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Crusading, Reformation and Pietism in Nineteenth-Century North Atlantic Evangelicalism[1]

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On 28 April 1835 *The Standard*, a London conservative newspaper, published a letter from Thomas Hartwell Horne, assistant librarian at the British Museum and a parish clergyman in the City, proposing that the ensuing 4 October be celebrated as the tercentenary of the English Reformation. Horne's motives were by no means merely antiquarian and commemorative. He saw the occasion as one for 'devout gratitude' and also as an opportunity to pre-empt the efforts of 'the advocates of Popery' 'to pervert unwary Protestants from their pure and holy faith'. [2] Recent months had seen a political crisis over the future of the Church of Ireland, and the launching of a sustained campaign to counter the perceived Roman Catholic threat to Protestantism in Ireland.[3] Meanwhile in Britain, in the aftermath of Catholic Emancipation in 1829, there was awareness of a growing and increasing visible Catholic presence. Hence the upcoming anniversary of the publication of Miles Coverdale's English translation of the Bible in 1535 seemed to offer a golden opportunity for collective reaffirmation of Protestant tradition and identity. When the day came it was widely marked in church services and special sermons. The Reformation was still a valuable point of reference and appeal in contemporary religious and political contentions.[4]

Nearly four decades later Josephine Butler, a committed if independent-minded evangelical, was leading the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which sought to control the spread of venereal disease by empowering the police to arrest suspected prostitutes and subject them to a compulsory medical examination. Butler and her supporters were passionately opposed to this legislation because it

[2] *The Times*, 1 Sept. 1835. Horne's letter was first published in the *Standard* of 28 April 1835 and reprinted in the *Ipswich Journal* of 2 May.
[3] Wolffe 1991, pp. 77-90.
[4] A more extended discussion of the 1835 commemoration is forthcoming in John Wolffe, 'The Commemoration of the Reformation and Mid-Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Identity', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 2014.

implied a double moral standard, degrading women in order to enable men to indulge their lust while being protected from the consequences of their own actions. When, 1874, she published reflections on the progress of the campaign, Butler called her pamphlet *Some Thoughts on the Present Aspect of the Crusade Against State Regulation of Vice*. She urged her friends to keep constantly in mind 'the religious nature of our crusade, and the grave responsibility of those whom God has called to labour for the overthrow of the worst and longest-established form of social evil.' She also referred to the contemporary 'crusade' of American women 'against intemperance'.[5] Later in life she was to entitle her memoirs *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade*.[6] Butler's use of the word 'crusade' was ironic insofar as it has been used against her in 1872 in a hostile article in the *British Medical Journal*, which described her campaign as

> a fanatical crusade … led by a small knot of agitators, singularly combining philosophical free-thinkers of the most extreme cast, with impressible women and sincere religionists, armed with the large funds which such appeals to passion are sure to provide, and canvassing the whole country with restless and unshrinking energy.[7]

By appropriating the word 'crusade' and giving it a positive meaning, Butler was boldly flying in the face of widespread contemporary usage and seeking to turn her critics' language against them.

Subsequent widespread use of the word 'crusade' in the twentieth century to characterise a range of vigorous moral and religious campaigns has also been reflected in the academic literature, notably in Ray Billington's *The Protestant Crusade*, first published in 1938, a study of anti-Catholic campaigns in the United States in the three decades before the Civil War. In 1978 Billington's lead was followed by Desmond Bowen in the title of a comparable book on Ireland, and in 1991 by the present author in his study of Protestant organizations in mid-nineteenth

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[5] Butler 1874, pp. 7, 12.
[6] Butler 1896.
[7] Anon. 1872, pp. 529-30.

century Britain.[8] The choice of word felt a straightforward one at the time in view of the obvious parallels with Billington's and Bowen's earlier books. Drawing on then still widespread popular usage, it seemed a obvious term to encapsulate the zealousness of nineteenth-century campaigns against Roman Catholicism, their sense of black and white confrontation, and in particular their perception of confronting fundamental religious error. In such analysis, moreover, a direct association was made between the ethos of 'crusade' and the rhetoric of 'Reformation'.

Accordingly in the context of this book it seems instructive to reflect on only on the more immediate relations of Pietism to Anglo-American evangelicalism, but also on the more distant but still powerful resonances and legacies of the other two major themes of the volume. Against this background the paper falls into three main sections: first, it offers reflections on the relationship of Pietism and evangelicalism; second it explores the role of the motifs of crusade and Reformation in the conceptualization of nineteenth-century evangelicalism; and finally it examines the implications of this analysis for assessment of the role of religion as an agent of historical change.

From Pietism to Evangelicalism

The nature of the relationship between Pietism and evangelicalism is an important strand in a lively current academic debate regarding the origins of evangelicalism. The agenda for this conversation was set by David Bebbington's 1989 book *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, which opened with a very widely cited definition of evangelicalism as characterised by four special marks:

> *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.

Bebbington also asserted that 'There was much continuity with earlier Protestant traditions, but … Evangelicalism was a new phenomenon of the eighteenth century'.[9]

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[8] Bowen 1978; Wolffe 1991.
[9] Bebbington 1989, pp. 1-2.

Thus he sees it as clearly distinct both from continental Pietism, and from Anglican, Puritan and Reformed Protestantism in the English-speaking North Atlantic world.

Other scholars, however, have over the last twenty years vigorously marshalled the evidence for a stronger continuity than that acknowledged by Bebbington. In particular the late W.R.Ward employed a command of German unusual among English-speaking scholars to explore in depth the roots of evangelicalism in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century continental Pietism. Indeed, while he did not engage in an explicit critique of Bebbington, the very titles of his two books on the subject, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (1992) and *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (2006) served to claim Pietism as an intrinsic part of this history of evangelicalism. In Ward's eyes it was clear that the first evangelical was not Wesley, Whitefield or Zinzendorf in the 1730s, but Philipp Spener in 1670s or perhaps even Johann Arndt in the 1600s. Other scholars with the linguistic skills to work on both English and German sources – notably R.V. Pierard in the United States and Hartmut Lehmann in Germany – have tended to similar conclusions.[10] It should further be noted that the Pietist *collegia pietatis* as advocated by Spener had its parallel in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth century England in a movement of small Anglican lay religious societies, which sought to cultivate a deeper spiritual life among their members. Enthusiasts for these organizations included Samuel Wesley, father of John and Charles, and they provided an important model and inspiration for later developments, subsequently freely adapted by the early Methodists.[11]

Meanwhile in 2005 a number of other scholars met in Pennsylvania to discuss essays also questioning the novelty of evangelicalism, work which eventually bore fruit in *The Emergence of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities,* edited by Michael Haykin and Kenneth Stewart, and published in 2008. There is much important work in this collection, but for our present purposes the striking thing about it is the absence – in over 400 pages and 18 chapters – of any contribution primarily focused on the links between Pietism and evangelicalism. Rather the collective emphasis of the book is on the roots of evangelicalism in the Puritan and Reformed

[10] Lehmann 2009; Pierard 2011.
[11] Walsh 1986.

Protestant traditions of the English-speaking world. Only two chapters are concerned with continental developments: one argues that the Dutch *Nadere Reformatie* movement of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had a proto-evangelical character; the other argues that Martin Luther can be seen as an evangelical in the post-eighteenth-century sense, but does not discuss developments in the Lutheran tradition in Germany between the early sixteenth century and the early eighteenth.[12] While individual writers nevertheless refer to Pietism in various ways, it seems that the editors did not consider it a sufficiently important aspect of evangelical origins to merit attention in its own right. In the light of the weighty evidence to the contrary, one is left with the suspicion that this judgement reflects a particular theological agenda: an endeavour to represent evangelicalism as primarily a development of Reformed Calvinism rather than of Lutheran Pietism.

The reality is that evangelicalism had diverse and complex roots. These came together in new combinations in the 1730s stimulating the innovative dynamism of the movement, which leads Bebbington to see this as a decade of distinctive departure. It may well be a useful metaphor in visualising this process to think of a large river, with headwaters rising in different environments but eventually flowing together make up a common stream. Of course the analogy starts to break down when one acknowledges that the stream of Pietism also flowed in a variety of other directions, but the image of a river is still helpful in suggesting both real continuity with the past, and changed characteristics after the confluence. It was essentially the radical and popular dimensions of the Pietist stream that flowed into early evangelicalism, as mediated particularly by Zinzendorf and the Moravians. The catalyst for the combination lay particularly in the extensive people movements of the 1730s, driven in part by religious persecution, notably the expulsion of Protestants by the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg in 1730. The most famous of such subsequent encounters was between John Wesley and Moravian refugees on his voyage to Georgia in 1735, but it was symbolic of a wider process of new religious cross-fertilisations characteristic of the decade. The effect was to produce a movement characterised more by zeal and

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[12] Haykin and Stewart 2008, pp. 146-68, 171-98.

vision than by theological coherence, and thus highly subject to the fragmentation and fluidity that have been recurrent themes of its subsequent history.[13]

By the early nineteenth century the Moravians, who had played a crucial role in the early internationalization of radical Pietism, were losing momentum, and Anglo-American evangelicalism had developed its own institutional and ideological dynamic. German and Scandinavian Pietists who settled in the United States tended to be separated by language and cultural barriers from English-speaking evangelicals. Ties with continental Pietists therefore appeared in some respects rather weaker than they had been in the early years of the movement. Nevertheless they remained important, especially through the mission field. It was notably Danish Pietists at Tranquebar from 1706 and the German Christian Schwartz at Tanjore later in the century who pioneered Protestant missions in southern India where British evangelicals were relatively late arrivals. When William Carey and his associates began their mission in Bengal in the 1790s, they based themselves in the small Danish colony of Serampore, where the authorities were more sympathetic than in British-controlled Calcutta.[14] Then in the early nineteenth century the Basel Missionary Society was an important source of recruits for the Church Missionary Society, which initially lacked a sufficient supply of volunteers from its own Anglican evangelical constituency.[15]

It is instructive to view relationships between British and American evangelicals and the continental spiritual heirs of the earlier Pietists from the perspective of the mid-nineteenth century. It now seemed that Pietism, having been a significant agent of change in the eighteenth century, had become more conservative in its impact. Although radical and revivalist streams continued to flow, notably in the Haugean movement in Norway,[16] by this period there was a sense that the central impetus to revival and religious innovation was moving west, from Germany to Britain and eventually to the United States. The British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1804, gave early priority to the circulation of the scriptures in continental Europe, supporting agents and facilitating the establishment of Bible societies in Germany,

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[13] For fuller development of this point see Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 26-32.
[14] Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 76-7; Pierard 2011.
[15] Jenkins 2000.
[16] Hope 1995, pp. 367-99.

Switzerland and Scandinavia, thus stimulating networks that made a significant contribution to continental neo-Pietist movements.[17] The formation of the Continental Society in Britain 1819, and the Foreign Evangelical Society in the United States in 1839 stemmed from a conviction that Europe was a mission field.[18] Although English-speaking evangelical interest centred on supporting the growth of Protestant minorities in historically Catholic countries, their zeal also extended to Prussia and Scandinavia. There in the original heartlands of Pietism they perceived an advance of cold rational religion and state repression that led to the persecution of dissenting radical evangelical groups, including German Baptists and Norwegian Haugeans. When the leading American Presbyterian Robert Baird toured northern Germany and Scandinavia around 1840, he reported some pockets of spiritual life, but in general he felt that acceptance of secular state control was inhibiting and even repressing evangelical zeal. [19]

The growth of politically conservative aristocratic neo-Pietism in Prussia after 1815, culminating in the accession to the throne in 1840 of the sympathetic Friedrich Wilhelm IV, was at odds with the more politically reformist, even radical strands, of British Nonconformist and American evangelicalism.[20] It is true that Lord Ashley, the evangelical leader of the campaign for factory reform, who shared deeply conservative social and political instincts, was delighted to collaborate with the Prussian monarch in realizing their shared dream of establishing a Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841, as a focus for mission to the Jews and renewed Western Christian interest in the Holy Land. Ashley enthused at the prospect of 'a combination of Protestant thrones, bound by temporal interests and eternal principles, to plant under the banner of the Cross, God's people on the mountains of Jerusalem!'[21] German evangelical leaders themselves, however, had a rather less millennial vision of the realities of the contested situation on the ground in their country, which they reported to the founding conference of the Evangelical Alliance in London in 1846.[22] The editor of the Alliance's journal *Evangelical Christendom* perceived the turmoil of 1848 as in part a consequence of the king's political

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[17] Paterson 1858; Hope 1995, p. 375; Howsam 1991, pp. 158-9.
[18] Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 80-1.
[19] Baird 1841.
[20] Bigler 1972, pp. 125-55.
[21] Lewis 2010, pp. 276-87; Hodder 1887,
[22] Evangelical Alliance 1846, pp. 30-3, 71-2.

misjudgements, but also as reminiscent of the judgement of God on the iniquity of Israel.[23] In 1851 Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher, Pastor of the Trinity Church in Berlin, gave the Alliance a further gloomy account of the spiritual state of Germany, contrasting a gradual recovery of orthodoxy among the clergy with pervasive 'rationalism' among the people. He estimated that of the 400,000 people in Berlin, only 20,000 attended church.[24] Alongside a perception of general 'infidelity' and spiritual declension, the Evangelical Alliance in the 1850s continued to highlight its sympathy for persecuted dissenting Protestant groups, especially in Prussia and Sweden.[25]

The Evangelical Alliance's third international conference held in Berlin in 1857 marked the climax of renewed evangelical contacts between Britain and Germany. For some it was a euphoric moment: Sir Culling Eardley Smith, President of the British Evangelical Alliance hailed the end of three centuries of separation between 'Christian England' and 'Christian Germany'.[26] Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who had encouraged the conference to come to Berlin, held a reception at Potsdam for the delegates, who serenaded the king with a rendering of *Ein Feste Burg*, thus affirming not only their own solidarity but their sense of continuity with the traditions of the German Reformation. On the other hand, wider international involvement was limited with Denmark, Norway and Sweden only sending four delegates between them, and in practice the language barrier severely hampered effective communication between the much larger British and German contingents.[27] Moreover the conference was strongly opposed by the conservative high church party in the Prussian Lutheran church, represented by Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg's *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, which regarded it as a false union with a plethora of sectarians. Hengstenberg had formerly identified with Pietism 'as a sound development of the Reformation of the sixteenth century' but had renounced it in 1840 because he came to perceive its emphasis on 'experimental piety' as at odds with sound church organization. [28]

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[23] *Evangelical Christendom* 3 (1849), pp. 2-3.
[24] Steane 1852, p. 424.
[25] *Evangelical Christendom* 7 (1853), pp. 113-5, 8 (1854), pp. 114-8.
[26] Quoted Railton 2000, pp. 184-5.
[27] Steane 1859 pp. xiv, 673; Wolffe 2007, p. 220; Railton 2000, p. 187.
[28] Anon. 1862 pp. 119, 126.

The complexities of the relationship between Pietism, evangelicalism and the broader post-Reformation Protestant tradition have been well illustrated since the 1960s, by the emergence in German of the word '*evangelikale*' intended to distinguish a specific evangelicalism of the Anglo-American type from a broader '*evangelisch*' Protestantism. *Evangelikale* Germans claim not only an affinity with present-day English-speaking evangelicals, but also to be standing fully in the tradition of the early Pietists.[29] Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century currents of Pietist, evangelical and neo-Pietist influence and perception flowing across the North Sea and the Atlantic were, however, too rich and diverse to reduce to a single teleology. They should not be seen as just one, or two, movements, but as many, sharing, however, a common ground in a 'Pietist impulse', the profession of a Protestant Christianity rooted in personal spiritual experience.[30] Such experience, as Bebbington emphasizes in the 'conversionism' dimension of his definition, could undoubtedly be an agent of radical change in individual lives;[31] the extent to which it could also change the wider society is an issue to which we shall return below.

Crusade and Reformation in Nineteenth-Century North Atlantic Evangelicalism

In the evangelical worldview a sense of crusade against Roman Catholicism and other perceived spiritual and moral evils was associated with the reassertion of the perceived heritage of the Reformation. The earliest such usage of the word 'crusade' occurred in a series of pamphlets published in 1813 promoting the Bible Society, with an anonymous compiler calling himself 'Peter the Hermit'. A frontispiece engraving of the Cross, with the motto 'In hoc signo vinces', suggested even longer historical allusions back to Constantine. 'Peter the Hermit' hoped that 'the generous and romantic associations connected with the title' of his work would further its cause.[32] It is indeed worth noting a certain affinity between the conversionism and crucicentrism of evangelicals and that of the original crusaders, in terms of personal commitment to the cause through identification with the cross, although the specific theological and devotional frameworks were very different. However such positive application of the word 'crusade' was actually something of a rarity at this period: for example the liberal Protestant *Belfast Monthly Magazine* used the word in 1811 to deride the

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[29] Geldbach 1998 pp. 156-8.
[30] Winn *et al*. 2011, pp. xxi-ii.
[31] Bebbington 1989 pp. 5-7.
[32] Anon. 1813, frontispiece, p. v.

'extravagance' of those who advocated the conversion of the Jews, and in 1813 to attack clergy who 'stand forth as leaders of the Protestant crusade' to make 'the enmities of history, hereditary and immortal'.[33]

A similar sense of identification with the Reformation was apparent in May 1827 in the formation of the British Society for Promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation. It is striking that, just as the latter day 'Peter the Hermit' perceived the crusades as a useful inspiration for the contemporary cause of the Bible Society, but did not venture to pursue the historical parallel in any detail, the Reformation Society' speakers made frequent rhetorical reference to the Reformation, but gave very little attention to what the Protestant Reformers actually did, said and wrote.[34] They also, with activities initially targeted at the Catholic population of Ireland, perceived the Reformation as ongoing in their own time. Its mode of operation in its early years was to set up a series of public debates with Roman Catholic advocates, initially in Ireland and then in Britain as well. The normal point of departure for the Protestant speakers was the Bible rather than the Reformation as such, and they sought to portray Tridentine and post-Tridentine Roman Catholic teaching as unscriptural. It was left to the shrewder Catholic speakers to probe the question of what the Reformation actually stood for.[35]

The ambivalent nineteenth-century resonances of crusades, often seen in a negative rather than positive light, and of the Reformation, used as a legitimating point of reference largely detached from actual historical enquiry, thus merit further exploration. In 1825 the Irish Catholic leader Daniel O'Connell, alluding to their campaign against slavery, expressed his pity for those 'who went on a religious crusade to the West Indies, and forgot the white bondsmen at home'.[36] In 1835 he complained of what he described as a British 'crusade' of 'oppression, insult, devastation and slaughter' against the people of Ireland and in 1842 he accused Poor Law Guardians in County Cork of carrying on 'a direct crusade against the religion of the people'.[37] In October 1828, a *Times* leader also used the word in its condemnation

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[33] *Belfast Monthly Magazine* 7:37 (31 Aug. 1811), p. 152; 10:56 (31 March 1813), p. 252.
[34] For example see Noel *et al*. 1828.
[35] For example see Tottenham *et al*. 1836; Wolffe 1991, pp. 41-8, 60.
[36] *The Times* 2 May 1825, p. 3.
[37] *The Times* 10 Sept. 1825, p. 1; 30 Dec. 1842, p. 3.

of the anti-Catholic activities of Irish clergy who were campaigning against Catholic emancipation:

> It is humiliating (if it excite no stronger feeling) to read that reverend clergymen, who profess to belong to a pure and reformed church, should in these times of feverish excitement in Ireland, lead the way in the diffusion of the most implacable hostility among the parties engaged in this unholy strife. They call upon the people of England too, to unite with them in this desperate crusade against the suffering mass of the Irish community.[38]

Later in the century an opponent of the Church Association, set up in the 1860s to oppose the spread of Anglo-Catholic liturgical practices, mocked this 'new crusade against the cross' with the claim that 'the principles of the Reformation' were in fact entirely consistent with the ritualism it was attacking. [39]

Evangelicals themselves could also use the word 'crusade' in a hostile context. It could form part of their polemic against the alleged historic sins and corruption of the Roman Church, notably in Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna's 1848 account of the Albigensian Crusade:

> Oh, if we were to select one solitary instance whereby to prove the diabolical character of the Romish delusion, and to establish beyond a cavil its title to the distinguishing name of the Antichrist, we would point to the crusaders, rushing on their blood-stained way, with the transubstantiated wafer in their van, and the priestly invocation to the Holy Ghost pealing in their ears.[40]

In a contemporary context the word was used against O'Connell and the Irish Catholics, by Nonconformists against efforts to promote Anglican dominance in education, and even in 1855 against the secularists, led by George Jacob Holyoake, who had 'lately made a crusade on' Liverpool.[41] More subtly, a crusade could be portrayed as an inappropriate means to a desirable end, as in the Rev. John Stoughton's concern that the celebration of the tercentenary of the ejection of Nonconformist ministers from the Church of England in 1662 should not become a

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[38] *The Times* 28 Oct. 1828, p. 3.
[39] Anon 1866.
[40] Tonna 1848, pp. 113-4.
[41] Anon 1835, p. 2; Mursell 1844, p. 110; *The Defender,* 1(1855), p. 12.

'polemical crusade'.[42] Similarly over-zealous opponents of slavery in the United States, too impatient to wait for the gradual operation of 'moral appliances' to secure their ends, were attacked in an 1863 pamphlet for 'their dreadful haste to let out deluges of blood in their war crusade'.[43]

The appeal to the Reformation was something of an innovation in the 1820s. Earlier generations of evangelicals had not seen it as a reference point in the same way. It is notable that in William Wilberforce's *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians*, published in 1797, and a seminal Anglican evangelical text, the word 'reformation' itself was used to refer to personal and corporate spiritual and moral renewal rather than to an historical era. Wilberforce's actual reference to the Reformation era was limited to a brief passage where he alluded to 'the Religion of the most eminent Reformers, of those bright ornaments of our country who suffered martyrdom under queen Mary; of their successors in the times of Elizabeth', whose writings he equated with the version of 'true Christianity' he himself was advocating. The context was patriotic, and allusion to the continental Reformation notably absent. Moreover Wilberforce anticipated that his readers would lack 'time, opportunity or inclination' to peruse even the writings of the English Reformers and appeared to regard them as supporting witnesses rather than primary sources of inspiration and legitimacy.[44] Wilberforce's original text thus contrasts strikingly with an introductory essay by Daniel Wilson, vicar of Islington and future bishop of Calcutta, added to an 1826 edition of the book. Wilson emphatically looked back to the 'glorious period of the Reformation' and hoped for 'the pure evangelical doctrines of the Reformation' to be 'more decidedly espoused' by contemporary bishops and church dignitaries.[45]

This growing appeal to the Reformation among British evangelicals was motivated in part by a sense of missionary opportunity in Ireland alongside consciousness of resurgent Ultramontanism in continental Europe after 1815. There was also an awareness of an increasing Catholic presence in Britain itself, partly due to Irish immigration, but also due to the natural growth of the small indigenous Catholic

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[42] Stoughton *et al.* 1862, p. 23.
[43] Balme 1863, p. 24.
[44] Wilberforce 1797, pp. 321-2, 379-80, 429, 438.
[45] Wilson 1826, pp. xl, lxxiii.

community. However, it was also driven by the rise of more hardline doctrinal positions within evangelicalism itself, where a more explicit Protestantism was a natural corollary of a tendency to Calvinism and premillennial eschatology. It is important to note that all these trends and influences were already operative before the beginning of the Oxford (or Tractarian) Movement in 1833 also prompted mounting concern about a Romeward tendency within the Church of England.[46]

During the 1830s and 1840s, initial merely rhetorical reference to the Reformation began to be supported by more informed historical enquiry. Celebration of the tercentenary of Coverdale's Bible was an important step in this direction. In August 1835 Thomas Hartwell Horne published an expanded version of his earlier newspaper letter as a substantial pamphlet, which he summarized as a combination of

> … a brief Historical Sketch of the Reformation, on the Continent as well as in this country, together with a concise vindication of the religion of ALL ORTHODOX PROTESTANT CHURCHES from the unfounded charge of novelty brought against it and them by Romanists, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth down to the present time; and which should also exhibit the peculiar tenets of Romanism, in contrast with the pure Scriptures of Truth.[47]

Horne's declared purpose was to provide an accessible resource to inform the commemoration, especially for clergy preparing sermons for 4 October. It was widely circulated and reprinted: a single bookseller in Islington reported that he had sold eighty copies in three weeks, and by the following year it had already reached its seventh edition.[48] It somewhat improved the baseline of historical knowledge, but also reinforced a sense of equation between the Reformation and contemporary struggles against Roman Catholicism. This perception was reinforced early the following year when Edward Bickersteth, a popular evangelical writer, published a compilation of writings by the English Reformers, along with his own substantial introduction on the present-day 'Progress of Popery', which was also published as a separate pamphlet. Bickersteth had little specific to say about the texts he was introducing, but rather saw

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[46] Wolffe 1991, pp. 17-23, 29-32.
[47] Horne, 1835, p. 4.
[48] Hambleton 1835, p. 28; British Library online catalogue.

himself as seeking 'to disclose Protestant Popery' in his own time. For Bickersteth the Reformation and the 'real Protestantism' he attributed to it was summed up in the devotional imperative 'to be looking simply to Jesus for every thing'.[49]

The subsequent decade saw a significant upsurge in evangelical historical writing about the English Reformation, now increasingly stimulated by anxiety to counteract Tractarian as well as Roman Catholic readings of the religious past. The classic sixteenth century work John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, generally known as the 'Book of Martyrs' was republished in several full and abridged editions. The *History of the Reformation* by the Swiss Protestant Jean Henri Merle D'Aubigné began to appear in English translation in 1838 and had already reached a fifth edition by 1843. It went through numerous further English editions and reprintings during the next two decades. While D'Aubigné's scholarship enhanced his readers' knowledge of the sixteenth century, his standpoint confirmed their predisposition to see their contemporary situation as comparable.[50] Then late 1840 saw the formation of 'The Parker Society for the Publication of the Works of the Fathers and Early Writers of the Reformed English Church' which aimed to ensure that by means of the systematic republication of Reformation texts 'a general knowledge of the principles and doctrines held and taught by Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, Whitgift, and their learned and venerable coadjutors will be widely diffused, and rendered accessible to every member of the Church of England.' The Society's success was striking. It had initially hoped for 2,000 subscribers, but by early 1841 it had more than double that number, with a further increase to more than 6,000 by 1842.[51] It continued to flourish until it completed its task in the mid 1850s.[52] There were also a number of theological works whose authors explicitly drew on the Reformation legacy in developing a response to Tractarianism. These included William Goode's massive *Divine Rule of Faith* (1842), Charles Smith Bird's *Defence of the Principles of the English Reformation* (1843), and Edward Arthur Litton's *The Church of Christ* (1851).[53] Then 1860 saw the commemoration of the tercentenary of the Scottish Reformation in a major convention in Edinburgh. Historical papers were complemented by accounts of

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[49] Bickersteth 1836; Birks 1851, vol. 2, p. 89.
[50] Wolffe 1991, p. 111; British Library online catalogue; Merle D'Aubigné 1838, pp. xiv-xx.
[51] Parker Society 1841, pp. 5, 7.
[52] Toon 1979, p. 44.
[53] Toon 1979, pp. 73-4, 117-9, 174-5.

the contemporary work of societies engaged in proselytism among Roman Catholics, which were still implicitly seen as a continuation of the work of the original Reformation. [54]

The specific appeal to the Reformation was but one dimension of the broader campaign against Roman Catholicism that was a prominent feature of mid-nineteenth century evangelicalism. In Ireland, the Reformation Society's proselytizing efforts in the 1820s were halted by growing sectarian polarization consequent upon the political campaign for Catholic Emancipation, but the dream of a Protestant Ireland was not abandoned.[55] It was revived in the 1850s by Alexander Dallas and his Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics, a movement that achieved a limited number of conversions but aroused considerable antagonisms.[56] In the United States explicit reference to the Reformation was less widespread, as it seemed a historically remote event on another continent. Nevertheless, there were occasions on which its perceived political as well as religious legacies were hailed as inspirational, as in the Foreign Evangelical Society's Annual Report for 1843:

> For a long time pent up, as it were, in Great Britain, it gradually broke down the barriers of ages, and enlarged and rendered permanent the liberties of the people of that country. It developed itself in a still more striking manner in the achievement of the liberties of these United States. And a few years later, it displayed its energies to an astonished world, in that series of revolutions in countries where Romanism held its undivided sway and a spiritual and political despotism had been united to exclude the doctrines of the Reformation… [57]

There was a powerful ongoing sense of confrontation with the contemporary Roman Catholic Church, which was seen both as promoting deadly spiritual error and subversive of essential American liberties. Similar mentalities were also apparent around the British empire, notably in Australia and in Canada, where in 1897 a speaker in Victoria, British Columbia, pronounced that 'if we do not take up the challenge of the Romish Church, we are not worthy to take our stand beneath the

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[54] Wylie 1860.
[55] Wolffe 1991, p. 59.
[56] Bowen 1978, pp. 208-56.
[57] Foreign Evangelical Society 1843, p. 14.

banner of St. George.'[58] Such no-compromise attitudes were also apparent in other evangelical campaigns, notably opposition to slavery, and subsequently temperance and – as we have seen – the British campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, but the anti-Catholic campaign was a particularly widespread and persistent example.

The negative nineteenth-century resonances of the concept of crusade represent a significant counterpoint to the contemporaneous romanticization of the history of the original crusades by popular writers such as Kenelm Digby.[59] During the late nineteenth century and twentieth century, however, the word 'crusade' overcame its earlier ambivalences and was widely adopted by evangelicals and their organizations, for example by the Church Army, founded by Wilson Carlile in 1882, whose newspaper was initially entitled *The Battleaxe, or Gazette of the Church Army, Crusade and Mission Band Movement*.[60] In 1906 'The Crusaders Union' was formed, as a movement to reach out to unchurched children and young people.[61] The 'Heart of Africa Mission' was renamed 'Worldwide Evangelization Crusade' [WEC] after the death of its founder C.T. Studd in 1931. To Norman Grubb, who was responsible for the change, the word 'crusade' epitomised 'that fighting, daring, self-dedicating attitude' that he attributed to Studd, and encapsulated underlying principles of 'sacrifice and faith'. [62] In 1951, in Los Angeles, Bill Bright founded a new organization to evangelize university students and gave it the name 'Campus Crusade for Christ'; during the third quarter of the century Billy Graham's international evangelistic campaigns were generally known as 'crusades'. [63] Only in the recent past, in awareness particularly of the resonances of the word for Muslims, has a consciousness of its problematic nature resurfaced, leading, for example, to Billy Graham adopting alternative titles for his later campaigns, to WEC changing its name to 'Worldwide Evangelization for Christ' and to 'Crusaders' marking their centenary in 2006 by changing theirs to 'Urban Saints'.[64]

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[58] *The Protestant Observer* 1897, pp. 146, 174; Wolffe 2008.
[59] Siberry 1999.
[60] Rowan 1905, pp. 170-1.
[61] www.urbansaints.org/pages/4110/what_happened_to_crusaders.htm, accessed 3 February 2012.
[62] Grubb 1969, pp. 75-6.
[63] www.ccci.org/about-us, accessed 3 Feb. 2012; Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 182-4.
[64] Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, p. 183;www.wec-int.org/home-mainmenu-2/goals-mainmenu-48.html; www.urbansaints.org/pages/4110/what_happened_to_crusaders.htm, accessed 3 February 2012. The WEC website avoids any mention of the older name.

In concluding this section, it seems appropriate to ask myself whether I would now, as I did in 1991, use the word 'crusade' in the title of a book concerned with nineteenth-century evangelical anti-Catholicism. Certainly I would hesitate for longer than I did then, in awareness not only of the way the negative connotations of the word have become stronger in the last twenty years, but also of the anachronisms both in any extended analogy between early Victorian Protestants and medieval crusaders, and in the use of a word those very Victorian evangelicals would have been reluctant to apply to themselves. Nevertheless, the usage of the word can still be defended, in pointing up affinities in terms of radical personal commitment to confrontation with the perceived spiritual or moral enemies of true Christianity, a commitment that as in the Crusading and Reformation eras themselves could all too quickly became distorted and tarnished in process of application. The word is also valuable, albeit in a somewhat paradoxical sense, in reflecting the perceptions of opponents: nineteenth-century Catholics, notably Daniel O'Connell, felt themselves to be the objects of an ongoing 'crusade'. There is a significant analogy to be drawn here with the response of some contemporary Muslims to perceived Western Islamophobia: as for example in a webpage headed 'The Crusades Continue' accompanied by an image of a crusader knight with the facial features of a composite of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair.[65] It may be fair to perceive the concept of a 'Protestant crusade' in the nineteenth century, like that of the original 'crusades' in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries as in part an 'invention' of posterity, but that invention was still indicative of an underlying significant historical reality.[66]

Evangelicalism as an Agent of Change

Finally what insights arise in relation to the theme of the role of religion as an agent of change?[67] The rapid expansion of evangelicalism in an era also characterised by major, and in some cases revolutionary, political and social change has naturally led historians to explore questions of cause and effect, and some have made strong claims for the socially and culturally transformative impact of the movement. Such arguments have famously included the views of Elie Halévy on the importance of evangelicalism in maintaining an orderly society in Britain in the era of the French

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[65] www.missionislam.com/knowledge/crusades.htm, accessed 26 January 2012.
[66] Cf. Tyerman 1998.
[67] The next two paragraphs summarise discussion in Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 82-5.

Revolution,[68] provocatively developed by Edward Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*. In Thompson's view, Methodism was crucially instrumental in the readiness of early industrial workers to accept the harsh discipline of the factory system and hence their own subordination, enabling Britain to avert political revolution, but also facilitating its success in achieving 'industrial revolution'.[69] Across the Atlantic, while recent scholarship has tended to play down the view that evangelicalism was a significant factor contributing to the American Revolution,[70] there is a strong support for the converse argument, that the Revolution itself opened doors for evangelicalism to take a major role in shaping of politics and society in the early republic. In particular, Nathan Hatch, through his examination of popular religious movements has concluded that 'America's non-restrictive environment permitted an unexpected and often explosive conjunction of evangelical fervor and popular sovereignty'[71] which, in the absence of equally dynamic alternatives played a central part in shaping American national identity and political culture in the northern and middle states.

Evangelicalism is also seen as an agent of major social and cultural change as a result of the work of evangelical voluntary societies and, in Britain, the efforts in parliament of men such as William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect.[72] Thus evangelicalism was seen as important not only in significant legislative changes such as the abolition of slavery, but also as bringing about substantial advances in fields such as education and the practical support of the poor, and creating many of the institutions that make up what we now think of as civil society. More broadly it has been viewed as making a central contribution to the ascendancy of the value systems characterised as 'Victorian', a view articulated in G.M. Young's *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* in 1936, and developed more recently by Boyd Hilton in *The Age of Atonement* (1988), which explores how the characteristically evangelical doctrine of substitutionary atonement came, in his view, to dominate social and economic thought in the first half of the nineteenth century.[73] Meanwhile, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued in *Family Fortunes* (1988) that during this same period

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[68] Olsen 1990.
[69] Thompson 1968, pp. 411-40.
[70] Noll 2002, p. 78.
[71] Hatch 1989, p. 9.
[72] Brown 1961; Smith 1957.
[73] Young 1936, p. 4; Hilton 1988.

evangelicalism shaped the attitudes of the English middle class, especially their sense of masculinity, femininity and domesticity. Similar arguments have been made in relation to the United States by Mary Ryan and Nancy Cott, who argue that evangelical religion 'endowed women with a vital identity and purpose'.[74] In the wider non-European world, evangelicalism, through the overseas missionary movement, has been seen as spearheading the march of imperialism, with the zeal of missionaries for the spread of the gospel both placing them in the forefront of contact with indigenous peoples, and providing an ideological rationale for their subjugation. Such views were especially widespread in both religious and academic circles at the time of the anti-colonial reaction of the 1960s.[75]

It is difficult to translate such arguments into clear-cut conclusions about the role of evangelicalism in change: manifold factors were involved and while religion was certainly one of them, there is room for considerable debate about the weight it should receive, and indeed whether religious changes were causes or consequences of other changes. Perhaps rather than asserting religion was a primary agent of change we may sometimes be on safer ground in showing how it was rather a facilitator and gatekeeper for change. It was highly sensitive to other social, cultural, economic and political pressures, sometimes resisting them, sometimes helping to carry them forward, but always indicating through its own crises and transitions that change was at work in the wider society. The initial emergence of evangelicalism from Pietism and from a variety of other Protestant religious traditions seems to be most convincingly viewed in this light. It is hard to argue convincingly that despite the transformative effect of evangelical conversion and devotion on individual lives, the quite small numbers of early evangelicals were agents of substantial change in mid-eighteenth society. It is much more credible to see evangelicalism as a prominent manifestation of widespread cultural, social and spiritual instability lying not far below the surface of the apparently well-ordered 'Age of Reason'. The immediately widespread international character of the revivals of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, extending as they did from Silesia to western Massachusetts, were indicative to contemporary supporters of the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. Such an explanation is beyond the province of the academic historian, but the

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[74] Cott 1977; Ryan 1981.
[75] Stanley 1990, pp. 11-31.

phenomenon remains hard fully to explain in more human and material terms, and prompts awareness of a world that was already much more culturally interconnected than is commonly supposed and very conscious of change, or at least of the need for change.

In the nineteenth century it is more plausible, but still not unproblematic, to argue that evangelicalism was a significant agent of change. It is easiest to trace and document such changes when they relate to core religious activities, to the building and transformation of church and chapel communities which had a substantial impact at the local level. In 1858 George Eliot in her novella 'Janet's Repentance' offered a compelling fictionalised account of the subtle and sometimes ambivalent effects of evangelicalism in changing the ethos of the town of Nuneaton ['Milby'], in the English midlands, in the 1820s:

> Religious ideas have the fate of melodies, which, once set afloat in the world are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them woefully coarse, feeble, or out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable. It may be … that at Milby, in those distant days, as in other times and places where the mental atmosphere is changing, and men are inhaling the stimulus of new ideas, folly often mistook itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upwards, called itself religion. Nevertheless, Evangelicalism had brought into palpable existence and operation in Milby society that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life.[76]

A rounded appreciation of the role of evangelicalism as an agent of change needs to be informed particularly by the work of historians who have approached the subject through studies of particular real-life localities, thus exposing something of the complex human dynamics Eliot described so eloquently. This approach has been applied with considerable success by Davidoff and Hall who grounded their wider arguments about the role of evangelicalism in shaping class and gender consciousness

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[76] Eliot 2000, pp. 227-8.

in case studies of Birmingham and Colchester.[77] A similarly richly textured understanding of the role of evangelicalism in local social relationships emerges from Mary Ryan's study of Oneida County, New York.[78] Other such studies point to the specificities of evangelical impact and agency: Methodists were having a transformative effect among slaves in the Chesapeake at the very time that they struggled to make significant headway among convicts in Australia.[79] It is seen as reinforcing class distinctions in Aberdeen at the same time as it was cutting across them in Oldham.[80] In many environments the anti-Catholic dimensions of evangelicalism were muted, but in confessionally divided cities, such as Belfast and Boston, they came to the fore in reinforcing sectarianism.[81] Such differing interpretations obviously owe something to the presuppositions of researchers as well as to the detailed evidence, but they nevertheless point to wide variety in local experience.

Similarly, detailed work has led to the development of a more nuanced understanding of the role of evangelicalism as an agent of change in the missionary and imperial context. Particular cases shows a complex and chequered record, in which missionaries certainly sometimes advanced the cause of empire, but in other contexts could be vigorous critics of insensitive political and economic expansion.[82] Likewise, empires could both advance, and undermine, the influence of evangelicalism. There is a growing understanding of missionaries, not as passive agents of imperial policy, but as crucial links between colony and metropole.[83] Individual life stories become important in understanding such processes in the earlier stages of evangelical diffusion, of men such as William Knibb (1803-45), Baptist missionary in Jamaica, whose return to England in 1832 to advocate the anti-slavery cause was a significant factor in its success; David George (1743-1810), born a slave in Virginia, moving to Nova Scotia at the American Revolution, and ending his days leading a Baptist congregation in Sierra Leone; and Samuel Marsden (1765-1838), Anglican chaplain in New South Wales and missionary to New Zealand, but with an evangelical

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[77] Davidoff and Hall 1987.
[78] Ryan 1981.
[79] Williams 1984; Grocott 1980, pp. 133-4, 138.
[80] MacLaren 1974; Smith 1998.
[81] Doyle 2009; Bendroth 2005.
[82] Stanley 1990; Porter 2004.
[83] Hall 2003.

experience rooted in the Yorkshire of his youth.[84] Then, in the later nineteenth century, as evangelicalism developed a global reach, putting down roots in locations from West Africa to the South Pacific, and from Chicago to China, its interactions with local processes of cultural, political and social change became almost as infinitely diverse as humanity itself. [85]

Wider changes are most convincingly related to particular evangelical crusades. The campaign against slavery was undoubtedly significant. While by no means all abolitionists were evangelicals, and some evangelicals, especially in the American south, continued to defend slavery as sanctioned by Scripture, it is hard to envisage that had there been no evangelicalism and no Clapham Sect in England, the slave trade would have been abolished in 1807 at the time and in the way it was. A similar point can be made about the abolition of British colonial slavery itself in 1833, and about the impact of evangelical anti-slavery opinion in bringing the United States to its ultimate confrontation with slavery in the Civil War.[86] Evangelical efforts were also highly significant in promoting the advance of educational provision for the lower classes – in both day and Sunday schools – and in ameliorating the physical as well as spiritual deprivation of nineteenth century cities – through the work of city missions from the 1830s, and eventually from the 1880s through the Salvation Army and the Church Army.

Evangelical crusades often had a double-edged quality. This was especially apparent in the divisive consequences of the anti-Catholic crusade, primarily but not only in Ireland, in an abiding separation of communities that owes quite as much to the nineteenth-century confrontation between crusading evangelicalism and ultramontane Catholicism as to the longer-term legacy of the Reformation itself. At the same time, such a judgement needs to be balanced by awareness of the extent to which the evangelical crusade was also a stimulus to the diffusion of constructive spiritual and social inspiration. Insistence on Sunday observance helped to curb the excesses of exploitative employers, but it also imposed oppressive limitations on those, notably children, who lacked the inclination for repeated church attendance and merely

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[84] Hall 2003, pp. 112-5, 161-73; Gordon 1992; Yarwood 1977.
[85] Hutchinson and Wolffe 2012, pp. 117-45 and passim.
[86] Wolffe 2005, pp. 195-212.

devotional reading.[87] Above all the crusade against slavery in which evangelicals played an important role, eventually helped to bring about the emancipation of millions of black people, but at a terrible cost, in the American Civil War, of hundreds of thousands of fatalities. If the Civil War's immediate origins lay more in upholding the Union than in abolitionism, as early as 1862, according to Harry Stout, 'What began a political war was being transformed, in effect, into a moral crusade with religious foundations for which martyrs would willingly sacrifice themselves on their nations' altars.'[88] There was, in David Rolfs' words, a campaign by the Northern churches 'to depict the war as a holy crusade against a wicked Southern confederacy'. The construction of the war as a just 'crusade', moreover implied that that Christians who died in it could be assured of salvation, a belief that for some could slide into an heretical equation of martyrdom with death in the cause of the nation rather than of faith.[89] Such ideas were to recur half a century later amidst the even greater slaughter of the First World War. [90]

Conclusion

Alongside consideration of the role of religion in general and of evangelicalism in particular as an agent of change, there needs to be acknowledgement of a 'darker side'. To that extent, the 'new atheists' who use the historical record of Christianity as grounds for attacking its continued influence in the contemporary world set up a case that deserves to be answered. A response from historians seeking to develop a more balanced narrative and evaluation lies in part in drawing attention to ways in which religion has played more constructive roles in processes of change, in part in exposing and tracing the historical myths and distortions that have fuelled religious-motivated confrontations. In particular nineteenth-century evangelicals drew on a superficial and partisan understanding of the Reformation era. It is also helpful to develop George Eliot metaphor of 'melodies': if one feels a discomfort with the way that the intense personal devotion of early Pietism and evangelicalism eventually transmuted into the crusading language of the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic', first published in 1862, the issue surely lies with the process of transmission and adaptation rather than with the original impulse. And, above all, if historians are to play a useful role in providing the

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[87] Conybeare 1999, pp.282-5.
[88] Stout 2006, pp. 82-3.
[89] Rolfs 2009, pp. 76, 82-3.
[90] For example Winnington-Ingram 1914, pp. 74-5.

requisite perspective for such contemporary debates, it is essential that they should be prepared to step outside narrow period silos, and take the long view of how concepts such as 'crusade', 'Reformation' and 'Pietism' have been understood and applied in later generations.

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