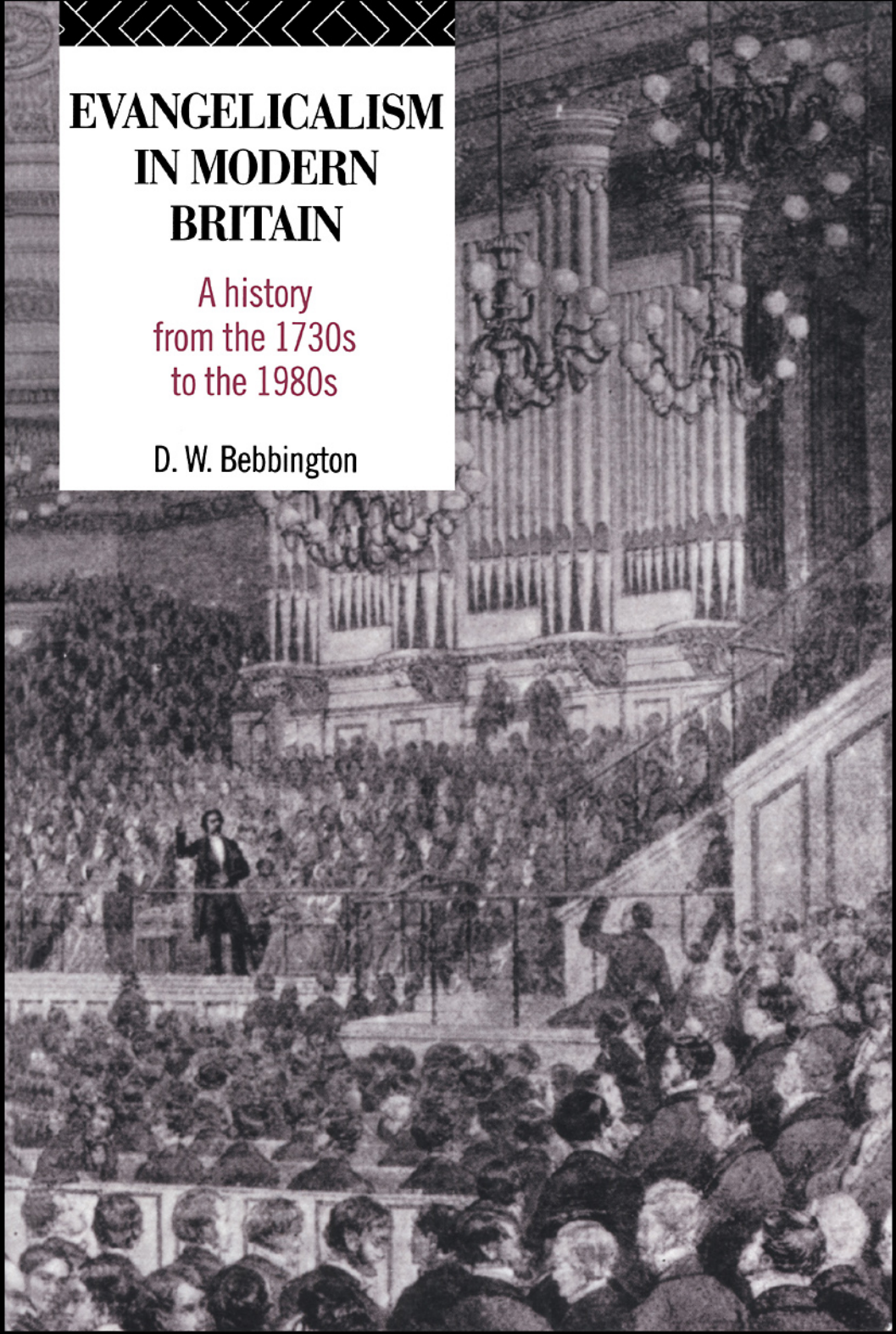
EVANGELICALISM IN MODERN BRITAIN

A history from the 1730s to the 1980s

D. W. Bebbington



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By the Same Author

Patterns in History
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The Nonconformist Conscience
Chapel and Politics, 1870–1914
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Evangelicalism
Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond, 1700–1990
(Co-editor)
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A HISTORY FROM THE 1730s TO THE 1980s

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Preface

The Evangelicals of Britain have been neglected. A few themes have been selected for attention by historians—such as John Wesley and the rise of Methodism, William Wilberforce and the struggle against slavery, Lord Shaftesbury and the campaigns for social reform—but many aspects of the movement remain in obscurity. Light has been shed by studies of particular organisations and denominations, but the development of Evangelicalism as a whole has been examined very little. That is surprising, because it has been a major tradition within the Christian churches. In the mid-nineteenth century it set the tone of British society. In the 1970s both archbishops of the Church of England were drawn from it. And from the 1790s onwards the missionaries it despatched did much to mould the Christian faith in many other parts of the world. The neglect of the Evangelicals is undeserved.

This book attempts to fill a gap by providing an overall survey of the movement. It therefore has a twofold task. One dimension is to consider the influence of Evangelicals on society. More research has been done on this aspect of the movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than on any other. The dependence of this study on earlier work will be very apparent here. More attention, however, is paid to how Evangelicalism itself has changed. Religion, as Edward Gibbon once remarked with tongue in cheek, has never existcd in the pure form in which it descended from heaven. It has always been affected by its surroundings at the same time as influencing those surroundings. Studies of churches founded by missionaries have been well aware of this principle. Discussion of British Evangelicalism has been much less alert to the effects of its host culture. So the second main dimension of the book is an exploration of the ways in which Evangelical religion has been moulded by its environment.

The movement has been self-consciously distinctive and unitary. It has consisted of all those strands in Protestantism that have not been either too high in churchmanship or too broad in theology to qualify for acceptance. It has spanned the gulf between the Established Church and Nonconformity in England and Wales and has bound together bodies north and south of the Scottish border. It has nourished close links with co-religionists abroad, especially in the English-speaking world. Although this study considers

influences from overseas, and particularly from America, it concentrates on developments within Britain. Even Ireland, united constitutionally with Britain for much of the period, is left out. But it does try to take account of the remarkable sectarian mosaic that existed alongside the larger churches.

Although much material has been drawn from biographies and other monographs, research has paid particular attention to some of the immense number of periodicals generated by Evangelicalism. The secondary literature is surveyed incidentally in the notes to the chapters, and so no separate booklist has been included. It should also be noted that research has been greatly facilitated over the years by participant observation. Services of worship can reveal a great deal about Christian traditions.

Many debts have been incurred. The draft has been read in whole or in part by Dr Clyde Binfield, Dr Ken Brown, Professor Roy Campbell, the Rev. Professor Colin Gunton, Dr David Hempton, Dr lain Hutchison, Dr Neil Keeble, Mr John McIntosh, Professor Mark Noll, Dr Brian Stanley and Dr John Walsh. I am extremely grateful for their comments, but none of them bears responsibility for the text. A pilot essay was read by Dr Sheridan Gilley, Dr Richard Holt, Dr David Lyon, Professor Arthur Pollard, Professor Andrew Walls, Professor R.K.Webb, Dr Haddon Willmer and Dr David Wright. I much appreciated their observations. Members of my family have greatly helped the process of writing: my mother, Mrs Vera Bebbington, my mother-in-law, Mrs Margaret Lacey, and especially my wife Eileen, who supplied constant encouragement. My daughter Anne also helped by urging me to 'cut the chapters'.

I have been grateful for access to material in the possession of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the London City Mission and Church Society (to which I was guided by Dr Brenda Hough). Most of the research was done in the British Library, Cambridge University Library, the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, the National Library of Scotland and Stirling University Library. I appreciate the help given by their staff, and especially assistance, following earlier guidance, from Miss Alison Peacock of the Methodist Church Archives at the John Rylands. Several friends have generously provided accommodation during research trips, and I want to express particular gratitude to Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, for its warm hospitality.

The project was originally stimulated by an invitation to give the Trustees' Lectures at Union Theological College, Belfast, in 1980, and the Laing Lecture at London Bible College in 1982. Discussion with students in my course at the University of Stirling on Church, State and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain helped to crystallise some of the points, and I am particularly indebted to one of them, Mr Colin Rogerson, for a remark (which he may have forgotten) that illuminated a crucial area. Conversation with several friends—particularly the Rev. Dr Richard Kidd—has been stimulating. Theological Students' Fellowships at other Scottish universities forced me to explore

several aspects of the subject by inviting me to speak on them. The University of Stirling granted a sabbatical semester for the basic research in 1983, and I am grateful for financial support to the British Academy, the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and the Whitley Lectureship. Miss Margaret Hendry, assisted by Mrs Margaret Dickson, has word-processed the text with immense care and skill. The Rev.James Taylor, Minister of Stirling Baptist Church, has helped the writing of the book by being a distinguished exemplar of the tradition it discusses. To him the book is dedicated.

David Bebbington
Stirling, February 1988

Note to 1993 printing

A few minor alterations have been made. None of them, however, affects the substance of the book.

David Bebbington
Stirling, May 1993

EVANGELICALISM IN MODERN BRITAIN

[1]
Preaching the Gospel: The Nature of Evangelical Religion

…woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! (1 Cor. 9:16)

Evangelical religion is a popular Protestant movement that has existed in Britain since the 1730s. It is not to be equated with any single Christian denomination, for it influenced the existing churches during the eighteenth century and generated many more in subsequent years. It has found expression in a variety of institutional forms, a wine that has been poured into many bottles. Historians regularly apply the term 'evangelical' to the churches arising from the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[1] The usage of the period justifies them. Sir Thomas More in 1531 referred to advocates of the Reformation as 'Evaungelicalles'.[2] Yet the normal meaning of the word, as late as the eighteenth century, was 'of the gospel' in a non-partisan sense. Isaac Watts, for example, writes of an 'Evangelical Turn of Thought' in 1723.[3] There was a reluctance, most marked in Scotland, to apply the word to a particular group, since by implication those outside the group would be branded as not 'of the gospel'.[4] Other terms were used, especially by critics. In 1789 Joseph Milner wrote of 'Evangelical religion, or what is often called Calvinism or Methodism'.[5] Steadily, however, the word 'Evangelical' supplanted the others as the standard description of the doctrines or mnisters of the revival movement, whether inside or outside the Church of England.[6] In 1793 *The Evangelical Magazine* was founded to cater for members of any denomination dedicated to spreading the gospel. That is the sense in which the word is employed here. Although 'evangelical', with a lower-case initial, is occasionally used to mean 'of the gospel', the term 'Evangelical', with a capital letter, is applied to any aspect of the movement beginning in the 1730s.[7] There was much continuity with earlier Protestant traditions, but, as Chapter 2 contends, Evangelicalism was a new phenomenon of the eighteenth century.

Who was an Evangelical? Sometimes adherents of the movement were in doubt themselves. 'I know what constituted an Evangelical in former times', wrote Lord Shaftesbury in his later life; 'I have no clear notion what constitutes one now.'[8] Part of the problem was that, as Shaftesbury implies, Evangelicalism changed greatly over time. To analyse and explain the changes

is the main purpose of this book. Yet there are common features that have lasted from the first half of the eighteenth century to the second half of the twentieth. It is this continuing set of characteristics that reveals the existencc of an Evangelical tradition. They need to be examined, for no other criterion for defining Evangelicalism is satisfactory. An alternative way would be to appeal to contemporary opinion about who was included within the movement. That approach, however, risks being ensnared in the narrow perspective of a particular period. For polemical purposes the right of others to call themselves Evangelicals has often been denied, particularly in the twentieth century. The danger is that the historian may be drawn into the battles of the past. It is therefore preferable to identify adherents of the movement by certain hallmarks. Evangelicals were those who displayed all the common features that have pcrsistcd over time.

Evangelical apologists sometimes explained their distinctiveness by laying claim to particular emphases. The Evangelical clergy differed from others, according to Henry Venn (later Clerical Secretary of the Church Missionary Society) in 1835, 'not so much in their systematic statement of doctrines, as in the relative importance which they assign to the particular parts of the Christian System, and in the vital operation of Christian Doctrines upon the heart and conduct'.[9] Likewise Bishop Ryle of Liverpool asserted that it was not the substance of certain doctrines but the prominent position assigned to only a few of them that marked out Evangelical Churchmen from others.[10] By that criterion, Ryle was able to distinguish his posirion from that of the great number of late nineteenth-century High Churchmen whose message was similar to his own, whose zeal was eqvial to his own and who preached as much for conversions.[11] They elevated certain doctrines surrounding the church and the sacraments to a standard of importance that he believed to be untenable. The tone of Evangelicalism permeated nearly the whole of later Victorian religion outside the Roman Catholic Church, and yet the Evangelical tradition remained distinct. It gave exclusive pride of place to a small number of leading principles.

EVANGELICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The main characteristics emerge clearly. The High Churchman G.W.E. Russell remembered that the Evangelicals of his childhood in the midnineteenth century divided humanity into two categories: 'a converted character' differed totally from all others. Russell had also been taught to be active in charity, to read the Bible and to maintain 'the doctrine of the Cross'.[12] There are the four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of

Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.

In the early days of the revival there was normally a stress in Evangelical apologetic on the first and the last. John Wesley was willing to describe two doctrines as fundamental: justification, the forgiving of our sins through the atoning death of Christ; and the new birth, the renewing of our fallen human nature at the time of conversion.[13] Similarly a group at Cambridge received the 'three capital and distinguishing doctrines of the Methodists, viz. Original Sin, Justification by Faith and the New Birth'.[14] Original sin, the condition from which we are rescued by the other two, was also on Joseph Milner's checklist of four doctrines absolutely necessary to salvation: the 'divine light, inspiration, or illumination' of conversion; original sin; justification by faith in the merits of Christ by which 'the great transaction of the Cross is appropriated'; and spiritual renovation, the consequent working out of duty from the motive of gratitude.[15] This final factor implies activism, but in the eighteenth century Evangelicals rarely spelt out its importance in doctrinal terms. They nevertheless threw themselves into vigorous attempts to spread the faith. Likewise they did not normally put the Bible among the most important features of their religion. The Bible, after all, was professedly held in high esteem by all Protestants. Yet they were notably devoted in their searching of the scriptures. The centrality of the Bible could still be taken as read in the mid-nineteenth century, even when activism was mentioned explicitly. 'An Evangelical believer', according to William Marsh in 1850, 'is a man who believes in the fall and its consequences, in the recovery and its fruits, in the personal application of the recovery by the power of the Spirit of God, and then the Christian will aim, desire, endeavour, by example, by exertion, by influence, and by prayer to promote the great salvation of which he himself is a happy partaker…'[16] Thus the earlier phase of Evangelical history concurred with the late Puritan divine Matthew Henry in dwelling on three Rs: ruin, redemption and regeneration.[17] In practice, however, from its commencement the movement showed imrnense energy and a steady devotion to the Bible also.

Later generations, while still displaying the four main characteristics, tended to present them rather differently. The first leading principle of Evangelical religion, according to Bishop Ryle, is 'the absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture'. There followed, as other leading principles, the doctrines of human sinfulness, the work of Christ in salvation, the inward work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and his outward work in sanctification. The primacy of scripture was directed against those who exalted the authority of either church or reason.[18] Other late nineteenth-century writers adopted a similar defensive posture, particularly against High Church doctrine on the priesthood and the sacraments. Edward Garbett claimed in 1875 that the three cardinal Evangelical principles are the direct contact of the individual soul with God the Father, the freedom and sovereignty of the Holy Ghost and the sole

High Priesthood of God the Son. His intent is to repudiate High Church teaching about the role of the priest in mediating the grace of God to the people.[19] Likewise the ministers of the London Baptist Association set about defining Evangelicalism negatively. 'In our view', they announced in 1888, 'the word "evangelical" has been adopted by those who have hcld the Deity of our Lord, in opposition to Socinianism; the substitutionary death of the cross, in opposition to Sacramentarianism; the simplicity of the communion of the Lord's Supper, in opposition to the doctrine of the Real Presence. It certainly has also further references…in opposition to those who deny the infallibility of Scripture on the one hand, and who assert another probation for the irnpenitent dead on the other.'[20] One eye is constantly being cast over the shoulder at the ritualists and the rationalists. Instead of the joy of new discovery that pervades eighteenth-century lists of distinctives, there is a resolve to resist an incoming tide of error.

Twentieth-century formulations again put the stress elsewhere. In asking 'What is an Evangelical?', in 1944, Max Warren, General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, gave priority to evangelism over everything else, even worship. The need for conversion, trusting the Holy Spirit to sustain the believer's new life and the priesthood of all believers were his other three cardinal principles. Thus activism now comes first, with the centrality of the cross and the study of the Bible, though both are mentioned, relegated to a lower place in the scheme of things.[21] Warren, however, was not among the more conservative Evangelicals, whose strength was to grow later in the century. Conservatives usually attributed most importance to the authority of the Bible. Once that was granted, they believed, all other features would be assured. Thus John Stott, in asking Warren's question, 'What is an Evangelical?', in 1977, replied that two convictions cannot be surrendered. First, he claimed, 'We evangelicals are Bible people'. It followed, secondly, that Evangelicals possesscd a gospel to proclaim. The cross, conversion and effort for its spread were all placed under that comprehensive heading.[22] Similarly J.I.Packer put the supremacy of scripture first in a list of six Evangelical fundamentals in 1979. To the familiar categories of the work of Christ, the necessity of conversion and the priority of evangelism he added the lordship of the Holy Spirit (in deference to charismatics) and the importance of fellowship (in deference to Catholics).[23] Variations there have certainly been in statements by Evangelicals about what they regard as basic. There is nevertheless a common core that has remained remarkably constant down the centuries. Conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism forrn the defining attributes of Evangelical religion. Each characteristic can usefully be examined in turn.

CONVERSIONISM

The call to conversion has been the content of the gospel. Preachers urged their hearers to turn away from their sins in repentance and to Christ in faith. G.W.McCree, a London Baptist minister of the mid-nineteenth century, was typical in holding 'that conversion was far above, and of greater importance than, any denominational differences of whatever kind'.[24] A vivid account of conversion, pinpointed by Matthew Arnold as a classic, is given in the autobiography of Sampson Staniforth, then a soldier on active service and later one of the Wesley's early preachers:

> As soon as I was alone, I kneeled down, and determined not to rise, but to continue crying and wrestling with God, till He had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell; but as I looked up to heaven I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my hcart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'. My chains fell off; my heart was free. All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace.[25]

Staniforth's narrative is a classic not only because of its patent sincerity but also because of its inclusion of agony, guilt and immense relief. The great crisis of life could stir deep emotion. The experience was often ardently sought, for others as well as for oneself. Prayer requests for conversion appeared in the Evangelical press: 'For a gentleman on the road to destruction, who fancies he is saved.—For an unconverted brother who is addicted to excessive drinking—…For my late foreign governess, an avowed Unitarian'.[26] Conversions were the goal of personal effort, the collective aim of churches, the theme of Evangelical literature. They could seem a panacea. 'Conversions not only bring prosperity to the Church', declared the Wesleyan Samuel Chadwick at about the start of the twentieth century; 'they solve the social problem.'[27] A converted character would work hard, save money and assist his neighbour. The line between those who had undergone the experience and those who had not was the sharpest in the world. It marked the boundary between a Christian and a pagan.

Preaching the gospel was the chief method of winning converts. Robert Bickersteth, Bishop of Ripon from 1857 to 1884, held that 'no sermon was worthy of the name which did not contain the message of the Gospel, urging the sinner to be reconciled to God'.[28] There was a danger, Evangelical preachers believed, of offering only comfort from the pulpit. Hearers needed to be aroused to concern for their spiritual welfare. If the delights of heaven were described, so were the terrors of hcll. Jonathan Edwards, the American theologian who stands at the headwaters of Evangelicalism, believed in insisting on the reality of hell; Joseph Milner, an erudite early Anglican Evangelical, would preach sermons on topics like 'The sudden destruction of

obdurate offenders'; and a Methodist preacher assured a backslider 'that the devil would soon toss [him] about in the flames of hell with a pitchfork'.[29] Normally, however, there was more circumspection. The minister, according to an article of 1852 'On the method of preaching the doctrine of eternal death', should remember 'that he is sent to be a preacher of the Gospel of the grace of God, and not to be a preacher of death and ruin'.[30] Fear was not neglected as a motive for conversion, but more emphasis was generally laid on the forgiving love of God. It was essential, however, that the preacher himself should be converted. How could he speak of what he had not known? Some ministers underwent conversion experiences when already in the ministry. Thomas Chalmers, the Evangelical leader in the early nineteenth-century Church of Scotland, was among them.[31] One clergyman was even converted by his own sermon. Preaching on the Pharisees in his Cornish parish, William Haslam realised that he was no better than they, but then felt light and joy coming into his soul. The cry went up, 'The parson is converted!'[32] The experience turned him into an Evangelical.

Conversion was bound up with major theological convictions. At that point, Evangelicals believed, a person is justified by faith. Because human beings are estranged from God by their sinfulness, there is nothing they can do by themselves to win salvation. All human actions, even good works, are tainted by sin, and so there is no possibility of gaining merit in the sight of God. Hence salvation has to be received, not achieved. Jesus Christ has to be trusted as Saviour. Acceptance by God, as Luther had insisted, comes through faith, not works. Justification by faith, as we have seen, was one of the distinguishing doctrines of Evangelicalism in the eighteenth century. Critics declared it to be subversive of all morality. To the typical mind of the period it seemed to destroy the obligation to observe the divine law. If salvarion was available without good works, the door was opened for any form of profligacy. Gratitude, replied the Evangelicals, was the strongest motive for moral behaviour. Henry Venn, the Evangelical Vicar of Huddersfield, declared that 'faith is not understood, much less possesscd, if it produce not more holiness, than could possibly be any other way attained'.[33] Consequently it was dwelt on. To the growing son of an Evangelical Anglican home in the mid-nineteenth century it seemed that the clergy taught nothing else but justification by faith.[34] Although the doctrine was sometimes watered down in the later nineteenth century,[35] it was championed so vigorously by Evangelicals in the Church of England in the 1980s that it became a central topic of theological dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.[36] Justification by faith embodied much that was most precious to them.

Assurance was another doctrine closely connected with conversion. Once a person has received salvation as a gift of God, he may be assured, according to Evangelicals, that he possesses it. Not only is he a Christian; he knows he is a Christian. John Wesley laid great emphasis on this teaching. 'I never yet knew', he told an enquirer in 1740, 'one soul thus saved, without what you call "the

faith of assurance": I mean a sure confidence, that by the merits of Christ he was reconciled to the favour of God. '[37] The idea was not distinctive to Wesley and his followers, for those affected by Evangelicalism in the Calvinist tradition were equally attached to it. Assurance had been an important theme of pre-Evangelical Protestant spirituality, but the experience had never been regarded as the standard possession of all believers. The novelty of Evangelical religion, as Chapter 2 will show, lay precisely in claiming that assurance normally accompanies conversion. Other Christians, especially those of more Catholic traditions, found the expectation of assurance among Evangelicals eccentric, presumptuous or even pathological.[38] Yet it remained characteristic of them. Max Warren defended the doctrine in 1944 as 'the here and now certainty that "I am 'in Grace' because I have been converted"'.[39] The confidence of Evangelicals had its roots in the inward persuasion that God was on their side.

Since conversion was the one gateway to vital Christianity, parents looked anxiously for signs of it in their growing children. The Scots Evangelical mothcr of W.E.Gladstone, the future Prime Minister, wrote in a letter when he was about ten years old that she believed her son to be 'truly converted to God'.[40] Conversion was most common among teenagers, but the average age at the experience seems to have fallen during the ninetcenth century. In the first half of the century, a higher proportion of conversions took place in adulthood. Later on, as churches drew more on Christian homes, the stage of decisive commitment tended to occur earlier. The mean age at conversion among future Methodist ministers in the period 1780–1840 was 16.9 years; the mean age in the period 1841–1900 was 15.8 years.[41] Home background clearly remained an influential factor in the 1960s. An Evangelical Alliance survey of about 5,000 Christians established that one in six had been converted before the age of twelve and three in four before the age of twenty.[42] Conversion was statistically less likely the older a person was.[43] Among the exccptions, conviction usually went deep. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, a Cumberland baronet, for example, underwent a decisive experience while suffering from a dangerous illness in middle age. Though retaining the sporting interests of his class, he became a generous patron of local religious services, temperance work and the whole Evangelical Union denomination.[44] For the adult there could be a drastic reappraisal of life's priorities.

'Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power', wrote Jonathan Edwards, 'at oncc changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul…But as to fixing on the *precise time* when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time was; but others are more at a loss.'[45] The question of timing was pcrplexing to subsequent generations. Could conversion sometimes be gradual rather than sudden? Anglican Evangelicals, commonly more educated, sober and respectable than their brethren in othcr denominations, never had qualms about accepting the validity of gradual

conversions. Charles Simeon, their leading spokesman in the early nineteenth century, was emphatic: 'we require nothing *sudden*'.[46] Likewise William Jay of Bath, an Independent minister with a fashionable congregation, could testify to no 'distinct and unique experience'.[47] Methodists, on the other hand, usually looked for a datable crisis, though equally they expected it to be preceded by a long period of 'awakening'.[48] Revivalists in the mid-nineteenth century stressed the change of a particular moment. Thus, Reginald Radcliffe sought to impress on Sunday School teachers in 1860 that 'conversion is an instantaneous work'.[49] James Caughey, a vigorous American revivalist in Methodism, asserted that 'the work of conversion is so momentous, that no man can pass through it, and not know it'.[50] There was nevertheless an undoubted drift towards the standard Anglican position as the nineteenth century wore on. Alexander Raleigh, a distinguished Independent preacher between the 1840s and the 1870s, made a conscious change of heart central in his earlier sermons, but later accepted that conversion could be gradual and unconscious.[51] By 1905 only the Baptist contributors to an interdenominational symposium on *The Child and Religion* expected a crisis of personal religious decision.[52] Conservative and sectarian Evangelicals often continued to think in these terms, but gradualism was stronger among the more open-minded. Differences of emphasis remained unresolved in the twentieth century.

Another issue revolved round the means of conversion. The orthodox teaching was that true conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.[53] Challenges to trust Christ were thought legitimate human means for bringing about conversions, but the Spirit was still held to be responsible. In the nineteenth century, however, some of the more enthusiastic Evangelicals, eager to maximise conversions, began to teach that the crucial factor is a person's *will* to be saved. Carefully planned methods, such as meetings designed for anxious enquirers, could encourage the desire to believe. In *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835), Charles Finney, the leading American exponent of this line of thinking, presented revivalism as a science, a powerful technique for securing mass conversions. It was an immensely popular work, selling 80,000 copies by 1850 and making a great impact in Britain, not least because it was adapted for the British market by removing, for example, strictures on drinking tea. Finney came close to denying the need for the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Some did draw that inference. J.H.Hinton, later a leading Baptist minister, wrote in 1830 that 'a sinner has power to repent without the Spirit'. He subsequently declared that he had been misunderstood, explaining that he did believe that the Spirit acts in conversion overall. But others did not retract. Nine students at Glasgow Congregational Theological Academy were expelled in 1844 for 'self-conversionism'. They went on to form part of the new Evangelical Union, a largely Scottish denomination committed to revivalism.[54] Eagerness for converts had the effect of modifying the theology of a section of Evangelicalism. The satne motive operated later in the century

on the mind of R.F.Horton, an eminent Congregationalist who reached the identical conclusion that a person may exercise his will in order to be converted.[55] Such thinkers were trying to reduce the mysterious element in conversion for the sake of niaking the experience more widely known.

The most celebrated issue raised by conversion was its relation to baptism. This was the substance of what probably qualified as the chief theological controversy of the early and mid-nineteenth century. The problem was one of reconciling the conviction of Evangelicals that conversion is the time when a person becomes a Christian with two statements in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. According to the order for baptism, an infant is declared regenerate at the end of the ceremony; and according to the catechism, baptism is the occasion of our new birth. Evangelicals who were also Anglicans had a tangled knot to untie. Furthermore, Anglicans of other schools were able to claim that Evangelicals were disloyal to the formularies of their church. The best known incident, remembered as what provoked Henry Manning's secession to Rome, was the Gorham case of 1847–51. Bishop Philpotts of Exeter, a punctilious High Churchman, refused to institute George Gorham, an Evangelical clergyman, to a living in Devon because he did not accept the Prayer Book teaching that baptism is the time when a person is born again. On appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Gorham's right to reject the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was upheld.[56] But this affair was only the tip of an iceberg. Controversy had begun as early as 1812, when Richard Mant, a traditional High Churchman, had criticised Evangelicals for rejecting the Prayer Book doctrine of baptismal regeneration.[57] Evangelicals made a variety of replies. The order of infant baptism, some held, expresses a charitable hope about the future regeneration of the child; or, according to others, the service is designed for believers who could pray with confidence for the salvation of the child.[58] Others again felt that they had to embrace a doctrine of baptismal regeneration, going on to redefme regeneration to mean not 'becoming a Christian', but something less decisive. This was the course taken, for instance, by J.B.Sumner, later Archbishop of Canterbury.[59] It is a shaky answer, a sign that Evangelicals found this apparent discrepancy between their doctrine and their liturgy embarrassing.

It is not surprising that the question was aired repeatedly. In Scotland, for example, a leading Episcopalian and later Primus, James Walker, insisted in 1825 that baptismal regeneration was the teaching of his church.[60] His arguments were met by a number of Evangelical clergy, and a spirited pamphlet war ensued. In England, C.H.Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, censured the Evangelical Anglican clergy in a sermon of 1864 for failing to repudiate the principle of baptismal regeneration. A storm of indignarion burst about him.[61] A Prayer Book Revision Society, guided by Lord Ebury from 1859 to 1889, wished to remove 'everything which can be held to imply that Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is *inseparably connected with the Rite*' [62] But the anomaly remained to

trouble twentieth-century Evangelical Anglicans. In 1965 *The Church of England Newspaper* asked its largely Evangelical readership whether the church should cease baptising infants altogether. Of the clergy, 289 replied no, but 47 replied yes. Of the laity, 455 said no, but a remarkable 268 said yes.[63] Clearly a high proportion of the respondents were worried about what infant baptism was supposed to signify. The problem was perennial because the idea that infants are regenerate through baptism does appear in the Book of Common Prayer, whereas Evangelicals have believed that only through conversion does a person become a Christian. The recurring difficulties on this subject are a corollary of the centrality of conversion in Evangelical religion.

ACTIVISM

A second leading characteristic of Evangelicals has been their activism. It flows from the first, as Jonathan Edwards remarked. 'Persons', he wrote, 'after their own conversion, have commonly expressed an exceeding great desire for the conversion of others. Some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul…'[64] Henry Venn, by his own computation, was instrumental in the conversion of some 900 people during three years at Huddersfield.[65] A Methodist missioner of the later nineteenth century claimed to have seen nearly 90,000 led to Christ at his meetings.[66] Wesley's early preachers threw themselves into efforts to spread the gospel. A typical one attended class and band meetings, visited the sick and preached five or six times a week; another, when stationed at York in 1760, rodc a circuit of 300 miles every six weeks, visiting some sixty societies; a third frequently managed no more than eight hours of sleep a week.[67] Preaching services at 5 a.m. were common.[68] Sunday could be immensely demanding, as the resolutions of a Methodist and his wife in 1774 reveal: 'We will attend the preaching at five o'clock in the morning; at eight, go to the prayer meeting; at ten, to the public worship at the Foundery; hear Mr. Perry at Cripplegate, at two; be at the preaching at the Foundery, at five; meet with the general society, at six; meet in the united bands at seven, and again be at the prayer meeting at eight; and then come home, to read and pray by ourselves'.[69] The dedication of laypeople that was so marked a feature of Methodism was imitatcd in the Church of England. Paid full-time and voluntary part-time workers became general in Evangelical parishes. There was a similar development in the Church of Scotland, where Thomas Chalmers appointed deacons for parochial visitation.[70] 'The Evangelical saint of to-day', declared the Congregationalist R.W.Dale in 1879, 'is not a man who spends his nights and days in fasting and prayer, but a man who is a zealous Sunday-school teacher, holds mission services among the poor, and attends innumerable committee meetings. "Work" has taken its place side by side with prayer…'[71]

The result was a transformation in the role of a minister of religion. The English parish clergyman of the later eighteenth century was very like a

member of the gentry in how he spent his time. Duty consisted almost exclusively in taking services.[72] For the Evangelical, however, pastoral work was laborious. 'To acquaint ourselves', ran a clerical manual of 1830, 'with the various wants of our people; to win their affections; to give a seasonable warning, encouragement, instruction, or consolidation; to identify ourselves with their spiritual interests, in the temper of Christian sympathy, and under a sense of Ministerial obligation; to do this with the constancy, seriousness, and fervid energy which the matter requires, is indeed a work of industry, patience, and self-denial.'[73] In the 1840s Spencer Thornton, Rector of Wendover, each week delivered seven evening lectures, gave two afternoon readings and conducted four Bible classes; he also held five monthly and three quarterly meetings.[74] At a higher level, Bishop C.R.Sumner of Winchester wrote more than 3,500 business letters in his last year of office and Bishop Bickersteth of Ripon excited surprise by choosing to preach three times each Sunday on his arrival in the diocese.[75] At the 1851 census of religion, whereas Anglican churches overall provided an average of 2.06 services a Sunday, a sample of churches belonging to the Evangelical Simeon Trust provided 2.52. An unsympathetic commentator was forced to conclude in 1860 that 'the evangelical clergy as a body are indefatigable in ministerial duties'.[76]

The Methodists were equally exemplary. Wesley was a typhoon of energy, preaching more than 40,000 sermons and issuing more than 400 publications.[77] John Fletcher of Madeley, a clergyman who was Wesley's designated successor, was described by his wife as 'always on the stretch for God'.[78] Adam Clarke gave up tea and coffee on Wesley's advice in 1782, and consequently saved several whole years of time over the rest of his life for devotion to Christian scholarship. 'For a short time after he left off the use of those *exotics*', according to his biographer, 'he took in the evenings, a cup of *milk and water*, or a cup of *weak infusion of camomile*', but as he found that he gained no time by this means, and the gaining of time was his great object, he gave that totally up…'[79] Time was scarce. A working week of between 90 and 100 hours was expectcd of men in the nineteenth-century Wesleyan ministry.[80] It is hardly surprising that the connexion maintained a 'Worn-Out Ministers' Fund'. An idenrical shift to a new dynamism is apparent in the life of the Scot, Thomas Chalmers. In his early ministry he was not an Evangelical. After the satisfactory discharge of his duties, Chalmers commented at the time, 'a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure'. After his conversion, by contrast, Chalmers was reputed to have visited 11,000 homes in his Glasgow parish during a single year.[81] Evangelicalism brought about a striking change of attitude.

There were other effects of the imperative to be up and doing. Learning, for example, could be regarded as a dispensable luxury. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Independent ministers were trained not in theology or Greek, but simply in preaching. It would have been 'highly improper', according to a contributor to their magazine, 'to spend, in literary

acquisitions, the time and talents which were so imperiously demanded in the harvest field'.[82] The same factor could inhibit scholarship even at the universities. It was said of James Scholefield, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge from 1825, that 'had his other numerous and important duties allowed sufficient leisure, his Editions of the ancients would doubtless have exhibited more of original research'.[83] As it was, the quest for souls generally drove Evangelicals out from centres of learning to the parishes and to the foreign mission field. The missionary movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the fruit of the Evangelical Revival. That is not to claim sole credit for the Evangelicals. On the contrary, Roman Catholic missions had for long put Protestants to shame. Yet a direct result of the revival was the creation of new missionary societies, beginning with that of the Baptists in 1792, that did so much to make the Christian faith a worldwide religion.[84] The dedication of the Cambridge Seven, a set of promising young graduates who entered the China Inland Mission in 1885, was a celebrated case of Evangelical zeal.[85] But activism often spilled over beyond simple gospel work. 'Toil, toil, toil', wrote Lord Shaftesbury in his diary for April 1850, 'nor should I lament, could I say fruit, fruit, fruit.'[86] Shaftesbury's efforts in such causes as public health provided a further outlet for Evangelical energy. Wilberforce's campaign against the slave trade and Nonconformist political crusades around 1900 are but the most famous instances of attempts to enforce the ethics of the gospel. A host of voluntary societies embodied the philanthropic urge. Hannah More, the Evangelical authoress of the turn of the nineteenth century, summed up succinctly the prevailing Evangelical attitude. 'Action is the life of virtue', she wrote, 'and the world is the theatre of action.'[87]

BIBLICISM

The third main feature of the Evangelicals, their devotion to the Bible, has been the result of their belief that all spiritual truth is to be found in its pages. The Bible alone, John Wesley contended, was the source of his doctrine of salvation. 'Let me be *homo unius libri* [a man of one book]', he declared in the preface to his collected sermons of 1746.[88] His brother Charles was so immersed in scripture that in one of his hymns, 'Lord, and is Thine anger gone', twenty-six biblical allusions are crowded into sixty-four lines.[89] Opponents of an early Methodist preacher, he reported, 'said I made my Bible my god!'[90] Another declared that after his conversion the Bible 'seemed an entirely new book'.[91] This frequent experience among Evangelicals led to charges by eighteenth-century opponents that they were subjecting the Bible to arbitrary interpretation under the alleged illumination of the Holy Spirit. The opponents, often maintaining a doughty tradition of Anglican apologetic, claimed to be the more scriptural party in appealing to the bare text.[92] Yet Evangelicals were certain they understood the Bible clearly. Hence the

nineteenth-century Scottish revivalist Brownlow North 'spent hours every day in hard and prayerful study of its pages'.[93] A contemporary evangelist, Henry Moorhouse, was similarly devoted. 'He would not suffer anything, not even a sheet of paper, to be laid upon his Bible. There alone, apart, it must lie, unique, matchless, wonderful, the very mind and presence of the infmite and eternal God. '[94] Evangelicals revered the Bible.

Respect for the Bible did not necessarily lead them into far-fetched views. The passage from the first book of Corinthians about a rock following Israel through the wilderness came up for discussion at a conversation party for Cambridge undergraduates led by Charles Simeon. Did the rock really move? 'Oh yes, of course', replied Simeon, 'with a hop, skip and a jump!'[95] Here was no wooden literalness. It is true that doctrinal preoccupations often encouraged an instinct for turning to the New Testament letters in preference to the gospels.[96] Yet Evangelicals did not normally concentrate on obscurities. For the end of the nineteenth century, when the age of the questionnaire was just dawning, we possess a detailed breakdown of texts taken by preachers in a variety of Evangelical pulpits on a Sunday in March 1896. The survey came about because, intriguingly, the journal *Tit-Bits*, on receiving a complaint from a reader about the length of sermons, launched a competition to fmd the longest—it was, it turned out, a sermon preached at a Primitive Methodist chapel lasting one hour eighteen minutes. *The British Weekly*, an interdenominational paper, repeated the survey and also investigated texts. Three-quarters were drawn from the New Testament. John's gospel was the most popular source, followed closely by the first letter of John and then by the other three gospels. In the Old Testament, most texts came from Psalms, Genesis and Isaiah. None was taken from Philemon, 2 or 3 John, Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk or Zephaniah. The single verse that inspired most sermons was Galatians 2.20 about being crucified with Christ.[97] Certainly there is no evidence here of the deliberate searching out of obscure texts.

There was agreement among Evangelicals of all generations that the Bible is inspired by God. When it came to determining the implications of inspiration, however, there were notable divergences. Henry Venn of Huddersfield referred incidentally in 1763 to 'the infallible word of God' and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion confessed its belief in 1783 in 'the infallible truth' of the scriptures.[98] 'The Bible is altogether TRUE', wrote Edward Bickersteth in his extremely popular *A Scripture Help* (1816). 'lt is truth without any mixture of error.'[99] Yet in the period up to that date there was no attempt to elaborate any theory of infallibility or inerrancy. On the contrary, there was remarkable fluidity in ideas about the effects of inspiration on the text. The overriding aim of early Evangelicals was to bring home the message of the Bible and to encourage its devotional use rather than to develop a doctrine of scripture. A body of Evangelical opinion, however, began to insist from the 1820s onwards on inerrancy, verbal inspiration and the need for literal

interpretation of the Bible. [100] In reaction against the publication of *Essays and Reviews* (1860), a Broad Church manifesto for studying the Bible in the manner of any other book, the newer dogmatic school of thought became more vocal.[101] To us', wrote the Baptist C.H.Spurgeon, 'the plenary verbal inspiration of the Holy Scripture is a fact and not a hypothesis.'[102] From the chair of the Congregational Union in 1894, by contrast, G.S.Barrett repudiated the 'crude and mechanical theory of verbal inspiration'.[103] Attitudes to the Bible drew apart until, in the wake of the First World War, the Evangelical world divided into conservatives and liberals primarily on that issue. The importance attributed by Evangelicals to the Bible eventually led to something approaching schism in their ranks.

CRUCICENTRISM

The doctrine of the cross, fourthly, has been the focus of the gospel. The Evangelical movement, in the words of Gladstone, 'aimed at bringing back, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all that the Cross essentially implies'.[104] Nothing in the Christian system, according to John Wesley, 'is of greater consequence than the doctrine of Atonement. It is properly the distinguishing point between Deism and Christianity.'[105] The reconciliation of humanity to God, that is to say, achieved by Christ on the cross is why the Christian religion speaks of God as the author of salvation. 'I am saved', wrote an early Methodist preacher, 'through faith in the blood of the Lamb.'[106] There is a cloud of witnesses on the theme. An eighteenth-century Scottish theologian, John Maclaurin, like many subsequent Evangelicals, preached on 'Glorying in the cross of Christ'.[107] 'The death of Christ', according to the clerical manual of 1830, 'in this scriptural and comprehensive view, includes the whole Christian system.'[108] Representative twentieth-century Evangelicals in the Church of England said much the same.[109] Theologians elaborated the point: R.W.Dale, with telling reasonableness in 1875; James Denney, with scrupulous clarity in 1902; John Stott, with contemporary awareness in 1986; and, greatest of all, P.T.Forsyth in a series of vibrant treatises in the early twentieth century.[110] Critics deplored what they saw as an obsession. The Quaker statesman John Bright, having heard G.B. Bubier, a Congregational divine, is said to have murtnured to himself, 'The atonement, always the atonement! Have they nothing else to say?'[111] Even those who professed a liberal version of Evangelical belief in the twentieth century like the Methodist W.R.Maltby felt compelled to lay great stress on the cross.[112] 'If men are Evangelical Christians at all', declared the Congregationalist Alexander Raleigh in 1879, 'they can say without a shadow of insincerity, "God forbid we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ…"'[113]

Looking back on an interwar childhood in the Brethren, Anne Arnott recalled trying on Christmas Day to escape in imagination to Bethlehem from the rninistry which, as always, centred on the crucifixion.[114] The atonement

eclipsed even the incarnation among Evangelicals. In 1891 Charles Gore, a rising young Anglo-Catholic, inaugurated a central tradition in Anglican thought by arguing in the Bampton Lectures for the incarnation as the heart of Christian theology.[115] The warning issued to Methodists in the following year is instructive:

> We rejoice in the prominence which is being given to the doctrine of the Incarnation, with all its solemn lessons and inspirations. But we must be careful lest the Cross passes into the background, from which it is the glory of our fathers to have drawn it. Give to the *death* of Christ its true place in your own experience and in your Christian work—as a witness to the real and profound evil of sin, as an ovcrwhelming manifestation of Divine love, as the ground of acceptance with God, as a pattern of sacrifice to disturb us when life is too easy, to inspire and console us when life is hard, and as the only effectual appeal to the general heart of men, and, above all, as the Atonement for our sins.[116]

To make any theme other than the cross the fulcrum of a theological system was to take a step away from Evangelicalism. The Congregationalist James Baldwin Brown, to the dismay of many co-religionists, had already followed the Broad Churchman F.D.Maurice along that path, and by 1897 a Methodist, J.Scott Lidgett, was doing the same.[117] Christopher Chavasse was still urging caution on Anglican Evangelicals about this trend of thought in 1939. 'Let us', he told them, 'keep close to Scripture, and allow the Atonement to explain the Incarnation—Christ was born in order to die…'[118] Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, showed he knew his Evangelicals when, in addressing their Keele Congress in 1967, he urged them to recognise that other Anglicans also upheld, in different ways, the 'supreme assertion that in the Cross of Christ alone is our salvation'.[119]

The standard view of Evangelicals was that Christ died as a substitute for sinful mankind. Human beings, they held, were so rebellious against God that a just penalty would have been death. Yet, as Thomas Scott the commentator discovered to his delight, 'Christ indeed bore the sins of all who should ever believe, in all their guilt, condemnation, and deserved punishment, in his own body on the tree'.[120] Belief in a substitutionary atonement originally distinguished Evangelicals from even the strictest divines of other schools. William Law, an outstanding devotional writer drawn on by Scott, among many others, explicitly repudiated the idea that Christ suffered in our stead.[121] Probably the greatest sermon by Robert Hall, Baptist minister in Cambridge at the opening of the nineteenth century and the ablest preacher of his day, was a defence of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.[122] Its argument was still being repeated, with due acknowledgement of Hall, in a statement of Evangelical principles by the Anglican W.R.Fremantle in 1875.[123] By the 1870s, however, the fear was expressed that substitution was being discarded,

and even the leading Wesleyan theologian W.B.Pope was equivocal on the subject.[124] The humanitarian tone of public opinion was veering against this understanding of the death of Christ. George Bernard Shaw voiced the newer attitude in characteristically scaring fashion. 'I detest the doctrine of the Atonement', he once wrote, 'holding that ladies and gcntlemen cannot as such possibly allow anyone else to expiate their sins by suffering a cruel death.'[125] In the early years of the twentieth century the teaching was fading from the Methodist pulpit.[126] It survived nevertheless in conservative Evangelical circles, enshrined, for instance, in the statement of faith of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Christian Unions. Jesus Christ was there described as dying not only as our representative but also as our substitute.[127] Belief that Christ died in our stead was not uniform in the Evangelical tradition, but it was nortnal.

The implications of the cross for life were also important for Evangelicals. There was a bond between the atonement and the quest for sanctification. 'All treatises', wrote Henry Venn,'…written to promote holiness of life, must be deplorably defective, unless the cross of Christ be laid as the foundation…'[128] The motive for spiritual growth was gratitude for Calvary. Preoccupation with the cross led to some exaggerated forms of spirituality. Mrs Penn-Lewis, an early twentieth-century holiness advocate, for example, went about teaching that there must be a decisive experience for the believer of crucifixion of the self.[129] But it was also common for preachers to dwell, as did the Congregationalist David Thomas in the 1840s, on the 'relation of the Atonement to practical righteousness'.[130] By 1908 this line of thought had generated in the mind of the Wesleyan J.E.Rattenbury a sanction for socialism. The gospel declares that human beings are to be considered not for their station, rank or riches but for their potential as sons of God. Consequently, he contended, 'the theology of the cross…is well fitted to be the soul of the Collectivist movement'.[131] Richard Heath, an extreme proponent of the social gospel, went further. The vicarious suffering of Christ was for him a symptom of the never-ceasing fact of human solidarity in adversity. God was suffering with his creatures.[132] Attention to the cross could lead in diverse directions.

The *theologia crucis* gave rise to debate. For whom did Christ die? For the elect only, as Calvinist believers in particular redemption affirmed? Or for all, as Arminian advocates of general redemption insisted? The Evangelical ranks were riven in the eighteenth century by controversy between Methodists, who were Arminians, and most others, who were Calvinists. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, this debate was dying down. Most Evangelicals were content to adopt a 'moderate Calvinism' that in terms of practical pulpit instruction differed only slightly from the Methodist version of Arminianism. Leading Anglican Evangelicals expressed the view in 1800 that redemption is both general and particular. Arminians were right to stress human responsibility to repent and Calvinists right to stress the need for divine grace.[133] 'I frankly confess', wrote William Wilberforce, 'that I myself am no Calvinist, though I am not either an anti-Calvinist.'[134] Discussion of

the scope of the atonement became moribund. It was dismissed as mysterious, impractical, a subject ill suited to bringing about conversions. Hence denominations that had maintained a separate existence because of the issue eventually came together. In England the gap between General and Particular Baptists that went back to the early seventeenth century steadily narrowed during the nineteenth, and in 1891 the two bodies formally fused. In Scotland, the Congregational Union, professedly Calvinist, and the Evangelical Union, revivalist and Arminian in style, united in 1897. What Evangelicals agreed on seemed of infmitely greater importance than their disagreements, and their pre-eminent ground of agreement was the cruciality of the cross.

THE BACKGROUND

Evangelical religion displaying these four characteristics burst on western Christendom at an epoch when the fundamental division between Catholics and Protestants had become firmly established over two centuries. Although in 1770 there were some 80,000 Roman Catholics in England,[135] the state in Britain was Protestant. The crown was restricted to Protestants, and so were a nurnber of other offices of state. The Church of England, the Established Church of England and Wales, had rctained its bishops at the Reformation but emerged from the seventeenth century as an unequivocally Protestant body. Its establishment meant that the Church of England was intertwined with the state. The monarch was the supreme head of the church. Theoretically, all his subjects in England and Wales belonged to it. The bishops of the Church of England sat of right in the House of Lords. Parliament exercised as much authority in spiritual matters as in temporal affairs. With the decay of church courts, ecclesiastical cases increasingly came before the secular courts. More than half the patrons of livings who appointed parish elergymen were laypcople. For advancement in a clerical career the patronage of some member of the social elite was essential. Clergymen were expected to display the manners of the gentry, among whom they were educated at Oxford and Cambridge. Their pulpit ministry was partly designed to teach the lower orders their place in the order of things. Conscientious men there were in the Church of England, notably at episcopal level, but there was little effective check on clerical negligence. The church played a salient role in everyday life, but at the expense of imbibing a strong dose of secularity.[136]

Protestant Dissent, though possessing roots in the sixteenth century and perhaps earlier, was primarily indebted to the strength of the Puritan movement in the seventeenth century. In the 1650s, under Cromwell, the Puritans had enjoyed a brief spell of official favour, but with the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 their period in the sun came to an abrupt end. Some 2, 000 ministers who refused to accept the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 in its entirety were expelled from the Church of England. Despite persecution, the Dissenting congregations survived to enter an era of toleration following

the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Dissenters were allowed to practise their religion unmolested, but, with hardly any of the gentry in their ranks, were reduced to a marginal role in society. Most of them retained the Calvinist theology in the Reformed tradition of their Puritan forebears, though there were some General Baptists who held Arminian views and the more numerous Quakers professed a belief in an 'inner light'. This credal difference, together with distinctive clothes, language and even calendar, set the Quakers apart from their Dissenting brethren. The mainstream consisted of the 'three denominations'. Presbyterians, who numbcred many merchants in their ranks, formed the scction of Dissent that was to be least influenced by Evangelicalism. Adopting increasingly broad theological views as the eighteenth century advanced, many of them reached a Unitarian position by its end. Independents, also known as Congregationalists, believed in the independence from all external authority of the local congregation. Like the less numerous Particular Baptists, who were identical apart from holding that baptism should be by immersion and for believers only, the Independents generally remained orthodox during the eighteenth century. These bodies were to be swept along by the Evangelical Revival.[137]

In Scotland there was an entirely different situation. The seventeenthcentury kirk had wavered between Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism, contriving to blend them both after the Restoration. With the Glorious Revolution, however, the Church of Scotland became definitely Presbyterian. Bishops were at last repudiated. Episcopalian congregations, which were numerous in the north-east, began a life outside the Established Church. The whole population of Scotland belonged in theory to the Church of Scotland, and in practice an effective form of social discipline was maintained in many parishes against notorious sins. There was a continuing appreciation of Puritan classics and every minister had to profess at his ordination an acceptance of the Reformed theology of the Westminster Confession. The more rigid adherents of traditional ways and doctrine, however, began to detect a relaxation of standards. Several were particularly dismayed that, following the Union of Scotland with England in 1707, lay patronage had been rcstored to the Church of Scotland. Discontent on this issue induced Ebenezer Erskine, one of the ministers of Stirling, to lead a sccession from the church in 1733. Presbyterian Dissent became a feature of Scottish church life, and small Independent and Baptist groups followed soon after. The Puritan legacy in the eighteenth century was greater in Scotland than in England.[138]

The changing role of Evangelical religion in modern Britain forms the theme of the following pages. There is a pattern of overlapping chapters. Chapter 2 examines the nature of the movement in the first century of its existence up to about 1830. It enquires why the movement began and discovers the answer in the cultural mood impinging on the Protestant tradition. Contrary to the common view, Evangelicalism was allied with the Enlightenment. Chapter 3 deals with a change of direction in Evangelicalism

that occurred in the 1820s and 1830s, tracing the shift of emphasis once more to its cultural roots—this time in Romanticism—and examining some of the consequences down to about 1860. In Chapter 4 there is a study of the impact of Evangelical religion on British society as a whole during the nineteenth century, when its influcnce was at its peak. Chapter 5 analyses a movement in late nineteenth-century spirituality that again helped to reorient the movement. Chapter 6 deals with the effects of earlier factors in dividing Evangelicals into conservative and liberal camps during the interwar years. The transforming effect of twentieth-century cultural trends on Evangelicalism is the subject of Chapter 7. Chapter 8 tries to pick up the threads by analysing developments since the Second World War and Chapter 9 reaches some general conclusions. It becomes clear that Evangelical religion in Britain, despite the four constant elements discussed in this chapter, has altered enormously over time in response to the changing assumptions of Western civilisation.

[2]
Knowledge of the Lord: The Early Evangelical Movement

> *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD. (Jer. 31:34)*

The decade beginning in 1734 witnessed in the English-speaking world a more important development than any other, before or after, in the history of Protestant Christianity: the emergence of the movement that became Evangelicalism. Priority in the British Isles must go to Wales. A young schoolmaster living near Brecon, Howel Harris, came to faith during the spring of 1735. [1] A few weeks later Daniel Rowland, curate at Llangeitho in Carmarthenshire, underwent a similar experience of forgiveness. Soon both began travelling round South Wales, gathering large audiences and preaching the arresting message that salvation could be known now.[2] England followed. George Whitefield, converted as an Oxford undergraduate in the spring of 1735, stirred both Bristol and London by his oratory two years later, exhorting his hearers to seek the new birth.[3] Charles Wesley, who at Oxford had been Whitefield's mentor in his religious quest, did not reach assurance of faith for himself until 1738. In the same week, on 24 May, his brother John felt his heart 'strangely warmed' as he trusted 'in Christ, Christ alone for salvation'. Prompted by Whitefield, John Wesley began his career of open-air preaching at Bristol in the following year.[4] Whitefield roused parts of Scotland in 1741, and in the next year there broke out at Cambuslang near Glasgow a revival in which men and women anxiously looked for pardon.[5] Already there had been a comparable phenomenon in the colony of Massachusetts. In 1734–5, exactly when Harris and Rowland were wrestling with their conviction of sin in Wales, Jonathan Edwards was involved in a revival in the town of Northampton, where he was minister. His published analysis of the revival had impressed Wesley between his experience of trusting Christ and the inauguration of his travelling ministry and was well known to the Scottish ministers most involved at Cambuslang.[6] The movement in America, which Whitefield fanned into a larger flame, is usually styled 'The Great

Awakening'. But it was part and parcel of The Eighteenth-Century Revival',[7] a quickening of the spiritual tempo in Britain and beyond.

The quickening seemed desperately needed. The Dissenters, the immediate inheritors of the Puritan legacy in England, were at a low ebb. In the 1730s there was a proliferation of writings on 'the decay of the Dissenting interest'. Philip Doddridge, writing in 1740, believed that the decline was concentrated chiefly in the west and south of England,[8] but there it was acute. In the samc year the Western Association of the Particular Baptists urged four fast days to repent of spiritual declension.[9] Fewer new Independent and Baptist places of worship were registered in the 1730s than in any other decade when the system of registration was in force.[10] Evangelicalism, however, transformed the situation. Later in the century, when the revival movement impinged significantly on the Old Dissent, numbers of Independents and Baptists rose steadily. It has been estimated that in 1750 there were about 15,000 Independent and 10,000 Particular Baptist church members. By 1800 the respective figures had risen to 35,000 and 24,000.[11] Although there was marked population growth in the period, this rate of church growth outstripped it. The number of churches in the Particular Baptist Western and Midland Associations approximately doubled between 1780 and 1820. Furthermore, the overall increase in membership per church doubled over the period. And the most spectacular change among Calvinistic Dissenters was a great rise in the number of those who attended regularly as 'hearers' without becoming members. One church, at Gold Hill in Buckinghamshire, was said in 1818 to have five hearers for every member.[12] So the Dissenters touched by the revival enjoyed far more success afterwards than before.

The Methodists made even greater progrcss. Their membership increased from 22,410 in 1767, the first year when it was recorded, to 88,334 in 1800 and 232,074 in 1830.[13] Round the core of loyal members Methodist 'hearers' formed a large penumbra. In the Church of England, by contrast, the number of communicants seems to have decreased during the eighteenth century. It continued falling relative to population until the 1830s.[14] Evangelicalism had madc much less impact on the Established Church than among Dissenters. In the Church of Scotland, whose Evangelical strength was greater than that of the Church of England, communicant levels probably kept pace with population during the eighteenth century. But it was Presbyterian Dissent, much of it fired with evangelistic fervour, that grew most in Scotland. By 1835, only a century after the first secession, it enjoyed the allegiance of nearly a third of Edinburgh churchgoers.[15] It is clear that the appearance of Evangelicalism was the signal for a major advance by Protestant Christianity in the ensuing century.

The motor of expansion was the message of justification by faith. Lost sinners must trust Christ for salvation. In the classic compendium of Evangelical faith and practice, *The Complete Duty of Man* (1763), Henry Venn, Vicar of Huddersfield, defines saving faith as 'a dependence

upon Christ for righteousness and strength, as having paid to the justice of God full satisfaction for his broken law, and obtained acceptance for all believers in his name, to the reward of eternal life'.[16] Christ had done all that was needed to achieve salvation. It remained only for men and women to accept forgiveness at his hands. Faith was therefore seen as the gift of grace. It was 'simply to hang upon Him'.[17] To insist on faith as the way of approaching God was to reject certain popular alternatives. Venn condemns three. Our ground of hope, he explains, cannot be works, that is, the performance of good deeds, for evcn the best actions have flaws and so are unacceptable as an offering to a God of absolute holiness. Sincerity is equally inadequate. God expects perfect obedience (which only Christ could perform), not our good intentions. Nor will a mixture of faith and works help us. If we rely partly on our good deeds, the grand difficulty of their being tainted by sin remains.[18] 'Attempts to complete what grace begins', according to Venn's Baptist friend Abraham Booth, 'betray our pride and offend the Lord, but cannot promote our spiritual interest'.[19] Thus ordinary Methodists would go about urging that mere morality was of no avail in justification, for faith alone did everything.[20] They would swap texts with broader-minded Bible students. 'Whenever I read in St. Paul's Epistles on justification by faith alone', recalled James Lackington, then an apprentice shoemaker, 'my good mistress would read in the Epistle of St. James, such passages as suggest a man is not justified by faith alone, but by faith and works…'[21] It was a telling riposte, but scholarly Evangelicals were able to point out that while Paul writes of the condition of justification, James is discussing the nature of genuine faith.[22] If faith is real, it will automatically produce good works. Holiness is the fruit of faith. This explains the apparently paradoxical position of Wesley: 'we are justified by faith alone', he wrote, 'and yet by such a faith as is not alone…'[23] Faith is the only means by which we are made right with God; but faith, as soon as it exists, creates an itnpulse towards living a better life. Views differed about whether or not it was essential to understand the notion of justification by faith. Joseph Milner, a clergyman near Hull and the leading Evangelical historian, held the doctrine absolutely necessary to salvation.[24] Wesley, with his customary latitude in matters of opinion, supposed that those ignorant of the belief, or even hostile to it, might be saved.[25] But Evangelicals were united in holding that the reality of faith—as opposed to belief about it—is the sole condition of acceptance by God.

The bearers of the message did not always find a ready welcome. To be told that sincerity in the performance of the religious duties of one's station did not command the blessing of God was startling, if not insulring. To be assured that good works were as filthy rags seemed subversive of all morality. To hear faith lauded to the skies aroused suspicions of fanaticism, the 'enthusiasm' that the eighteenth century shunned because its seventeenth-century version had killed a king. Polite society was alarmed. It is true that Frederick, Prince of Wales, was so impressed that he was rumoured to be intending to use his

powers as monarch to make Whitefield a bishop.[26] But Frederick was on bad terms with his father, George II, and in any case predeceascd him in 1751. Evangelical penetration of high society, with the notable exceptions of the Countess of Huntingdon and the Earl of Dartmouth, was deferred until the aftermath of the French Revolution, when a high religious profile began to have welcome anti-revolutionary connotations. So the Evangelical movement laboured under severe disadvantages. Undergraduates were expelled from Oxford for Methodist practices in 1768;[27] young men suspected of Evangelical views were denied ordination in certain dioceses of the Church of England;[28] and unwelcome ministers of more sober outlook were imposed on parishes with Evangelical preferences in the Church of Scotland.[29]

There is a vivid fictional portrayal of resistance to Evangelicalism in George Eliot's tale, 'Janet's repentance'. Mr Tryan, a new Evangelical curate, arrives at a chapel-of-ease on the outskirts of the parish of Milby. His proposal to deliver Sunday evening lectures in the parish church of the to vn itself on the grounds that the resident clergyman does not preach the gospel arouses the ire of the town lawyer. A petition is organised to oppose the application to lecture. Tryan, according to the lawyer, preaches against good works. 'Tell a man hc is not to be saved by his works', the lawyer declaims, 'and you open the floodgates of all immorality. You see it in all these canting innovators; they're all bad ones by the sly; smooth-faced, drawling, hypocritical fellows…'[30] When the lecture is eventually established, Tryan has to run the gauntlet of 'groans, howls, hisses, and hee-haws' on the way to church. Stories circulate about the minister and his hearers. Trades people among them are warned that they will lose good customers. 'Mr Budd harangued his workmen, and threatened them with dismissal if they or their families were known to attend the evening lecture; and Mr Tomlinson, on discovering that his foreman was a rank Tryanite, blustered to a great extent, and would have cashiered that valuable functionary on the spot, if such a retributive procedure had not been inconvenient.'[31] The storm subsides precisely because convenience triumphs. This narrative is set in the 1820s. At an earlier date resistance was commonly both fiercer and more sustained. Wesley endured mobbing when he first preachcd in Staffordshire in the 1740s.[32] His followers were violently assaulted. Christopher Hopper was the victim of 'invectives and lies, dirt, rotten eggs, brickbats, stones and cudgels'; Peter Jaco 'was struck so violently with a brick on the breast that the blood gushed out through my mouth, nose, and ears'; John Nelson's wife was beaten by a crowd of women 'so cruelly that they killed the child in her womb, and she went home and miscarried directly'.[33] Opposition was sometimes led by members of the elite and had a measure of local co-ordination. A elergytman fearful for his congregation or his standing might egg on a crowd to violence. Or else popular resistance might possess its own dynamic. It was rightly perceived that Evangelicalism threatened to divide community life. Customary ways were under attack and

the mob retaliated in the only way available to the plebeian population of the eighteenth century.[34]

Evangelicals created their own community life. Methodism was famous—or notorious—for it. The weekly class meeting for the exchange of spiritual experience was the essence of Wesley's system for building up those who had been awakened by preaching. The pattern began almost accidentally at Bristol in 1742. A building debt had to be extinguished. Consequently the 'society', the body of all Methodists in the city, was broken down into short lists, to each of which was assigned a collector of weekly contributions. The collectors soon developed a pastoral role, and Wesley directed that members on each list should gather to seek their guidance.[35] To possess a quarterly ticket as a class member was the defining quality of a Methodist; to be noted as having 'ceased to meet' in class was to be no longer a Methodist. By 1783 in Bristol there were fifty-seven classes, each including from nine to eighteen members. The allocation to classes was on a purely geographical basis.[36] In addition to classes, however, early Methodism possessed other tight-knit groups. Only those professing justification were admitted to the bands, which also met weekly, and which were divided according to sex and marital status. This arrangement permitted greater intimacy. 'In the classes', it was recalled, 'they only confessed in general terms, that they have been tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil. But in the bands they confessed the particular sins which they had been tempted to commit, or had actually committed.'[37] Those Methodists judged to be near or in the state of entire sanctification, at least in the larger societies, assembled in select bands. There were sometimes also penitents' meetings for backsliding band-members.[38] The plethora of preaching meetings, watch-nights, covenant services at new year and love-feasts, that is larger gatherings for the relating of testimonies while buns and water were handed round—all these bound Methodists strongly together in a hostile environment. 'Such was our love to each other', according to John Haime, the promoter of a Methodist society in the army, 'that even the sight of each other filled our hearts with divine consolation.'[39] Visits to the sick and dying brought genuine sympathy; substantial interest-free loans were available, at least in London, from a common fiind; and Methodists looked after the businesses of sick brothers.[40]

Although the organisational structure was unique to Methodism, the spirit was characteristic of Evangelicalism as a whole. Jonathan Edwards knew the value of religious conversation as an antidote to spiritual melancholia.[41] The Yorkshire and Lancashire Particular Baptist Association, perhaps inspired by the Methodist example, urged in 1764 an increase of 'private meetings for mutual conference on the things of God'.[42] Samuel Walker, the Evangelical curate of Truro, organised societies for converts using material drawn from the Book of Common Prayer, less tightly controlled groups for religious conversation and a Parsons' Club, the prototype for many subsequent societies of Evangelical clergy, from about 1750.[43] Societies for prayer were promoted

in and about Glasgow during the 1740s by John Maclaurin, minister of the North West Church there, and others.[44] Meetings for prayer became the hallmark of congregations touched by the revival. There was a natural tendency for Evangelicals to meet for religious purposes. The resulting fellowship was no ethereal thing but a strongly cemented form of social solidarity.

Who composed the Evangelical communities? The Methodist membership list for Bristol in 1783, which includcs occupations, may be taken as an example. Of 790 names, only 99 are unidentified. The largest occupational group is the servants, of whom there are 55 of each sex. In addition, 26 women are concerned with laundry work, 24 with dressmaking—and so in many cases are probably more specialised servants. Shoemakers and members of related trades, together with their wives, form a group of 80 names. Apart from 29 gentlemen and gentlewomen and 25 classified as old, poor or almswomen, no other group contains as many as 20 names. There are only 13 labourers.[45] The list is fairly representative of evidence from elsewhere. The large number of servants, for example, is repeated in a sample of the converts in the Cambuslang revival of 1742, although not, apparently, among Evangelical Nonconformists in England.[46] More uniformly, a high proportion of shoemakers is found in Evangelical communities of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The most consistent fmding has been that the artisan section of society, embracing shoemakers but also including a variety of tradesmen such as carpenters and coopers, was heavily over-represented in Evangelical ranks. Such skilled men and their families formed as high as 66 per cent of a Relief Church in Glasgow between 1822 and 1832.[47] A thorough trawl of evidence has shown that this social group was more than twice as nutnerous in eighteenth-century Methodism, at 47 per cent, as in society at large.[48] Unskilled men were few, at least among committed members of Evangelical bodies. There may well have been morc of them among the 'hearers', the regular attenders who had not actually joined. Although artisans could be impoverished in bad times for their trade, Evangelicalism was rarely the religion of the poorest and outcast. Nor was it the religion of the prosperous and successful in the eighteenth century. The gentry may sometimes have been marginally over-represented in Methodism,[49] as the Bristol statistics illustrate, but the impact of the Evangelicalism of the Church of England on the elite was only just beginning when Hannah More and William Wilberforce composed their appeals to the great in the 1780s and 1790s.[50]

Women were numerous in the movement. 'I have heard Mr. Wesley remark', reported a rather jaundiced ex-Methodist, 'that more women are converted than men; and I believe that by far the greatest part of his people are females; and not a few of them sour, disappointed old maids…'[51] A measure of confirmation is provided by the discoveries that about 55 per cent of a sample of East Cheshire Methodists in the later eighteenth century were

women and that nearly half of them were unmarried.[52] Religion may have provided psychological reassurance, even emotional outlet, for this section of the population. In any case, women were consistently found in larger numbers than men. Both Cambuslang converts in 1742 and Bristol Methodists in 1783 included two women for every man.[53] Nor were they necessarily kept in the background. Outside the formal setting of public worship, and evcn occasionally in it, women found opportunities for self-expression. In the proliferating cottage meetings of early Evangelicalism it was often women who took the lead in prayer and praise, counsel and exhortation.[54] In 1803 Wesleyans effectively prohibited female preaching for the sake of propriety, but the custom was restored by the Primitives. The Bible Christians of south-western England, too, put what they called 'female brethren' on the preaching plan.[55] In the upper echelons of society Hannah More, blue-stocking and Evangelical ideologue, played a no less significant role.[56] In an age when avenues for women into any sphere outside the home were being closed, Christian zeal brought them into prominence.

The places where Evangelicalism struck deepest root were usually of certain particular kinds. Where artisans were most numerous, vital religion was most likely to do well. Therefore, areas springing into life with proto-industrial employment for the skilled worker, townships like Paddiford Common in 'Janet's Repentance' with weaving and mining as the chief occupations, were ideal territory.[57] Methodism and Calvinistic Dissent as well as the Evangelical Anglicanism that George Eliot depicts thrived there. Growing industrial areas, including the big cities, were deliberately targeted by Wesley and his contemporaries, for there dwelt the most concentrated populations. In the countryside, patterns of settlement were highly significant determinants of Evangelical strength. Scattered dwellings of recent erection in large parishes or on parish boundaries, together with market towns, proved more receptive to the gospel than ancient nucleated villages of small size.[58] It was partly that in areas of scattered settlement the parish church was often far distant, so that when travelling preachers arrived they offered a monopoly of religious provision, whereas tight-knit communities usually clustered round the parish church. Only on the rare occasions when a clergyman of the Church of England held Evangelical convictions was this an advantage. Similarly in Scotland Evangelicals gained most ground in the vast parishes of the Highlands as well as in the new industrial regions.[59] Landownership also played a part. In so-called close parishes, where land was held by one or at most three proprietors, penetration by Evangelicalism was rare. Land for erecting a chapel was far more likely to be available in open parishes where landownership was fragmented.[60] Many of the determinants boil down to the issue of social control. Wherever authority could be exerted from above to encourage conformity to established ways, the innovations of popular religion would be resisted. Squire or parson, or both together, could publicise their distaste for enthusiasm. The mob would be conscious s of their support—albeit normally

tacit—for throwing the Methodist preacher in the duckpond.[61] Conversely, where the expectations of squire and parson could be ignored with impunity, gospel preaching would be sustained. In particular, artisans who prided themselves on avoiding dependence on the landed order for their daily bread would assert their self-reliance by giving the new message a hearing—and perhaps more. Evangelism was most effective where deference was weakest, whether in town or countryside. It is no accident that Yorkshire and Cornwall, with their large parishes and numerous artisans, were the fields of the greatest Methodist harvests.[62]

VARIETIES OF EVANGELICALISM

Despite its self-conscious unity, the Evangelical movement comprised several distinct strands. The Methodists were set apart from other groupings by both doctrine and discipline. They asserted a strong doctrine of assurance that will call for detailed scrutiny; and they believed in Christian perfection, which again deserves fuller attention.[63] The esscnce of their distinct doctrinal position, however, was Arminianism. Christ, they claimed, made salvation available to all who believed, and not just to the litnited number of the elect. Such a rejection of Calvinism was not quite unique among Evangelicals, for a few of the clergy unconnected with Wesley shared Arminian beliefs.[64] So did the New Connexion of General Baptists, founded by an ex-Methodist, Dan Taylor, in 1770.[65] But Methodism was the chief bulwark of Arminianism. Charles Wesley filled many a hymn with anti-Calvinist polemic: The invitation is to all'; 'For all, for all, my Saviour died!'; 'Thy sovereign grace to all extends'.[66] His brother John called the connexional journal *The Arminian Magazine*. The first issue carried an article on Jacobus Arminius, the early seventeenth-century Dutch divine who drastically modified Reformed theology.[67] Yet John Wesley did not adhere closely to the structure of Arminius's thought. Nor was his theological system similar to the arid scheme of those rational Dissenters who treated Arminianism as a staging post to Unitarianism. Theirs, as Dr Nuttall has pointed out, was an Arminianism of the head; Wesley's was a version of the heart.[68] It was a dynamic message, a proclamation that the love of God is vast and free. No fatalism cast a shadow over the experience God wishes all to enjoy. Any man or woman can receive saving faith.

Wesley could not tolerate several aspects of the Calvinist scheme of salvation. It is true that hc sometimes minimised the distance between his own and the Reformed position. 'I think on justification', he wrote to John Newton in 1765, 'just as…Mr. Calvin does.'[69] But Wesley rejected outright belief in predestination, the doctrine that some human beings are foreordained to salvation by God's decree. It was alien to his upbringing, for both parents stoutly denied it.[70] It was equally far removed from the ethical cast of his thought. If some are chosen and others are not, so that human beings cannot

affect their destiny, the sanction for morality disappears. This was what Wesley meant by claiming that the teaching led to antinomianism. So he deplored the defection of a Cornish clergyman who had 'fallen into the Pit of the Decrees'.[71] A related objection was to the Calvinist doctrine of imputed righteousness. Reformed theologians held that God treats sinners as righteous by the legal fiction that Christ's merits are theirs. Wesley again held that this principle undercut the biblical summons to holy living. According to Calvinists, believers may commit sins and yet still be accepted by God for Christ's sake. According to Wesley, a person ceases to be a Christian as soon as he performs a sinful act. Calvinism was lulling people into a baseless sense of their security. Furthermore, Reformed theologians taught that any true believer would remain one until death—the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. God would guarantee their ultimate salvation. Again, Wesley viewed such teaching as licence for immorality.[72]

Although he repudiated it, Wesley pursued no vendetta against Calvinism. Men holding Reformed views were admitted to his annual conference, and during the 1760s Wesley employed without examination a preacher, Thomas Taylor, who read little but Calvinist authors and leaned to imputed righteousness and fmal perseverance.[73] There was more eagerness for battle on the other side. The publication of the minutes of the 1770 Methodist Conference, referring to good works as a 'condition' of salvation, provoked an outcry by Calvinists such as Rowland Hill and Augustus Toplady. Wesley scemed to be rejecting no less a doctrine than justification by faith. In reality he did not. Good works, according to Wesley, were not the way to justification, but they were essential to fmal salvation. So the 'Calvinistic Controversy' of the 1770s that drove Methodism further apart from other Evangelicals was based in part on a misunderstanding.[74] There was, nevertheless, substantial theological disagreement between Wesley and the Reformed tradition. Evangelical Arminianism was a distinct body of thought.

Methodism was also differentiated from other strands of the Evangelical movement by its discipline. Wesley professed to be a loyal son of the Church of England, constantly resisting calls for separation.[75] Yet Methodism was an elaborate religious organisation that had no dependence, except for the sacraments, on existing ecclesiastical structures. Wesley personally supervised the whole massive machine. All the preachers were his 'helpers'; membership lists were revised by his decision, against which there was no appeal. Some suggested that 'the love of power seems to have been the main spring of all his actions'.[76] By and large, however, his authority was willingly accepted. The problems arose with his death in 1791. How was the machine to operate without Wesley's guiding hand? Some preachers, led by Alexander Kilham and inspired in part by the egalitarianism of the French Revolution, pressed for greater local autonomy and more lay power. They were routed, however, and forced to leave the Wesleyan body to set up the Methodist New Connexion in 1797.[77] By the 1810s another autocracy had been established.