor, however, was that a work should uphold a Christian world view and writers who failed to do so were severely criticised.

Pertinacious concern for content sometimes carried with it a disregard for form. An Evangelical Magazine reviewer of a volume of religious poems maintained that

The man of taste may read them for their poetic excellence; but the experienced Christian will be too much absorbed in the piety of the sentiment to think about the poetry.³

Similarly a Baptist Magazine contributor dismissed literary quality as unimportant:

This poem is introduced by a very modest preface, in which the pious author contends, and we think successfully, that mediocrity is not to be despised. Whatever is useful is valuable. His object is to feed the flame of devotion; and the time is coming, when some writers of more splendid poetic talents will wish, in vain, that they had employed their time to the same noble purpose.⁴

Their concern that literature should be useful led evangelicals to misread some non-evangelical works, the

2. MM liii (1830) p 833. Cf EM i series xxvi (1818) p 519; xxix (1821) p 473; ii series iv (1826) p 472. But the EM was not convinced that the fictionalisation of Scripture was wrong and praised some poems on Scriptural subjects eg i series xx (1812) p 220; xxvi (1818) p 463; ii series iv (1826) pp 63, 194. For justification of the practice see CO xiv (1815) p 329, 'Without venturing on any flagrant departure from the simple history of Scripture, he has filled up the short outline of the account of Jephthah with genius and dexterity'. Cf the preface to Montgomery's poem The World before the Flood (2nd edn 1813) p x 'It was his design, in this composition, to present a similitude of events, that might be imagined to have happened in the first age of the world, in which such Scripture characters as are introduced would probably have acted and spoken, as they are here made to act and speak...Its value in this view, must be determined by its moral, or rather by its religious influence on the mind and on the heart. Fiction though it be, it is the fiction that represents Truth, and that is Truth, - Truth in the essence though not in the name; Truth in the spirit though not in the letter'. For a similar argument see below p 355.

3. EM ii series i (1823) p 21.

4. BM xv (1823) p 112.

enjoyment of which they legitimised by discovering a moral. Homer, a Christian Observer contributor noted approvingly, wrote to display the crime and consequences of adultery and the rewards of conjugal love.⁵ An Eclectic reviewer stifling his intuitive response managed to persuade himself that there was no nobility in Cleopatra's suicide:

Nothing more beautiful and bewitching than this voluptuous queen: yet with all this beauty and witchery, her utter worthlessness and falseheartedness are fairly brought out, and entirely deprive her before the end of the Tragedy, of esteem and admiration. Not that the poet seems to be reading such a lesson, but facts are given according to nature, and the reader cannot fail of drawing the right conclusion.⁶

This tendency to impose their own views on the literature which they read resulted in further hindrances to the task of criticism. Convinced of their own rectitude and the invalidity of other views of life, evangelicals did not easily 'suspend disbelief', accepting for the duration of their reading the standards and values of the writer. The rigid simplicity of their moral code did not allow them fully to appreciate tragedies deriving from behaviour which they regarded as improper. Harriet Corp maintained that Juliet should have attempted to dissuade her father when he pressed her to marry Paris. She was foolish to trust to Romeo's fidelity: he had already revealed his inconstancy of character by deserting Rosaline.⁷ Similar limitations of sympathy

5. CO xii (1813) p 734.

6. ER ii series vi (1816) p 380.

7. H Corp, A Sequel to the Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life... (1809) pp 112f.

precluded evangelical responsiveness to Catholic tragedies for 'nothing can be more ridiculous in fiction than a Roman Catholic saint ... It is Christianity alone which can render death sublime'.⁸

Above all evangelicals found it impossible to empathise with atheistic literature. Totally convinced of the rationality of their own position, they could not conceive that others could in all good faith come to opposite conclusions. Writers who perpetrated an anti-Christian view of life must be conscious blackguards motivated by the desire for publicity and fame. Byron, John Styles implied, was deliberately malicious:

Why an unbeliever should delight to propagate his opinions, it is impossible to explain on any principle of benevolence and humanity. What good can any man propose to accomplish, by persuading his fellow-creatures - that there is no God - that they live in a fatherless world - that the infinite spirit is gone - that the only solid foundation of virtue is wanting - and that the system is exploded, of which God is the great subject, and that train of affections and conduct for ever annihilated, of which HE is the supreme object... O, it is impossible not to turn with abhorrence from the apostate spirit who would thus involve the whole creation in his own ruin and wretchedness...⁹

Hypersensitive to the interests of religion, evangelicals were utterly insensitive to the ideas of others and all too often approached the literary expression of them with closed minds.

Underlying such attitudes is a failure to distinguish between art and life, an unwillingness to recognise that a poet

8. ER ii series ii (1814) pp 236-37.

9. J Styles, Lord Byron's Works Viewed in Connexion with Christianity... (1824) pp 14-16. For a similar argument see below p 404.

can adopt a persona and is not necessarily speaking in his own voice as from a pulpit. Such distinctions would have appeared casuistical to evangelicals fearful lest the reading of impious literature proved to be the first step on the road to damnation. The same consideration made them suspicious of the portrayal of vice. There was little point in protecting the young from the evil of the world if they were to meet it vicariously in print. Even the most moral works might mislead in this respect. The Methodist Magazine warned:

In all compositions, particular delicacy should be studied in making mention of sinful actions. If it is not deemed advisable to omit altogether stories and facts relating to seduction, it should be plainly intimated, in the name or title of the work, that such matter is contained in it. A strict guard should be placed upon the fancy, lest the writer, while seeking to check the progress of vice, should become inadvertently the means of increasing it. 10

Fear of thus putting a stumbling block in the way of the young may have incapacitated evangelicals' own literary efforts.

An Eclectic reviewer praised the author of a novel Self-Control because she made 'her vicious character so far from attractive, that he does not excite a moment's interest'. On the other hand this very achievement made the heroine's passion for the man unconvincing, and her struggle against his influence incomprehensible: 'Instead of sympathising with Laura in her regrets, we are more disposed to wonder at her having felt any'. 11

It was dangerous to make vice appealing, but consequently the temptations to which characters were exposed were unlikely to appear convincing.

10. MM xlvii (1824) p 171, from instructions to the Irish RTS.

11. ER i series viii (1812) p 616.

Similar assumptions led evangelicals almost universally to repudiate satire: 'Wickedness' wrote a Baptist Magazine reviewer, 'is too serious a matter for ridicule'.¹² The satirical frame of mind, uncharitable and frivolous, accorded ill with the character of a Christian, let alone with that of a Christian minister. Rev Richard Watson was, according to his biographer, a wit, well-skilled in the use of satire and invective. But he restrained himself, as did others similarly gifted, lest he wound feelings or injure his reputation: 'he never lost sight of the respect due to his office and character as a minister of Christ, nor indulged himself in unbecoming levity'.¹³ The dignity of the cloth was wounded not only if pastors practised satire but also if it was directed against them. To ridicule religion was to lessen its respectability.¹⁴ Evangelicals were too earnest and maybe too insecure to expose their faith to criticism.

Such evidence goes some way towards substantiating charges of evangelical philistinism, but it is by no means conclusive. Evangelicals should not be subjected to more stringent tests than others. Wayne C Booth has argued that no reader can seriously claim that his acceptance or rejection of a work of art is totally unconnected with questions of belief; it was as hard for evangelicals to empathise with a Catholic or an atheist as for post-war Englishmen to admire a Nazi S S hero.¹⁵ Moreover instances in which evangelicals

12. BM iii (1811) p 384.

13. T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 648.

14. EM i series xiv (1806) p 225. Cf CO ix (1810) p 151, which reveals that evangelicals were less critical when they sympathized with the satirist's aims.

15. W C Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (1961) pp 140-41.

failed to suspend disbelief can be paralleled by many others in which they had no difficulty in doing so. One Eclectic reviewer shuddered 'at the vengeance of Minerva', while another recognised that admiration could be awakened by that of which one disapproved: 'forgetting the wickedness of Lady Macbeth, or Satan, ...we feel ourselves for the time fully possess (sic) with the grandeur of their sentiments'.

Evangelicals were moved 'by the strong delusion of sympathy' in medieval legendary tales and were able totally to lose themselves in the imaginative worlds created by Sir Walter Scott.¹⁶ Reviewers frequently praised works which had no apparent moral.

Nor was the failure to distinguish between art and life absolute. While Christian Observer critics occasionally objected to the contamination of 'Christian' works by classical allusion, a source of objection to Paradise Lost, an Eclectic reviewer was highly critical of Plumptre's attempts to purify literature:

Few lovers of song will, we believe, become converts to the doctrines laid down by the reverend critic; who contends for the utter rejection of every piece in which mention is made of Venus, Cupid, or the Graces. He is equally displeased with any allusion to witches, ghosts, and fairies, to fate, fortune or the influence of the stars. Of both rapturous and desponding lovers he is the declared enemy: affirming that for a man to give to his mistress the titles of lovely angel, dear idol, divine creature, adorable goddess, is unworthy of a rational being and a Christian; and that it is equally so to talk of despairing and dying, if his vows should be rejected, instead of resorting to the 'sacred volume', and learning

16. ER i series x (1813) pp 280, 377. On Scott see below pp 338-39, 347-50.

resignation. In short, every thing offends Mr P which does not perfectly accord with plain matter of fact, and the sober dictates of right reason. He seems to regard the fictions and colourings of a poetic fancy as serious violations of truth; and to be quite incapable of distinguishing between jest and earnest. 17

If the same complaint could be made of some evangelicals, it is clear that the malady was not universal.

Plumptre was further criticised for disregarding literary merit. He 'seems to be of opinion that, if a song have but a moral cast, the absence of every other recommendation is sufficiently compensated'. 18 Neither the Eclectic Review nor the Christian Observer regarded religion as a cover for a multitude of literary sins: 'a poem must, after all, be criticised as a work of taste; and there is one rule for the appreciation of moral, and another for that of literary excellence.' 19 Examples of disregard for matters of taste can be paralleled by many more in which evangelicals engaged in detailed criticism of prosody and expression. The Christian Observer editor of 1812 was sufficiently interested in this to give considerable space to two philosophical works on the nature of taste. 20 Urbane and courteous the reviewers of both periodicals gave praise to non-Christian works where praise was due. Nor was the work of Christian writers accepted uncritically: the Christian Observer constantly complained about the poor standard of religious verse, regarded Montgomery's The World before the Flood as of variable merit, and, to the author's intense chagrin, was not wholly

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17. CO xxii (1822) pp 279-80; ER i series viii (1812) p 916. On Plumptre see above p 195.
 18. ibid p 917.
 19. CO xiii (1814) p 666. Cf Knutsford, op cit p 335.
 20. CO xi (1812) pp 91-105 on A Alison Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1811); pp 587-606, 654-75 on D Stewart, Philosophical Essays (1810).

complimentary about Coelebs in Search of a Wife.²¹

It would be wrong to suggest that even the popular press was totally insensitive to matters of literary merit for reviewers were only too aware of the stylistic weakness of some religious poetry. While the Evangelical Magazine was sympathetic towards the publication of mediocre poetry by ladies in distressed circumstances in need of emolument, it constantly criticised others who foisted on the public poetry fit only for circulation among friends.²² The Methodist Magazine made the point yet more forcefully:

...had he consulted ...the credit of that religion which he seems anxious to recommend he would have been careful not to associate the sacred doctrines of evangelical truth with the most consummate doggerel that ever offended the good taste of the educated part of mankind.²³

Evangelicals shared the taste of the 'educated part of mankind' to a far greater extent than is always recognised. Their literary values frequently resembled those deriving from the thought forms of the day of which their theology was but the evangelical expression. Thus, evangelicals were not alone in disparaging the imagination. Basil Willey has suggested that from the late seventeenth century the prevalent philosophy militated against poetry: truth was ascertained not through the imagination but through 'naked reason'; Pope did not

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21. CO iv (1805) p 516; viii (1809) pp 109ff; xi (1812) p 752; xiii (1814) pp 657ff; xxiii (1823) p 697; A M Roberts (ed) op cit pp 29-30.
22. For EM sympathy see eg i series xxvii (1819) p 463; xxviii (1820) p 422. For criticism xxi (1813) p 28; xxii (1814) p 146; xxiv (1816) p 392.
23. MM xlvii (1824) p 824. Cf BM xii (1820)p374 'without good taste, or judgment they have indulged in expressions which must be disagreeable to Christians of cultivated minds, and must prove most disgusting to others'.

convey his beliefs through mythological and allegorical machinery for the age of the Royal Society favoured straightforward explanation and did not conceive of the imaginative communication of a truth that was conceptually inexpressible.²⁴ The theological form of such thinking can be seen in the intellectual formulations of natural theology, in the anti-sacramentalism of the latitudinarians, and in the paucity of eighteenth century contributions to the development of liturgy and ecclesiology. The only 'symbol' in many eighteenth century churches was the three decker pulpit. Evangelicals' assumptions that truth was conceptual and art an embellishment were part of a heritage wider than the purely sectarian. The distaste of more cultured evangelicals for allegory was not just due to religious scrupulosity. Jabez Bunting's objection to highly figurative oratory bears the insignia of the eighteenth century as well as of evangelicalism:

-----'s flights of fancy are truly ludicrous; and, indeed, I think that, in general, the fewer excursions we make into the regions of metaphor and allegory, the better it will be. Plain sense, expressed in plain words, without any show of learning, or affectation of rhetorical brilliancy, is most likely to be of ultimate use to our hearers. Other things may dazzle, but they seldom illuminate or sanctify...²⁵

The affinity between evangelical theology, at least in its less enthusiastic forms, and eighteenth century classicism has been briefly explored by Professor Donald Davie in his recent

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24. B Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background (1934, 1962 edn) pp 261-66. Cf pp 189-92.
25. T P Bunting, op cit i p 139. For criticism of allegory see ER i series ix (1813) pp 226ff. While the EM believed that allegory was difficult to do well, encouraged by Bunyan's example it regarded it as an 'eminent and useful means of religious instruction' (i series xiv, 1806, pp 561, 562-63).

Clark lectures. He suggests that the typical characteristics of the Calvinist aesthetic were simplicity, sobriety, measure, and an awareness of the totality of any artistic scheme. Thus, Isaac Watts, one of its greatest exponents, determined 'to restrain my verse always within the bounds of my design', an intention no less classical than Calvinist.²⁶ The critical vocabulary of evangelical reviewers testifies to their acceptance of neo-classical canons of criticism, to which the Eclectic Review and the Christian Observer like the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews largely adhered. The conventions of classicism combined easily with evangelical seriousness when the Christian Observer rejected puns as improper accompaniments of Shakespearian death-scenes.²⁷ Similarly it refuted in true eighteenth century style Irish-born Adam Clarke's claim that fairy tales had predisposed him to an awareness of the spiritual world; the reviewer denied that God would employ 'ridiculous fabrications' to aid his purpose.²⁸ Objections to improbability abounded in evangelical as in non-evangelical reviews. Thus John Foster scorned the 'absurdity' and 'wretched barbarism and superstition' of Southey's poem The Curse of Kehama. As an evangelical Foster was particularly shocked that a Christian poet should in his own person invoke members of the Hindu pantheon, but his basic objection to polytheism was shared by many non-evangelicals including James Mill.²⁹ The Quarterly Review, generally sympathetic to Southey, who was one of its regular contributors,

26. Davie, op cit lecture ii.

27. CO vii (1808) p 332.

28. Ibid xxxiii (1833) pp 671ff; J B B Clarke (ed), op cit i pp 44ff.

29. ER i series vii (1811) pp 185-205, 334-50, reprinted in J Foster Critical Essays (1888-95) i. Cf J Mill, The History of the British in India (4th edn 1817) i pp 378ff.

complained about the 'tumid and unimaginable absurdity of Hindu mythology', as, more vituperatively, did the less sympathetic Francis Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review.³⁰ Jeffrey's critique closely resembled that which Foster wrote for the Eclectic Review.

Concern about the moral and religious tenor of works, and the belief that literature should be didactic similarly extended far beyond evangelical circles. A twentieth century commentator, discussing the major periodical criticism of Byron, suggests that

The chief limitation of the early critics was their preoccupation with the moral and religious significance of the play, their insistence on interpreting Cain as subversive propaganda ... Most of the reviewers had literal minds and could not accept the characters as fictitious but listened to them as heretical spokesmen of the author.³¹

Unease about the literary depiction of evil had been expressed by Samuel Johnson who in the Rambler of 31 March 1750 examined the respective claims of realism and morality: 'it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation'.³² While agreeing that credibility demanded the portrayal of vice, Johnson was adamant that it should always appear repugnant, never united with ameliorating graces. Not only the evangelical press but also the Quarterly Review condemned irreligion and immorality in fiction; its critics and those of the Christian Observer made very similar judgments

30. Quarterly Review v (1811) pp 40-61; Edinburgh Review xvii (1811) pp 429-65.

31. T G Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain (1968) p 330.

32. F Brady and W K Wimsatt (eds), Samuel Johnson: selected poetry and prose (1977) p 157.

on Miss Edgeworth's Tales of Fashionable Life.³³ The religion and morality demanded by evangelicals was admittedly often more strict than that required by their contemporaries, but the principle was the same.

Set within the context of their own day evangelicals' criticism was neither as idiosyncratic nor as contemptible as has sometimes been implied. Twentieth century editors of the 'Critical Heritage Series', studies in the reviews of various leading authors, regularly see fit to include those from the Eclectic and, less frequently, from the Christian Observer and sometimes comment favourably upon them. Thus, Professor Jackson writes of the early nineteenth century response to Coleridge

During these years appreciative comments were rare. One of the few was a long, detailed, and enthusiastic review of The Friend, which appeared in the Eclectic Review ... The review deserves a careful reading as the first description of Coleridge's thought and prose style, and for its anticipation of later apologists ... More than ten years were to pass before Coleridge was to be served as well by a reviewer.³⁴

This later appreciation of the Eclectic Review was shared by some contemporaries. The poet laureate Robert Southey frequently endorsed the literary judgments of its editor, Josiah Conder, and wrote in 1814, 'I wish my coadjutors in the Quarterly had thought half so much upon poetry and understood it half so well'.³⁵

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33. CO viii (1809) pp 781-92; xi (1812) pp 781-97; Quarterly Review ii (1809) pp 146-54; vii (1812) pp 329-42, which like the CO praised Miss Edgeworth's morality but was critical of her failure to base it on a religious foundation. For criticism of novels on grounds of morality see xxvi (1821) p 141; xxxiii (1826) p 482.
34. J R de J Jackson (ed), Coleridge: the critical heritage (1970) pp 6-7. Cf J O Hayden (ed), Scott: the critical heritage (1970) p 6; J E Barcus (ed), Shelley: the critical heritage (1975) p 14; L Madden (ed), Robert Southey: the critical heritage (1972) p 106.
35. ibid p 210.

c. From the Iliad to Ivanhoe: the range of evangelical reading.

The congruity of evangelicals' attitudes towards literature with those of their contemporaries is further confirmed by an analysis of the secular literature which they most enjoyed reading. In 1819 in a letter to his father Tom Macaulay complained that

There is a general disposition among the more literary part of the religious world to cry down the elegant literature of our own times, while they are not in the least degree shocked at the atrocious profaneness or gross indelicacy when a hundred years have stamped them with the title of classical. I say 'if you read Dryden you can have no reasonable objection to reading Scott'.¹

Macaulay's gibe was not altogether justified for evangelicals criticised Dryden and other authors of the past for immorality, and read with enjoyment the works of Scott and other modern writers. Nevertheless it is true that evangelicals on the whole shared the common assumption that the literature of the past was more serious, less ephemeral, and therefore superior to that of the present. That they read past masterpieces notwithstanding some theological qualm, shows their responsiveness to the literary judgments of the ages; that they also read modern works is testimony to the very considerable extent to which they were influenced by contemporary opinion.

i 'The unrivalled productions of genius left us by the ancients': evangelicalism and the classics.

It was automatically accepted by evangelicals as by

1. Trevelyan, op cit i pp 90f.

their fellows that education should be classical. Even the strictest evangelical fathers trained their sons in the classics and sent them, if Anglicans, to Oxford or more frequently Cambridge where much of their time was devoted to classical study. While some dissenting academies developed predominantly vocational courses, the classics loomed large in others.² Some evangelicals were passionately enthusiastic about Greek and Roman literature. Bristol Baptist College employed as successive classical tutors two keen classicists, Robert Hall and Joseph Hughes.³ Some, like John Mason Good and Isaac Taylor junior devoted time to translating the classics, producing work that was praised throughout the evangelical press.⁴ There are frequent references in biographies to the evangelical practice of reading Virgil and other classical authors for relaxation.⁵

Yet there was also within evangelical circles considerable unease about classical study, expressed both by those who like a Methodist Magazine reviewer could see little justification for it, and by those who enjoyed it.⁶ Joseph Kinghorn, a keen classicist, admitted, maybe to appease his unsympathetic father, that the classics did nothing to feed

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2. See below p 389.
 3. Leifchild, op cit pp 37, 45ff where it is recorded that as Hughes grew older he read the classics in the afternoon for recreation. For Hall see below p 331.
 4. Mason Good's translation of De Rerum Natura was praised in ER i series ii (1806) pp 603-10, 686-97, and Taylor's Of Herodotus in BM xxi (1829) pp 198-99. For further interest in classical texts see xix (1827) pp 375-78; ER i series iii (1807) pp 224-29; ii series xv (1821) pp 342-44; xxii (1824) pp 289-312. On Mason Good see below pp 367-68.
 5. Eg R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) ii p 143; S Drew, The Life of Rev Thomas Coke (1817) pp 89-90. Cf ER ii series xvi (1821) p502, where a translation of Horace was recommended for clerical relaxation.
 6. MM xl (1817) p 139.

the hungry soul and thus compared unfavourably with the Scriptures. ⁷ A correspondent of the Christian Observer complained that they did not prepare dying men to face eternity. Moreover, they were liable to inculcate false ideas: their morality was antagonistic to that of Christianity which had very different standards of heroism, while they propagated an 'absurd' and 'untrue' religion. ⁸ Some Eclectic reviewers were concerned lest a taste for the classics should mitigate evangelical disgust at idolatry, still prevalent on the mission field. ⁹

Some of the attempts made to dispel this unease reflect the evangelical constraint to explain everything in explicitly religious terms. It was argued that those who studied classical languages were thereby equipped to read some of the original Scriptures. A knowledge of the classics enabled preachers to follow St Paul's example and appeal to the educated classes; it was therefore a necessary evangelistic tool. More particularly classical descriptions of pagan societies could serve the cause of religion since they revealed to the percipient or well-instructed reader the deplorable state of a world without Christ. An Eclectic reviewer went so far as to refute one condemnation of the classics by claiming that they were 'irrefragable witnesses for Christ'. They made clear

the utter insufficiency of man for his own happiness;
the natural cravings of the human heart after an

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7. Wilkin, op cit p 72. Cf J Gilbert (ed) op cit i pp 318-19, where Mrs Gilbert wrote of her husband, classical tutor at Rotherham College, 'he is desirous of exchanging a life of cold classical study, which is extremely unfavourable to the growth of personal piety, for the edifying duties of a pastor'.
8. CO xxxi (1831) pp 652-60. Cf ER i series iii (1807) pp 922-23.
9. ER ii series xxvii (1827) pp 439ff.

infinite good; and the astonishing anticipations of what that good must imply, in order to satisfy the thirst of man's moral nature... Where we would ask, except in the Sacred Scriptures, is the aching void of the natural heart more forcibly illustrated, than in the soberer reflections of Horace? ¹⁰

Yet these claims are little more than ex post facto justifications. Evangelical attempts to legitimise classical literature within the immediate terms of their theology are unconvincing.

Some of the other reasons given for classical study, however, reveal the extent to which evangelicals accepted the assumptions of their day. Far from regarding the classics as opposed to Christian ethics, some asserted the traditional view that classical training was conducive to morality. Robert Hall asked:

Shall we abandon the classics, and devote ourselves to the perusal of modern writers, where the maxims inculcated, and the principles taught, are little, if at all, more in unison with those of Christianity?...While things continue as they are, we are apprehensive...that we should gain nothing by neglecting the unrivalled productions of genius left us by the ancients, but a deterioration of taste, without any improvement in religion... Until a more Christian spirit pervades the world, we are inclined to think that the study of the classics is, on the whole, advantageous to public morals, by inspiring an elegance of sentiment and an elevation of soul, which we should seek for in vain elsewhere. ¹¹

Many evangelicals shared Hall's view that the classics could not be rivalled as sources of good taste. The Eclectic Review regarded them as the 'most precious gems of human genius' and argued that they contributed significantly to the sum of human happiness. ¹² Christian Observer contributors maintained,

10. ER i series i (1805) pp 485ff; MM liii (1830) p 834.

11. The Miscellaneous Works and Remains of Robert Hall (1846) p 446.

12. ER ii series iv (1815) pp 355ff; xvi (1821) pp 121ff; xx (1823) pp 413ff.

admittedly in the face of criticism, that the cultivation of morals was not the sole end of human existence: the study of the classics, a source of profound philosophy and insight into human nature, had proved to be the best way of cultivating taste and imagination. Supremely important though religious and moral knowledge was

are we therefore to hold in contempt the blessings of civilization and secular knowledge? Is the cannibal of New Zealand in more enviable circumstances than civilized man, supposing both to be on a level in regard to Christian principles? ¹³

Belief in the values of civilization provided for the continued acceptance of classical literature regardless of theological qualm.

ii. 'One of the highest kinds of mental gratification':
evangelicalism and drama.

Evangelical theology demanded the anathematization of the theatre. It did not however militate so categorically against the reading of plays. Drama as a literary form was sanctioned by Scriptural precedent. ¹⁴ One of the worst characteristics of theatrical production, the contaminating company, was eliminated when plays were read in the safe seclusion of the home. Moreover, without the glamour and glitter of costume and scenery, and the immediacy of acting, much of the captivating and seductive appeal to the passions was lost. A play could be read soberly and, with preceptoral help, its values could be dispassionately compared with those of the faith. Approached in this way drama was no more dangerous than

13. CO xxxii (1832) pp 84-85; xxxiii (1833) p 789.

14. EM i series xxix (1821) p 238 referred to Job and Canticles.

any other literary genre. The Eclectic Review constantly stressed that it revered dramatic writing although despising the theatre, while Hannah More maintained that to reject such 'pure' works as Racine's Athalia and Milton's Comus merely on account of their form would be 'an instance of scrupulosity which ... no well-informed conscience could suggest'.¹⁵

But not all plays were 'pure' and so some evangelicals while acknowledging their genius felt bound to criticise them. One unusually vituperative Eclectic reviewer maintained that it would have been better for English morality had Shakespeare never been born.¹⁶ His works were in the words of one minister a 'mass of fascinating mischief'.¹⁷ Richard Cecil complained:

No high grand virtuous religious aim beams forth in him. A man, whose heart and taste are modelled on the Bible, nauseates him in the mass, while he is enraptured and astonished by the flashes of pre-eminent genius.¹⁸

Similarly a Christian Observer reviewer while admitting that drama was 'one of the highest kinds of mental gratification' objected to Shakespeare's plays because they were neither predominantly moral nor Christian and tended to excite the passions.¹⁹

Evangelicals were not alone in censuring Shakespeare. Johnson had felt some qualm over his morality as did the highchurch

15. H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) iii pp 41-45; ER i series ix (1813) pp 185-86; ii series i (1814) pp 631-44; xiv (1820) pp 87-88. Cf CO xii (1813) pp 228-29.
16. ER i series iii (1807) p 77.
17. CO xvi (1817) p 217.
18. Josiah Pratt, op cit p 100.
19. CO vii (1808) pp 326-29.

Christian Remembrancer which regretted that a father could not safely put the bard's work into his daughter's hand:

Many a person with scruples rather to be commended for delicacy, than censured for strictness, has abstained from that delightful perusal...we do not comprehend how a servant of God can take delight in any study, any business, any amusement, which is either to be reprobated for profaneness or is defiled with obscenity.²⁰

Many evangelicals however, delighting in Shakespeare's plays, sought to make excuses for his profaneness and obscenity. He had lived in a barbarous age; the most offensive passages were not original, but had been forced upon him by the exigencies of theatrical production.²¹ If some evangelicals complained that Shakespeare was immoral others, also following Johnson, were quick to praise him for his understanding of people. Lord Teignmouth commented:

No man ever had a deeper knowledge of human nature; and his characters, excepting those which are professedly the creatures of imagination, are drawn from life. Next to the Bible, no author has so well anatomized the human heart, and exhibited the workings of the human passions.²²

The Eclectic Review regularly applauded Shakespeare's talent while Wilberforce maintained that to read his work was almost his 'greatest treat'.²³ At eighty-six Hannah More wrote a poem

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20. Christian Remembrancer i(1819)pp369ff, an approbatory review of Bowdler's Family Shakespeare. Bowdler was himself a highchurchman. For his nephew see above p 44. S Johnson Preface to the Plays of William Shakespeare (1765) F Bray and W K Wimsatt (eds), op cit p 307.
21. ER i series iv (1808) p 621; ii series ii (1814) p 70; xii (1819) p 350. Cf CO xxv (1825) p 282.
22. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 306. Cf H More, Preface to the Tragedies (1801), Works (1818 edn) iii pp 46-47: 'He seems to have known how every being which did exist would speak and act under every supposed circumstance and every possible situation; and how every being which did not exist must speak and act if ever he were to be called into actual existence'; Brady and Wimsatt (eds) op cit pp 301ff.
23. See for example ER i series x (1813) pp 558-59; ii series v (1816) p 90; xv (1821) p 473; R I and S Wilberforce, Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iv p 204.

asserting his preeminence even over Milton:

Did ever Milton all your thoughts engage,
 And make you laugh and weep in the same page?
 Did Virgil ever weep, like good King Lear,
 That he a daughter had? I greatly fear
 Milton's a mighty man above this earth,
 Too great for jollity - too high for mirth. 24

The high seriousness of evangelical theology, asserted by Miss More in her didactic prose, did not always prevail over literary sensibility. All the world, commented a Christian Observer correspondent, reads Shakespeare. 25

iii. '...where pleasure is the prevailing feeling...':
 evangelicalism and poetry.

Almost all the evangelical world read poetry. Devotional pieces were printed in every number of the Evangelical Magazine, while volumes of poetry were regularly reviewed in both the popular and the more cultured evangelical press. Biographies record numerous instances of evangelicals who, even if they read little other literature, delighted in poetry, wrote it, or urged their children to memorise it. 26 Quotations in articles, sermons and books reveal a widespread familiarity with works such as Edward Young's Night Thoughts and Cowper's The Task which, with Paradise Lost and the Psalms, served to sanction the genre. 27

Its acceptability derived in part from its subject matter. Poetry lent itself to meditative introspection and

24. Thompson, op cit p 372.

25. CO vii (1808) p 388.

26. See for example Macdonald, op cit pp 475f; Aveling, op cit p 100; Gisborne, op cit p 120.

27. See for example T Jackson, Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 73; Life of Rev Robert Newton (1855) p 21.

religious reflection more readily than did other genres. Descriptive poetry was unlikely to instil immoral ideas or to inflame the passions. On the contrary since the study of nature was a means of grace, it could be used to stir devotion. Religion and poetry, J W Cunningham argued, seemed made for each other, for religion enhanced perceptions of beauty and sublimity, the proper objects of poetic taste. ²⁸

Cunningham's argument reveals how congenial neo-classical assumptions about the nature of poetry were to evangelical modes of thought. Believing that God's first intention was to instruct his creatures the Christian Observer readily approved of a genre which according to Aristotelian definition should have a moral effect. It regularly quoted Johnson's formula:

If the object of poetry is to instruct by pleasing, then every poetical effort has a double claim upon the attention of the Christian observer. For we are anxious that the world may be instructed at all rates, and that they should be pleased where they innocently may. ²⁹

The Eclectic Review was equally classical, if less didactic. It maintained that 'the design of poetry must be to please, to gratify the imagination and to touch the softer feelings', 'the office of poetry is, not to teach, but to warm and elevate the mind'. ³⁰ Neo-classical critics had taught that what was naturally interesting, truly poetic, and therefore pleasing, was not the mundane and the particular, but the idealised and

28. J W Cunningham, On the Genius and Poetry of Cowper, Grimshawe (ed), The Works of Cowper (1835) vi pp xxii ff. Cf above p 252.
29. CO xi (1812) p 376; xiii (1814) p 254; xviii (1819) p 667.
30. ER ii series xxv (1826) p 242; xxviii (1827) p 47. Note however the ER's complementary refrain: 'To profit mankind a poet must please them, but unless he profits them at the same time he cannot please them long' (i series vii, 1811, p 21).

the sublime. ³¹ The evangelical periodicals, believing that ignorance of evil was bliss, were happy to concur:

if the end of poetry be to relax and recreate the mind it must be attained by drawing away the mind from the low pursuits and sordid cares, from the pains and sorrows of real life, at least whatever is vulgar and disgusting in them, to an imaginary state of greater beauty, purity and blessedness. ³²

In clearly Platonic tones an Eclectic reviewer declared that the aim of art was to be 'perfectly like the perfect model that we may suppose nature to have imperfectly copied'. ³³

Their sympathy with classicism led some evangelicals to be critical of modern poetry. Crabbe's genius was praised but he was criticised for his 'low and confined subjects' and his tendency to portray life at its worst rather than its best. ³⁴ John Styles contrasted Byron unfavourably with older writers who 'spread out a brighter heaven above our heads, a softer and greener earth beneath our feet'. ³⁵

The Evangelical Magazine condemned the 'glut of poetical romances and eastern tales' produced by Scott, Southey, Byron, and Moore, which attracted readers by their 'extravagant fictions' and 'romantic heroes' rather than by 'brilliant

31. A useful summary is provided in W J Bate, From Classic to Romantic (1946) chapters i and ii.
32. ER i series viii (1812) p 1241. Cf ii series ii (1814) pp 186-87, 227-28; xviii (1822) p 408.
33. ibid iv (1815) p 477.
34. Eg CO x(1811) pp 502-11; ER i series viii (1812) pp 1240-53. For similar non-evangelical complaints see A Pollard (ed), Crabbe: the critical heritage (1972). Evangelicals were particularly concerned about Crabbe's treatment of religion: CO xviii (1819) pp 650-68; ER i series vi (1810) pp 546ff; ii series xiii (1820) pp 114ff.
35. J Styles, Lord Byron's Works Viewed in Connexion with Christianity (1824) p 16.

descriptions' and 'chaste delineations':

They are calculated to amuse but not to instruct - to gratify a sickly taste but to impart no good counsel - to display pathos without exciting sympathy - to describe manners, but to inculcate no morality - in fine to pourtray (sic) character without affording a solitary example worthy of imitation. 36

The Baptist Magazine deprecated 'stories of war and blood - of furies and fiends - of knights and castles - of deams and sprites', and objected to the 'demoralising pages' of modern poetry. 37 The more cultured press was also sometimes critical: an Eclectic reviewer commented 'There is a great deal of modern poetry, that is ill-adapted to make its readers either the wiser, the better, or the happier'. 38

But not all evangelical reviewers condemned modern poetry for some regarded it as superior to that of the past. 39 Unquestionably the most popular modern poet in evangelical as in other circles was Sir Walter Scott. The Eclectic Review and Christian Observer printed long laudatory reviews particularly of his early work. 40 Hannah More had a standing order with her bookseller for all new volumes of his poetry while William Wilberforce was equally enthusiastic: 'There are some parts of the poem that are quite inimitable', he wrote of The Lady

36. EM i series xxvi (1818) p 206. Note however the EM's praise of 'elegant and interesting fragments' from Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Lockhart, in The Keepsake for 1829 (ii series vi, 1828, p 524).

37. BM viii (1816) p 81.

38. ER ii series xv (1821) p 182.

39. CO xxvii (1827) p 296. In ER ii series vi (1816) p 489 it was argued that the average quality of modern poetry was higher than that of any previous period.

40. Eg ER i series iv (1808) pp 407-22 ; vi (1810) pp 578-602 ; vii (1811) pp 672-88 ; ix (1813) pp 587-605 ; CO ix (1810) pp 366-89 ; xi (1812) pp 29-33 ; xiv (1815) pp 750-60.

of the Lake. ⁴¹ Other evangelicals shared Wilberforce's regret that there was not 'much of a moral' but their unease did not stop them delighting in Scott's depiction of medieval life and manners, his versification, his evocation of sympathy, his realistic characterisation... Their reaction was summed up by Hannah More who wrote ecstatically of Rokeby:

Beautiful passages are numerous, and there are a thousand graces which I shall delight to dwell upon... I am not disposed to be critical when I read poetry, where pleasure is the prevailing feeling as it ever must be in reading Scott. ⁴²

Pleasure prevailed too for many evangelical readers of the works of Robert Southey. One Christian Observer critic reported that he read Roderick with 'extra-ordinary pleasure' while others maintained that no living poet had equal ability to refresh and charm the mind; Southey was a 'true genius' who gave dignity, interest, and an air of reality even to subjects 'essentially and hopelessly fictitious'. ⁴³ The Eclectic Review was more critical of Southey's wild flights of fancy which infringed the canons of neo-classical taste and complained because the poet used myth and allegory and lacked feeling on religious subjects. Nevertheless its reviewers also found much to praise in his works, as did Wilberforce, who although critical of Southey's picture of Islam and his versification, relished his 'prodigious command of the language' and 'moral sublimity'. ⁴⁴

Far less attention was paid by the evangelical press

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41. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iii pp 459f; W Roberts, op cit iii p 389.
 42. ibid p 390.
 43. CO ix (1810) p 367; xi (1812) p 384; xiv (1815) pp 592-616.
 44. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) iii p 564; ER i series ix (1813) p 101; ii series i (1814) pp 431-36; iii (1815) pp 354-66; vi (1816) pp 196-204; xvii (1822) pp 421-22; iii series ii (1829) pp 251-59. See above p 325.

to poets more centrally within the romantic tradition, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats. But little space was accorded to them in the Edinburgh Review whose condemnation of Wordsworth is well-known.⁴⁵ The Eclectic Review was also initially critical of the Lake poets on neo-classical grounds, and looked for the early demise of the new school.⁴⁶ Nevertheless a reviewer refused uncritically to condone a parody of Wordsworth fearing that the poet had not had 'fair play':

The chief peculiarity of this most perverse writer evidently consists in expressing serious and impassioned sentiments in vulgar phraseology, and connecting them with subjects that are low and common: and though it is frequently impossible to read his poetry with a grave countenance, yet would it be the height of injustice to deny, that he has looked at nature with the eye of a poet; that his conceptions are sometimes strikingly original, and his pathos deep and powerful. All this however the satirist has found it convenient to overlook.⁴⁷

While later reviewers continued to criticise Wordsworth's 'imbecilities of style' and unpoetic subjects, they acclaimed his poetry from which they had derived 'some of our highest pleasure'.⁴⁸ Jeffrey's disgust at The Excursion was not shared by evangelicals for James Montgomery's Eclectic review was in the rather exaggerated words of an informant of Dorothy Wordsworth 'highly encomiastic'.⁴⁹ The Christian Observer did not review Wordsworth's poetry but some of its readers, Jane Venn and Henry Thornton, appreciated it, as did Hannah More who 'could not believe that these noble Miltonic lines had been written

45. Edinburgh Review xxiv (1814) pp 1-30.

46. See for example ER i series iv (1808) pp 35-43; v (1809) pp 192-93.

47. ibid ix (1813) p 98.

48. ibid ii series vi (1816) pp 4ff; xii (1819) pp 62ff; xiv (1820) pp 177ff; xv (1821) p 182.

49. ibid iii (1815) pp 14ff; E de Selincourt, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth iii (2nd edn 1970) p 206.

by a man whom the reviewers had been assailing for years'.⁵⁰
 This ultimate evangelical compliment was also paid by John Styles
 who maintained that Byron for all his genius had not left
 to posterity works comparable to those of Milton - and
 Wordsworth.⁵¹

The most controversial of the romantic poets was
 undoubtedly Lord Byron whose works sold extensively and whose
 private life gave rise to much scandal and prurient gossip.
 His play Cain was threatened with prosecution for blasphemy
 and even the Edinburgh Review, by no means generally antagonistic
 to him, complained that 'his writings have a tendency to
 destroy all belief in the reality of virtue':

We have not been detractors from Lord Byron's
 fame, nor the friends of his detractors; and
we tell him - far more in sorrow than in anger -
 that we verily believe the great body of the
 English nation - the religious, the moral,
 and the candid part of it - consider the
 tendency of his writings to be immoral and
 pernicious - and look upon his perseverance
 in that strain of composition with regret and
 reprehension. We ourselves are not easily
 startled, either by levity of temper, or
 boldness, or even rashness of remark; we are
 moreover, sincere admirers of Lord Byron's genius -
 and have always felt a pride and an interest
 in his fame. But we cannot dissent from the
 censure to which we have alluded...⁵²

Set within this context the Eclectic Review's
 criticism of Byron does not appear exceptional. Indeed its

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50. Quoted M G Jones, op cit p 225. See above pp 309-11.
 51. J Styles, Lord Byron's Works Viewed in Connexion with
 Christianity (1824) p 29.
 52. Edinburgh Review xxxvi (1822) p 447.

reviewers praised highly the early cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, The Giaour, and The Corsair, and when Lara was published expressed pleasure at the appearance of another Byronic poem.⁵³ Later reviews as in the secular press were increasingly critical but compliments continued to be paid to Byron.⁵⁴ Eclectic reviewers on the whole disagreed with those who believed that Byron's poems spread moral contagion:

If in any degree they may lessen our abhorrence of vice, by making our sympathy predominate over principle, rather than by counteracting its influence, they at the same time, deepen our conviction of the miseries inseparably connected with a departure from virtue...It is but justice to say, that there is nothing, so far as we recollect, in his poems, which displays any design, or which is in itself calculated to corrupt the virtuous mind, to raise a guilty glow of pleasure, or to delude the imagination into a love of splendid crime. There is, at least, a highly moral lesson to be deduced, if the readers please, from his poetry.⁵⁵

The Christian Observer reviewer of The Giaour agreed with this, acknowledging that Byron never attempted to suggest that vice brought happiness. The four reviews of Byron's poems in the Christian Observer, however, tended to be much more critical than those in the Eclectic Review, although readers' attention was drawn to some 'truly beautiful passages'.⁵⁶ The popular periodicals, maybe some of the detractors to whom Jeffrey referred, were unwilling to grant Byron any accolade and certainly did not hold to the view that his work was comparatively innocuous. The Baptist Magazine admitted that only the blind and bigotted would deny Byron's genius, but it refused to praise him.⁵⁷

53. ER i series viii (1812) pp 630-41; x (1813) pp 523-31; ii series i (1814) pp 416-26; ii (1814) pp 393-98.

54. ibid iv (1815) pp 94-96; v (1816) pp 269-75, 595-99; vii (1817) pp 292-304; viii (1817) pp 62-66, 291-92; ix (1818) pp 555-57; x (1818) pp 46-54; xii (1819) pp 147-56; xv (1821) pp 518-27; xvii (1822) pp 418-27.

55. ibid i (1814) pp 422-23.

56. CO xi (1812) pp 376-86; xii (1813) pp 731-37; xiii (1814) pp 245-57; xvi (1817) pp 246-59.

57. BM xxii (1830) p 385.

The Evangelical Magazine likewise acknowledged his genius but condemned him for prostituting his gifts, for spreading profanity and corruption, and for perpetrating false and morbid views of human nature. ⁵⁸

Whether or not they approved of him evangelicals like their contemporaries were fascinated by Lord Byron. J W Cunningham even appears to have named a daughter after him. ⁵⁹ Lord Teignmouth devoted sixteen lines of a poem on nature and grace to him, eulogising his 'matchless art' and urging him to add

... to a Poet's fame
The brightest honours of a Christian's name!
Why suffer sceptic gloom thy mind to cloud,
And robe thy blazing genius in a shroud? ⁶⁰

Others, refusing to believe that a man would willingly choose misery, assumed that he was ripe for conversion and acted accordingly. John Sheppard, a clothier from Frome whose wife had recently died, employed the underhand method of sending Byron a copy of a prayer for his redemption discovered in her private papers. ⁶¹ The eccentric Thomas Mulock claimed that Byron was 'the only person in the world who seems to have any

58. EM i series xxx (1822) p 192; ii series ix (1831) pp 190, 196.

59. Louisa Byron Cunningham was born on 29 November 1816 (Lambeth Palace Library Ms 2238). Six years later Cunningham wrote to Byron denying that he was the model for De Rance, Cunningham's tale of a profligate, of which Byron had never heard (R E Prothero, ed, Byron's Works: Letters and Journals vi, 1901, pp 153-54). Prothero also prints a letter from Cunningham to Murray suggesting that the plaque Byron had designed for the grave of his illegitimate daughter, Allegra, be omitted since the poet might later regret his choice of inscription. Cunningham was however loath to cause him pain 'The injury, which in my judgment, he is from day to day inflicting upon society is no justification for measures of retaliation and unkindness' (pp 70-72). Cunningham may genuinely have been seeking to soften a blow: evangelicals and highchurchmen alike at Harrow had agreed that the perpetuation of the child's name might harm the schoolboys' morals. According to Trollopian sources the Vicar nevertheless congratulated the poet on Cain thus proving himself to be a 'flunkey' (T A Trollope, op cit i pp 91-92; Sadleir, op cit p 57; Bigland, op cit p 39).

60. Teignmouth, op cit ii p 212.

61. Prothero (ed) op cit v pp 488f.

proper notion of religion', and urged evangelical faith upon him. ⁶² When he died the Christian Observer printed 'Observations on the character, opinions and writings of the late Lord Byron' which spanned four issues. ⁶³ At Holland Chapel, Kennington, John Styles preached a sermon on Lord Byron's Works Viewed in Connexion with Christianity and the Obligation of Social Life. ⁶⁴

Styles' peroration is of particular interest, for he urged his listeners to read only those parts of Byron's works which the wise and good had not denounced. To recommend total abstinence would, he admitted, be futile. ⁶⁵ The confessed inability of a leading preacher to dissuade his congregation from reading such secular literature is significant testimony to the power of public opinion over pronouncements from the pulpit.

iv. '... a style of production peculiarly the world's own...': evangelicalism and the novel. ⁶⁶

Most objectionable of all literary genres in evangelical eyes was the novel. In December 1800 the Evangelical Magazine published a 'Spiritual barometer; or a scale of the

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62. ibid pp 132, 593; A L Reade, The Mellards and their Descendants (1915) pp 44-45. Mulock a freelance lecturer was the father of the Victorian novelist Dinah Craik. He and his fellow Baptist, William James Reade (see above p 309) married sisters.
63. CO xxv (1825) pp 79-87, 151-58, 214-22, 281-88.
64. The sermon was preached on 4 July 1824. I am grateful to Mr J Creasey of the Dr Williams's Library who informs me that the Independent Holland Chapel was opened by Styles but did not pay and so the mortgage was foreclosed. The chapel became an Anglican Proprietary Chapel on the site now occupied by Christ Church, Brixton.
65. J Styles, Lord Byron's Works Viewed in Connexion with Christianity (1824) p 29.
66. ER ii series xix (1823) p 283.

progress of sin and of grace'. Towards the positive pole it was calibrated with the attributes and practices thought to characterise those destined for 'glory' and 'dismissal from the body'; at the other extreme graded in degrees of depravity were the activities of those assumed to be heading heedlessly to 'death' and 'perdition'. Among the most heinous of sins, even more damning than attendance at the theatre, was 'love of novels'.⁶⁷

Some Eclectic reviewers sought to explain away the apparent inconsistency of approving narrative poetry while condemning narrative prose. The enjoyment of poetry demanded effort on the readers' part; the novelist in contrast made no demands on his readers. There were more bad novels than bad poems for epic and dramatic poetry being subject to known rules demanded a degree of skill in their exponents: 'The circumstantials of prose are the essentials of verse'.⁶⁸

It followed that

The effect of novel-reading is more deleterious than that of poetry, because the excitement is in general more powerful; and the novelist relies more simply on the passion of curiosity for producing gratification, than the poet does, who seeks to please by more refined means.⁶⁹

Underlying these rationalisations was the fact that the novel was not an accepted genre. Narrative poetry was approved by association; the novel, like television in the mid-twentieth century, being a new medium, was infra dig. Novel criticism was

67. EM i series viii (1800) p 526.

68. ER iii series ii (1829) p 162 . Cf ii series vii (1817) pp 312-13; xv (1821) pp 280ff; xxix (1828) pp 145-48.

69. ibid xxv (1826) p 445.

in its infancy and criteria of excellence were not yet established. Objections to the novel had been widely voiced in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Fearful of its realism, Johnson had noted that in older romances 'every transaction and sentiment was so remote from all that passes among men, that the reader was in very little danger of making any applications to himself'.⁷⁰ In contrast many critics feared that modern novels would both arouse the passions and create false presuppositions in young girls who might expect all young men to behave as did the heroes: they would, in Mrs Barbauld's words be unprepared for the 'neglect and tedium of life'.⁷¹

Evangelical objections were reiterations of the qualms, of others, heightened by the fear that a girl's soul and not just her respectability and temporal well-being were at stake. To read novels was to become familiar with just such beliefs and behaviour as were avoided in everyday life. If novels were to be read at all 'we should be tempted to give the preference to those works of pure and genuine fancy, which exercise and fill the imagination' rather than to those which 'by exhibiting passion and intrigue in bewitching colours, lay hold too intensely on the feelings'.⁷² Fairy tales and the Arabian Nights being concerned with remote and imaginary worlds did not mislead as did modern novels. Filled with distaste for the comparative dullness of daily living, regarding love as

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70. The Rambler 31 March 1750, Brady and Wimsatt (eds), op cit p 156.
71. Quoted by W F Gallaway, 'The Conservative Attitude toward Fiction', Publications of the Modern Language Association of America lv (1940) p 1054. For further discussion of contemporary attitudes to the novel see J T Taylor, Early Opposition to the English Novel: the popular reaction from 1750-1830 (1943); I Williams, Novel and Romance 1700-1800: a documentary record (1970) pp 1-24.
72. H More, Hints towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess (1805), Works (1818 edn) x p 173.

all-important, readers of the latter were likely to be deterred and distracted from more serious and demanding studies and from the disciplines of spirituality. Immersed in an imaginary world they might easily substitute vicarious living for the character-forming experiences of everyday life. Novels were therefore 'nervating' and 'dissipating', 'intoxicating stimulants', which caused 'artificial' and 'injurious' excitement. ⁷³

By the third decade of the nineteenth century the more general distrust of the novel was largely effaced, although it was still regarded as a poor sister to the more established genres. The Quarterly Review of January 1821 introduced its essay on Northanger Abbey and Persuasion with the affirmation: 'The times seem to be past when an apology was requisite for condescending to notice a novel'. The writer was not surprised that novels had been indiscriminately condemned at a time when most were highly improbable, engaged the passions, and portrayed vice favourably. He believed however that the novel had since changed to become a vehicle of morality. ⁷⁴

Evangelical reviewers disagreed. When Sir Walter Scott ~~did~~ the Methodist Magazine wrote of his novels, the popularity of which had done much to make the genre respectable, 'Their capital defect is, that they appear to have been written without any moral aim'. ⁷⁵ Christian Observer contributors protested that Scott misrepresented religion, and that his novels, while not licentious, were far from positively moral. ⁷⁶ Novels might have improved but by effectively denying that sin, an affront

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73. ER i series viii (1812) pp 605-06; ii series vii (1817) pp 309-36; CO xiv (1815) pp 512-17; xvi (1817) pp 298-301, 371-75, 425-29; xxii (1822) pp 157-72, 237-50; MM xlii (1819) pp 606-09; H More, Moral Sketches (1819) pp 238-49.
74. Quarterly Review xxiv (1821) pp 352-57.
75. MM lvi (1833) pp 17-18.
76. CO xxxii (1832) p 814; xxxiii (1833) pp 478-82.

to God, had dire consequences, they misled their readers in matters of ultimate importance. Evangelicals maintained that the worthiness of characters could only properly be evaluated according to criteria which God might be assumed to adopt. Failure to reflect a Biblical outlook on life was a culpable misrepresentation of reality. Moreover, even the least objectionable novels were criticised for engrossing more time than could legitimately be devoted to relaxation by those accountable to God for the use of every moment. 'Had he written before the flood' Hannah More wrote of Scott,

all would have been well ... A life of eight hundred years might have allowed of the perusal of the whole of his volumes; a proportionate quantity in each century would have been delightful: but for our poor scanty threescore years and ten, it is too much... 77

Above all evangelicals continued to oppose novel-reading because, long associated with loose living and the circulating library, it had acquired the irrevocable stigma of worldliness: 'If we are not to think, to feel, to act, and to perish with the world' argued a Christian Observer correspondent 'let a deep and wide interval yet exist between the habits of pleasure of the two parties'. 78

Nevertheless not even evangelicals were proof against the power of Walter Scott. In 1817 the Christian Observer noted that novel-reading was practised to a considerable extent even in the religious world and on more than one occasion it blamed Scott for this: 'The habit of novel-reading

77. W Roberts, op cit iv pp 204-05.

78. CO xvi (1817) p 301.

introduced into many families where it did not formerly prevail, by means of Sir Walter Scott's publications, has always appeared to us so pernicious and alarming that we have never ceased to remonstrate against it'.⁷⁹ Such virtuous indignation was not altogether justified for not all Christian Observer contributors categorically condemned the novel. While some were hostile, some, including the editor's son, Tom Macaulay, justified the reading of certain classes of fiction.⁸⁰ Admittedly the periodical refrained from reviewing any of Scott's novels until the thirty-ninth was published in 1822, when it determined to make its views known on an author who wrote so prolifically and had so extensive an influence: much of the review was devoted to a reasoned condemnation of novel-reading. But the reviewer admitted that Scott's were the best of 'mere novels'.⁸¹

Further evidence of growing permissiveness comes from the Eclectic Review. Its contributors reviewed a number of novels, and while some spoke derogatively of the genre, 'a species of literature which, with rare exceptions, we have not submitted to the drudgery of reading', 'a class of works which has but doubtful claim on our notice', it was by no means condemned out of hand.⁸² On the contrary reviewers admitted that 'To the authors of fictitious Narratives the literary world is certainly indebted, for some of the most sublime and useful

79. ibid p 64; xxii (1822) p 158; xxxii (1832) p 819.

80. Ibid xv (1816) pp 784-87. Cf xvi (1817) pp 230-31.

81. ibid xxii (1822) pp 157-72, 237-50.

82. ER ii series xiii (1820) p 526; xv (1821) p 280.

works in poetry or prose', and suggested that the skill needed to write prose narrative was such that 'the performance, though it be but a tale, will appear to deserve no mean rank among the efforts of genius'.⁸³ In particular reviewers, including those most uneasy about the novel, were convinced of Scott's genius, although some voiced regret that he did not put his undoubted talents to better use.⁸⁴ If not positively moral, Scott at least eschewed the libertinism of his predecessors, while he was regarded as a far greater writer than his contemporaries:

... seeing that the constant demand for such works necessitates a supply of some kind ... we will not dispute that a service is rendered to the lovers of light reading, by writers of superior talent ... who furnish the public with amusements more deserving of the name of intellectual, than the generality of novels.⁸⁵

More positively, several reviewers spoke very highly of Scott's achievements, acclaiming his talents and whetting their readers' appetites by quoting at length from his works. His plots were criticised

but such is his faculty of identification, so perfectly to the life are his characters drawn, coloured, grouped, and put into action, and with such veritable circumstance does he surround them, that we are insensible to deficiencies in his fable, that would be fatal to any less powerful spell than that by which he contrives to enthrall us ...⁸⁶

Comments like this make plain the problems which evangelicals faced. Eclectic reviewers were in varying degrees convinced by the traditional arguments against novel-reading.

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83. ibid i series ii (1806) p 140; ii series xii (1819) pp 429-30.
 84. ibid xiv (1820) p 268.
 85. ibid xii (1819) p 423.
 86. ibid xviii (1822) p 163.

There was moreover much in Scott's writings of which they disapproved. Yet they acknowledged his moral and aesthetic superiority over other novelists past and present, and, so lured, succumbed to his spell. Their difficulty was explicitly stated in an 1833 review of a novel by Mrs Hall:

In perusing works of this class, we too often find ourselves forced to admire what we cannot approve; pleased, interested, fascinated by the perusal, and dissatisfied with ourselves on reflecting what has so much pleased us. 87

The dilemma found typical expression in William Wilberforce who in later life delighted in Scott's novels. Nevertheless he felt that he had sat up too late reading Old Mortality and wrote of Peveril of the Peak

I am glad we have finished the work; this class of writing is too interesting: it makes other studies insipid, or rather other light reading; but yet much to be learned from this class of writings... 88

The last statement represents Wilberforce's attempt, conscious or subconscious, to justify and account for his interest.

In 1822 he read The Fortunes of Nigel and commented:

It is strange how much Nigel had haunted me while reading it. In spite of all my resistance and correction of the illusion by suggesting to myself that the author may order events as he pleases, I am extremely interested by it. But I think it is partly because I consider it all as substantially true, giving the account of the manners and incidents of the day. 89

But the books appealed to more than purely academic interest in the past and Wilberforce was not wholly convinced by his own explanation. In the last resort he was unable to justify the reading he enjoyed so much. While he continued to delight

87. ibid iii series ix (1833) p 41.

88. R I and S Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (1838) v pp 268-70.

89. ibid p 133.

in Scott's writings and noted with satisfaction any Christian emphases, he lamented the general absence of 'moral or religious object':

They remind me of a giant spending his strength in cracking nuts. I would rather go to render up my account at the last day, carrying up with me The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain than bearing the load 90 of all these volumes, full as they are of genius.

Hannah More's tract, The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, was one of many religious tales which flooded the market in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, a period which saw the effective birth of the religious novel. Indeed if some evangelicals were seduced into novel-reading by Sir Walter Scott, far more were led onto the downward track by Mrs More and her successors. Unlike the Waverley novels, religious fiction was reviewed in all the evangelical periodicals, and, particularly in its infancy, received considerable approbation. The Evangelical Magazine was exuberant that the tables were now being turned on the devil:

because the enemy of mankind hath dressed Vice and Licentiousness in these engaging forms, must we therefore wholly surrender them to his service? By no means. Rather let us restore them to the cause of Virtue and Religion. 91

'With great pleasure we announce and recommend this publication', wrote the Eclectic Review of a widely acclaimed novel by Harriet Corp; 'She ... embodies her instructions in a form which must attract attention.' 92 The Christian Observer quoted several pages from another work by the same author to encourage young people to read it: they would do so with pleasure and profit. 93

90. ibid p 254.

91. EM i series xiii (1805) p 515; xx (1812) p 395.

92. ER i series v (1809) pp 972-73.

93. CO vi (1807) pp 522-26.

But religious novels also provoked criticism which became increasingly marked as their production escalated in the years after the Napoleonic wars. The term 'novel' was one of such disapprobation that evangelicals were initially loath to apply it to a Christian work: in 1806 the Evangelical Magazine wrote of John Satchell's Thornton Abbey 'Were this work written on any other subject than religion, we should not hesitate to call it a Novel, in the form of Letters: but that name has been too much degraded to be admitted into religious literature'.⁹⁴ There was considerable unease about mixing sacred and secular. Momentous religious truths should surely not be presented in so gaudy a garb: in 1823 the Baptist Magazine protested 'we cannot help calling in question the propriety of stating ... divine principles, or sacred influence, through the plot of a romance ...'.⁹⁵ Also questioned was the propriety of producing fiction for adults. Stories were for children; the Eclectic Review was therefore

unwilling to believe, what seems indeed implied in the practice of many useful writers, that in addressing men and women of any class, it is really necessary, or really desirable, to tickle their ears, and lure their eyes with tales and pictures.⁹⁶

The underlying assumption was that 'tales and pictures' were merely sugar to the pill. Believing that religious truth was conceptual, evangelicals communicated it not on the whole through narrative, but within the framework of narrative - through long and sermonic comments and conversations. Too much narrative was regarded as not only inappropriate but also counterproductive.

94. EM i series xiv (1806) pp 514-15.

95. BM xv (1823) p 111.

96. ER ii series ix (1818) pp 61-62.

The Christian Observer feared that some might read religious fiction for the plot and the incidents, vicariously sharing the experiences and emotions described, but skipping the moral lessons and religious observations.⁹⁷ Thus, it praised one novel because it was 'not novelish in its character: its incidents being few and simple, and only as pegs for the moral'.⁹⁸ Similarly it stated of Mrs More's Coelebs in search of a Wife 'It may be very true that novels are mischievous; but we cannot allow this work to be called a novel ... the preceptive parts are not choked with incidents'; 'Mrs More with her lively imagination, must have felt some difficulty in preventing her Coelebs from degenerating too much into matters of plot and incident, of which she has admitted only so much as seemed necessary for her higher purpose'.⁹⁹ Paradoxically the Christian Observer was giving highest praise to those novels that made least use of the genre's potentiality.

That the novel was not factually true was a further cause of concern to some evangelicals and gave rise to casuistry such as that described in the Evangelical Magazine of 1805: 'to avoid the offence some well-meaning Christians have taken at fictitious narrative, the Author, like the celebrated Bunyan, hath told his pleasing story as a dream'.¹⁰⁰ A few evangelicals clearly had very rigid ideas about what was 'true': a reviewer of Mrs Sherwood's Stories explanatory of the Catechism complained that events illustrative of catechetical teaching were unlikely to occur in the right order.¹⁰¹

97. CO xi (1812) pp 713-14.

98. ibid xxx (1830) p 432.

99. ibid viii (1809) pp 109, 111; xxiii (1823) p 648.

100. EM i series xiii (1805) p 270.

101. ibid xxvi (1818) p 477.

Such bizarre objections were rare, but concern for authenticity was sufficiently widespread to provoke the multiplication of tales 'founded on fact'. These were praised more highly than mere fiction, but were not free from censure: in 1825 the Baptist Magazine pronounced 'We are jealous of these little tales founded on fact - not knowing how far they are so - and we think an intelligent child should be encouraged, in every instance, to ask "is it true?"' ¹⁰²

The Eclectic Review, catering for the more educated, recognised that even reputable histories were but 'fictions founded upon fact', suggested that verisimilitude was more important to a story than factual truth, and argued that a work could be both fictional and true. ¹⁰³ Nevertheless it was generally accepted that fact was more potent and edifying than fiction. Virtuous characters in fiction, the Christian Observer pointed out, might or might not be imitable; certainly there was no obligation on the reader to emulate them as there was in the case of lives of real people. ¹⁰⁴ Moreover testimonies and memoirs were believed to provide authoritative evidence of the activity of God, which fiction by definition could not supply. ¹⁰⁵ 'The God of truth' the Baptist Magazine argued 'cannot be so fully expected to use the creations of fancy, as he may be the correct relations of his own righteous acts and gracious operations'. ¹⁰⁶ It was a mystery to some

102. BM xvii (1825) p 124.

103. ER ii series xiii (1820) pp 276-77, 349. Cf above p 316.

104. CO xxv (1825) p 162.

105. See for example ER iii series ii (1829) p 87 'We are unwilling to consider this story as a mere fiction...It disturbs the satisfaction which we must feel at meeting with so pleasing a delineation of the power of religion, to recollect that the case is suppositious and ideal; that being totally destitute of the character of evidence, it must fail to convince: it may illustrate, but it can prove nothing'. Cf ii series vii (1817) p 313.

106. BM xv (1823) p 385.

evangelicals why people should want to read the inventions of fiction when real life accounts were just as exciting. In 1827 the Evangelical Magazine hailed a set of biographies with the comment 'There would be little occasion for works of fiction, were a due attention paid to the narratives of those who have actually figured on the stage of life'.¹⁰⁷

Underlying all such criticisms of fiction and attempts to woo evangelicals from the novel was the nagging fear that religious novel-reading might be accompanied by the same ill effects as ordinary novel-reading, over-excitement, an unwillingness to read more serious matter, and an insatiable thirst for fiction. The Christian Observer maintained that 'though occasional stimulants may be salutary, they cannot with impunity become our daily food'.¹⁰⁸ From the beginning there was concern lest religious fiction proliferated: thus the Eclectic Review of 1806 praised Thornton Abbey but feared 'a serious calamity, if the success of the present work should let loose a pack of religious novels upon the public'.¹⁰⁹ By the 1820s its fears were realised and protests against a continuing inundation of religious fiction became increasingly common in all evangelical periodicals. An Evangelical Magazine reviewer would have given one book unqualified praise had he not been afraid that the increase in religious fiction would prevent the study of real history and would imperceptibly encourage the young to read dangerously worldly novels.¹¹⁰ The same prevalent fear that people would progress from religious

107. EM ii series v (1827) p 342.

108. CO xxx (1830) p 432.

109. ER i series ii (1806) p 1030.

110. EM i series xxvi (1818) pp 208-09.

novels to secular novels, and hence become more worldly and less religious, was voiced by the Methodist Magazine when it spoke disparagingly of

... those religious novels which abound in the present day, and which threaten very extensively to pervert the taste of our youth. In the books to which we refer, evangelical sentiment is mixed up with flippant and fictitious narrative, which is only calculated to induce a habit of novel-reading, and to render the mind indifferent to sober truth and fact. 111

But despite all their unease and antagonism the reviewers felt unable totally to condemn such novels. Christ had taught in parables. The need to provide wholesome reading matter for the evangelical youth remained as did the initial evangelistic incentive:

... it seems pretty clear that, while the rage for that kind of reading, which gratifies an irregular appetite and a distempered fancy, continues so inordinate, the only choice left to the friends of wisdom, is, to encounter folly on its own ground, and to make their way to the understanding by addressing themselves to the imagination. 112

When the aim was laudable, critics could not but approve. 113

In any case they often enjoyed the books themselves. Although he disapproved of tales, a Baptist Magazine reviewer confessed that he had derived considerable pleasure from Procrastination; or the Vicar's daughter. 114 The ambivalence of the reviewers' position over religious as over secular novels was reflected even within individual reviews. Many started by condemning the genre and then proceeded to exempt from censure the

111. MM xlvi (1824) p 693.

112. ER i series viii (1812) p 924.

113. See for example ER iii series iii (1830) p 565.

114. BM xvii (1825) p 173.

particular novel under review. The Eclectic Review's analysis of Dunallan; or Know what you judge; a story commenced 'We still think the light viands now so much in request, a bad substitute for the more healthy, spiritual food of our forefathers ...' But the reviewer acknowledged that it was a novel-reading age and if fictions were to be read 'their being made subservient to moral or religious lessons cannot be held criminal'. He admitted that tales could have good effects upon their readers and 'when religious truths are recommended by the charms of graceful fiction, and kept, at the same time, in their genuine purity, we should not know exactly in what terms to express our disapprobation'. 115

Ultimately the reviewers had no option but to accept the religious novel because the evangelical public for which they wrote liked it and made profitable its increasing production. This state of affairs was regretfully acknowledged by the Eclectic Review of 1832 when it lamented that whatever it said would be disregarded: 'Our recommendation they scarcely need, nor would the public wait for it. Our interdict would not be respected. Tales the public will have...' 116

d. Conclusion: philistines or literati?

Two conclusions can properly be drawn. In the first place it is clear that evangelicals, Anglican and dissenting alike, were far more widely read in the realms of secular

115. ER ii series xxiii (1825) p 462.
116. ibid iii series vii (1832) p 346.

literature than has generally been recognised. Matthew Arnold's stereotype of the uncultured dissenter has all too often been uncritically accepted, with the result that even so competent a critic as R D Altick untypically makes erroneous statements:

While...the Christian Observer gave prominent space to reviews of The Lady of the Lake, Gabbe's Borough and the first cantos of Childe Harold, dissenting periodicals such as the Eclectic Review paid little or no attention to current secular literature, except by way of condemnation. ¹

The allegation would be accurate if directed at the Evangelical or Methodist Magazines but the Eclectic Review was both more comprehensive in its coverage and more complimentary in its criticism than was the Christian Observer. An analysis of the reviews in the two periodicals reveals that, notwithstanding some weaknesses, evangelical criticism was notably in tune with that of the age, and of a higher standard than is often admitted.

The cultural influence even of the popular evangelical press cannot be entirely dismissed. The frequent publication of poetry of however lowly a standard and the regular reviews of religious poems, tracts, and novels may well have constituted an introduction to literature for many in the lower classes. Moreover, the periodicals' failure to review secular works is no proof of their subscribers' refusal to read them. On the contrary it seems unlikely that John Styles' was the only congregation to indulge in proscribed reading. The vehemence with which periodical writers and preachers alike inveighed against certain works tells its own story: the presidential address to the Methodist Conference of 1825 would hardly have contained

1. . . . Altick, op cit p 117. Cf with reference to evangelicalism in general the assertion that good evangelicals did not read Byron in M J Quinlan, Victorian Prelude (1941) p 180.

so extensive a warning against 'the irreligious and insidious influence, which pervade so much of the literature...of the day', had the denominational leaders not had reason to fear that the rank and file were in danger of falling. ²

Yet the unease of men like Entwisle and Bunting, of periodical reviewers and above all of those evangelicals most committed to the study of literature, shows that the legend of evangelical philistinism was not totally unfounded. While many evangelicals enjoyed secular literature to a far greater extent than is generally acknowledged and allowed it a very real place in their lives, they remained unable satisfactorily to relate it to their theology. On the one hand they accorded it a value independent of religious utility, regarding it most positively as a proper adjunct of civilization, more negatively as a domestic occupation, less harmful than public amusements. On the other they were unhappily aware that imaginative reading absorbed time that could be devoted to more religious pursuits, and, more seriously, served subliminally to undermine the teachings of the faith. Their problem was, if not resolved, most clearly articulated by one of the most eminent of evangelical literati, John Foster, who concluded a discussion of the subject with the crucial question:

Under what restrictions then ought the study of polite literature to be conducted? ... I can only answer as I have answered before. Polite literature will necessarily continue to be the grand school of intellectual and moral cultivation. The evils therefore which it may contain, will as certainly affect in some degree the minds of the successive

2. J Entwisle and J Bunting, The Annual Address of the Conference of the Methodist Societies... (1825) p 9.

students, as the hurtful influence of the climate, or of the seasons, will affect their bodies. To be thus affected is part of the destiny under which they are born, in a civilized country. It is indispensable to acquire the advantage; it is inevitable to incur the evil ... 3

No statement more clearly reveals evangelicals' acceptance of culture, and their failure to reconcile it theologically with their faith.

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3. J Foster, On Some of the Reasons by which Evangelical Religion has been rendered Less Acceptable to Persons of Cultivated Taste (1805 , 1st American edn 1807) pp 169-70. Foster's place in the Christian tradition of opposition to the things of this world is discussed in H J C Grierson, Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century... (1958 edn) pp 1-4, while his acceptance of secular literature as inherently valuable is stressed by A G Newell, 'A Christian Approach to Literature', Evangelical Quarterly xxxii (1960)

10. FAITH AND THOUGHT

Foster's famous essay On Some of the Causes by which Evangelical Religion has been Rendered Less Acceptable to Persons of Cultivated Taste is the most extended explanation of intellectual alienation from evangelicalism, and, emanating from within the evangelical fold, the most damning indictment of the movement as essentially anti-intellectualist.

Foster believed that evangelicals forfeited intellectual respect because the faith of some, being purely emotional, was mindless, while the mental horizons of others were limited by some two or three over-emphasised doctrines which they assumed explained everything.¹ Even when belief was more balanced, distinctive dialect and grotesque gestures rendered objectionable religious statements which the educated might more readily have accepted if expressed in the language of Dryden and Pope:

For I suppose it will be instantly allowed, that the mode of expression of the greater number of evangelical divines and professors is widely different from the standard of general language, not only by the necessary adoption of some peculiar terms, but by a continued and systematic cast of phraseology; insomuch that in reading or hearing five or six sentences of an evangelical discourse, you ascertain the school by the language, requiring everything to be marked with the signs of the holy church, and forbidding any one to minister to religion except in consecrated speech.²

Foster recognised that some of these problems were irremediable. As long as evangelicalism was practised and

1. ibid pp 18 ff.
2. ibid pp 24, 39-40.

preached by the ignorant and uncultured, the impression given of the faith to the intelligentsia would be unavoidably degrading:

This humiliation is inevitable; for unless miracles are wrought, to impart to the less intellectual disciples an enlarged power of thinking, the evangelical truth must accommodate itself to the dimensions and unrefined habitudes of their minds ... Insomuch that if there was no declaration of the sacred system, but in the forms of conception and language in which they declare it, even a most candid man might hesitate to admit it as the most glorious gift of heaven. 3

But the intellectual poverty of evangelikalism was not, according to Foster, just circumstantial. He complained that some Christians made no effort to redress their ignorance and even gloried in it, attributing

a kind of merit to their indifference to knowledge, as if it were the proof or the result of a higher regard for religion. If a hint of wonder was insinuated at their reading so little and within so very confined a scope, it would be replied that they thought it enough to read the Bible; as if it were possible for a person whose mind fixes with inquisitive attention on what is before him, even to read the Bible without at least ten thousand such questions being started in his mind as can be answered only from sources of information extraneous to the Bible. But ... this reading of the Bible was no work of inquisitive thought ... Those who have no wish for anything like a general improvement in knowledge, have no disposition for the real business of thinking, even in religion ... 4

What really annoyed Foster was the complacency and arrogance characteristic of those who neither acknowledged nor sought to extend their limited understanding

as if it comprised everything which it is possible, or which it is of consequence, for any mind to see in the Christian religion. They were like persons who should doubt the information that incomparably greater

3. ibid pp 13-14.

4. ibid p 21.

numbers of stars can be seen through a telescope than they ever beheld, and who have no curiosity to try. 5

Foster's bitter condemnation of his fellow evangelicals invites scrutiny: is it true that 'men of cultivated taste' were antipathetic to evangelicalism? To what extent did evangelical belief in the all-importance of religion act as a deterrent to intellectual activity? How far were evangelicals prepared to question known verities, to reformulate their beliefs as a result of new discovery?

a. The Evangelical Intelligentsia

Foster's assumption that intellectuals were unsympathetic to evangelicalism must, at least, be qualified, for it is possible to list a number of evangelicals whose 'cultivated taste' and intellectual achievements were recognised, either at the time or subsequently, outside purely evangelical circles. Moreover, while evangelicals were not themselves members of the literary establishment, several maintained friendships with men of whose standing there is no doubt. The production of a catalogue is unavoidable in the substantiation of this case. Nevertheless that a catalogue can be produced is itself proof of the sometimes questioned existence of an evangelical intelligentsia.

University placements provide clear evidence that evangelicals, spurred by belief in the value of hard work, could hold their own in intellectual competition. Thomas Fowell Buxton

5. ibid pp 23-24.

received the gold medal, the highest honour of Trinity College Dublin. ⁶ At Cambridge Henry Venn Elliott was 14th wrangler, William Jowett 12th, Thomas Gisborne 6th, and J W Cunningham and Edward Hoare 5th. William Dealtry was 2nd wrangler and 2nd Smith's prizeman in 1796, as was Charles James Hoare in 1803. Two years earlier Henry Martyn had been first prizeman and senior wrangler. ⁷ Martyn was but one of seven wranglers among Simeon's assistants at Holy Trinity; an eighth, James Scholefield, became Regius Professor of Greek. ⁸ In 1778 and 1783 respectively the senior wranglers were two evangelicals, William Farish and Francis Wollaston; the latter was Jacksonian Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy from 1792 until 1813 when he was succeeded by the former, previously Professor of Chemistry. Contemporary with them were Joseph Jowett Regius Professor of Civil Law from 1782 to 1813, and his close friend Isaac Milner, President of Queens, sometime Jacksonian Professor, Mathematical Professor, and University Vice Chancellor; Milner's examiners had 'starred' his degree result with the comment 'incomparabilis'. Of not dissimilar stature in a different field was Samuel Lee, a carpenter's apprentice who had taught himself Greek and Hebrew, and made some progress in Chaldee, Syriac, Samaritan, Persian and Hindustan before

6. C Buxton, op cit p 26.

7. J Bateman, The Life of the Rev Henry Venn Elliott (1868) p 35; J H Townsend (ed) op cit p 37; the others are all cited in DNB. Cambridge was the favoured university for evangelicals in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, although the presence of Isaac Crouch attracted some few to St Edmund Hall, Oxford. See J S Reynolds, The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735-1871 (1953). For early support of Cambridge see J D Walsh, 'The Magdalene Evangelicals' Church Quarterly Review clix (1958) and for Wilberforce's decision to send his sons to Oxford, Newsome, op cit pp 57ff.

8. F W B Bullock, op cit p 193. The other six were Thomas Thomason (1796), Thomas Sowerby (1798), W Madell (1803), M Preston (1804), Francis Goode (1820), William Carus (1827). For further discussion of such men and of Scholefield (cited in DNB) see Hopkins, op cit ch vii.

being sent to Cambridge at CMS expense in 1813. Reputed to be the master of eighteen languages he was appointed in 1819 to the chair of Arabic and in 1831 to that of Hebrew. Two years later he was awarded a D.D. ⁹

The intellectual competence of dissenters who like Lee often rose to eminence from socially disadvantageous circumstances is confirmed by the awards of Scottish universities and by appointments to government service. The Rev Robert Morrison, a LMS missionary, received a doctorate from the University of Glasgow: the author of a Chinese grammar, linguistic treatises, and a three volume Dictionary of the Chinese Language, Morrison was to bequeathe his substantial Chinese library to University College London. On account of his unusual fluency in the language he was appointed East India Company translator, and was sent as Lord Amherst's interpreter on an abortive diplomatic mission to Peking. ¹⁰

The linguistic facility of another dissenting missionary was similarly recognised when William Carey was appointed Professor of Bengali at the government sponsored civil service college of Fort William. Like Morrison Carey published a grammar, and translated into English some Bengali literature. ¹¹ Another shoemaker Samuel Drew, illiterate at the time of his conversion, published metaphysical works of such calibre that he

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9. All are cited in DNB. See further Stock, op cit i p 120 on Lee, and C Smyth, 'William Farish 1759-1837', Magdalene College Magazine lxxvi (1937).
10. On Morrison see R Lovett, op cit ii ch xix, and DNB.
11. S Pearce Carey, op cit pp 215ff. See also DNB.

was awarded an AM by Marischal College Aberdeen.¹² Drew was one of a number of able men converted under the ministry of the Rev Adam Clarke, who was himself deemed worthy of two Aberdeen degrees. A man of indefatigable curiosity, an unrepentant bibliophile, and collector of rare books and first editions, Clarke was elected to various learned societies, and most significantly, was appointed by a Royal Commission to revise Rymer's Foedera.¹³

More questionable testimony to the intellectual abilities of evangelicals is provided in biographical dictionaries. Many evangelicals receive approbatory mention in the Dictionary of National Biography but such work tends by definition to be over-complimentary. In view of this the entries on evangelical doctors are of interest, for while the DNB lauds William Hey's contribution, practical and theoretical, to surgery, it qualifies its praise of John Mason Good.¹⁴

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12. J T Wilkinson, Samuel Drew 1765-1833 (1963). Leslie Stephen for DNB notes that Drew's political and metaphysical works were highly commended by the Anti-Jacobin Review. He was himself less approbatory describing Drew's most voluminous work, The History of Cornwall, from the earliest records and traditions to the present time (1815-24) as 'not more than a fair compilation', and denying that his metaphysical arguments 'show more than a strong mind, quite unversed in the literature of the subject'. But this of itself is no small compliment!
13. The first volume and part 1 of the second bear his name. He was a Fellow of the Antiquarian Society, and of the Royal Asiatic Society, an Associate of the Geological Society, of London, and a member of the American Historical Institute. For further indications of his scholarly interests see DNB, J B B Clarke (ed) op cit, and catalogues held by the British Library viz: A list of manuscripts formerly in the possession of the late Dr Adam Clarke; on sale ... by Baynes and Son (1836); A Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the European and Asiatic Manuscripts in the Library of the late Dr Adam Clarke... (1835) A List of Manuscripts, English, Irish, French, Icelandic... formerly in the possession of... Dr A Clarke (1836).
14. According to DNB, Hey, a very skilful surgeon the first to describe and name the growth fungus haematodes, contributed several papers to the series Medical Observations and Inquiries. Hey's pupil and biographer John Pearson, a member of the Royal and Linnaean Societies, was described in DNB as possessing a 'strong scientific bias' but his publications were dismissed as 'neither numerous nor important'.

A member of the Royal College of Physicians, Good was one of evangelicalism's polymaths. A natural linguist, he mastered Italian during his apprenticeship and read Ariosto, Tasso, and Dante, and in the course of his life learnt Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Sanscrit, and Chinese. He published not only medical works but also classical and Biblical translations, essays and poems, and in conjunction with Olinthus Gregory, an evangelical mathematician, prepared a twelve volume cyclopedia, Pantologia.¹⁵ The DNB pays tribute to his 'striking power of acquiring knowledge and of arranging it in orderly fashion' but suggests that 'he was without creative ability, and hence his works, while full of erudition, pleasingly though not brilliantly imparted, are not of permanent value'.

Similar assessments have been made of other Evangelicals both by contemporaries and by historians. The anti-slavery movement's parliamentary spokesmen mastered and marshalled a complex mass of material and were in addition possessed of a degree of political astuteness not unrelated to intellectual competence. But they were not original thinkers. The self-educated Methodist Thomas Jackson was critical of Wilberforce on just these grounds, while Samuel Smiles cited Fowell-Buxton as one who had achieved great things through effort rather than original endowment: 'Buxton was no genius - not a great intellectual leader, but mainly an earnest, straightforward, resolute, energetic man'.¹⁶ Among Evangelical Directors of

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15. Gregory who wrote a life of Mason Good is also cited in DNB. On the latter see further W Munk, Roll of the Royal College of Physicians (2nd edn, 1878) iii pp 248-51.
16. T Jackson, Recollections of my own life and times (1873) p 181; S Smiles, Self Help (1859, 1908 edn) pp 308-09.

the East India Company were men of not dissimilar gifts, although lacking the charisma of Wilberforce and Buxton. Pitt and Dundas had a high opinion of John Shore, future Lord Teignmouth, and the DNB is eulogistic about the contribution which he and Charles Grant made to judicial and commercial reform in India. But again there is no evidence that theirs were minds of the first order: on the contrary the twentieth century historian of the East India Company, C H Philips, while testifying to their ability, experience and influence, describes Grant as 'bigotted and prejudiced', and argues that Teignmouth was cautious, suave, lacking in initiative, a man of few personal opinions. 17

Few public men, whatever their religious persuasion, are also original thinkers. But if Clapham was therefore predictably not in the forefront of intellectual advance, both contemporaries and historians acknowledged that its ethos was undeniably intellectualist and that it nurtured some very able men. The research competence of the anti-slavery campaigners is not doubted: Granville Sharp undertook a two year investigation into the laws of England in order to prove the illegality of slavery on English soil, while Zachary Macaulay, the archetypally unrecognised backroom boy, had an encyclopedic knowledge of slaving practices. 18 The solid ability characteristic of researchers, administrators and effective parliamentarians

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17. Philips, The East India Company 1784-1834 (2nd edn 1961) pp 69, 92, 131, 154, 158ff, 217, 244. Philips maintains that another Evangelical, Edward Parry (who had competed with Henry Thornton for the hand of Marianne Sykes, Meacham op cit p 34) was with Grant the most able, experienced, and influential director. On Shore see further Annual Register (1834) p 212 from which the DNB information seems to be derived
18. Both are praised in DNB.

was manifested in good measure in the men who regularly congregated, most appropriately, in the library at Battersea Rise. It was presumably there that Henry Thornton wrote his book Enquiry into the nature and effects of the paper credit in Great Britain concerning which J S Mill commented:

This work, published in 1802, is even now (1848) the clearest exposition that I am acquainted with, in the English language of the modes in which credit is given and taken in a mercantile community'.¹⁹

The book was reviewed in the first number of the Edinburgh Review, as was The Crisis of the Sugar Colonies by Thornton's neighbour James Stephen senior.²⁰ Stephen's 'great natural talents' were praised by Henry Brougham, whose opinion is endorsed by E M Forster's reference to the 'alarming and able Stephen family'.²¹ Forster, who believed that the Common gave little encouragement to the arts, nonetheless argued that it was the home of intellectual activity. More significantly Noel Annan has designated Evangelicalism as one of three streams contributory to the development of the high Victorian intellectual

19. J S Mill, Principles of Political Economy (1909 edn) p 515.
20. Edinburgh Review i (1802) pp 172-201, 216-37. The periodical also reviewed works by Hey (ii, 1803, pp 261-68), Teignmouth (v, 1805, pp 329-46), Hannah More (vii, 1805, pp 91-100; xiv, 1809, pp 145-51), Montgomery (ix, 1807, pp 347-54), Wilberforce (x, 1807, pp 199-206). No evangelical theology was reviewed but this is not a significant omission since the periodical rarely covered theology of any school. The Quarterly Review noticed works by Thomas Gisborne (xxi, 1819, pp 41-66), T T Biddulph (xxxii, 1824, pp 111-25), Adam Clarke (li, 1834, pp 117-44) and Robert Hall (xlvi, 1832, pp 100-32).
21. E M Forster, op cit p 45; H Brougham, Speeches (1838) i pp 402-14. Brougham believed that Stephen's inadequate education had precluded the proper polishing of his talents but nevertheless described his pamphlet, War in Disguise (1805), with which he disagreed as 'brilliant and captivating' a work of 'extraordinary merit'. Denis Gray, op cit p 169 points out that there is no proof that Stephen was the originator of the Orders-in-Council, as both Brougham and Wilberforce claimed.

aristocracy, the Bloomsbury group and the intelligentsia of the mid-twentieth century: not only Tom but also Rose Macaulay, G O and G M Trevelyan, A V Dicey and Leslie Stephen, Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, Katharine Stephen Principal of Newnham, and Margaret Popham headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College, all traced their ancestry back to Clapham as did many no less eminent figures. ²²

An earlier attempt to identify the recurrence of intellectual ability in different generations of the same family was made by Francis Galton who cited not only the Macaulays but also the dissenting Taylors of Ongar to illustrate the thesis of his Hereditary Genius, an inquiry into its laws and consequences (1869):

This family is remarkable from the universality with which its members have been pervaded with a restless literary talent, evangelical disposition, and an artistic taste. The type seems to be a very decided one, and to be accompanied by constitutional vigour... None of its members have attained the highest rank among authors, but several are considerably above average. ²³

The reputation of Isaac Taylor junior was such that he only narrowly lost the 1836 election to the chair of logic at Edinburgh, while his work was read enthusiastically by the young Marian Evans who called him 'my jewel'. ²⁴ When he died in 1865 the Gentleman's Magazine described him as 'a well-known writer and inventor', 'a member of a very talented family'. ²⁵

22. See above p 62.

23. F Galton, Hereditary Genius... (1869) pp 190-91.

24. G S Haight (ed), The George Eliot Letters (1954-56) i pp xliii, 63-64, 93, 98, 174; ii pp 305, 441; I Taylor, op cit i pp 68-69.

25. Gentleman's Magazine ii series xix (1865) pp 386-88. Cf the obituary in Good Words vi (1865) pp 681-88, in which it is suggested that Taylor, Hall, Foster, and Chalmers 'were of an order that has now no living representative...They gave to the winds the notion that earnest piety was necessarily associated with feeble intellect'.

Still more significant than the testimony of the Gentleman's Magazine is that of the contemporary highchurch press. The Christian Remembrancer was totally at variance with some of the views expressed in Simeon's sermons, 'but on the principles which the writer is known to advocate, they are well-constructed and pointedly argued'.²⁶ The equally highchurch British Critic labelled Richard Cecil as 'a very profound and original thinker'.²⁷ Antagonistic though both periodicals were to dissent, they recognised the ability of some dissenters: the Remembrancer accorded high praise to J H Hinton's The Harmony of Religious Truth and Human Reason... (1832), and commended both the 'great learning and extensive research' of John Pye Smith, and the 'extensive learning and deep research' of Adam Clarke.²⁸ The Critic described Foster as 'that distinguished writer' and lauded the genius of his fellow Baptist Robert Hall:

There probably is not a man in the kingdom capable of feeling the slightest interest in the manifestations of intellect, virtue, and religion, who is not familiarly acquainted with the name of Robert Hall. His published specimens of Pulpit Oratory were some of them at least, of such surpassing splendour and power, that they took at once an elevated station in our standard theological literature, and placed their author beyond all dispute among the great and commanding spirits of the age. The death of such a man became, of course, an object of deep and melancholy concern, not only with members of his own particular communion, but with all persons of every persuasion, throughout the whole range of intelligent society in the realm.²⁹

26. Christian Remembrancer xiv (1832) p 24.

27. British Critic iv (1828) p 257.

28. Christian Remembrancer xii (1830) pp 161, 742; xv (1833) p 208. On J H Hinton, the Baptist brother-in-law of Isaac Taylor senior, and Pye Smith, an Independent, see DNB, which comments somewhat disparagingly: 'without brilliance, or metaphysical depth, Pye Smith had no small learning, industry, and versatility'.

29. British Critic xiii (1833) pp 292, 325.

A similar tribute was expressed in the Quarterly Review which labelled Hall as an 'absolute master of English' a thinker whose talents were 'surpassed by those of very few men in his time'.³⁰

The existence of an evangelical intelligentsia comprised both of intellectually competent men and of some few original thinkers can thus be proved by reference exclusively to non-evangelical sources. It can further be shown that while the leaders of literary society were not themselves attracted to evangelicalism, they respected the work and maybe more significantly enjoyed the companionship of individual evangelicals. One of Hall's closest friends was the Whig historian James Mackintosh who, on reading his Essays, described Foster as 'one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced'.³¹ A further tribute to Baptist scholarship was paid by the increasingly conservative Robert Southey, who wrote to Coleridge almost certainly from Bristol, 'The Baptist Library here - I have got access to, and the privilege of carrying home its books. This is of importance to me. The books relating to Oriental matters are many and good'.³² Southey respected and corresponded intimately with Josiah Conder of the Eclectic Review, and along with other members of the literary élite wrote in complimentary fashion of the work of the evangelical poets James Montgomery and Henry Kirke White: he corresponded with both, writing a memoir and editing the Remains of the latter.³³ While

30. Quarterly Review xcv (1832) pp 100ff.

31. R J Mackintosh (ed), Memoirs of the life of the right honourable James Mackintosh (1835) i pp 13-16, 126-27, 251-53, 368-71.

32. K Curry (ed), New Letters of Robert Southey (1965) i p 213. The letter is dated 1 January 1800.

33. ibid i pp 439, 482; ii pp 12ff, 50. C C Southey (ed) The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey (1849-50) iii pp 59ff, 92ff, 256ff. Montgomery and Kirke White are both cited in DNB. Southey's memoir of the latter was first published in 1807.

criticising its inadequate organisation Southey nonetheless regarded the comparison of Calvinism and Arminianism by James Nichols, a Wesleyan printer and bookseller, as 'the most valuable contribution to our ecclesiastical history that has ever fallen into my hands'. Described by the Athenaeum as 'one of the rare race of learned printers, and a man of unbounded general information', Nichols was, according to the DNB, respected not only by Southey but by Wordsworth and 'many other scholars'.³⁴

Wordsworth and his sister were from time to time hosts to Wilberforce and his family of whom the latter wrote enthusiastically 'The two daughters are very sweet girls - remarkably modest - and unaffected - lively, animated and industrious, in short just what well-educated girls should be'.³⁵ Coleridge's references to Wilberforce, in contrast, are often slightly critical and he admitted that he felt no sympathy towards him.³⁶ But Coleridge respected Robert Hall, occasionally attended the ministry of another Baptist John Ryland, and corresponded with Ryland's one-time assistant Joseph Hughes. In an inscription in an 1818 edition of The Friend presented to Hughes, Coleridge referred in almost obsequious tones to the spiritual help the recipient had given him, and in the following year he wrote to Hughes 'Having no-one in the circle of my

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34. Southey's remarks are quoted in DNB which, however, makes no reference to Nichols' denominational activities, for which see Ward (ed), The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting... (1972) p 44.
35. E de Selincourt (ed), op cit iii pp 482ff.
36. E L Griggs (ed), Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1956-71) iii pp 125, 148; iv pp 675, 843; vi p 734.

acquaintance who is at once competent and interested in religion theologically, I had additional pleasure in the opportunity of conversing with you'. A more certain indication of Coleridge's regard, because addressed to a third party, was his reference to the 'immense importance of the Advice given me in the inclosed (sic) note from that worthy and enlighteæd man, the Revd Joseph Hughes'.³⁷ Coleridge was also friendly with Joseph Cottle, a man of dissenting affiliations, who greatly enjoyed the drama of his intercourse with and influence upon the Lake poets. He proposed to Southey that an annuity should be established for Coleridge, only to be told, interestingly, that Coleridge could well fend for himself as the Eclectic Review would welcome contributions from him. Coleridge wrote to Cottle, whose poem The Messiah he had reviewed, 'I have no interest in the Edinburgh or Quarterly Reviews; but in the Eclectic or Christian Observer I hope to have my review inserted'.³⁸ While too much must not be deduced from such speculative proposals, the evidence they yield of interaction between evangelicals and members of the literary élite serves further to qualify Foster's implication that the two were mutually antagonistic. While many intellectuals disliked evangelical religion, they associated with and indeed respected individual evangelicals, some of whom can themselves properly be denominated 'persons of cultivated taste'.

37. ibid i pp 116, 247-48; iii pp 35-36, 463, 472ff; v p 300; vi pp 1048ff. Cf Leifchild, op cit p 465.

38. Griggs (ed), op cit iv p 546. Cf Curry (ed), op cit ii p 94. I am indebted to Dr Stephen Prickett who advises (in a private letter) that it is unlikely that anything came of these suggestions: 'Southey is not, in general, a good guide to Coleridge's state of mind ... and Coleridge was himself always announcing projects which were never started, let alone completed'. Cottle's sycophancy is revealed in his Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey (1847). See also DNB.

b. 'A Reading People' ¹

The existence of an evangelical intelligentsia does not of itself challenge Foster's fundamental argument that evangelicalism was in general anti-intellectualist. On the contrary his sense of alienation from his fellows was shared by other intellectuals within dissent. Josiah Conder had no doubt that dissenters did not properly appreciate the Eclectic Review of which he wrote:

The times are against it, and its enemies are very numerous, among those who ought to be its friends. It is thrown away upon the Dissenters. They prefer the Evangelical Magazine and the Congregational... I am continually receiving testimonies to its character from those who are without ... ²

The same differentiation between the intellectual élite and the bulk of dissenters was made by non-evangelicals friendly with the former: Coleridge complained to Hughes of 'the undervaluing of, - nay the suspicious aversion to, - all intellectual ἄσκησις among so many truly pious Christians'. ³

The justice of his charge was admitted even by the popular dissenting press which recognised both the lowly birth of its readers and the educational deficiency consequent upon this. 'People who discover a concern for eternal salvation' noted the Evangelical Magazine of 1793 'are mostly of the lower classes among mankind'. ⁴ The financial hardship experienced by many dissenting ministers precluded any rectification of an inadequate education. The Methodist Magazine stressed that

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1. MM xlii (1819) p 609 'The Methodists in general may be considered as a reading people...'
 2. E R Conder, op cit pp 224, 248. Cf J Gilbert (ed), op cit i p 98.
 3. Griggs (ed), op cit vi pp 1048f; Leifchild, op cit p 466. Cf Mackintosh, op cit i pp 126-27.
 4. EM i series i (1793) p 186.

Methodist preachers did not have the literary advantages of those of other persuasions; if they were to purchase books once they were stationed the rich of their flock would have to pay for them. ⁵ Joseph Kinghorn was urged to accept a tutorship at Bradford Academy on the grounds that he was one of very few Baptists qualified for the job. ⁶ Indeed the Baptists' periodical maintained that they were behind the other older denominations educationally; while there had always been some learned ministers, there had never been as many as among the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Independents. But the Independents were no more sanguine: 'We are ready to admit that our learned men are not numerous'. ⁷ Old and new dissenters alike recognised that this was as much a product of prejudice as of circumstance and referred, often sadly, to the contempt with which many Christians regarded learning: 'It is a sentiment but too generally embraced by a certain class of conscientious serious Christians, that divine teaching is totally incompatible with human literature...'; 'It is much to be regretted that many serious persons are prejudiced against learning...'. ⁸ Acknowledging that the 'religious world' largely ignored the Eclectic Review, the Evangelical Magazine argued that the work deserved wider support. ⁹

But if the periodicals thus regretted dissenting denigration of learning, they also sometimes reflected it. The belief that intellectual competence was no prerequisite for

5. MM xxxii (1809) p 436.

6. Wilkin, op cit p 308.

7. BM xvi (1824) p 192; ER ii series xxvii (1827) p 221.

8. EM i series xii (1804) pp 492ff; MM xxxi (1808) pp 612-13.

9. EM i series xv (1807) p 567.

discipleship, that 'in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God', was easily transmuted by less educated evangelicals into the complacent ignorance so deplored by Foster.¹⁰ An Evangelical Magazine contributor, hearing of his book but not apparently reading it, argued that men of taste had always been opposed to genuine religion and that St Paul when writing to the Corinthians had predicted this continuing state of affairs. Rejection of evangelicalism by the educated was therefore a confirmation of prophecy, a display of God's glorious and discriminating grace', and evidence that modern religion was true to the primitive model.¹¹ The socio-economic antagonism between privileged and unprivileged was thus inverted to take theological form as the latter declared that ultimately the greater birthright was theirs.

The peculiarity of language deplored by Foster was similarly exemplified, as well as execrated, in the evangelical press, as Sydney Smith so bitingly demonstrated.¹² Intimately familiar with the Bible, evangelicals turned naturally to Scripture, embroidering arguments on all subjects with Biblical illustrations, which were often inapt and invariably esoteric: religion and the world, a Baptist writer maintained, were as incompatible as the iron and clay of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.¹³ Attempts at humour, drawing upon the same source, were no less laboured and frequently bizarre: 'I am a little Branch of the Bush on Fire, yet UNCONSUMED' wrote an eccentric contributor to the Evangelical Magazine.¹⁴ Statements of this kind were on

10. 1 Corinthians i 21 (A V).

11. EM i series xvii (1809) p 15.

12. See above p 142. Cf Mackintosh, op cit ii p 353.

13. BM xiii (1821) pp 154-55.

14. EM i series ix (1801) p 516. Cf x (1802) p 525; xi (1803) p 202.

the whole confined to the popular dissenting periodicals: in contrast Christian Observer correspondents objected to 'sectarian patois' and to the use of 'figurative expressions in prayer' which, however Scriptural, were incomprehensible. ¹⁵ The editors of the Record received many letters complaining about the 'religious phraseology' in the paper's advertisements which, writers feared, would mystify rather than enlighten, and thoroughly deter the unconverted. But while the editors agreed that distinctive terminology should not be used unnecessarily they nevertheless argued that Christians' language should mirror the vast gulf between them and the worldly: 'The men of the world do not use our language. Let us not forsake the language of the patriarchs, apostles, confessors and martyrs to use theirs'. ¹⁶

Their opinion was widely shared by Evangelicals of the older school who passionately defended the emotive phraseology of the Authorised Version ('Biblical Language') both against the vulgarity of those who made St Paul 'speak like a milliner', and against the secularity of others who described Biblical events in the a-reverent language of critical scholarship. A Christian Observer contributor, anxious to maintain the separation of sacred and secular, lamented any such disregard of 'the words endeared to us by hallowed associations'. ¹⁷ In their own way Evangelicals - and indeed some Anglicans of other schools - were deserving of Foster's censure. ¹⁸

15. CO xxviii (1828) p 374; xxxii (1832) pp 708-10. Cf v (1806) pp 241-44; xxii (1822) pp 765-66.

16. The Record 14 November 1833.

17. CO xxx (1830) pp 678-79; R Cecil, Ms Diary, pp 58-59, dated September 1806.

18. For a discussion of attitudes of other Christians to Biblical criticism see below pp 408ff.

In other respects too they were vulnerable to his criticism, for unease about intellectual activity, if less blatant, characterised Evangelicals as well as dissenters. Christian Observer educationalists were very aware of the need to guard against and counteract what they believed to be the natural depravity of the human mind. They constantly lamented the tendency of scholastic studies to deaden devotional feeling. The student's 'literary duties, which require intense devotion of mind, necessarily call off his thoughts in a great measure from dwelling on heavenly objects'.¹⁹ Mental pursuits were branded as more destructive of religious impressions than any other activities for they demanded total absorption; unlike the manual worker the student could not constantly think on God.²⁰ So precarious was religious faith that even the most legitimate studies could weaken piety and interrupt private devotion. 'Christ' commented the Rev Legh Richmond 'has often been crucified between classics and maths'. Evangelical fathers wrote to sons at university urging them to work hard but at the same time to refrain from putting too much store by academic attainments: what should it profit a man to become senior wrangler and to lose his own soul?²¹

Even when personal religion was not apparently threatened educated evangelicals sometimes eschewed or limited intellectual pursuits, believing that they were called to make better use of their short and accountable time on earth. The individualistic

19. CO ix (1810) p 720; xiv (1815) pp 79-80; xxii (1822) pp 474-75, 623-26.

20. CO xxv (1825) pp 358-59.

21. Grimshawe, op cit pp 579ff, 618. Cf Townsend (ed), op cit pp 23ff; Pearson, op cit ii pp 41-42.

ethos of evangelicalism combined with a narrow conception of religion to preclude any real awareness of the church as a corporate body whose different members had different tasks. Evangelicals' linear scale of values and overwhelming sense of religious need militated against academic study, as against any activity which did not obviously contribute to the salvation of the world. Thus even Charles Simeon who thoroughly enjoyed attending British Association meetings and reading scientific works spoke dispragingly of an international scientific conference:

One atom of heavenly science is in my estimation preferable to all that they brought forth. And so St Paul thought, when he counted all but dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. 22

John Venn, a man of wide-ranging interests, wrote to the evangelical scientist Francis Wollaston

Alas! How little honour is it to be the best chemist in Europe in comparison with being a useful minister of Christ. What comparison can there be between saving a soul and analysing a salt! 23

The charge that evangelicalism acted as a deterrent to academic activity is thus capable of considerable substantiation. It is however also necessary to examine the extent to which intellectual interests were encouraged by a movement which valued the rational faculties in man, urged its adherents to master abstract doctrine, and believed that the world would only be converted by the intelligent exercise of human means.

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22. Carus, op cit p 722.
 23. Hennell, op cit p 52.

That evangelicalism as a religion of the Book gave a fillip to literacy was acknowledged even by so bitter a one-time critic as James Lackington:

The enthusiastic notions which I had imbibed, and the desire I had to be talking about religious mysteries etc., answered one valuable purpose; as it caused me to embrace every opportunity to learn to read. ²⁴

What is perhaps less generally recognised is the willingness of evangelicals, once possessed of this ability, to exercise their minds over the works that they read. Thomas Scott and Joseph Benson, the leading theologians of Evangelicalism and Wesleyanism, might restrict their reading to religious matter but both were determined to master their discipline. ²⁵ Not only professional theologians but also laymen puzzled over complex theological problems: on 23 April 1823 for example the popular tract writer John Vine Hall read Luke x 21-22 and was beset by 'perplexing thoughts concerning the personal distinctness between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit'. ²⁶ Some such queries were submitted to the popular periodicals which provide clear proof that their first readers were intellectually more competent than is generally assumed. The Evangelical Magazine in particular was not aimed at theological illiterates. On the contrary its doctrinal discussions demanded a fairly high level of ratiocination, and in some cases presupposed knowledge of Hebrew. Articles in the Baptist and Methodist Magazines were shorter and less analytical: nevertheless discussions such as that on the pre-existence of the human soul necessitated abstract thought. ²⁷ Methodist hymnbooks too, as E E Kellett has pointed out, were learned volumes. ²⁸ Evangelicalism was too doctrinal to be as mindless as Foster suggested.

24. Memoirs of the first forty-five years of the life of James Lackington (1791, 13th edn 1810) p 62.

25. Scott, op cit passim; Macdonald, op cit passim; see below p 397.

26. Newman Hall (ed) op cit p 132.

27. See for example MM xxiii (1800) pp 22-28.

28. E E Kellett, op cit p 108.

Moreover, periodical readers were urged to undertake regular tough theological study: in 1808 the Methodist Magazine listed forty-six authors whom it regarded as most worthy of attention.²⁹ While many of the volumes recommended in this way and cited in individuals' bibliographies were produced by contemporary evangelicals, classical theologians were among the most popular, Archbishop Leighton and Bishop Hall, Pascal and Jeremy Taylor, Baxter and Doddridge, Philip and Matthew Henry, Butler and Paley. Their biographies reveal that many evangelicals read voraciously in theology and some built up substantial libraries: Professor Ward records that the Wesleyan solicitor, Thomas Allan 'a man forgotten by history' and 'a scholar by instinct' 'left a theological library to Conference which bore comparison with those of Dr Williams and Sion College'.³⁰

The encouragement which evangelicalism as a doctrinal faith gave to intellectual activity is most clearly revealed within Quakerism, for among Friends evangelicals were the intellectuals. Their theological interests were condemned by the quietist branch of the movement, in language paradoxically reminiscent of that employed by evangelicals against others, as 'carnal wisdom', 'head knowledge', 'outward learning' and 'empty profession'. 'This anti-intellectualism' writes the Society's most recent historian, 'was a persisting trait of quietism, and one of its main lines of demarcation from evangelicalism'.³¹

29. MM xxxi (1808) pp 471-73. The writer outlined a comprehensive educational programme in a series of 'Letters to a young preacher from his friend'.

30. W R Ward, Religion and Society in England (1972) p57.

31. E Isichei, Victorian Quakers (1970) p 19.

The true Quaker way, quietists such as Sarah Grubb believed, was to wait in emptiness and passivity upon the Holy Spirit who would make himself known in mystical experience and inner revelation. J J Gurney's concern with the doctrinal formulations of the Society, and campaigns for Biblical instruction in Quaker schools were therefore regarded with intense suspicion as 'human efforts'. To busy oneself with such matters, with Biblical and other studies, was to inhibit the Word of God which came in the waiting and the quietness. Gurney, notes his latest biographer,

recognised the importance of concepts as aids to and instruments of Christian experience, whereas Sarah Grubb was truly convinced that insight and verbal messages are given directly from the Lord... She could not accept Gurney's ordered sermons, clearly reflecting his careful study of the Bible and years of systematic thought about the basic principles of Christianity, as anything other than superficial, creaturely compositions, devoid of the true fire. 32

Gurney's belief that God worked through human means was reflected throughout evangelicalism. The study of theology was believed to be essential if ministers were properly to fulfil their calling. Illiteracy it was sarcastically asserted was not a qualification for ministry. Like so many jibes against wilful ignorance this was directed not only against evangelicals but against Catholics: whereas the Catholic priest whose primary task was to administer the sacraments was respected because of his office and need be no more able than his flock, the respect accorded to an evangelical cleric was directly proportional to his performance

32. D Swift, op cit pp 173-74, which includes some discussion of Sarah Grubb and her sympathisers.

in the pulpit from which he was expected to deliver sermons which he had himself composed.³³ To this end, the Baptist Magazine asserted, study was necessary, for the age of miracles was past and men could no longer expect to preach by inspiration.³⁴ Not even Methodists, possibly the least reliant upon specific sermon preparation, denied that continuing study was necessary for as Foster's friend Josiah Hill argued 'If our young preachers are not to be accomplished scholars, our people have at least a right to expect that they shall be sound Methodist divines'.³⁵ Indeed it must not be assumed that evangelical preaching necessarily comprised an endless repetition of the same 'gospel sermon'. On the contrary early Methodists differentiated between exhortation, an appeal to repent and believe made by those just starting their preaching career, and the more sophisticated and demanding task of 'taking a text'.³⁶ The business of exposition was believed, by some at least, to make considerable intellectual demands on the preacher. Thus Joseph Kinghorn wrote to his Anglican friend Edward Bickersteth

The mind wants food as well as the body; and the minister's mind must have time to expatiate, to find and to view carefully, different subjects, in order to bring forward a useful variety, or declare anything like the whole counsel of God... it is a sad feeling to come to the house of God and offer there only the dregs of the mind.³⁷

Kinghorn, Bickersteth and Hill were more academically inclined than many evangelicals but their belief that a preacher

33. See above pp 126-27; CO xvii (1818) pp 159-60; BM xvii (1825) pp 108-09.

34. BM v (1813) p 199.

35. W R Ward, The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820-29 (1972) p 155.

36. J B B Clarke (ed) op cit i pp 135-38.

37. Wilkin, op cit pp 358-59.

should have intellectual competence was widely shared, for this was demanded not only by the nature of the task but also by the expectations of the clientele: only 'growing men' it was claimed could gain and retain the respect of congregations in an increasingly learned age.³⁸ Both the Eclectic Review and the Baptist Magazine noted with concern that as ministers who could command intellectual respect died, children of dissenting homes turned to the more cultured establishment. By 1831 the Eclectic Review was arguing that dissent was losing yet more ground among the higher and middle ranks of society: 'Rarely are young men of liberal education and good family found to enter the dissenting ministry'.³⁹ Methodists felt that they had yet more cause for anxiety: as the men to whom they preached availed themselves of educational opportunities so, Joseph Sutcliffe noted,

an unlettered pastor with a provincial accent sounds but ungracious on their ear. The evangelical clergy, the polish and good learning of many dissenters, place Methodism in a contest very different from former years.⁴⁰

From outside evangelicalism James Mackintosh observed that

a party which has hitherto not only neglected but rather despised or dreaded knowledge, has been compelled, by the literary spirit of the age, to call in literature to their aid; their new followers of a higher class require elegance.⁴¹

The pragmatic nature of such arguments should not be overemphasised for they presuppose that the spirit of an educated age was already reflected within evangelicalism both

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38. EM i series iv (1796) p 362. Cf xiv (1806) p 70.
 39. ER iii series vi (1831) pp 492-94; vii (1832) p 138; BM xxv (1833) pp 7-8.
 40. W R Ward, The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820-29 (1972) p 192. Letter dated 26 December 1828.
 41. Mackintosh, op cit i p 408.

among those who had grown up within the faith and among new converts. The call for cultured preachers was a response to changes that were already taking place. Thus the Baptist Magazine was concerned to point out that the 'prejudices unfavourable to learning' were fast declining: contemporary dissenters valued an educated ministry. ⁴²

The statement was maybe too sanguine for periodical writers regularly appealed for funds for poorly supported academies, and produced articles justifying ministerial education to those still sceptical of its value. The frivolity and high spirits of some students gave rise to much murmuring among those who feared that learning rather than piety was becoming the qualification for ministerial office. In reply the proponents of education denied that they were aiming to 'make' ministers, and claimed that they were merely concerned the better to equip those already assumed to possess ministerial gifts. ⁴³ While the practice of appointing untrained men, which had escalated during the revival, continued particularly within Methodism, the arguments in favour of training fell on fertile ground. By the late 1820s the demand for a Wesleyan Theological Institution was gaining strength and was approved at Conference of 1834, the chief opposition deriving not from anti-intellectualism but from dislike of autocratic centralization. ⁴⁴ Some old dissenters continued to study at Scottish Universities, and some in the homes of respected ministers who sometimes found themselves running embryonic

42. BM ii (1810) p 441. Cf xvi (1824) p 126.

43. ibid iv (1812) pp 436-38; v (1813) pp 199-201; xxv (1833) pp 6-10; MM liv (1831) pp 382-84; EM ii series xi (1833) p307.

44. W R Ward, Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (1972) pp 160-61.

academies; increasingly others were sent to colleges, some long-established, many others owing their foundation to the revival. Ad hoc though this preparation might be its strength was recognised by Anglicans who shared the dissenting consciousness of denominational competition. Evangelicals were painfully aware that their university educated ordinands, unlike dissenters, had no theological training, and they increasingly recommended that men should undertake some theological study prior to accepting a living. ⁴⁵

There was some debate as to what constituted proper ministerial training. While some students, then as always, wished to restrict their courses to subjects of obvious future utility, there was considerable feeling that ministers should experience a wider education: 'in these days of refinement and science, something more is necessary in order to acquire attention, than a bare knowledge of Scriptural doctrines'. ⁴⁶ The Christian Observer confessed to a 'romantic attachment' to the traditional form of university education. ⁴⁷ Believing that Christians should do their duty in the place in which they were called, Evangelicals argued that students were accountable to God for the diligent pursuit of prescribed studies. At the very least they would thereby learn self-discipline. Claudius Buchanan commented on the tendency of his fellow students to give up mathematics, 'I am inclined to believe, that were I an eminent saint, I should be a good mathematician, a good linguist, a good Scripturist'; an undergraduate who asked

45. R Cecil, Ms Diary, p 12f, dated 26 August 1804; CO xxxii (1832) pp 49-58.

46. EM xv (1807) p 305.

47. CO xxxii (1832) p 51.

Simeon whether it was not his religious duty to read the Bible and to pray rather than continue to study classics and maths was given very short shrift. 48

While dissenters, frequently faced with the task of constructing a ministerial training course from scratch, laid greater emphasis on subjects relating to theology, the curricula of dissenting academies, printed in the Evangelical Magazine, were far from narrow. The classics were regularly included, and among other subjects taught in various places were Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and French, various branches of maths, physics, chemistry, and astronomy, history and geography, belles lettres and philosophy... 49

The benefits of a general education were less readily proffered to those who served abroad. In the early years of evangelical overseas expansion there was some feeling that missionary education was an unnecessary luxury. At a meeting of Anglicans at Rauceby in 1795 some argued that the 'grand requisites' of a missionary were not to be conferred by education, and if possessed superseded the need of scholastic preparation. The Apostles had not been so trained. Those present apparently assumed that education was essentially classical, and hence not directly relevant to mission among the uncivilized. 50

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48. A W Brown, op cit pp 35-36. Cf Carus, op cit pp 433, 843ff. On Buchanan whose opinion was quoted in CO xvi (1817) p 514, see DNB.
49. Eg EM i series xxv (1817) pp 363-64 (Rotherham); xxix (1821) pp 431-32 (Idle); ii series iii (1825) pp 341-42 (Blackburn); iv (1826) p 345 (Homerton); v (1827) p 302 (Cheshunt); vii (1829) pp 371-72 (Highbury); ix (1831) p 356 (Western). For a detailed study of individual academies see H McLachlan, English Education under the Test Acts being the History of the Nonconformist Academies 1662-1820 (1931)
50. Carus, op cit pp 108ff.

Their ignorance of the situations in which missionaries were to serve was responsible for much of the recurrent tension between the latter and their sponsoring societies.⁵¹ In contrast David Brown, who as chaplain to the East India Company had first hand experience of the mission field wrote to Simeon in 1789:

You will be aware that zeal and grace, though essentials are not the only requisites on this occasion. They must be men of general knowledge, and possess such a share of science, as may make their conversation interesting to the learned Brahmins, who will only be communicative in proportion to the returns made them by those with whom they converse. There should also be a natural propensity to languages.⁵²

The value of an extensive and accurate knowledge of languages, ancient and modern, could not be gainsaid for the production of vernacular Bibles was an essential part of the church's missionary task. Shoddy and summary translations were totally unacceptable for those concerned for 'God's honour and the glory of his Word' maintained that 'so sacred a work ought to be done as well as possible'.⁵³

Brown's belief that missionaries should be 'men of general knowledge' was also increasingly accepted as charismatic enthusiasm was tempered by a belief in means, and as the societies were forced through experience to recognise that evangelism abroad was not rewarded by easy conversions. Moreover, for all Simeon's influence at Cambridge no graduate

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51. See for example Carey, op cit pp166ff, which also reveals the problems caused by the slow passage of post from England to India. For an expanded discussion of the Serampore controversy see E Daniel Potts, op cit.
52. Carus, op cit pp 76f.
53. T Jackson, The Life of Rev Richard Watson (2nd edn 1834) p 575. For the contribution of Bible translators to philology see Canton, op cit i p 392.

presented himself to the CMS until 1815; the few volunteers for the mission field were men of low social status who lacked the educational qualifications which Anglicans at least were accustomed to assume in ordinands for home service.⁵⁴ The assumption that such men could be sent abroad in zealous ignorance was replaced by the diametrically opposed belief that spiritual training should be accompanied by social and academic education. Thus in a paper on the 'Best means of preparing missionaries for their work' delivered at an interdenominational gathering in 1820, Jabez Bunting argued that potential missionaries should know 'what the heathen are, what modes of address suit them' and should be given 'general preparatory knowledge, suited to the intended station'. History, natural philosophy, astronomy and geography should be included among their studies, thus enlarging their minds, while their social experience should be augmented by removal from 'their own sphere, by introduction into proper society ...'⁵⁵ In 1825 a Language Institution was founded in London which aimed, by providing lectures and a library to acquaint men with the languages, manners, customs, and opinions of those whom the missionary societies sought to influence.⁵⁶ The individual societies too began to make some provision for their own candidates: substantial pressure for the Wesleyan Theological Institution came from the missionary society, while in 1826 the CMS established a seminary at Islington. In an early lecture delivered there the Rev Daniel Wilson, while warning against the dangers of learning, expounded upon the advantages which educated missionaries, always assuming they were men of faith, enjoyed over their uneducated colleagues.⁵⁷

54. Stock, op cit i ch vii. The first graduate was William Jowett for whom see above p 365.

55. T P Bunting, op cit ii pp 174ff.

56. BM xvii (1825) pp 396-98; CO xxvi (1826) pp 563-64.

57. ibid pp 568-69.

Education was not merely valued for those who were to engage in full-time Christian service. On the contrary evangelicals gave their support to a wide variety of educational organisations. Kinghorn, Carey, Taylor senior and Baines junior, participated in literary societies in the towns in which they lived, and for purposes of scholastic discussion were happy to mix with men of very varied religious creeds.⁵⁸ Other dissenters recommended that libraries should be set up at churches.⁵⁹ Many evangelicals contributed either to the BFSS or to the National Society, depending upon their belief about the nature and place of religious instruction in a syllabus, and similarly supported either University College London or the supposedly more godly institution in the Strand, and in some cases both.⁶⁰ The Evangelical Magazine recorded the establishment by dissenters of societies to finance the education of ministers' children and of grammar schools at which they might safely be educated.⁶¹

The multiplicity of these efforts to further post-elementary as well as basic education constitutes a serious challenge to the common assumption that evangelicals were concerned only to enable men to read the Scriptures and regarded

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58. Wilkin, op cit pp 277ff; Carey op cit p 66; J Gilbert (ed), op cit i p 47; Binfield, op cit p 81.
59. EM i series xx (1812) p 346; xxiv (1816) p 505; MM xlii (1819) p 609.
60. The EM welcomed both institutions (ii series ii, 1825, p 338; vi, 1828, pp 309, 354, 553; xi, 1833, p 161). The CO while not initially hostile to University College gave a far more cordial welcome to Kings (xxv, 1825, p 395; xxviii, 1828, p 407; xxix, 1829, p 317), and when challenged stressed that it had never defended 'that creature of Bougham's creation' (xxxii, 1831, p 577). The Record predictably condemned Gower Street as latitudinarian and liberal and rejoiced in its teething troubles (eg 7 July 1831; 11 March 1833).
61. EM i series xiv (1806) p 70; xv (1807) p 529; xviii (1810) p 494; xx (1812) p 78.

any subsequent education as undesirable. To argue in this way is to misinterpret the refusal of some evangelical authorities to teach writing in Sunday Schools. Professor Ward has stressed that within Methodism the debate over writing was but one of many foci of the ongoing conflict between those who wished to assert connexional and pastoral authority, and those who wanted to continue the flexibility of local and lay autonomy to which the revival had given rise.⁶² In a battle born of social divisiveness and centring on the exercise of power the real issue was not what the schools should teach but who should control their syllabi and practice. The Sunday School writing debate was admittedly less a pretext for the assertion of power than the otherwise similar Leeds organ controversy, for the question raised was more obviously a matter of serious principle. But the principle under discussion was not the value of literacy but the proper use of Sunday. Those who opposed the teaching of writing on Sundays did not on the whole object if children learnt to write on other days of the week. Their stance paralleled that of those Evangelicals who, on Sundays only, refused to despatch or open mail, read papers, travel, visit, or engage in business. The Methodist Magazine stressed that to teach writing on the Sabbath was to legitimise the teaching of trade on the Sabbath.⁶³ Convinced in the decades following the French holocaust that England's continued well-being was contingent upon the strict observance of Sunday, evangelicals prohibited any activity that was not immediately

62. W R Ward, Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (1972) pp 137-40. Cf Laqueur, op cit pp 142-45.

63. MM xlvii (1824) pp 762-64. The sabbatarian issue is also stressed in Laqueur, op cit pp 128-42.

concerned with the worship of God, regardless of its inherent merit, and the scarcity of other opportunities for its prosecution. Nothing mattered in comparison with the need to avert the outpouring of divine wrath which they were sure would be visited upon a nation whose neglect of the Sabbath was symptomatic of its deep-seated spiritual malaise.

If concern for the well-being of the nation militated against the teaching of writing on Sundays, it was one of the factors which led evangelicals to encourage and participate in elementary education. On other days of the week, for education was lauded as conducive to morality and as a preservative of public order. While the mere confinement of children who might otherwise roam the streets contributed temporarily to this, the lessons taught were assumed to instil an appreciation of English social organisation and a willingness to maintain it. While sanctioning indoctrination this assumption derived from a belief in human rationality for evangelicals adhered to what Professor Ward has called 'the intellectualist assumption that working men were the victims of false ideas'.⁶⁴ Their certainty that if men were taught to reason they would be better Christians and better citizens caused them enthusiastically to advocate education for the lower classes at a time when some of their contemporaries were still regarding it with fear and suspicion.

Their beliefs similarly inclined Evangelicals to the progressive side in the ongoing debate on girls' education. Refusing to school their daughters exclusively in 'worldly

64. W R Ward. Religion and Society in England 1790-1850 (1972) pp 12, 278.

accomplishments', they considered at length in the Christian Observer what form of female education should properly be adopted as an alternative.⁶⁵ In common with many of their contemporaries, some contributors were uneasy about teaching girls 'severe' or 'scientific' subjects, metaphysics, logic, the classics, which might vitiate female tenderness and delicacy. On the other hand there was considerable support even for such studies and the belief that a girl's mind should not be trained was firmly repudiated. Such training was regarded as essential for both long and short term purposes. On women lay maybe the most vital of all tasks, the upbringing of young children; since Evangelicals sometimes hesitated before sending their children away to school, the mother's responsibility was correspondingly greater. Moreover, insistence upon the values of home society gave rise to the belief that a woman should be a genuine companion to her husband, who might otherwise lack opportunities for thoughtful talk. While not expected to be his intellectual equal, his wife should at least be able to converse intelligently with him. In any case confining her activities to the home, a woman whether married or not, needed some mental stimulation to prevent her time hanging upon her hands. It would be cruel, Hannah More commented, for parents to insist upon a retired life without qualifying their daughters for that retirement. Religion and mental cultivation alone could equip women of standing for such a life.⁶⁶

The juxtaposition here as elsewhere of 'religion' and 'mental cultivation' is indicative of the high premium which

65. The discussion was a major feature in numbers for the first six months of 1808.

66. H More, Coelebs in search of a wife (1808, 1809 edn) ii p 420.

evangelicals placed upon the latter. While frequently recommended as a preservative against worldly or sensual temptation, its value as an antidote to Regency raffishness was not merely negative but derived from its peculiar concordance with Christianity, its suitability for a being destined for eternity.⁶⁷ Indeed so congruent were faith and study that evangelicals tended to regard a love of books in youth as a mark of potential spirituality. The writers of memoirs and obituaries frequently noted with approbation that their subjects had been addicted to reading as children, isolated from and uninterested in the childish play of their fellows.⁶⁸

As a counterpart to this conversion often served as an incentive to bookish pursuits. Taught to eschew the pleasures of the world and the flesh, to find enjoyment at home rather than in society, evangelicals developed a taste for reading, and, many claimed, found that faith facilitated thought. 'Why now' exclaimed one of Rowland Hill's exemplary characters, 'it appears...as though I had been all my days without brains, while I was living without grace'.⁶⁹

Hill's character, however, exercised his brains on religious subjects alone, as did others who likewise lauded the value of intellectual activity. The potentially limited connotations of evangelical terminology are revealed in the

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67. See above pp 120-22 and Teignmouth, op cit ii p 349 'If the mind be not directed to laudable or profitable pursuits, it will most infallibly yield to those of an opposite nature...what occupation, under such circumstances, can be more fit for a reasonable being, than the employment of his intellectual faculties, both as a means of present gratification, and with the prospect of future, though not perhaps perceived advantages?'
68. See for example EM i series i (1793) pp 89ff, 177ff; ii (1794) pp 3ff; BM xxi (1829) pp 181ff.
69. R Hill, Village Dialogues iv (1803) pp 127f.

title of Edward Bickersteth's book, The Christian Student, a synonym for the student of theology. A restriction of interest to subjects of religious utility was implicitly encouraged by influential leaders like Thomas Scott who announced in 1779 in his autobiography 'for these last two years I have scarce opened a book but upon religious subjects', and by the most widely circulated periodicals, the contents of which were almost exclusively theological. 70

On the other hand genuine interest about a wide range of subjects was evinced by the Eclectic reviewers. Between January and June 1828, six months chosen at random, non-theological reviews dealt with Irish history, coins and medals, volcanoes, indigestion, Hayti, Celtic antiquities, classical and legal textbooks, Columbus, the U S A, a journey through India, 'mental and moral science', the North Coast of Africa, travels in Sicily, South African monarchs, Austria, the mortality and 'physical management' of children, the Sandwith Isles, the Peninsula war, the history and philosophy of science, and botanical geography...

That the Eclectic Review went some considerable way towards increasing its readers' general knowledge is, given its terms of reference, only to be expected. The Christian Observer did little in this respect, its non-theological reviews being primarily concerned with literature, and philosophical studies on the nature of the mind, which it reviewed at considerable length. But its proprietors were of a higher station in life than those of the Eclectic Review and could perhaps assume that their readers had enjoyed a general education and were

in receipt of secular reviews in a way that the dissenters and editors of the popular press could not. It is significant, in contrast, how much general information was communicated by the latter. The belief that every phenomenon in nature testified to divine planning meant that astronomy and geology, botany and mineralogy, anatomy and zoology, were regarded as properly religious studies. While much of the writing about these subjects was too subsumed in theological didacticism to constitute proof of genuine intellectual curiosity, the extent to which it acted as a stimulant to wider interests must not be underestimated. Even the Methodist Magazine, which confessed to exclusively religious concerns, conveyed some general knowledge under the sectional headings 'The Works of God Illustrated' and 'The Word of God Displayed'.⁷¹ More comprehensively, the Evangelical Magazine's analyses of every Biblical jot and tittle gave rise to wide-ranging investigations: in 1802 under the title 'The Natural History of the Fox or Jackall' it sought to determine which species was described in Scripture and in so doing conveyed much information about the habits of the animal kingdom.⁷² Similarly the Baptist Magazine printed a long series of 'Philosophical Reflections' for its younger readers in the hope of making them more aware of the profuseness of God's provision for man's every need. In April 1821, for example, in the 24th article in the series it illustrated divine care in mundane matters by discoursing

71. The editors delineated the character of the periodical in MM li (1830) preface. For instances of theological didacticism see above p 253.

72. EM i series x (1802) pp 403-04.

at length on the properties and use of iron.⁷³ In particular the popular periodicals mirrored the practice of the secular reviews in devoting much space to tales of travel and accounts of the geography and customs of other lands. If the prevalence of these testifies in part to the impetus given to intellectual inquiry by the missionary movement, the evangelical counterpart to exploratory expeditions, the interest evoked was not purely pragmatic. In these as in articles on many other subjects it is clear that faith provided the initial justification for studies which soon proved to be absorbing in their own right. Joseph Kinghorn's interest in Egyptian mythology, the works of Zoroaster, Rabbinical literature, and Hebrew accentuation, went way beyond their utility in Biblical study.⁷⁴

Faith provided too the justification for studies which bore little relation to Biblical matters, for many evangelicals assumed that the subordination of the senses to the mind legitimised intellectual pursuits of almost any kind. 'We feel a desire to know, and we are highly gratified by knowing' wrote H F Burder, and listed among The Pleasures of Religion the study of

the history of the ages which are past, and of the generations now mingled with the dust - the character, the manners, and the transactions of other nations, in distant parts of the world, contemporary with ourselves - the scenery and the products of countries we never expect to visit - the natural history of the various tribes of animals peculiar to their respective climates and elements - the laws

73. BM xiii (1821) pp 157-58.

74. . Wilkin, op cit pp 240, 285, 449, 474.

which regulate the phaenomena of the heavens and the earth; and the ocean - and the treasures of science, reduced by the wisdom of enlightened men, to systematic forms, and applied to purposes of practical utility. Pleasures arising from sources such as these are interdicted by no law; and when they do not unduly engross the mind, so as to impede the performance of incumbent duties, they are not only allowable, but desirable. 75

Occasionally the published lives of evangelicals reveal similar intellectual curiosity. One of the most striking is the autobiography of Thomas Jackson, a work refreshingly free from Latinate verbosity and jargon: at times stylistically reminiscent of the writings of George Eliot, it vividly portrays the 'life and times' of an early preacher. The book is clearly the product of an alert and interested mind, for it contains parenthetical discussions on the nature of Druidism (strong in Jackson's home county) and on the development of the English language (whose various dialects he encountered on his travels). As a young minister, preaching some nine times a week and travelling extensively, Jackson would sometimes rise at 3.00 a m to study Greek, and in addition managed to read between thirty and fifty volumes per annum, thick theological tomes, and a variety of classical and literary works. A catalogue of the contents of his library extends to 290 pages. 76

Jackson was one of the more able ministers but it would be wrong thus to dismiss his interests as idiosyncratically

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75. H F Burder, The Pleasures of Religion (1823) p 13.
 76. J Heald, A Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts presented to the Wesleyan Theological Institution in the year mdccclix; T Jackson, Recollections of My Own Life and Times (1873) passim. Jackson was immensely impressed by the library of one of Methodism's few aristocrats, Robert Carr Brackenbury: 'Such a collection I had never seen before. It contained the works of England's greatest divines, Episcopal, Puritan, and Nonconformist; with a considerable amount of general literature, historical, poetic, and philosophic' (p 77). See further Mrs R Smith, Raithby Hall or memorial sketches of Robert Carr Brackenbury esq of Lincolnshire and of Sarah his wife (1859)

intellectual. On the contrary obituaries and the memoirs printed in the periodicals often contain tantalising hints of the intellectual inclinations of other evangelicals. But little is known about the Baptist Lawrence Butterworth who despite the paucity of his formal education composed a Greek grammar and was working on Greek etymology at the time of his death in his late teens.⁷⁷ Another who died young was the Rev Joseph Webb, who gained great pleasure from linguistic research, taking pains in the last three years of his life to investigate the origins of the English language in Anglo-Saxon and Gothic sources.⁷⁸ As a student at Bristol Baptist College Rev William Anderson had read additional texts to those prescribed, had taught himself French, and for a short time had studied Italian and German. He continued to read voraciously not only in theology but also in history, philosophy, politics, and political economy. As classical and mathematical tutor at the same institution he insisted that his fourth year students study advanced Greek classics and calculus.⁷⁹

Such testimony is highly significant for it indicates that evangelical interest in secular studies may have been much more general than is often assumed. It is moreover noteworthy that the writers of brief memoirs saw fit to mention their subjects' non-theological concerns. While the claims that they frequently made concerning intellectual prowess cannot easily be validated, they nevertheless reveal to the historian the respect in which such ability was held.

77. BM xx (1828) pp 489-92, 537-40.

78. ibid vii (1815) pp 221-31.

79. See above p 104.

Their accounts reveal too that evangelical apprentices and ministers, like Jackson, commonly snatched time from sleep in order to study, a course of behaviour invariably regarded as commendable.⁸⁰ In a recent biography John Vickers has suggested that Thomas Coke, effective founder of Methodist missions, was widely read for a man so extensively involved in administration.⁸¹ The point can be made yet more aptly of other evangelicals, manual workers and travelling preachers, who lacked Coke's initial educational advantages. The extent of evangelical intellectual activity can only properly be judged against the plumline of opportunity. There seems reason to believe that evangelicals, far from resting complacently in their ignorance, did more than might be expected to redress it.

c. The limits of evangelical curiosity

Foster's argument that evangelicals were intellectual philistines is seriously weakened by the clear evidence that faith provided an incentive for study, which many evangelicals thoroughly enjoyed. Dr Binfield, however, properly distinguishes between men 'of great learning' and men 'of extensive information', and in a series of cameos of nineteenth century nonconformity suggests that dissenting ministers could usually be placed in the latter category: they possessed 'good second-class minds'.¹

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80. See for example the account of Rev Charles Whitfield who as an apprentice devoted five hours a day to theological study (BM xiv, 1822, p 89). Cf the achievement of Samuel Lee and Robert Morrison both of whom educated themselves in languages while following a trade: see above pp 365-66.
81. J Vickers, Thomas Coke, Apostle of Methodism (1969) p 321.
1. Binfield, op cit p 190.

While, as he rightly implies, this level of competence should not be underrated, it is nevertheless clear that an antiquarian delight in the accumulation of knowledge and the ability to juggle with ideas and arguments did not of themselves preclude that blinkered outlook on life which Foster so despised. It is therefore necessary to determine the extent to which evangelicals displayed an open-minded curiosity, a willingness to reformulate and adjust ideas, and above all that love of truth for its own sake which R W Dale believed they so signally lacked. ²

Such a task is fraught with difficulty for it is almost impossible for the historian so to assimilate the framework of thought of a previous age as to be able accurately to assess what constituted open-mindedness for those operating within it. The temptation and danger is to regard as truly open-minded those whose views correspond most closely to those of our own society. Yet this is perhaps to overlook the originality of men who developed new ideas which subsequent generations were to reject, and it certainly does less than justice to those who thought deeply within the context of certainties which their descendants can no longer accept.

One of these certainties was the belief, underlying all eighteenth century thinking and not really challenged until the mid-nineteenth century, that reason and revelation were congruent, the truth of the latter irrevocably proven

2. See above p 59.

by the former. 'Were it to be admitted as possible' wrote an Eclectic reviewer in 1832

that a temperature of mind peculiarly addicted to scepticism, might, after due inquiry, be still assailed by honest doubts; yet to disbelieve or to arrive at a conviction that the Christian religion is false, even candour itself must pronounce to be impossible. ³

It was an easy step from this to the view expressed by John Pearson that infidels had neither the moral obligation nor the authority to spread their beliefs. ⁴ Moreover, if reason normally led men to accept the truth of the Christian revelation, then failure to believe could properly be regarded as the product of wilfulness rather than of ratiocination. The work of sceptical writers was therefore dismissed by the Christian Observer on the grounds that the study of controversy did not enlarge the mind. On the contrary Christianity was so well-authenticated that it was childish for those convinced of its truth to discuss its possible falsity. ⁵

Despite their apparent logic it is difficult not to sense in these arguments at least some rationalisation of underlying fears, evident in the frequent sentimentalisation of the Bible. Although evangelicals frequently claimed that true religion had nothing to fear from the discoveries of truth, they were very much afraid of the natural depravity of the human mind which engaged in such discoveries. Thus the Methodist Magazine criticised the 'mistaken liberality' of Philip

3. ER lll series viii (1832) p 15.
4. J Pearson, op cit i pp 122ff. Cf above p 318.
5. CO xviii (1819) pp 215-20.

Doddridge who encouraged his pupils to read books antagonistic to Christianity, expounded to them both sides of any question, and left them to make up their own minds. In 1822 the periodical explicitly condemned such free discussion:

Many might thus receive the poison of error, whom the antidotes would never reach, or who love darkness rather than light. It betrays great practical inattention to the doctrine of our natural depravity, when men boldly assert that truth has nothing to fear from any kind of discussion, and that therefore we may freely, and ad libitum, give audience to the subtleties of error, and innocently lend ourselves to its diffusion, under the notion of its eventual impotence ... The truths, so vitally connected with salvation, are not thus to be trifled with. We are not at liberty when once convinced of their Scriptural authority, to encourage light and trifling discussions which call them into question, in such a way as to make it appear that we have not fully made up our minds as to their being 'the true sayings of God'.⁶

Within the context of their belief that the Bible constituted 'the true sayings of God' evangelicals were open to at least some new ideas. Individuals regularly encouraged others to show them where their interpretation of Scripture was questionable: thus Thomas Scott argued that the greatest favour anyone could do for him, was to convince him with sufficient arguments where he was wrong.⁷ It was part of the evangelical belief in the importance of the Bible that new, even un-congenial ideas, be accepted once they were proved to have Scriptural authority. The process was facilitated by the increasing rejection of a rigidly systematic approach to the Bible, a rejection which Professor Ward suggests derived

6. MM xxvii (1804) pp 497-501; xlv (1822) Preface.

7. Scott, op cit p 216. Cf J Venn, Sermons (1814-1818) 111 p 370; Carus op cit p 674.

in part from the influence of enlightenment thought:

...the one thing absolutely incredible to eighteenth century evangelicals was the metaphysical approach to theology so characteristic of reformed theologians in the seventeenth century. With astonishing speed they came round to the view that the contest between Arminians and Calvinists was not merely unfortunate in its effects, but utterly mistaken in principle. For the evangelicals conceived that they were applying the inductive method in the field of religion, while the polemical backwoodsmen were sacrificing the truth to system.⁸

Professor Nuttall has argued that the danger inherent in Calvinism, sometimes resulting in antinomianism, is an undue attention to logic by men who are fascinated by logical systems but lack the mental ability to recognise reason's limits.⁹ Evangelicals within old dissent challenged this strict logic of hyperCalvinism, while their Anglican counterparts increasingly enunciated an unsystematic moderate Calvinism. These parallel movements testify to the willingness of evangelicals around the turn of the century within specified limits to rethink and reformulate their creed.

Within those same limits they were prepared to accept some of the new forms of Biblical criticism, which, emanating from Germany, began to be noticed in the English religious press in the second half of the 1820s. While the Evangelical Magazine complained that many scholars sought to reduce Christianity to questions of philology and grammar, it acknowledged that Biblical criticism could reinforce the faith.¹⁰ Even the Methodist Magazine was happy that the works of German critics should be

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8. W R Ward, Religion and Society in England (1972) p 17.
 9. G. F Nuttall, 'Calvinism in Free Church History', Baptist Quarterly xxii (1968) p 425.
 10. EM ii series viii (1830) p 523.

translated - providing that they were duly censored. ¹¹ The Christian Observer went still further and criticised those of its readers who wished to eschew the study of Hebrew because it laid open to question matters which from childhood they had regarded as sacred:

no thinking man will allow this to be any argument against improvement in Biblical any more than in any other science. The immutable interests of truth can never suffer from knowledge well applied. ¹²

But if evangelicals were prepared to accept some textual amendations as a result of modern scholarship, and even to acknowledge that the interpretation of particular verses might be open to doubt, at no point did they grant the premises of German criticism. The authenticity of the Trinitarian verse was sometimes questioned but the sacrosanctity of the vast bulk of Scripture was regularly upheld. ¹³ The Bible was a book unlike all other books, the final and authoritative statement of God to man. To question the Bible was to question God, and to throw doubt upon matters of paramount importance:

No learning, no research, however profound and extensive, can atone for that levity of criticism which treats the records of human salvation as of any authority less than divine. The greatest injury that can be done to any man, is, to impair his confidence in that testimony which God hath given concerning his son. ¹⁴

The Methodist Magazine's distress was shared by Hannah More

'That which was from the beginning declare we unto you' are the words of inspiration...Though Holy Scripture was given to be searched (it) was not given to be criticised...Christianity is no appropriate field for the perplexities of metaphysica ...It is not to be endured...to hear questions on which hang all our hopes and fears speculated upon as if they were a question of physics or history. ¹⁵

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11. MM lv (1832) p 384.
 12. CO xxv (1825) pp 144-45.
 13. Simeon believed that 1 John v 7 was a later interpolation (Hennell and Pollard, eds, op cit pp 46,58), as from its inception did ER (i series vi, 1810, pp 62-71, 155-64; ii series xiv, 1820, p382; iii series i, 1829, p506; iii, 1830, p169)
 14. MM l (1827) p 763.
 15. Quoted M G Jones, Hannah More (1952) p 232.

While historians do not always pay sufficiently sympathetic attention to this genuine agony of mind, the propriety of their traditional charge cannot be doubted. Dr Reardon writes

The Evangelical view of Scripture indicates indeed where the weaknesses of Evangelicalism lay. Intellectually it was narrow and naïvely reactionary. The wider problems of faith and reason did not trouble it and in philosophical theology it had no interest. 16

These intellectual inadequacies are however only truly significant in so far as they were peculiar to evangelicalism. Dr Reardon's qualifying footnote should therefore be given prominence:

Not that the Evangelicals were unique in their exaggerated Biblicism. Bishop van Mildert of Durham, for instance - one of the most thoughtful and scholarly churchmen of his time - considered it 'impossible even to imagine a failure, either in judgment or in integrity in the Bible'.

The foremost English critics of German theology were two highchurchmen, H J Rose and J J Blunt. No less traditional in his methodology than evangelicals, the latter attempted in 1828 to prove The Veracity of the Gospels and Acts from internal evidence, and in the Hulsean lectures four years later similarly to establish that of the Mosaic writings.¹⁷ Such efforts were approved by the highchurch press for the British Critic, Anglican equivalent of the Eclectic Review, and the Christian Remembrancer, highchurch counterpart of the Observer, shared their distaste for the 'awful corruption of Christianity' which the Eclectic maintained had taken place in Protestant Germany.¹⁸

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16. B M G Reardon, From Coleridge to Gore (1971) p 29.
 17. On Rose see DNB and on Blunt the memoir attached to his Two Introductory Lectures on the Study of the Early Fathers (1856). Evangelicals approved of the latter's early writings (ER iii series iii, 1830, pp 334-42; CO xxx, 1830, pp 179-81, 460-65), but the ER criticised Rose for assuming that neology was caused by inadequate ecclesiastical control (ii series xxviii, 1827, pp 2ff).
 18. ER ii series xxix (1828) p 523; British Critic iv (1828) pp 178ff; vi (1829) pp 469ff; viii (1830) pp 308ff; Christian Remembrancer viii (1826) pp 65ff; ix (1827) pp 637ff, 677ff.

The Christian Remembrancer in particular was well-supplied with epithets with which to denounce 'the erroneous tendency...of neological sophistries' and, specifically, 'the neological blasphemis of Mr Milman's History of the Jews', which 'unhallowed volume' it wished to see immediately withdrawn. 19

The Christian Observer was not therefore only referring to its own school when it noted that

The devout reader feels greatly distressed at a style of writing which divests the Old Testament narratives of their sacredness, and discusses them much as we should discuss the pages of a heathen historian. 20

Highchurch no less than evangelical periodicals objected to the irreverence of works such as Milman's which described Abraham as 'an independent sheik of Emir', and which implied that the Biblical account might not be altogether accurate. 21 The

British Critic complained that in his History of Rome Niebuhr

leaves us to infer that he attaches little or no credit to the History of the Old Testament, beyond what every ancient document, in which there is a mixture of truth and fiction, is entitled to receive. 22

The authenticity of Scripture, the Critic believed, was confirmed by miracle and fulfilled prophecy; its testimony to providential intervention should therefore be taken into account by any subsequent historian as categoric fact. Milman's 'usual propensity to represent everything merely as the result of human policy' was consequently condemned on the grounds that 'as a faithful historian', an unintentionally ironic phrase, he

19. ibid xii (1830) pp 224, 285, 679; xiii (1831) p 288.

20. CO xxxii (1832) p 15.

21. British Critic vii (1830) pp 376-78; Christian Remembrancer xii (1830) pp 242-44. Cf The Record 30 November, 3, 7, and 28 December 1829.

22. British Critic iv (1828) p 367. The first two volumes of Niebuhr's work were published in English in 1828.

'was bound, at all risks, to make prominent in his narrative the leading feature of the Mosaic history, the continued and immediate superintendence of the Divine Being'.²³ His 'sadly irreverent predilection for secondary causes and human agency' was similarly criticised by the Christian Remembrancer which maintained that Jewish history, being 'one continuous and stupendous miracle...is not...to be viewed in the same light as the ordinary narratives of the profane historian'.²⁴

Highchurchmen like evangelicals justified their approach by arguing that the role of reason was to establish the evidences of Christianity not to judge its doctrines.²⁵ But like evangelicals they were thereby enabled to evade the challenge of scholarship by making acts of faith. Thus the British Critic maintained that had the writers of Scripture given more information, they would have shown that the behaviour of the Judges was moral.²⁶ In language clearly reminiscent of the Methodist Magazine and Hannah More it criticised Niebuhr for questioning that all humanity was derived from a single pair:

If Adam had not sinned, Christ had not died: and we cannot see that the Gospel holds out the death of Christ as being of any avail, except to the descendants of Adam. If any inhabitants of this earth are not descended from Adam, though it may please God in his mercy to extend to them the benefits of Christ's death, yet assuredly no promise is given to them ... In this critical and philosophical age, we would warn the incautious reader of history against entering upon speculations, which may end in ruining his faith; and against adopting notions concerning his first parents, which may lead him to doubt concerning his Redeemer.²⁷

23. British Critic vii (1830) pp 388, 395, 401.
 24. Christian Remembrancer xii (1830) pp 283, 679.
 25. ibid viii (1826) pp 65ff. For evangelical views see above pp 116-17.
 26. British Critic vii (1830) p 395.
 27. ibid iv (1828) pp 370-71. Cf above p 407.

Despite these similarities, however, the evidence of the reviews suggests that the response of highchurchmen to German criticism and hence to the question of the inspiration of Scripture was on the whole less fraught than that of evangelicals. While the latter enunciated an increasingly rigid doctrine, highchurch reviewers continued merely to assert inspiration rather than create problems by defining its mode of operation. The absence of any justification of the doctrine of verbal inspiration from the highchurch press, its explicit repudiation by some reviewers, and the unembarrassed use of phrases such as 'the Book which contains his Word', are all indicative of the greater ease with which highchurchmen yoked together their traditional teaching and German methodology. ²⁸ The British Critic commented with approval

It seems now to be understood that the writings of prophets and apostles are to be interpreted just as we should interpret the writings of other men; that these writings differ from other compositions only in this, that their meaning whenever it can be discovered, will conduct us into all necessary truth; but that, in the endeavour to discover that meaning, we must resort to the same methods which help us to find the sense of all other ancient authors. ²⁹

Denying that Scripture was systematic, a table of regulations, or a scientific treatise, to be studied as an entity in its own right, the reviewer stressed the importance of discovering the circumstances in which particular books were written, but regretted that many still followed the old method.

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28. ibid ii (1827) p 398; iv (1828) pp 172-73; Christian Remembrancer xii (1830) pp 283ff. For evangelical views see above pp 92-95.
29. British Critic v (1829) pp 359-60.

Evangelicals were undoubtedly among these. Notwithstanding their general belief in the importance of human means they tended increasingly to deny that these had been operative in the writing of Scripture. The Record was scathing of Milman who described a Scriptural passage as a poem 'treasured up with religious care among the traditions of the tribes' rather than recognising that it had been preserved 'by the command of the Spirit who spoke through the mouth of Jacob'.³⁰ If human means were minimally employed in the writing of Scripture, it followed that there was no need to investigate the circumstances of Biblical writers before reaching conclusions about the meaning of 'God's Word'. Correct understanding was better facilitated by a knowledge of the Author. Details of life in ancient Israel could usefully illuminate revelation; they could in no wise alter its meaning. The conviction that the meaning of Scripture was already substantially established thus precluded much scholarly activity.

Even those branches of evangelicalism which repudiated verbal inspiration showed themselves to be less competent in scholarship than the highchurch school. Admittedly H J Rose became increasingly abrasive in his attack on Bretschneider whose arguments he did not fully understand, but he was not as obtuse as the Eclectic reviewer who sought to refute Mühlenfels by presupposing that which he was questioning: the suggestion that the Jews fashioned God after their own image could be met by 'quiet reference to the letter of Holy Writ'.³¹ The

30. The Record 3 December 1829.

31. ER iii series iv (1830) p 345. For Rose's views see Christian Remembrancer ix (1827) pp 637-91.

Eclectic Review was at least prepared to examine German theology, unlike the Christian Observer which opted out of the conflict, fearing to print even for purposes of refutation the 'fallacious' interpretations of the neologists.³² But the former work suffers badly in comparison with its highchurch counterpart. Both the Eclectic and the British Critic recognised that there was some good in the work of Schleiermacher, accepted the possibility of error in non-doctrinal matters, and acknowledged that the gospels might share some common source materials. The Critic's review of his writings was however noticeably more scholarly and analytical than that printed in the Eclectic, whose reviewer proved himself incapable of meeting Schleiermacher on his own ground. His article comprised lengthy quotations and inconclusive discussions on vaguely related topics, whereas the British Critic attempted logically to repudiate some of Schleiermacher's suggestions, and produced an intellectually respectable discussion of the synoptic problem.³³

The more scholarly approach of highchurchmen is most clearly revealed in their response to the new geology. Convinced that scientific discovery and Biblical teaching would ultimately prove to be compatible, the British Critic nevertheless maintained that 'the conclusions of geology, in its present imperfect state, cannot be reconciled with the Mosaical history of the creation'. To seek a premature

32. CO xxix (1829) pp 719-20; xxx (1830) p 252.

33. ER iii series i (1829) pp 413-31; British Critic ii (1827) pp 347ff; iv (1828) pp 149ff.

reconciliation was to the detriment of both: the reviewer was therefore highly critical of Andrew Ure's New System of Geology, in which such a reconciliation was attempted, and condemned the practice of using Biblical statements to support particular scientific theories.³⁴ In a later critique the same periodical proclaimed

We would not desire even the Christian philosopher to direct his steps in the pursuit of physical truth by continual reference to the cosmogony of Moses. We would request him, on the contrary to go on in the course of his useful studies, with his mind wholly unfettered by the trammels of any preconceived opinions and steadily to follow truth, whithersoever it may lead him; in the fullest confidence that every discovery he may make, every addition he may acquire to the stock of his former knowledge, will tend to throw new light on the primitive revelation, and, consequently, give him a firmer conviction of its divine origin.³⁵

Highchurchmen did not always live up to these ideals: the reviewer came perilously close to lapsing into just the practices he condemned, while Sharon Turner whom he criticised for making his science agree with his faith inclined towards highchurchmanship.³⁶ The Christian Remembrancer was more sympathetic towards Ure than was the Critic. Nevertheless it too disapproved of men who sought to defend the Bible against geologists while ignorant of their opponents' discipline. Moreover it denied that geology was concerned with speculation about creation and deluge, stressing that the scientific

34. ibid vi (1829) pp 387ff. For Ure, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Anderson's College Glasgow, who was not without geological competence see DNB.

35. British Critic xii (1832) p 66.

36. ibid pp 74-78. Sharon Turner, whose Sacred History of the World was under review, is described by DNB as 'devoutly orthodox' and 'impervious to German criticism', and by Kunitz and Haycraft, British Authors of the Nineteenth Century (1936) as 'very orthodox, devout and reactionary'. He was an intimate business associate of John Murray, editor of the Quarterly Review, and a friend of Isaac Disraeli.

sphere of interest centred upon the state of the earth's surface and its strata. ³⁷

The Christian Observer in contrast explicitly chose to focus its attention on matters relating to creation and flood and in so doing repudiated the wider scientific interests of its highchurch counterpart. ³⁸ Its articles were less analytical than those in the Remembrancer whose ability to differentiate between scientists and theologians it lacked. ³⁹ Thus it gave space to numerous contributions by George Bugg which exemplified all the traits which highchurch reviewers most vehemently condemned. Bugg, the self-appointed champion of Scripture, admitted that he was no geologist, but denied that it was necessary to discover whether geology supported the Bible for to do this was to devalue the testimony of God. While claiming to accept the facts produced by geologists, he rejected their theories and instead put forward his own which he regarded as more concordant with Genesis. ⁴⁰

Bugg's assumption that geologists were necessarily sceptics was condemned not only by the Christian Remembrancer but also by the editors of the Observer who replied tartly to

37. Christian Remembrancer xi (1829) pp 585ff; xv (1833) pp 390ff.

38. CO xxxii (1832) p 742.

39. Christian Remembrancer xv (1833) p 390 criticised Higgins, author of Mosaical and Mineral Geologies for the inadequacy of his knowledge; the CO reviewer showed no awareness of this (xxxii, 1832, pp 742-51).

40. CO xxviii (1828) pp 236ff, 308ff, 367ff, 428ff. The British Library Catalogue reveals that Bugg published two contributions to the baptismal regeneration debate in 1816, was dismissed from his curacy by the Bishop of Lincoln two years later, and by 1847 was regarding himself as a 'Unity man' (ie Unitarian).

another correspondent

It is clear that B has never considered the actual ascertained facts relative to the earth's structure. There they are, let us deal with them as we may; and it will neither confute the sceptic, nor satisfy the well-informed Christian, to say that all such researches indicate 'that pride of the human heart which unconsciously skims the very verge of infidelity'. Whether it is wiser and more Christian to shut our eyes, and aver that we see no such facts; or to admit what is palpable the moment we open them, but to shew that those facts do not really, as they cannot, controvence the inspired statements, though they may and do set aside the popular interpretation of them? 41

But if some evangelicals recognised that it might be necessary to reinterpret Scripture, the framework of thought within which they were prepared to do so was often very narrow. Bugg's tirades met with much critical response but, notwithstanding their assertions to the contrary, even those who challenged him tended to share his assumption that the Bible gave scientific guidance, and themselves suggested how the two sorts of evidence could be reconciled. 42 The lengthy debates in the Christian Observer thus concerned themselves with matters such as the possibility of a long gap in time between Genesis 1 1 and Genesis 1 2, while a contribution of 1823 revealed the literalistic considerations with which such discussions were often bedevilled:

On the supposition that each of the six days of creation extended to a period of six thousand years, Adam, who was created on the sixth day, and lived only nine hundred and thirty years, probably did not, as well as any of his posterity, live to see a single Sabbath. Is it likely that the Creator left man without that sacred institution for several thousand years? 43

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41. CO xxix (1829) p 648 where the Remembrancer's criticism was commended; xxxi (1831) p 255.
 42. CO xxviii (1828) pp 98ff, 311ff, 628ff, 750ff; xxix (1829) pp 91ff, 160ff.
 43. CO xxiii (1823) p 695.

Neither the highchurch periodicals nor the Eclectic Review ever sank to this sort of level, but the rare geological discussions in the latter compare unfavourably with those in the former. While proffering some criticism, an Eclectic reviewer went against the verdict of scientists, the Quarterly Review and the highchurch press alike, when he concluded that Bugg's Scriptural Geology was worthy of commendation.⁴⁴ Both the Eclectic Review and the British Critic doubted whether Lyell had proved the validity of his theory that all change was uniform.⁴⁵ The highchurch periodical, however, recognised that The Principles of Geology was a work of different scientific calibre from most so-called geological studies, devoted a lengthy article to it, and provided a clear and convincing précis of the author's reasons for proposing uniform change.⁴⁶ The Eclectic, in contrast, failed to differentiate between Lyell and Ure, whose works it reviewed in the same article, along with a third similar to Ure's. The reviewer devoted one paragraph to Lyell's views, two to quotations from Sedgwick's criticisms, and then proceeded to give unqualified praise to Ure's attempts to reconcile Scripture and geology.⁴⁷ Even the most educated of evangelicals thus failed in scholarly judgment because they viewed everything through Biblical spectacles.

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44. ER iii series i (1829) pp 39-54. Bugg's critics are listed in COxxviii (1828) p 98.
45. In so doing they were in tune with much reputable opinion. G Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution (1959) pp 70-78, stresses that in the 1830s the older theories could still commend themselves on scientific grounds: 'Common sense and the empirical evidence combined in favour of the idea that violence and catastrophe, rather than an undeviating uniformity, was the message engraved upon the rocks'.
46. British Critic xi (1831) pp 180-205.
47. ER iii series vi (1831) pp 75-81. For geologists' doubt about Ure's book see Christian Remembrancer xi (1829) p 585.

This attitude conditioned their thinking on almost all academic studies. The authority of the Bible was so self-evident that evangelicals assumed that its statements should always be taken into account.⁴⁸ If much intellectual inquiry was thus rendered irrelevant because the Bible had already given all the answers, even the study of subjects on which it had not proclaimed so categorically was bedevilled by the belief that everything could and should be explained within a narrowly Biblical framework and according to the Biblical model.

Many evangelicals therefore believed that secular, like Biblical, history should be studied to throw light upon 'the ways of God to man'. A Christian Observer contributor urged those who read history to seek both academic information and exemplifications of the religio-moral scheme in which they believed.⁴⁹ Similarly in an essay 'On the utility and importance of historic information', a Methodist writer justified the study of the past on the grounds that it helped men to understand present society, provided examples of good living - and confirmed the truth of revelation.⁵⁰ According to the Baptist Magazine it illustrated 'the too much neglected doctrine, "That righteousness exalteth a nation" and that "sin is a disgrace to any people"'.⁵¹ It followed

48. See for example with reference to subjects discussed above the EM's view that there was no point in discussing cause and effect when the Bible explained such relationships by reference to divine fiat (i series xxii, 1814, pp 206f). Cf the MM's quotation of Cowper

Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register, by which we learn,
That He who made it, and revealed its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age (liii, 1830, p 689).

49. CO v (1806) pp 86-90.

50. MM xxviii (1805) pp 371-74, 511-16.

51. BM xxii (1830) p 198.

that the most popular evangelical historians were not those renowned in wider society but men like the obscure Thomas Morell, who, in the words of the Evangelical Magazine, applied the subject 'to its legitimate and beneficial purpose, by rendering it a vehicle for religious instruction'. Morell regarded the fall of Troy as a comment on James iv 1. ⁵²

Such people wrote more as moralists and theologians than as historians. Hannah More, who with considerable ingenuity drew support from the diverse material of history for evangelical views and values, described the 'moral advantages to be derived' from the study of the subject. ⁵³ This sort of approach inevitably stifled intellectual inquiry for those who insisted on drawing improving lessons from their material were more interested in the uses to which it could be put than in the academic questions which it prompted. Indeed Miss More admitted as much for she was an unashamed opponent of the attempt to invest history - or any other subject - with autonomous value:

While every sort of useful knowledge should be carefully imparted to young persons, it should be imparted not merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of its subserviency to higher things. All human learning should be taught, not as an end but a means; and, in this view, even a lesson of history or geography may be converted into a lesson of religion. ⁵⁴

While Miss More's works gained widespread popularity, one or two of the more educated evangelicals disagreed with her views. Foster was predictably cynical about the moral utility

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52. EM i series xxi (1813) p 426. For further praise of Morell, described in the British Library Catalogue as Principal of Coward College London, see for example ER i series ix (1813) pp 264ff; BM xiii (1821) pp 205-06.
53. H More, Hints towards forming the Character of a Young Princess (1805), Works (1818 edn) ix ch xiv.
54. H More, Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799), Works (1834 edn) iii p 127.

of the study of history. ⁵⁵ Another Eclectic reviewer recognised, as Miss More did not, that the doctrine of Providence was a matter of belief, not of observation:

We see the agency of Providence so indefinitely varied, capable of aspects and interpretations so different, so many points of intersection and counteraction between Divine volition and human volition, and, in the vast majority of cases, so mournful a preponderance of evil, that we cannot profess, from such a survey alone, to support the doctrine in question. ⁵⁶

A didactic approach to history was eschewed by Adam Clarke, whose pamphlet on the death of Professor Porson, Charles Simeon's life-long bête noire, reveals a genuine interest in establishing an accurate record of events, regardless of whether or not they yielded improving lessons. ⁵⁷ His concern for accuracy was shared by his fellow Methodist, Thomas Jackson, a prolific biographer, whose caution in tracing developments of thought and character when there were few private papers extant caused him to frown upon the uncritical methods of others:

In the prosecution of these inquiries I was astonished to find how often writers copy from one another without inquiry, improve upon one another's mistakes and misrepresentations, so as grievously to mislead their unsuspecting readers. They are often the most confident when they are the deepest in error ... In this manner history and biography have too often been written; their authors being more anxious to interest their readers by startling narratives, than by a record of that which is strictly and literally true. ⁵⁸

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55. J Foster, Critical Essays (1888-95) i pp 174ff, 192f, reprinted from ER i series iv (1808).
 56. ER ii series ix (1818) p 44.
 57. A Clarke, A Narrative of the Last Illness and Death of Professor Porson... (1808). For the mutual dislike between Simeon and Porson see Hopkins, op cit pp 12-13.
 58. T Jackson, Recollections of My Own Life and Times (1873) pp 153-54. Cf pp 203-04 where Jackson objected to the practice of eliminating 'indelicate expressions' from new editions of old works, thus subjecting accuracy to the moral scruples of the day. Jackson's awareness of the difficulties of biography is evident in his life of Robert Newton.

Jackson's criticism was directed neither exclusively nor even primarily at evangelicals. Concern for documentary evidence was in its infancy and in a pre-Rankean age literary and moralistic approaches to history were both more common and more acceptable than they were later to become. If Clarke and Jackson were therefore in some respects ahead of their age, their fellow evangelicals were not out of accord with it when they demanded that history be written from a moral and religious standpoint. In a generally discriminating analysis of Gibbon's strengths and weaknesses, the Eclectic Review criticised his religious scepticism, but so too did the Quarterly, which recommended the destruction of those volumes likely to prove harmful, a course of action which the evangelical periodical refused to sanction.⁵⁹ It was no evangelical but Robert Southey who wrote

For the want of religion there can be no comparison. The more religious an historian is, the more impartial will be his statements, the more charitable his disposition, the more comprehensive his views, the more enlightened his philosophy. In religion alone is true philosophy to be found; the philosophy which contemplates man in all his relations, and in his whole nature; which is founded upon a knowledge of that nature, and which is derived from Him who is the Beginning and the End.⁶⁰

Such statements serve as a useful corrective to any over-severe condemnation of evangelical writing of history. Nevertheless the parallel between the mass of evangelicals and their contemporaries must not be over-emphasised. When Southey and others argued that historians should be religious, they were

59. Quarterly Review xii (1815) p 391; ER ii series v (1816) . pp 1-20, 180-201.

60. Quarterly Review xxxvii (1828) pp 197-98.

opposing those who trampled on that which was traditionally regarded as holy, and who wrote snidely and sceptically about the aims and actions of (Protestant) church and churchmen. But they did not believe that secular history should become nothing but a branch of theology.

The difference in approach can be corroborated not only by comparing evangelical histories with those of others, but also by reference to the rare reviews of the former in non-evangelical publications. In 1806 the Edinburgh Review criticised the loose conception of 'proof' perpetrated by the anonymous author of An Historical View of Christianity, a work which sought to confirm the truth of revelation by reference to the writings of rationalist historians: Christ had taught that the kingdom of heaven was like a grain of mustard seed and Gibbon had shown this to be true by describing the rapid spread of Christianity, an argument which the reviewer quickly pointed out no more proved the truth of that faith than the rapid diffusion of its doctrines confirmed that of Islam. 61

This tendency to ignore conflicting evidence and interpretation was a further focus of anti-evangelical criticism. Another Edinburgh reviewer objected to Hannah More's claim that in pre-Christian days the Jews alone maintained 'that great truth, of there being only one living and true God', and to her assertion that geographically and commercially Judea was 'most conveniently

61. Edinburgh Review viii (1806) p 273. More concordantly with evangelicalism the reviewer questioned the prudence of familiarising young people with the names and writings of infidels.

situated for pouring forth that light of truth':

It may not be so easy ... to make a child understand completely how Judea was the most favourable position for the dissemination of a new religion. We think, that the finger of a child would point at least as readily either to Egypt, the native soil of so many ancient deities; or to Arabia, whence Islamism has been spread to the banks of the Ganges upon one side, and to the foot of Mount Atlas at the other. 62

The reviewer's translation of 'light of truth' into 'a new religion' is illuminating. His misreading of 'most' as a superlative, rather than as a synonym for 'very', does not altogether vitiate his complaint: he apparently expected the author to engage in an objective comparative study. Hannah More in contrast started from the presuppositions of faith. To consider the religious advantages of other lands would have seemed to her a singularly fruitless exercise. All that was necessary was to ascertain why the deity so wisely selected Judea. Evangelical belief in the superiority and originality of Christianity informed all attempts to argue that this was the case.

Evangelical histories were criticised not only on account of their weakness in argument, but also for their inadequacy as the theological works which they purported to be. Miss More was supremely confident that the ways of God could be explained: 'That reader looks to little purpose over the eventful page of history, who does not accustom himself to mark therein the finger of the Almighty, governing kings and kingdoms'.⁶³ The Edinburgh Review did not dispute this but it dismissed as 'very whimsical' the specific examples she gave, for Miss More believed that the historian should seek to identify the activity

62. H More, Hints towards forming the Character of a Young Princess (1805), Works (1818 edn) ix pp 22, 231, discussed in Edinburgh Review vii (1805) pp 31-100.

63. H More, Hints... ix p 192.

of God in each and every event studied. She therefore managed to reduce the deity to a being politically comprehensible, scheming as might any human manager: by divine condescension the Red Sea nearly reached the Mediterranean as a stimulus to ancient trade; it was separated from it, however, so as to encourage exploration.⁶⁴ Moreover, as the Edinburgh Review noted, in explaining exactly how God worked his purpose out she made him ultimately responsible for human wickedness. While the reviewer can be criticised for ignoring her argument that God overruled evil for good, his objection is not thereby invalidated.⁶⁵ Indeed Miss More's failure to recognise the age-old problem of the causation of evil is but one indication of the simplistic nature of much evangelical writing: life past and present were assumed to be easily explicable within the framework of the evangelical scheme; there was little room for the accumulation of 'grand questions to be asked... in eternity'.

The phrase was Foster's.⁶⁶ Eschewing any attempt to explain everything in simplistic fashion, he recognised that there was much in life that was incomprehensible and inexplicable - and rejoiced in the belief that it was man's eternal destiny gradually to move towards fuller understanding. But his intellectual curiosity, his conviction that the formulation of 'grand questions' was 'one great object in life', was, as he bitterly recognised not widely shared within evangelicalism. Even the Eclectic Review which printed as many articles as it could elicit from Foster's tardy pen, and which regularly stressed that men should think for themselves, showed itself to be more religiously

64. ibid pp 21-22.

65. ibid pp 203-11.

66. J E Ryland (ed), Life and Correspondence of John Foster... (1846) i p 189.

constrained, less competent in scholarly adventure, than the highchurch periodicals with which it can appropriately be compared.

It has to be acknowledged that few movements spawn many men capable of tapping the frontiers of knowledge and understanding. But the fact remains that evangelicalism was often embarrassed by its intelligentsia and did not altogether know how to harness the abilities of its most thoughtful men for the furtherance of the faith. While those who threw their energies into the elucidation and translation of the Biblical text, and even into the accumulation of miscellaneous knowledge were praised for their efforts, those who sought to explore the imponderable mysteries of life and death, to question the nature of their beliefs, were revered - and frequently rebuked. Several of the most able had, like Foster, reasoned their way into evangelicalism from Arianism and Socinianism, but they were not encouraged to continue the process of questioning once safely within the household of faith.⁶⁷ Thus, notwithstanding its respect for Foster the Baptist Magazine showed little sympathy for his philosophical discussions of matters which it assumed to be straightforward.⁶⁸ Foster's fellow Baptist Joseph Kinghorn recognised the moral and intellectual difficulties inherent in Christianity and maintained that any thinking man had to face up to them, but the patriarchal Andrew Fuller dismissed as presumptuous his queries concerning the morality of a deity who created and called to account a race he knew

67. The most obvious examples are Thomas Scott (who did not want to go on questioning) and Robert Hall and John Mason Good, who did.

68. BM xxv (1833) pp 167-69.

would rebel.⁶⁹ The fear that men who asked such questions might, like Adam Clarke, propound unorthodox answers obsessed a school which believed that its existence depended upon doctrinal purity, and which sought at any cost to avoid heresy.⁷⁰ Thus not even Richard Cecil, whose originality of mind combined with undoubted orthodoxy escaped censure. There were murmurings within and without John Street Chapel that his sermons, designed to meet the interests of an educated congregation, were, however stimulating, insufficiently evangelical: one hearer, a 'pious clergyman', commented

Mr Cecil is a very wise preacher. He is a second Book of Ecclesiastes. Yet I would like him better and he would do more good, if he were rather a second Epistle to the Romans.⁷¹

In the eyes of most evangelicals the Apostolic proclamation of gospel truth was so comprehensive as to render unnecessary any further quest for the meaning of life.

69. Wilkin, op cit pp 313-21.

70. For a discussion of Clarke's views on the eternal sonship of Christ see I Sellers, 'Adam Clarke Controversialist' (Wesley Historical Society Lecture 1975, copy lodged in Dr Williams's Library). Had Clarke been less eminent he would undoubtedly have been disciplined: future ministerial candidates were expected to hold orthodox views on the subject.

71. Quoted T P Bunting, op cit i p 217. Cf Josiah Pratt, op cit pp cxxi-ii. On Cecil's originality of mind see J H Pratt, op cit pp 22-25, which quotes from Wilson's funeral sermon, and Jerram, op cit pp 52, 264-65: 'He did not talk upon subjects as other men did ... he viewed things with a different eye, with deeper penetration, and on a wider scale ... I never left him without receiving ideas and impressions which I never had before'. The need for a new book on Cecil was noted by Canon Smyth in 1943 ('The Evangelical Movement in Perspective', loc cit p 174). The scarcity of documentary material makes it improbable that this need will be met to the detriment of any study of evangelicalism and culture in which consideration of Cecil should be central.

d. 'The evangelical schism'

The man who more than most sought to break through the constraints of Pauline theology was Edward Irving, against the plumbline of whose thinking evangelical attitudes to matters cultural and intellectual can usefully be measured.

Irving's missionary address constitutes a striking contrast to that of Jabez Bunting for whereas the latter stressed the importance of academic preparation, the former denounced any reliance on human means and human calculation.¹ Such thinking was soon closely associated with premillennialist doctrine, for expectations of the Lord's imminent return precluded both long-term preparation for the evangelisation of the world, and any optimism about man's role in this. The continuing postmillennialist belief of many evangelical leaders was therefore identified by some opponents with 'notions of the march of mind', in a denigration of human thought and effort, most blatantly displayed in the Irvingite charismatic movement.² According to one of its historians this was characterised by

a belief in the positive rightfulness of ignorance, which is conceived of as Apostolic, and through which the Holy Ghost may speak without being dimmed by mere human learning.³

The widespread condemnation of pentecostalism even by those evangelicals who shared Irvingite unease over the spread of liberalism shows that evangelicalism was far from being as

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1. See above pp 85-86, 391.
 2. For premillennialist denigration of the intellect see Rowdon, op cit pp 50, 52.
 3. A L Drummond, Edward Irving and his Circle (1937) p 147.

anti-intellectualist as is sometimes assumed. The majority of evangelicals continued to assert the priority of ratiocination over charismatic inspiration and from the beginning denominational leaders sought to encourage this: writing of Methodism, the form of evangelicalism most vulnerable to pentecostalist fervour, Professor Ward notes 'The great defence of church order and preservative against the revivalists was to unite sound learning with vital religion'.⁴

But if on the one hand comparison with Irvingism reveals the extent of evangelical intellectualism, on the other it shows up its inadequacies. Irving should not be remembered merely by his late aberrant pentecostalism. In the last few unhappy months of his life, swept along by a movement over which he had lost control, he felt bound to subject his intellect to the supposed dictates of the Spirit, speaking in tongues. But in his prime he was revered by the intelligentsia of London: Coleridge, who regarded him as a major attraction of his Thursday soirées, wrote to an acquaintance 'You will like Irving, as a companion and a converser even more than you admire him as a Preacher - He has a vigorous & (what is always pleasant) a growing mind...'⁵

Irving was a visionary of a type rarely if ever nurtured by evangelicalism, a man even less prepared than Foster and Kinghorn, Clarke and Cecil, unquestioningly to accept the current teachings of the church. Indeed he was highly critical

4. W R Ward (ed), The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting (1972) p 14.

5. Griggs, (ed), op cit v p 474. Cf pp 280, 286-87, 365, 368-69, 476-77, and for Coleridge's unhappiness about Irving's later beliefs vi pp 549-50, 554, 570-71, 677, 840.

both of Scottish Presbyterians and later of English evangelicals believing that their overriding intellectual interest in correct doctrine precluded an openness of the whole personality to the Spirit of God. In catechetical formulations truth was 'presented to the intellect chiefly', in the Bible 'to the heart, to the affections, to the imitation, to the fancy, and to all the faculties of the soul'. Yet the Bible was all too often relegated to a source book of proof texts:

The solemn stillness which the soul should hold before her Maker, so favourable to meditation and rapt communion with the throne of God, is destroyed at every turn by suggestion of what is orthodox and evangelical - where all is orthodox and evangelical; the spirit of the reader becomes lean, being fed with abstract truths and formal propositions... Intellect, cold intellect, hath the sway over heaven-ward devotion and holy fervours. 6

If like many would-be reformers Irving overstated his case, there is nevertheless much truth in his suggestion that evangelicals valued the intellect at the expense of other facets of the human personality, and in consequence lacked the vision to accept insights of the type which Irving, ahead of his time, was seeking to communicate. Like F D Maurice, who acknowledged his debt to him, Irving was above all concerned to effect a 'realised theology', a theology which proclaimed the Lordship of Christ over the present as well as the future, over the whole of life and not just over men's disembodied minds and souls.⁷ Thus he argued that from the beginning of time the Spirit of God

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6. E Irving, The Oracles of God (1824) pp 13-14.
 7. On Maurice and Irving see Whitley, op cit pp 94-97. It is perhaps not just coincidental that the latest work on Irving is by the Director of the Church of Scotland's Arts Centre: C G Strachan, The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving (1973)

had been at work through natural means both in man and in the world at large preparing the ground for redemption.⁸ Moreover he believed that the salvation of man far from being esoterically consummated in the world to come, was integrally related to the salvation of the natural and work-a-day world:

as we grow to be redeemed by the power of Christ, working in us the law of the Spirit of life, we grow again to be lords and masters of the creature, and come to deliver it in a proportionate degree from its thralldom.⁹

To the disgust of the Baptist Magazine Irving was therefore scathing of evangelical attempts to opt out of the life of this world:

is it for this that God sets men free from spiritual bonds, that they may build them prison walls and naked cells...and leave the wilderness a wilderness still, and make the city a waste, and the fertile field a desolate waste...That separation from certain honest customs of life, which is beginning to be introduced as parts of religious duty, the proscription of innocent mirth and well-timed hilarity, the violent philippics against the sports and amusements of the field, the proscriptions of that free and easy discourse which our fathers entertained, the formation of a religious world different from the other world, and the getting up of certain outward visible tests of a religious character, the proscribing of all books unless they expressly treat upon some religious subject; also your Moravian establishments, and Methodist dresses, and many other things which I could name, savour to me of the same ignorance and misuse of the creature which the Papists carried to its perfection... In one word, all this is bondage, miserable bondage; the creation walleth to be liberated by liberated man. And shall redeemed man desert the redeeming of the creation? ¹⁰

Irving's more positive approach to life in this world

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8. E Irving, Sermons, Lectures and Occasional Discourses (1828) ii pp 604-86, one of a number of lectures on the parable of the sower.
9. ibid p 718.
10. ibid pp 719-20; BM xxi. (1829) p 240.

was reflected in his Christology. His theological interests focussed predictably not upon Pauline theories of the Atonement, but upon doctrines more obviously concerned with the earthly Lordship of Christ, the Incarnation and the Second Coming. His distaste for intellectual abstractions caused him to repudiate a docetic sacrificial offering in favour of a fully human Saviour, energising living flesh and blood, 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'.¹¹ It was Irving's interpretation of this last point which caused the furore, resulting in his condemnation for heresy. The question at issue, Irving explained was 'whether Christ's flesh had the grace of sinlessness and incorruption from its proper nature, or from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. I say the latter':

the precious truth for which we contend, is, not whether Christ's flesh (human nature) was holy - for surely the man who saith we deny this blasphemeth against the manifest truth - but whether during his life it was one with us in all its infirmities and liabilities to temptation, or whether, by the miraculous generation it underwent a change so as to make it a different body from the rest of the brethren. They argue for an identity of origin merely; we argue for an identity of life also. They argue for an inherent holiness; we argue for a holiness maintained by the Person of the Son, through the operation of the Holy Ghost. ¹²

Irving's heresy was to become a later orthodoxy. ¹³

Current thought, however, as P E Shaw has pointed out, 'in the interests of the divine impaired the human nature of Christ'. ¹⁴

Thus even Josiah Conder, one of the most cultured and open-minded

11. Hebrews iv 15 (A V)

12. Quoted Shaw, op cit pp 22-24.

13. See for example Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (eds G W Bromiley and T F Torrance, 1956) i part ii p 154.

14. Shaw, op cit p 24.

of evangelicals described Christ as coming 'so near to man that he even suffered being tempted'. His biographer believed that this indicated a morbid reaction against Socinianism which made Christians of the period afraid of dwelling on the real and complete humanity of Christ. ¹⁵ But evangelicals were reacting against more than Socinianism. Their ^{disinclination effectually} to appreciate the humanity of Christ was indicative of their inability fully to accept their own humanity. Their subordination of passion, sense and imagination to spirit and intellect was in part a reflection of the thought of the day. But it was reinforced by what K S Inglis has called 'the evangelical schism between soul and body, between the spirit and the world', a schism which evangelicals believed should characterise Christ's followers as well as Christ himself. ¹⁶ Thus while they accepted and enjoyed non-religious cultural and intellectual pursuits to a far greater extent than is generally recognised, they were never able confidently to assimilate such worldly activities within the framework of their world-denying theology. If a study of evangelicals' practice does much to qualify the traditional charge of philistinism, their failure theologically to justify that practice reveals how substantial a schism still remained between evangelicalism and culture.

15. E R Conder, op cit p 90.

16. K S Inglis op cit p 305.

APPENDIX 1Reason and the Passions¹

James Edmeston

Formed in pure celestial fashion
 From a piece of nether earth;
 Warmed by many a growing PASSION,
 Man in Eden took his birth.

LOVE was lovely, ANGER holy,
 JOY all heavenly and serene;
 FEAR was filial and lowly,
 HOPE lit all the future scene.

Every PASSION shed a pleasure
 Through the pure untainted soul;
 Each possessed its rank and measure,
 Heavenly REASON swayed the whole.

SATAN came, and whispered treason
 All against her gentle sway;
 Then the PASSIONS spurned at REASON,
 And they wandered each their way.

LOVE chose FOLLY, ANGER MADNESS,
 FEAR had GUILT to be her guide;
 JOY walked arm in arm with SADNESS,
 HOPE had ENVY at her side.

REASON wandered all forsaken:
 When she sang her sweetest song,
 Not a PASSION would awaken,
 Through the mutineering throng.

Blind to her celestial beauty,
 Deaf to her celestial strains,
 Deriding every call of duty,
 They strolled along the world's drear plains.

Turn, ye wanderers - list to REASON!
 Sad - you will be happy then;
 You have walked in wo a season,
 Stinging all the breasts of men.

REASON, or RELIGION, calls you,
 Let your wayward wanderings cease;
 Then whatever ill befalls you,
 All your influence will be peace.

HOPE and FEAR and ANGER yonder
 Cannot pass, but here must die;
 But LOVE and JOY entwined will wander
 O'er the bright fields of the sky.

So the MORTAL PASSIONS ever
 Will inspirit man below,
 And the DEATHLESS PASSIONS never
 Cease in heavenly souls to glow.

1. Quoted with approbation in ER ii series xv (1821) pp 547-48. On Edmeston see Miller, Singers and Songs of the Church (1869) pp 418-20.

APPENDIX 2

From John Satchell, Thornton Abbey (2nd edn 1814) i pp 36ff.

... every creature of God, animate and inanimate, is teaching some useful lesson to those who are disposed to learn. That poor despised ass, the poverty of whose owner obliges him to feed by the wayside, on thistles and other weeds, reminds us of the meek and lowly Son of God, riding upon this animal, and entering triumphantly into Jerusalem amid the acclamations of his followers; which was a prelude to his entering upon his heavenly inheritance by the ignominious death of the cross. The useful harmless sheep, whose flesh feeds us, and whose fleece secures us from the cold, puts me in mind of the Saviour of the world, who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, while the meek and innocent lambs call to my remembrance the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. The noble well-proportioned horse, I consider as the gift of God to ease our labour, and to bear part of our curse. The cow I behold with pleasure and gratitude. When I meet in an evening those useful creatures returning to their owners, their breath sweet as the rose, and their udders distended with balmy nectar, I view them as one of the kindest gifts of providence; since here the poor have provided for them a cheap, salubrious, and delicious repast; a repast, how infinitely superior to costly dainties, contrived with a view to gratify a depraved appetite; in which gratification too often consists the sad pre-eminence of riches! Wherever we are we cannot look around us without perceiving the goodness and munificence of the great Creator; of that immense Being, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. Those little birds, though they have neither storehouse nor barn, are liberally provided for by an unseen hand... The trees also, the succulent herbage, and the hills and valleys standing thick with corn, proclaim that every creature is subject to the will of Jehovah; otherwise what is in itself so unlikely to provide food for man and beast as the clods of the valley, the dirt which we trample under our feet? Contemplations like these are not only innocent, but exquisite gratifications: they refresh the spirits, gladden the heart, and leave no sting behind them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is divided into four sections:

- A) PRIMARY SOURCES
- B) LIVES AND LETTERS
- C) SECONDARY SOURCES
- D) WORKS OF REFERENCE

The inclusion of a separate biographical section (B) reflects the difficulty of categorising 'lives and letters'. Early biographers often reproduced verbatim lengthy extracts from the diaries and correspondence of their subjects: their works along with autobiographies should obviously be classified as primary sources. Yet this classification is clearly inappropriate for more recent and analytical biographies. It therefore seems sensible to group all biographical writings together rather than distribute them between sections A and C. For convenience of consultation, however, unpublished material, notwithstanding biographical or autobiographical content, is listed separately at the beginning of section A and at the end of section C.

A) PRIMARY SOURCES

1) Unpublished papers

Bacon papers, in private hands, comprising Letters 1783-1847; Diary of John Bacon jun. 1815-23; Reminiscences of the late John Bacon esq RA, 1847.

Cecil papers, Ridley Hall Cambridge, comprising Diary of Reflections and Prayers 1804-06; Undated Ms; Ms Remains; Typewritten List of Books in Hall Case at Ridley Hall, c 240 volumes once belonging to Richard Cecil.

Cunningham papers, Dorset Record Office D 289, comprising Diaries of J W Cunningham 1822-25, 1826-28, 1830 (F 38-39); A Copy of the Will of J W Cunningham (F 40); Diaries of Sophia Cunningham 1808-11, 1813-14, 1818-20 (F 41-42); Sophia Cunningham's Commonplace Book and an Account of her Death (F 43-44); Miscellaneous Material relating to their Marriage Settlement and their Children (F 2, 10, 19-21, 45-48).

Letters from J W Cunningham:

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