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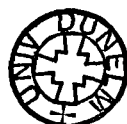
The place of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury within the Evangelical tradition, with particular reference to his understanding of the relationship of evangelistic mission to social reform.

PhD 1996

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the place of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury within the Evangelical tradition, particularly with the relationship in Shaftesbury's understanding between evangelism and socio-economic reform. Hence it includes extensive investigation of Evangelical attitudes towards economics. The thesis is intended to show that there was a significant theological foundation to the dynamic relationship in Shaftesbury's thought and action of these two aspects of his life.

Chapter 1 places the biographical material on Shaftesbury and recent scholarship on Evangelicalism in context, and also introduces the setting of the Victorian age. Chapters 2 and 3 chart the development and emergence of the Evangelical tradition and Chapter 4 seeks to understand the place within Evangelicalism occupied by Shaftesbury. Chapter 5 is an investigation of the various attitudes adopted by Evangelicals to questions of economics, including economic policy. Chapter 6 introduces a discussion of paternalism in Victorian society. Chapter 7 describes Shaftesbury's views on Political Economy and paternalism. Chapter 8 considers the demand for purity made upon Evangelicalism and its implications, especially as it related to the understanding of mission and the millennium. Chapter 9 reviews Shaftesbury involvement with a range of voluntary missionary societies, including discussion of tensions over social welfare. Chapter 10 locates all this discussion in the theological context of the millennial tradition, while chapter 11 develops this theme into an analysis of mission, the millennium and social welfare, including consideration of practical examples of socio-economic disturbance. Chapter 11 also seeks to develop an alternative Evangelical eschatological framework for the improved understanding of nineteenth-century views on evangelism and social welfare. Chapter 12 brings the previous examination together with a review of Shaftesbury's theology and practice of mission. Chapter 13 charts the contraction and decline of Evangelicalism in the later nineteenth-century, with chapter 14 drawing together overall conclusions.



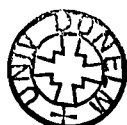
Title

The place of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury within the Evangelical tradition, with particular reference to his understanding of the relationship of evangelistic mission to social reform.

Richard Duncan Turnbull

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Durham, Department of Theology, 1996.

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24 JUL 1997

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Declaration

No part of the material contained within this thesis has previously been submitted by me for any degree either in this or any other university. Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases suitably indicated.

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Abbreviations

Throughout this thesis that following abbreviations are used for missionary societies:

BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
Bible Society	British and Foreign Bible Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CPAS	Church Pastoral Aid Society
LCM	London City Mission
LMS	London Missionary Society
London Society	London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews
RSU	Ragged School Union

1 Introduction

1.1 Shaftesbury

In its obituary notice, The Times, described Shaftesbury¹ thus:

In Lord Shaftesbury there has passed away the most eminent social reformer of the present century.²

Shaftesbury was 'one of the most honoured figures of our contemporary history,'³ 'the friend of the poor, the degraded, and the outcast.'⁴ The reviews of his life and work also recognised the profound depth of his Evangelical Christianity.⁵

Narrow as was his theology it was of a sort to inflame his ardour in the cause of his suffering fellow-men. It tinged his efforts without contracting their scope. Nothing is more astonishing in the catalogue of his exploits than their variety and comprehensiveness. He was an accumulator of philanthropic force, prepared for pouring it out in any direction and for any benevolent object. Wherever misery was most despairing, whatever diseases of human nature were most loathsome and degrading, he ever found time and zeal to explore and to try to heal. Lord Shaftesbury fills and will fill a special place in the annals of this century.⁶

Shaftesbury was born on 28 April, 1801 and died on 1 October, 1885. One year after his death Edwin Hodder published his three-volume work, The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury had been reluctant to agree to the production of a biography, but he co-operated with Hodder, with frequent interviews and discussions, as well as making available papers, including his diaries. Hodder's work is a typical Victorian biography. It was written by a sympathetic friend and sought to describe Shaftesbury's life chronologically, leaving out very little of the detail. It contains, therefore, a wealth of information. The extracts from the diaries are extensive and, in the main, accurate. There is, however, only limited critical engagement with the subject matter; it is descriptive rather than analytical, and hence, approaches hagiography, thus leaving scholarly assessment to later years.

It was 1923 before the first major attempt was made at a more interpretive biography of Shaftesbury, Lord Shaftesbury, by J.L. & Barbara Hammond. If the gap of nearly

forty years since the death of its subject might be seen as helpful in avoiding certain evaluative blind spots, it also had the effect of reinforcing other preconceptions from the biographers' perspective. The Hammonds were interested in social history, in particular the cause of the labour and factory movements. They viewed Shaftesbury through the eyes of a later age and through the concerns of a particular interest group. Hence their book contains much inaccuracy about Shaftesbury's religious beliefs, understanding and motivation, and was highly cynical towards his paternalism, and of his failure to co-operate with the wider labour crusades such as Chartism and Trade Unionism.⁷ While they were sympathetic towards his legislative work, his philanthropy was seen as distracting him from this essential social task.⁸ These weaknesses are highly significant for historical research. Shaftesbury cannot be understood apart from his Evangelical Christian beliefs. A proper appreciation, in the context of his times, also requires a full comprehension of Victorian paternalism.

The concern of the early biographers with labour history is striking. Even though Shaftesbury's personal background was not ignored, the dominant theme was labour legislation. There was no investigation into his wider philanthropic concerns, the depth of his theological views and his commitment to Evangelical missionary societies. Lord Shaftesbury and Social Industrial Progress, by J. Wesley Bready, published in 1926, followed the same line. Although much of his analysis was more incisive than the Hammonds, the development of industrial legislation dominated the volume. Shaftesbury's Evangelical views were not ignored, but the comment that 'Shaftesbury's reform policy was based on the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of a loving God,'⁹ demonstrated that Bready was, as far as religious judgement went, with the Hammonds.

A more balanced inquiry into Shaftesbury's life was provided in 1945 by Florence Higham, in a slim volume, Lord Shaftesbury. Again, however, the emphasis was on Shaftesbury's Parliamentary endeavours on behalf of labour. Consequently, although the importance of his religious views was noted, there was no deeper consideration of his motives. Higham welcomed his social legislative work, but she criticized

Shaftesbury for his failure to exercise a philosophy of state interference.¹⁰ This was not strictly accurate and again was illustrative of the weaknesses in the biographies.

In succession to the Higham volume stands the brief, but helpful biography published in 1964 by Geoffrey Best, Shaftesbury. Best improved on the approach adopted by previous biographers in two ways. First, his recognition of the extent and importance of Shaftesbury's theological opinions was shown by a more central chapter and with a more profound commentary. Second, he acknowledged Shaftesbury's devotion to voluntary missionary societies and the place this commitment played in his life. What was lacking in Best was a fuller understanding of Evangelical belief and its implications and the interconnections between this and Shaftesbury's legislative and voluntary exertions. Nevertheless, this volume represents the best short introduction to Shaftesbury.

In 1974, ten years after Best, Georgina Battiscombe published her biography, Shaftesbury. This had the advantage of being a full-scale critical biography of the subject. Hence it was more comprehensive than Best, more complete in its areas of description, and a challenging book to read. It displayed, however, serious weaknesses, far more than Best's volume. Not only was Evangelical religion poorly analysed, but the writer was clearly hostile to it.¹¹ This makes effective appraisal difficult. There was no penetrating discussion of the grounds of Shaftesbury's life-purpose. So, for example, the comment that it 'is a pleasant change to turn from Ashley the militant Protestant to Ashley the social reformer,'¹² illustrates Miss Battiscombe's lack of perception of the relationship between these two elements of his life and belief.

The most scholarly and effective biography written of Shaftesbury was that published in 1981 by Geoffrey Finlayson, Shaftesbury. This book was a masterly and excellent production of high scholarly content and discerning analysis. The author returned to the original manuscripts of the diaries and used them extensively. The coverage of Shaftesbury's life and activities was comprehensive. Finlayson was in no doubt about

the centrality of Evangelical belief in Shaftesbury's character. Nevertheless, Finlayson's investigation of Shaftesbury's Christian faith remained that of a generalist and historian and, although his extensive involvement with missionary and voluntary societies was recognized, the examination of Evangelicalism in relation to Shaftesbury's activities and interests was not fully explored.

The outcome of this review is a recognition of the weakness of much of the biographical work on Shaftesbury, and of areas of interrelationship not investigated even in the more scholarly works. This is probably due to the biographers approaching their subject primarily as historians. Hence they all had a difficulty in fully appreciating the extent and the implications of Shaftesbury's beliefs and their relationship to his life work.

1.2 Evangelicalism

The neglect of Shaftesbury's theological thought in the biographies is a reflection of the wider failure to recognise the extent and depth of Evangelical theology in the nineteenth century. Numerous house histories of the Evangelical missionary societies were produced and in 1908 G.R. Balleine's A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England was published, which was the most comprehensive and significant overall history of the movement. The house histories, of course, contained the minutiae of Evangelical activity, but little assessment. What has been lacking is extensive treatment of Evangelicalism in modern critical historical scholarship. This has been true of both general features of the subject and specific topics. Some theses were written, some monographs produced, but only since about 1976 has this trend expanded and deepened. Ian Bradley set out the broad themes of the period in The Call to Seriousness in 1976. Bradley concentrated on the development of the Evangelical tradition subsequent to the Revival of the 1730s, stressing the components of 'vital religion' which marked out Evangelicals, the mission both to this nation, and to the heathen overseas and also some analysis of the philanthropic and family features of Evangelical religion. In 1979, Michael Hennell, already active in Evangelical

historical scholarship, published Sons of the Prophets, which was a useful volume dealing with important figures in the Evangelical world, and Peter Toon brought out Evangelical Theology, 1833-1856, which treated the particular development of Evangelicalism in response to Tractarianism. This element of the field of study was further developed by John Wolffe in The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860 in 1991 and God and Greater Britain in 1994. Roger Martin published Evangelicals United in 1983 dealing with the unfolding of cross-denominational co-operation within Evangelical missionary societies in the period up to 1830.

What was still deficient was detailed scholarly insight into the issues and questions raised by the phenomenon of the Evangelical movement as a whole. This was supplied in 1989 by David Bebbington in Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. Bebbington has provided what will be the standard modern history of the Evangelical movement. The authoritative and proficient scholarship of Bebbington rather eclipsed Kenneth Hylson-Smith's Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984, which although useful, tended to rehearse older themes and lacked Bebbington's perception.

Bebbington has also co-edited a volume of essays, Evangelicalism, which makes an important contribution to comparative studies of Evangelicalism in Britain and North America and beyond.

There had been work on the social aspects of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, notably Evangelicals in Action, published in 1960 by Kathleen Heasman. This study, meticulous in its description of the activities of the Evangelical voluntary societies, did not engage, however, with questions of theological motivation. There was little else published in this area until 1986 with Donald Lewis's excellent volume dealing with the Evangelical mission to the working-class, Lighten Their Darkness. In 1988 Boyd Hilton sought to bring together Evangelical socio-political thought with his own research interests in historical economic thought in The Age of Atonement, though his success in doing so is questionable. In 1995 John Wolffe edited a helpful series of essays, Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal, which introduced a number of themes from mission to social welfare, education to the place of women.

The conclusion of the most reputable scholarship that Evangelicalism was not monolithic has not been attractive to many Evangelical ideologists. This, of course, raises the problem of the extent to which insiders can conduct critical, dispassionate investigation. The answer lies in avoiding polemic, engaging with wider scholarship, recognising diversity, and avoiding over optimism towards the subject matter.

There is an important early question of the definition of Evangelical. It is essential not to read back into history the narrow definitions offered by some modern rigorists, but to build up from the evidence, and track changes and developments, continuity and discontinuity. Thus the detailed characteristics offered by the respected modern Evangelical minister, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, may represent the views of modern Calvinism, but cannot serve as a working guide.¹³ On the other hand secular historians often simply do not understand Evangelicalism sufficiently to be able to avoid generalisations and naivety.

Bebbington has offered a four-fold working definition. He characterises Evangelicalism by biblicism, conversionism, activism and crucicentrism.¹⁴ Hence it is the supremacy of the Scriptures, the need for conversion, the commitment to desiring the conversion of others and the centrality of the cross of Christ that characterise the Evangelical. As the evidence is gathered this definition will be critically examined.

The relationship of Evangelicalism to the surrounding culture in general and to the prevailing philosophical forms of thought in particular is one that is likely to continue to exercise scholars. Bebbington has been formative in bringing to the fore this key question. To what extent were the distinctive characteristics of Evangelicalism reflections of a continuous Protestant core, or the product of various intellectual trends? Bebbington's thesis that these philosophical forces explain the development of Evangelicalism in each period is not new in its approach to ecclesiastical history, but has not been applied with such force to the emergence and growth of the Evangelical movement.

1.3 The Victorian Age

It is always difficult to describe the characteristics of any particular period.

Generalisations tend to mask the diverse strands that often go to make up seemingly monolithic descriptions. The Victorian era, if by that is meant, approximately, the whole of the nineteenth century, rather than simply the particular years of the Queen's reign, from 1837 to 1901, could be described politically, socially, and intellectually. It was, thus, the time of the Reform Acts, the repeal of the Corn Laws, and of the Forster Education Act. Victorian England also saw significant population growth, the extensive harnessing of capital resources in the process of production, a shift from the rural to the urban, and widespread poverty in both town and country. Intellectually, the nineteenth century was marked by scientific progress and discovery and the development of critical literary and historical methodology in scholarship. The assumptions and interests of both the Enlightenment and Romanticism vied with each other. It was, in short, an age of change.¹⁵ The ecclesiastical history of the period is also prominent, characterised by the Evangelical revival, the Oxford Movement, Roman Catholic immigration, ritualist controversy, and the increasing gap between institutional religion and the working classes.¹⁶

All of these various ingredients come together in this analysis and investigation of Shaftesbury. He was, after all, a child of his age, and part of the task is to unravel, if possible, those aspects of his thought which were determined by his social position and social views. Kitson Clark hints at the heart of the question:

But after 1836 the social and political distinction of the Evangelicals seems to fade with Lord Shaftesbury as a notable exception.¹⁷

Why was Shaftesbury an exception ? To what degree is Kitson Clark's statement an accurate reflection of the situation ? This opens up the debate of what constituted Evangelicalism and where Shaftesbury fitted in the movement. It also leads to the issue of the socio-economic views adopted by Evangelicals and by Shaftesbury. He stood out because of the wide range of missionary and social activity which dominated his life; his extensive commitment to social reforming legislation; his deep

Evangelical convictions and his dedication to voluntary societies. This thesis is concerned with the relationship between these different constituents of Shaftesbury's life. In what way did Shaftesbury's Evangelical opinions motivate and determine his response to both missionary endeavour and social reform, through both the legislature and the voluntary society ?

¹ The term Shaftesbury will be used for Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury from 1851 and in general description. For the period before 1851, the designation Ashley will be used.

² The Times, 2 October, 1885.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ There is no agreement over the capitalisation of Evangelical. As it represented a movement with a particular set of ideas, or the description of an individual holding to those ideas, the term is capitalised throughout this thesis.

⁶ The Times, 9 October, 1885.

⁷ J.L. & B. Hammond, Lord Shaftesbury, (1923), p186.

⁸ Ibid., pp152-153.

⁹ J. Wesley Bready, Lord Shaftesbury and Social Industrial Progress, (1926), p27.

¹⁰ F. Higham, Lord Shaftesbury, (1945), p109.

¹¹ G. Battiscombe, Shaftesbury, (1974), p100.

¹² Ibid., p107.

¹³ A collection of addresses by Dr. D.M. Lloyd-Jones from 1942-1977 was published by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1992 under the title, What is an Evangelical?.

¹⁴ D.W. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, (1989), pp2-19.

¹⁵ Classic general introductions include, L. Woodward, The Age of Reform, (1962), G.M. Young, Portrait of an Age, (1936), and G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, (1962).

¹⁶ O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church (2 vols, 1966, 1970) represents the standard introduction. There are also numerous analyses of the relationship of the church to the working classes.

¹⁷ Kitson Clark, p23.

2 The emergence of Evangelicalism

2.1 The origins of the Evangelical tradition

The emergence of the Evangelical tradition is usually associated with the Revival dating from about 1730. Thus Balleine, writing in the light of the later development of Evangelicalism into an ecclesiastical party grouping within the Church of England, referred to 'the party' as dating 'from the Great Revival of the eighteenth century,'¹ and Bebbington, to Evangelical religion as 'a popular Protestant movement that has existed in Britain since the 1730s.'² Yet, it is also recognised that its antecedents go much further back. Sir Thomas More used the description Evangelical generally of advocates of the Reformation in 1531,³ but this was not the usual nomenclature for Protestants. In fact, although the Reformation provided the strongest doctrinal foundation for the future development of the Evangelical tradition, these two historical manifestations of the Christian faith cannot be simply equated. Various threads were distilled into the ferment of the sixteenth century and, indeed, a variety of emphases also emerged from the Reformation. Doctrine and church order, in particular, led to differing interpretations of the Reformed faith. In England, the Elizabethan settlement had left an episcopal church order in place within a Reformed church, and yet, even in that setting, the Puritans continued to represent a more doctrinally Protestant strand of opinion. That there were tensions should not be surprising. The conflicts did, on occasion, lead to separation, especially with the ejection of some 2,000 Puritan ministers from the Church of England in 1662. Thus, parallel traditions came to develop both within and outside the Established Church. In partial reaction to those aspects of the faith which were stressed by the Puritans, there also emerged within the Established Church an orthodox party, emphasising the importance of the sacraments and an episcopal church order.

This variety of background determinants to the rise of Evangelicalism not only contributes to the problem of definition, but also acts as a reminder that Evangelicalism itself was not monolithic.

2.2 The distinctiveness of the Evangelical tradition

John Walsh has recognised the parallel growth of Evangelical thought among both Anglicans and Methodists.⁴ Thus, any simple identification of the Evangelical Revival with Methodism must be qualified. In his later essay, Walsh distinguished three factors which lay behind the rise of Evangelicalism: high church piety, a reaction against rationalism and the continuing Puritan tradition.⁵ These themes came together in the Evangelical Revival, but they can also be seen as representing continuing facets of the Christian faith both inside and beyond Evangelicalism.

Reformation scholarship has in recent years rehabilitated the medieval piety which had formed part of the background to the Reformation, but which, in spite of all its failings and distortions, was often caricatured by Reformed writers. Similarly, there is some danger in assuming that the period between, say, the Great Ejection in 1662, and the Evangelical Revival of the 1730s onwards, was a dark age of religion. Both Jonathan Clark⁶ and Gordon Rupp⁷ have drawn attention to the continuing influence of religion in society and of personal piety at that time. However, it would be difficult to deny a certain quietism. There were, nevertheless, those who represented the high church piety referred to by Walsh. This group included the Nonjurors who had refused the Oath of Allegiance in 1688 out of deference to the doctrine of passive obedience or non-resistance to the King as the Lord's anointed. An important exponent of this tradition was William Law, who sought to recall Christians to the need for holiness of life. Law also wrote in opposition to deism. These writings by a scholar of orthodox beliefs had a wide influence, particularly with their stress on the renewal of the devotional life. His most famous work, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, published in 1728, was widely appreciated and it had particular effect on Wesley, as shown by his involvement in the Holy Club, as well as the subsequent development of Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection. Indeed Wesley acknowledged his indebtedness.⁸

Walsh also saw the Evangelical Revival as a reaction against Protestant rationalism, as a protest against arid intellectualism and the coldness and formality of contemporary religion. As Wesley commented, religion 'is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold life-less assent, a train of ideas in the head, but also a disposition of the heart.'⁹ This analysis has been somewhat contradicted by Bebbington, who, rather against the previous trend of scholarship, has sought to ally Evangelicalism with the Enlightenment and rationalism rather than as a reaction against it.¹⁰

The third aspect of the Evangelical Revival referred to by Walsh was the continuing Puritan tradition. The continuity between Puritan and Evangelical understandings of Christianity was provided through the doctrine of sin and the depravity of man. The Puritan background also explained one way in which Evangelicalism influenced both the Established Church and Dissent. Even after the expulsions of 1662 there were still adherents of Puritanism within the Church of England. Walsh cited John Edwards and Benjamin Jenks as examples, but also insisted that Calvinism was not the normal disposition of a Church of England clergyman at this time.¹¹ Certainly within Dissent there remained a purer form of Calvinism, which continued to emphasise the double decree of predestination and a political covenant theology.

It was not a simple fusing of these Christian traditions that produced the distinctiveness of Evangelicalism. There were two other important aspects of the link: the impact of experience and the change in the doctrine of assurance.

Dry formality or intellectualism led to an increased demand for personal encounter with God. John Wesley's contacts with German pietism, especially Peter Böhler and the Moravian church, were vital for Evangelical development. Wesley had met Böhler on a number of occasions, including upon the former's return from Georgia in January 1738. Wesley recounted in his journal Böhler's description of the two inseparable fruits of true faith in Christ, namely, dominion over sin and the peace of a sense of forgiveness.¹²

Both [Böhler and Wesley] accepted St. Paul's teaching that the Christian is saved by faith, but faith to Wesley was a very complicated and complex thing, a process mainly intellectual.....To Böhler it was simple reliance on the finished work of Christ.¹³

Thus, the importance of an experiential relationship with Christ came to assume prominence in Evangelical development. However, the impact of experience on Puritanism was quite different. In this case it was the continued and continuing battle against sin, and man's total depravity before God which were at the forefront.

By bitter experience rather than by reasoning I have been convinced that if a man is to be saved, it must be by free grace in the proper and full sense of the word.¹⁴

These two elements of human experience were brought together in the doctrine of the atonement. It was only through a personal relationship by faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross that the sin and depravity of humanity could be forgiven.

Puritanism lacked the warmth which pietism offered in a personal encounter with God. The place given to depravity by the Puritan, combined with the experience of actual sin, meant that salvation could never be certain in this life. At least that was the practical consequence of Puritanism. Hence Puritanism came to be defined by introspection and self-examination. Final assurance could come only in heaven. To deal with the falling away of the apparently elect, William Perkins developed the idea of temporary faith.¹⁵ Doubt about final destiny always remained for the Puritan.

Evangelicalism thus represented a newly enhanced doctrine of assurance. The possibility of a direct personal experience of God came to be linked with a certainty of the knowledge of peace with God. Howel Harris, Charles Wesley and Jonathan Edwards were all given as examples by Bebbington.¹⁶ As for John Wesley, his description of his own conversion experience showed the link, and the influence of Böhler.

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.¹⁷

Wesley reflected here the Puritan doctrinal emphasis on justification by faith alongside the pietist concern for personal experience. The experience was individual and centred on the doctrine of a substitutionary atonement. The contrast was clearly shown as Wesley continued in his entry:

After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and he sent help from his holy place. And herein I found the chief difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace; but then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered: now, I was always conqueror.¹⁸

These different approaches of Puritan and pietist were mirrored within the emerging Evangelical movement, most acutely in the doctrinal conflicts between Arminianism, with Wesley as the main representative, and Calvinism, of which Whitefield was the most prominent example. To Wesley the Puritan commitment to predestination rather negated the idea of personal encounter since the individual apparently had no say in the process of salvation. If different strands of opinion contributed to the distinctiveness of Evangelicalism, we should not be surprised at the variety within that movement, depending on the relative weight given to the several background influences.

Evangelicalism assuredly retained a place for reason and natural theology. So did the Puritan and high church traditions. Hence it is also not surprising that Evangelicalism echoed some of the thought forms of the Enlightenment. However, it was the accent on personal experience that led to the distinctive Evangelical position, drawing together the multifarious elements of its origin.

2.3 Evangelicals and Establishment

The relationship between Evangelicalism and the Established Church was of particular importance, due to the dominating position of the Church of England. Evangelicals did not find it easy to gain livings, and relied upon appointments to Proprietary Chapels outside episcopal control, and to lectureships in parish churches. Ministers of the Established Church were prominent in both the Evangelical Revival and in the continuing theological and doctrinal development of Evangelicalism: for example, William Grimshaw, William Romaine, Charles Simeon, the Venns, John Newton, Josiah Pratt, Thomas Scott and William Goode. The relationship between the Established Church and the Evangelical movement was a difficult one. Many Evangelicals outside the Established Church rejected the very notion of establishment, and drew specific implications from their Reformed and biblical faith regarding the organisation of the church, in which episcopacy and the principle of establishment did not feature. At least in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, Evangelicals within the Church of England regarded ecclesiastical organisation as a matter on which a variety of practice could exist - in accordance with Article 24 of the Thirty Nine Articles.

The principal attraction of the idea of Establishment was that it held together the fabric of society. In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the need for order was felt by many churchmen, not just Evangelicals, but it was the danger of disorder and disharmony, in both church and society, that wedded many to the establishment principle. William Wilberforce, writing in 1797, in the wake of the revolution in France, argued that the Supreme Being had arranged 'the constitution of things, as to render the prevalence of true Religion and of pure morality conducive to the well-being of states, and the preservation of civil order.'¹⁹ Thus God ordered the union of church and society in order to preserve harmony between them.

Tension, however, would arise if the Establishment adopted an anti-Evangelical stance. There was also the issue of how a connection with a nominally Christian state could be justified?

It was such questions as these that brought their belief in the general necessity of an established church into conflict with their specifically Evangelical ideas about established churches, which centred on their attachment to the idea of a righteous nation and a national faith, their doctrine of an invisible church, and their natural sympathy towards Evangelical brethren outside the establishment.²⁰

Hence the strain facing Evangelicals in the Established Church. The reasons in favour of the establishment were mainly drawn from expediency. The purpose of establishment was to encourage godliness, right religion, and the fear of God and the restriction of ungodliness.²¹ There was thus a great attraction of the establishment to Evangelicals as they sought to resist the secularisation of the Sabbath, and other questions of public morality.

Evangelical ecclesiology gave prominence to the principle of the invisible church, in which membership was secured through faith alone, over against any human organisation of the visible church. But the Evangelical relationship to Dissent was also ambiguous. On the whole, the value of co-operation was extolled, particularly in interdenominational bodies such as the Bible Society, or if the gospel was not preached from the pulpit of the parish church.²² However, Simeon also regarded Dissent as evil in principle²³ and he urged respect for parish boundaries, and, as Bishop Handley Moule and Charles Smyth have highlighted, stressed loyalty to the order and organisation of the English church.²⁴

Part of the explanation for this friction was the confusion over establishment and episcopacy as well as both continuity and discontinuity with the Puritan tradition. Simeon, for example, was attached not to the principle of episcopacy, but to that of establishment. Thus, when in Scotland, Simeon preached happily in the Presbyterian church, the established church in Scotland.²⁵ The fondness of Evangelicals within the bounds of the Established Church for the principle of establishment was partly a

consequence of the continuation of the Puritan belief that the role of the state was to bring about the Christianisation of society. Puritanism had also sought to apply the principles of the Bible in full rigour to the practice of ministry and the organisation of the church, which were not seen as matters indifferent. Hence dissenting Evangelicals tended to reject episcopacy as a form of church government and also to reject the establishment principle. Simeon, as an Evangelical within the episcopal Established Church, was able to draw the distinction between them.

Thus can be seen the unique position of Evangelicals within the Established Church. Their existence was no more a paradox than the presence of Established Church and dissenting Evangelicals side by side on the committee of the Bible Society. It was part of the mosaic which went to make up Evangelicalism. Nevertheless, the principle of establishment also helped shape the views of this stream of Evangelicalism on the relationships between Christianity and social harmony.

2.4 The emergence of Evangelical thought

As the Evangelical tradition grew out from the Evangelical Revival, and the eighteenth century came to a close, more attention came to be paid to the content of Evangelical belief, both as an expression of common spiritual heritage and also to mark out the Evangelical faith from other forms of Christianity.

In his book, A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity ("A Practical View"), published in 1797, William Wilberforce emphasised the key issues for the Christian and something of the content of Evangelical belief. Wilberforce had undergone spiritual upheaval in the ten years before publication, from which he had emerged into Evangelical Christianity with the help of John Newton. Thus, in A Practical View, Wilberforce complained that many professed Christians saw vice as 'accidental and temporal' rather than 'constitutional and habitual,'²⁶ that the trust in Christ of the normal Christian 'cannot be expected to

be very vigorous,²⁷ and that 'kindness and sweetness of temper; sympathizing, benevolent and generous affections' and 'a life of general activity and usefulness' made up for 'the defect of what in strict propriety of speech is termed religion.'²⁸

Wilberforce protested eloquently against the compartmentalisation of religion. To him, the Christian faith had to be an all-consuming passion, dictating the whole of life and not restricted to either good works or Sunday duty.

How dexterously do they avail themselves of any plausible plea for introducing some week-day employment into the Sunday, whilst they have not the same propensity to introduce any of the Sunday's peculiar employment into the rest of the week.²⁹

Thus Wilberforce objected that not only was the Christianity of professed Christians understood in very different terms from that of real Christians, but that they also neglected the particular doctrines of Christianity, which Wilberforce spelt out as the corruption of human nature, the atonement of the Saviour and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. The appeal of the Evangelical was to "vital" religion, to the precise formulations of doctrine rather than vague generalities, to a religion that influenced the everyday life of the believer and was not just a matter of social duty.

It is like the principle of vitality, which animating every part, lives throughout the whole of the human body, and communicates its kindly influence to the smallest and remotest fibres of the frame.³⁰

By 1837 some fifteen editions of the book had appeared, amounting in total to some 75,000 copies. It remains a key source for understanding the content of Evangelical theology.

The association of Evangelicals with Clapham derived from 1792 when Henry Thornton, the first treasurer of the Bible Society, suggested to Wilberforce that they share a residence in Clapham, Battersea Rise House. Other Evangelical leaders moved onto the estate including James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay and Charles Grant. John Venn was secured as Rector. This group came to form the nucleus of the 'Saints', the name that came to be given to these Evangelical Members of Parliament and prominent merchants.

In 1783 a group of London Evangelical clergy founded the Eclectic Society for conducting religious discussion and the investigation of theological truth. For many of the meetings between 1798-1814 the notes made by one of the participants, the Rev. Josiah Pratt, later secretary of the CMS, were published in 1858 by John Henry Pratt.³¹ The members of the Society at the commencement of the notes were a number of well-known Evangelical clergymen: the Rev. John Newton, the Rev. Henry Foster, the Rev. George Pattick, the Rev. Thomas Scott, the Rev. Richard Cecil, the Rev. William Abdy, the Rev. John Venn, the Rev. Basil Woodd, the Rev. John Davies, the Rev. Josiah Pratt, two dissenting ministers, the Rev. John Clayton and the Rev. J. Goode, and a layman, John Bacon. Other members joined over time, and there were also country members who attended meetings when in London, and these included the Rev. Charles Simeon. The notes of these meetings are another important depository for discerning the substance of Evangelical thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

A break-down of the contents page of the notes shows where the Society placed the weight of its concerns. There were some 274 discussions recorded of which five topics stand out; some sixty-four debates around what can perhaps best be described as apologetics, including matters such as justification, the sovereignty of God, redemption and the Holy Spirit; forty-six deliberations on the minister, his ministry and preaching; forty-four on the nature of Scripture and its interpretation; thirty-two on the Christian life and thirty on Providence. A notable absence was any extensive treatment of the church and sacraments, although baptism and baptismal regeneration were dealt with on occasion. There was no discussion of the Lord's Supper. An interest in these issues, so prominent in sixteenth-century Protestantism, represented later developments in Evangelical doctrine, in response to the rise of Tractarianism.

A third area where the researcher can look in an investigation of early Evangelical thought is the writings of Charles Simeon, who was born in Reading on 24 September, 1759. In time Simeon proceeded to Eton and then to Cambridge. It was the insistence

of the Provost that he must attend mid-term Holy Communion in 1779 that led him to examine his own unworthiness. The discovery that he was able to lay his own sins upon Jesus gave him hope, which increased until:

...on the Sunday morning (Easter-day, April 4) I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, 'Jesus Christ is risen today! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's table in our chapel I had the sweetest access to God through my blessed Saviour.³²

In 1782, Simeon, in the same year as his ordination, was appointed to the living of Holy Trinity, Cambridge. Despite much opposition to his Evangelical ministry, Simeon persevered and gradually won acceptance. His ministry was conducted especially through the sermon, but also he held conversation classes, covering bible study and sermon preparation, for those who were preparing for ministry. Simeon's Horae Homileticae, sketches of sermons, was a sort of textbook for the Evangelical ministry.³³

The themes of Evangelical thought and intellectual theological engagement were beginning to emerge; the Bible, justification by faith alone, human depravity, God and the ministry. But there were also other issues coming to importance, including, for example, the nature of providence, which were to prove important in later developments.

2.4.1 Evangelicals and the Bible

The Bible formed the bedrock of the Evangelical faith. Simeon looked to the Bible first, the Prayer Book next and all other books in subordination to both.³⁴ The Eclectic Society debated the nature of biblical inspiration. John Venn drew the distinction between plenary inspiration and superintendence. The former suggested the inspiration of the actual words used, even if the author did not know what they meant. The latter meant that when writing a plain fact of history the writer used his own style.³⁵ There was, however, a difference of opinion in the understanding of inspiration, with two predominant views. One was the idea of negative inspiration. Thus Richard Cecil

referred to a care over the writer 'to prevent his uttering anything which is not truth'³⁶ and John Davies to the prevention of the writer 'delivering anything inconsistent with truth.'³⁷ The alternative view placed more emphasis on the plenary inspiration of the words of Scripture. Thus Henry Foster maintained that 'the writers were influenced not only as to *matter*, but as to *words*,³⁸ and John Newton maintained that when St. Paul spoke by permission, this implied 'that on all other occasions it is by *direction*.'³⁹

Simeon's essential view was that the Bible was the Word of God, and the true approach of the Bible Christian was to receive its words with simple submission,⁴⁰ not to seek to impose any system on Scripture - be it Calvinist or Arminian⁴¹ and to 'bring out of scripture what is there, and not to thrust in what I think might be there.'⁴²

Simeon was anxious to develop an Evangelicalism which was not wholly committed to either of the doctrinal systems of Calvinism or Arminianism. His approach was derived from his understanding of being under the authority of the Word. His view of the inspiration of Scripture was essentially that of negative inspiration.⁴³ No error in doctrine was to be countenanced, but inexactness might be allowed in philosophical or scientific matters.⁴⁴ He stressed that Scripture often used stronger language than would allow for a literal interpretation.⁴⁵ Simeon believed that the Bible judged its readers, and not vice versa, and it was this that led him to the principle of deference to the Word of God,⁴⁶ a maxim which united Evangelicals regardless of their particular understanding of the doctrine of inspiration.

At the Eclectic Society, discussion of the nature of inspiration then moved on to considerations of interpretation, including numerous deliberations on specific passages. William Goode stated that many Old Testament illustrations were figurative and intended to be typical of the person and work of Christ.⁴⁷ The Rev. H.G. Watkins saw the use of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament as evidence of express authorisation for a typical interpretation.⁴⁸ Extremes of interpretation however, were to be avoided. This view was backed up by the Rev. R. Lloyd, who emphasised the need for common sense in interpretation⁴⁹ and John Venn, who maintained the truth that 'all along from the beginning, there is a continual reference to Jesus' but also

demanded that we avoid 'falling into the absurdity and folly of forcing applications.'⁵⁰ Josiah Pratt emphasised that the extravagant analogies of the Fathers were unsafe,⁵¹ and hesitated also about personal types. The Rev. J. Goode advocated caution. For example, he did not think that the parable of the good Samaritan could be extended further than the moral case and be applied to Christ, since we are not called to go and do likewise, as Christ was sent to redeem sinners.⁵² Simeon was visiting the Eclectic Society for this discussion and made a significant contribution.

We must not take the *words*, but the *thing*, as typical. The ark, the altar are not typical of Christ. Thus not the ark, but the salvation of Noah and his family, is typical of Christ and his salvation: not the altar, but the offerings on the altar are typical of Christ.⁵³

In short, according to Simeon, 'typical things are graphic exhibitions of divine truth.'⁵⁴ This illustrated the dynamism of early Evangelical biblical interpretation, which was much broader and more open than is often assumed. Indeed Simeon believed that conflicting truths could be held together in tension;⁵⁵ when faced with two opposing principles, truth did not lie in simply taking the mean position.⁵⁶ This allowed Simeon to accept both the Calvinist emphasis on predestination and the Arminian stress on free will - in so far as he found them in Scripture - rather than seeking any reconciliation. Simeon recognised the need for interpretation. His overall method was to seek the just meaning, natural bearing and legitimate use.⁵⁷ Passages thus had to be treated in their whole setting and circumstances. He resisted attaching too much importance to, or building systems on, single words taken out of context.⁵⁸

However, pressing an analogical or typical interpretation too far could lead to challenging basic doctrine. Thus in an Eclectic discussion on the Mosaic history,⁵⁹ Josiah Pratt stated that the historical sense was more probable than the allegorical, and that it was incredible that Moses would introduce his history with a fiction calculated to puzzle.⁶⁰ John Newton pointed out that Balaam's ass speaking and the story of Jonah's whale were confirmed by Christ and Peter respectively and were allowed by God to try our faith,⁶¹ and John Venn said it was a miraculous age, not to be judged by current standards.⁶² Similarly, if the literal sense of the Fall were to be taken away,

it would be reduced to every man's sense.⁶³ Thomas Scott pointed out that some had allegorized even the crucifixion and the resurrection.⁶⁴

A good example from the New Testament of the early Evangelical methodology of biblical interpretation appeared in an Eclectic debate on Romans chapter 7.⁶⁵ Let no-one accuse these early Evangelicals of failing to engage with their Bibles or of simplistic approaches to complex questions. One only has to consult a modern commentary on the Epistle to the Romans to see that this very issue continues at the forefront of New Testament scholarship.⁶⁶ In the Eclectic Society's airing of the subject, Henry Foster correctly isolated the difficulty as the meaning of the words "carnal, sold under sin".⁶⁷ Foster appealed to another part of Scripture to justify use of the word carnal as relating to the regenerate, in the letter to the Corinthians "are ye not carnal", and to his own experience of the Christian life. This brought out the important place in Evangelical scriptural interpretation of appealing to elsewhere in Scripture. This was, of course, consistent with the understanding of Scripture as inspired. Richard Cecil also followed this axiom when he cited the evidence of Galatians where the flesh and the spirit were also contrasted in a specific reference to Christians.⁶⁸ The interpretation of Romans 7 as applying to the regenerate was supported by all those at the meeting. A visitor, the Rev. Mr. Simons, emphasised that Romans 8:23 which referred to the future redemption of our bodies proved that chapter 7 could be taken as pertaining to the regenerate.⁶⁹ The Rev. W. Fry stated that none but the regenerate could acknowledge the law as righteous and holy as it was in this passage.⁷⁰

The Bible was crucial to Evangelical theology. However, in the early foundational period of Evangelicalism, there was a dynamic engagement with the Scriptures, which allowed for debate over the nature of inspiration and issues of interpretation. The diagnostic principles which stood out were that Scripture was to interpret Scripture, context was crucial, extreme meanings avoided and that Christ was the centre of the Scriptures, although applications should not be forced.

2.4.2 The doctrine of man

Wilberforce entitled the second chapter of A Practical View 'Inadequate Conceptions of the Corruptions of Human Nature.' The perversion of human nature formed an important foundation for Evangelical doctrine; much else depended on this idea. The doctrines of sin and regeneration were contingent upon the depravity of human nature, which in turn was conditional upon the Fall. Thus the Eclectic Society discussed sin in relation to justification.⁷¹ Wilberforce's basic accusation against the nominal Christian was the tendency to 'overlook or deny, or at least greatly extenuate the corruption and weakness'⁷² of human disposition. Man was often seen as naturally pure and virtuous, but sometimes overpowered by temptation, thus there was among some an excessive concern with petty transgressions or occasional failings. Wilberforce rightly pointed out that this was a failure to trace the effects of human degradation to their true origin.⁷³

..man is an apostate creature, fallen from his high original, degraded in his nature, and depraved in his faculties; indisposed to good, and disposed to evil; prone to vice, it is natural and easy to him; disinclined to virtue, it is difficult and laborious; that he is tainted with sin, not slightly and superficially, but radically and to the very core.⁷⁴

Augustine also discerned such an emphasis in the Scriptures. It was nevertheless a decisive summary of the Evangelical understanding of man. Humanity was once in a state of perfection, but had fallen due to rebellion against God. Man was thus tainted with sin as part of his very being, orientated towards evil by nature; this was not a case of occasional lapses.

Wilberforce certainly recognised an inherent state of goodness in man's natural faculties. He referred to man's powers of invention and reason, a mind capable of reviewing the past in order to comprehend for the present and anticipate the future.⁷⁵ He also mentioned love and sympathy, joy, sorrow, and patience as well as the power of conscience.⁷⁶ The problem was that when applied in practice, the reason was clouded, the affections perverted and anger and hatred would come to the fore.

How do anger, and envy, and hatred, and revenge, spring up in his wretched bosom! How is he a slave to the meanest of his appetites! What fatal propensities does he discover to evil! What inaptitude to good!⁷⁷

The transmission of sin was an important question for other Evangelical doctrines, especially the atonement. The Eclectic Society was quite clear that the sin of Adam was imputed to his descendants,⁷⁸ although Basil Woodd pointed out that imputation did not imply that Adam's posterity were considered to have personally committed his sin.⁷⁹ The point here was not any philosophical understanding of the mechanics of transmission, but simply, as Calvin had stated more than 250 years earlier;

...it had been so ordained by God that the first man should at one and the same time have and lose, both for himself and his descendants, the gifts that God had bestowed upon him....Hence, rotten branches came forth from a rotten root, which transmitted their rottenness to the other twigs sprouting from them.⁸⁰

Evidence as to man's state of natural depravity was also called upon by both Wilberforce⁸¹ and by the Eclectic Society with reference to children.⁸² Thomas Scott stated that in children self-will was present, which required correction and discipline.⁸³ Josiah Pratt referred to the presence of greed and self-will as the parents of thieving, revenge and cruelty. Both love and authority were needed.⁸⁴ John Clayton remarked that envy and jealousy were discernible early on; education was the key.⁸⁵ But on a practical level perhaps the most apposite comment must be reserved for the following observation of the Rev. George Patrick:

I contended once a whole night with a child when seven months old. And it has left a permanent effect to this day.⁸⁶

To which a parent can only add a hearty cheer, even if the suggestion that this was proof of innate wickedness might be rejected.

Wilberforce also claimed as evidence of human debasement that professed Christians, who lived with all the benefits of the atonement, should continually forget God's authority and be ungrateful for his love for them and his actions on their behalf. The heart was turned away from God. This disposition affected all without exception and

could only be accounted for by some 'original taint, some radical principle of corruption.'⁸⁷

Wilberforce emphasised the importance of man's natural depravity; failure to recognise the problem would lead to a neglect to seek the proper remedy in the atonement. So the Evangelical view achieved its self-consistency. Atonement depended on depravity.

Wilberforce also made the point that to those who did know of man's depravity, the coming judgement and the unspeakable happiness or misery to follow should be an incentive to faith: 'it is indeed an awful and an affecting spectacle, to see men thus busying themselves in these vain speculations of an arrogant curiosity, and trifling with their dearest, their everlasting interests.'⁸⁸

2.4.3 The doctrine of atonement

The doctrine of the atonement lay at the heart of Evangelical belief and spirituality. The scriptural content of this dogma was largely derived from St. Paul's letter to the Romans, an epistle that was instrumental in the conversion of St. Augustine,⁸⁹ Martin Luther⁹⁰ and John Wesley.⁹¹ Indeed according to Wesley, there was nothing of greater consequence in Christianity than the atonement.⁹² An attachment to the doctrine of the atonement became a key distinguishing feature of Evangelicalism in contrast to other systems, most especially the later emphasis on the Incarnation. The personal and specific nature of the atonement and its consequences marked out the Evangelical from the general and wide-ranging nature of Incarnational theology. For the Evangelical, Christ was born in order to die.⁹³

If the basic assertion was that Christ died for our sins, the questions raised were of the extent and nature of the atoning death. For whom did Christ die, everybody or only the elect? In what manner did Christ's death atone for sin - as representative or as substitute? Was the bearing of our sins by Christ best understood in a penal manner or in a less mechanistic way? The extreme Calvinist position effectively limited the

power of the atonement to the elect. Calvin maintained that it was plain that 'salvation is freely offered to some, while others are barred from access to it,'⁹⁴ and that this could only be explained by a doctrine of election and predestination.⁹⁵ The same weight was given to the doctrine by George Whitefield. The Wesleys on the other hand wanted all men to be saved. There was undoubtedly much misunderstanding, and it is certainly not the case that the Wesleys believed that everyone would in fact gain salvation. The Evangelicals certainly believed in the sufficiency of the atonement to save the whole world, and so in that sense redemption was general; it was also an offer made to the whole world, but it was not so general as to be available to all.⁹⁶ Whereas the covenant of redemption was made with all mankind, the covenant of grace was available only to those who would be saved. Particular redemption was the effectual application of general redemption to the elect. William Goode stated that 'Christ did not give himself for the world in the sense which he did for the elect.'⁹⁷ There remained a mystery to salvation. John Venn made the cogent comment that what needed defining was faith.

If to believe the truth of the Gospel is enough, then all may be saved. If it be to believe savingly, then the range is more limited.⁹⁸

Thus Evangelicalism sought to avoid overestimation of both free will and determinism. However, although it is doubtful whether the Wesleys would have agreed, the particular problem with Arminianism was seen as follows:

It makes salvation depend on the will of a creature, whom the Scriptures represent as totally depraved.⁹⁹

Hence Evangelicals came to adopt a position of moderate Calvinism, or as the Rev. Daniel Wilson, Vicar of the Evangelical parish of Islington, and later Bishop of Calcutta, described it, 'practical Calvinism.'¹⁰⁰ What was meant was a retention of the Calvinist stress on sin and depravity and hence on the work of Christ on the cross, but rather than a strict application of the benefits of the atonement only to the elect, an emphasis on the sufficiency of the cross for all. The idea of moderate Calvinism also

included the universal invitation to faith, while recognising both that not all would be saved and also that there was a mystery to God's purposes in election.

The importance of this practical Calvinism for Evangelicalism should not be overlooked. The whole point of vital religion was hope in 'Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree,'¹⁰¹ rather than the nominalist hope in 'a vague general persuasion of the unqualified mercy of the Supreme Being.'¹⁰²

In what sense, however, did Jesus die for our sins? Evangelicals were united in affirming that Jesus died for our sins as a substitute. Thus John Clayton said at the Eclectic Society that the sin of a believer was imputed to Christ as a substitute or surety¹⁰³ and Henry Foster, on another occasion, that the substitution of Christ for sinners was the greatest possible act of love to his children.¹⁰⁴ Thus Christ took our sins and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us, on the basis of faith - hence justification by faith.

It is important to assess why the Evangelicals came to emphasise the substitutionary atonement. The reason was closely connected with the doctrine of assurance. The considerable impact of the doctrine of assurance on the emergence of Evangelical doctrine was the very personal and individual nature of the certainty of the forgiveness of sins. So also it was this specific nature of the atonement which came to mark out Evangelicals.

But substitution was only half the story. Evangelicalism also provided germane theological reasoning as to why the atonement was effective. It was because as our substitute Jesus bore the penalty of death which was rightly due to us that the atonement was the ground of hope. Hence the substitution was penal. This was amply summarised by Josiah Pratt at the Eclectic Society:

Then we must represent CHRIST to them as a SURETY, as a SUBSTITUTE, and His ability and willingness to discharge their debt *for* them; that He *atones* for their crimes; and that He works out *another righteousness* for them. This is a most essential branch of His mediatorial excellence. It is the ground of all our hopes. What he *did* and *suffered*, He did and suffered in *our stead*.¹⁰⁵

The substitution of Christ for the sinner satisfied the demands of divine justice. Again it was the particulars which were important. Wilberforce complained bitterly of those who thought that the demands of divine justice had been lessened on those who adhered to the new dispensation.¹⁰⁶ Thus also Simeon:

..as all the iniquities of all the children of Israel were transferred to the scape-goat under the law, that he might bear them away into a land of oblivion, so were all the sins of the whole human race transferred to Christ, that, having borne the curse due to them, he might take them all away from us for ever and that by the death of Jesus in our stead, our guilt is cancelled, and justice itself is satisfied on our behalf.¹⁰⁷

The self-consistency of Evangelical belief depended upon an effective dealing with the wrath of God discernible in the Scriptures. This emphasis also illustrates a problem in making too close an alignment between the Enlightenment and Evangelicalism. Although Enlightenment thought was complex, most of its thinkers would have recoiled somewhat at such a pivotal role for divine wrath. At the Eclectic Society, Thomas Scott noted that the decisive evidence of a state of salvation was not only having a proper view of our guilt and depravity leading men to submit to God's righteousness, but also concurrence in the divine plan of salvation.¹⁰⁸

2.4.4 The doctrine of God

As with all orthodox Christians, the Evangelical understanding of the doctrine of God took as its starting point the doctrine of the Trinity. Perhaps the best overall summary was that provided by Simeon:

...throughout the whole Scriptures that though there is but one God, there is in the Godhead, a distinction of Persons, who are severally revealed to us as possessing all the attributes of Deity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are represented as concurring in the great work of Redemption; the Father sending His Son into the world; the Son laying down His life for us; and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, to apply that redemption to our souls...¹⁰⁹

Within the proper order of the Godhead each person of the Trinity had a specific function - those of Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.¹¹⁰ God, of course, was

sovereign, and His sovereignty consisted in 'his not disclosing to man the particular reasons of his conduct.'¹¹¹ Thus God did retain something of mystery, but only as to the grounds of his actions, not in terms of access, or the possibility of a relationship with Him. God's sovereignty to the Evangelical was expressed in terms of the inexplicable nature of election and final destination, his providential actions and, in particular, in the certainty of the conversion of the Jews before the end of time.

This idea of order and harmony was of significance for the Evangelical understanding of God and his universe and of his action in the world. To the Evangelical the God of order could only create a systematic cosmos. Hence there was an Evangelical natural theology which saw the harmony of God in the regularity and measure of the created world. On 11 November, 1811, the Eclectic Society's topic for inquiry was the significance of the appearance of Halley's Comet. Josiah Pratt commented:

It may rouse us to the recollection that the government of God is proceeding on determined laws, how much soever may be hid from our observation.¹¹²

The comet illustrated God's unlimited power and humbled men in their ignorance.¹¹³ Daniel Wilson emphasised the concept of order when he stated that 'heavenly bodies are employed, particularly in Scripture, to demonstrate the stability of the covenant God makes with his people.'¹¹⁴ All this served to emphasise the littleness of man and God's condescension in the plan of redemption.¹¹⁵

Natural theology and revealed theology came together in the Evangelical scheme. The order and majesty of God were revealed in the natural harmony of creation and the laws of the universe, but this was not sufficient for salvation, which was available only through faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice. The changed heart could, of course, glory in the balanced symmetry of the universe in a new way. The debate at the Eclectic Society moved on to the discussion of providence, the nature of God's action in the world. Josiah Pratt defined general providence as 'the government of the world by that influence of second causes which God has connected with them.'¹¹⁶ God worked through a system of order and law of cause and effect. Pratt then defined

special providence as 'an effect produced by the appointment of God.'¹¹⁷ In other words the difference was between God acting through secondary causes or directly through primary causes. Pratt gave as examples of special providence only those effects which were either contrary to natural causes, above natural causes or by some extraordinary combination of natural causes.¹¹⁸ He also made the point that in many cases special providence was not to be distinguished from general and that what often appeared to be particular was often 'the common course of general providence.'¹¹⁹ Pratt displayed the typical reserve of the early Evangelicals in discerning acts of special providence. Since the laws of the universe reflected God's ordering, then it was generally through those laws that God worked. Pratt's advice was caution, suspicion, rejection if contrary to the Word, and acceptance only when the tendency was to sanctify. He also stressed that as much gratitude was owed for the operation of the usual course of things as for the turning aside of that course, and that special providences were too often made to serve a particular wish, thus 'Protestants were too ready to mark the judgements of God on Popish persecutors.'¹²⁰ John Davies warned against too hasty a conclusion from events,¹²¹ Thomas Scott emphasised that waiting was the key,¹²² and John Newton that there was no such thing as an accident.¹²³ The influence of Calvinist determinism could easily be seen.

However, when the Eclectics discussed fast days the idea of special providence was given greater prominence. Thus in 1803, John Clayton saw Bonaparte as God's instrument;¹²⁴ in 1807, the Rev. S. Crowther argued that God's hand should be seen more particularly;¹²⁵ in 1808, the Rev. H. Budd saw God's wrath as descending upon the nation due to sins sanctioned by statute, oppression in the colonies, profanation of the Sabbath and the existence of gin shops and lotteries;¹²⁶ in 1811, Clayton stated that 'God has a controversy with this nation is too evident to be doubted;'¹²⁷ and in 1812, an unnamed speaker maintained that 'it is evident that God's judgements are abroad in the earth.'¹²⁸ There was something of a tension between theory and practical application in early Evangelical thought. The abstract hypothesis tended to affirm God

as acting through secondary causes whereas the practical applications were inclined to see God as acting directly.

2.4.5 Ministry and Preaching

Evangelicals brought a renewed concern for the minister's duties and responsibilities. Basil Woodd claimed that the neglect and decay of pastoral duty was one of the crying sins of the time.¹²⁹ Woodd called attention to the Puritan tradition, especially to Richard Baxter's Reformed Pastor. Baxter gave two days a week to visiting in his parish.¹³⁰ Of course the end purpose in this was an encounter with an individual, enquiring into and learning of their spiritual state and bringing to the individual the challenge presented by Christ. Baxter himself stated that 'I have found by experience, that some ignorant persons, who have been so long unprofitable hearers, have got more knowledge and remorse in half an hour's close discourse, than they did from ten years' public preaching.'¹³¹ Similarly, ministers should intercede for each other, and avoid divisions on minor points, being united in the greater work of saving souls.¹³² This rekindled emphasis on ministerial duty was in part a reaction to the corruptions of the ecclesiastical system; non-residence, plurality, and simony.

Evangelical ministry was characterised by the ministry of the Word, centred on the cross, devotion to the *Book of Common Prayer*, revival of sacramental life, class instruction, administration of poor relief, distribution of tracts and the gathering together of like-minded clergy.¹³³ Simeon believed that there was plenty of work to do within the established parish boundaries of the Church of England, even if disregard for such boundaries had been a necessary evil in the days of the Evangelical Revival. Such respect was essential, however, if Evangelicals were to remain within the Established Church.¹³⁴

Preaching was one of the great gifts recovered in the Evangelical Revival and became a significant aspect of Evangelical ministry. John Clayton stressed that in all preaching equal weight should be given to doctrinal preaching, experiential preaching and practical preaching,¹³⁵ which addressed mind, heart and life respectively.¹³⁶ The

importance of doctrine was clearly stated; Foster indicated that the main problem was often that of not stating doctrine,¹³⁷ Newton described doctrine as the trunk,¹³⁸ and Scott said that doctrine must be scripturally stated and not reliant on experience.¹³⁹ It is, however, unfair to charge these early Evangelicals with preaching only to the mind; all three elements were needed, and their point was that they were recovering from the neglect of doctrine rather than overemphasising it.

2.4.6 The Christian life

Evangelicalism, reflecting its characteristic moderate Calvinism, rejected Wesley's notion of 'entire sanctification',¹⁴⁰ that is, of the possibility of the perfect state within the regenerated Christian. The Rev. W. Fry emphasised to the Eclectic Society that the Christian idea of perfection was not a sinless state, but the maturity of Christian graces.¹⁴¹ He spelt this out as a maturity of understanding of the things of God, a purity of motive, a more complete subjection of sin, holy disposition, humility and confidence.¹⁴² Thus the work was one of grace and gradual. A visitor to the Eclectic Society, the Rev. T. Robinson, stated that regeneration was a gradual process towards absolute perfection.¹⁴³ Thus, also, the spiritual mind had to grow and be fed, through exercise of the senses towards God and through the word.¹⁴⁴

This difference from the Wesleyans was of some importance. The mainstream of Evangelicalism continued to draw attention to the gradual progress towards perfection that could ultimately only be reached in the next world. The Wesleyan emphasis was more discontinuous, allowing for specific infusions of the Spirit such that, as Richard Cecil observed, 'Mr. Wesley's people talk fanatically of sealed times, hours, sermons, etc.'¹⁴⁵ This was undoubtedly due to the Wesleyan stress on a personal relationship with Christ and on experience. If the Christian was in a saving relationship with Christ, perfection in the Christian life must be possible, even if not inevitable.¹⁴⁶ But this view remained outside of the mainstream Evangelical tradition.

On more practical issues, the Sabbath was to be respected, being provided for both moral and spiritual benefit,¹⁴⁷ the family formed the centre of the Evangelical's

concern, to which he was to be the priest,¹⁴⁸ fasting was commended on occasion.¹⁴⁹ Scripture was to be read daily,¹⁵⁰ and, again, the family instructed.¹⁵¹ All of this was for the upbuilding of the Christian's life, to strengthen him and bring him into a closer walk with God.

2.4.7 Church and Sacraments

In the concerns of the Eclectic Society doctrinal truth took precedence over the nature of the church, a principle also accepted by Simeon.¹⁵² Hence, questions of ecclesiology and sacramental theology were not prominent in the discussions.

To consider briefly the issue of baptismal regeneration. Basil Woodd saw baptism only in terms of admission to the church,¹⁵³ Henry Foster associated it with circumcision and 'as to the actual communication of grace in baptism in all cases, experience shews there is nothing in it.'¹⁵⁴ The foundations were clearly being laid for the later Gorham case. The efficacy of baptism was different for believers and for their children. For the former it was the usual way of commencing the spiritual life, and presupposed faith; for the latter the emphasis was on entry into the covenant relationship with God.¹⁵⁵ The Rev. W. Fry was clear that 'heathens' children are not to be baptised, as children, till the parents are converted.'¹⁵⁶

The Evangelical understanding of a sacrament was of an outward sign, in the case of baptism, of the covenant of grace - since it is quite clear that grace as such is not communicated in baptism - and, presumably, in the Lord's Supper, of the death of Christ. There was certainly no concept of the sacraments as vehicles of grace, apart from explicit faith.

2.4.8 The missions to the heathen

Although it is a mistake to view the beginning of the nineteenth century as the origin of the modern missionary movement, it was, nevertheless, an important turning point.¹⁵⁷ What was different was the large-scale entry of English-speaking

Protestantism, as represented mainly by Evangelicalism, into the responsibility and active pursuit of the missionary enterprise. The stress on new birth and hence the need for conversion made missionary work a natural consequence of revival. For the history of missions generally, Stephen Neill, in his A History of Christian Missions, has provided analysis, context and description, including this formative period.

The starting point is usually viewed as William Carey's foundation of the BMS in 1792, followed by the interdenominational LMS in 1795. The question of church order soon arose in an interdenominational society, and the LMS developed into a dissenting body. This was one of the reasons for the foundation in 1799 by members of the Eclectic Society of the CMS, known at first as 'The Society for Missions to Africa and the East.' In 1804, the Bible Society was founded, an interdenominational society, with the restricted aim of the circulation of the Scriptures, illustrating again the basis of Evangelical authority.

2.5 The marks of Evangelical identity

A number of characteristics can be detected from this analysis which help identify the distinctive features of Evangelical identity. Two stand out. Firstly, there was an emphasis on doctrine, and, indeed, specific doctrines, not generalities; the nature and extent of sin and the necessity of the atonement, understood in a substitutionary manner were the most prominent. Secondly, there was the priority given to a personal relationship and encounter with God. Undergirding these points was the overall and supreme authority of Scripture and, also, a commitment to evangelism - demonstrated particularly in the foundation of the missionary societies.

Bebbington's four traits of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism clearly reflect some of these concerns. He described them as 'a quadrilateral of priorities.'¹⁵⁸ They may, however, be too general and somewhat confusing by way of categories. For example, an emphasis on the cross could be seen as a general concern of Christianity in the West. What marked out an Evangelical was a particular

understanding of the atonement. Also, the central commitment of the Evangelical to a personal relationship with God is subsumed and assumed in Bebbington's approach. This may be due to a confusion of authority, doctrine, spirituality and commitment, and a definition of an Evangelical may perhaps best be offered in those terms.

Thus, authority for an Evangelical lay entirely with the Scriptures. It is from the Scriptures that the Evangelical derived his doctrinal belief and personal guidance. Neither the church nor reason could occupy this position. Yet, as the Eclectic Society discussions showed, this did not involve a fixed view on the manner and nature of the inspiration and there was a great responsibility to interpret the Scriptures. Bebbington has recognised both this diversity and the central importance of the Bible for the Evangelical.¹⁵⁹ The point, however, is that Evangelical devotion to the Bible is explained by the position of authority occupied by the Scriptures.

Secondly, there was a definite doctrinal emphasis. It is here perhaps that continuity with the Reformation as mediated via the Puritan tradition was strongest. It was the specific doctrines of sin, substitutionary atonement and justification by faith that represented the primary content of the faith to which a person was converted.

Thirdly, there was a spiritual mark of an Evangelical; that characteristic which marked out the nature of the relationship with God. For the Evangelical this was a personal relationship, one that linked clearly to the nature of understanding of doctrine, and also to the stress on evangelism and conversion. This more than anything distinguished the Evangelical from the Puritan tradition that preceded it. This personal relationship with God also, for the Evangelical, extended to an understanding of God's continuing providential action in the life of the believer.

It is perhaps with these last two aspects that Bebbington's definitions become a little confused. The desirability of conversion was not an end in itself but was determined by the doctrinal concern with the atonement and the spiritual objective of a personal encounter with Christ.

Fourthly, there was the commitment of the Evangelical, which was expressed primarily in evangelism. The impact of the new birth has consequences for the converted believer; the wish to share the benefits of that transformation with others. Indeed, part of the changed life of the believer would be moral improvement, and, hence, greater activism by the Evangelical activist would not only extend the Kingdom of God, but also effect individual lives and through that influence also reach the wider society.

A scheme such as this one allows for all of the insights of Bebbington's description of Evangelical characteristics to be expressed, but with greater clarity. It remains to be seen what repercussions later developments within Evangelicalism would have on the marks of Evangelical identity.

¹ G.R. Balleine, A History of the Evangelical Party in the Church of England, (1908), p1.

² Bebbington, p1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ J.D. Walsh, 'The Yorkshire Evangelicals in the Eighteenth Century with special reference to Methodism' (Cambridge PhD, 1956), as quoted in K. Hylson-Smith, Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984, (1989), p13.

⁵ J.D. Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival,' in G.V. Bennett & J.D. Walsh (eds), Essays in Modern Church History, (1966), p138.

⁶ J.C.D. Clark, English Society, 1688-1832, (1985).

⁷ E.G. Rupp, Religion in England, 1688-1791, (1986).

⁸ J. Wesley, Journal, 24 May 1738, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, 4 vols, (1827), vol 1, p94.

⁹ J. Wesley, Works, vii,9-10 (Sermon on Salvation by Faith), quoted in Walsh, Origins, p149.

¹⁰ See chapter 3.5 for a full discussion.

¹¹ Walsh, Origins, p156.

¹² Wesley, Journal, 24 May 1738, Journal, p96.

¹³ Balleine, p23.

¹⁴ J. Milner, Practical Sermons on the Epistles to the Seven Churches (1830), in Walsh, Origins, p155. Joseph Milner (1744-1797) was an Evangelical divine converted in 1770 and the author of a number of works. Many of his sermons were published in the period 1800-1830 in four volumes.

¹⁵ Bebbington, p43.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp45-46.

¹⁷ Wesley, Journal, 24 May, 1738, Journal, pp97-98.

¹⁸ Ibid., p98.

¹⁹ William Wilberforce, A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity, (1797), chapter VI, p422.

²⁰ G.F.A. Best, 'The Evangelicals and the Established Church in the early nineteenth century,' Journal of Theological Studies 10 (1), 1959, p64.

²¹ Ibid., p66.

²² Ibid., pp71-72.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ M. Hennell & A. Pollard (eds), Charles Simeon, 1759-1836, (1959), p126.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Wilberforce, chapter II, p26.

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- 27 Ibid., chapter III, p70.
28 Ibid., chapter IV, p247.
29 Ibid., chapter IV, p197.
30 Ibid., chapter IV, p162..
31 J.H. Pratt, Eclectic Notes: or Notes of Discussions on Religious Topics At The Meetings of the Eclectic Society, London, during the years 1798-1814 (1858).
32 W. Carus, Charles Simeon, Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Charles Simeon, (1847), p9.
33 David Spring, 'The Clapham Sect: Some Social and Political Aspects', Victorian Studies 5(1), 1963, p41.
34 Hennell & Pollard, p29.
35 Pratt, p152.
36 Ibid., p153.
37 Ibid., p154.
38 Ibid., p153.
39 Ibid., p154.
40 Hennell & Pollard, p34.
41 Ibid., p31.
42 Carus, p703.
43 Hennell & Pollard, p44.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Pratt, p393.
48 Ibid., p394.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p395.
52 Ibid., p396.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Hennell & Pollard, p31.
56 Ibid., p32.
57 Ibid., p34.
58 Ibid., p35.
59 Pratt, p47.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p295.
66 For example, J.D.G. Dunn, Romans, Word Biblical Commentary, (1988), pp374ff, cites fifty-six scholars who have dealt with the passage before proceeding to discuss the alternatives.
67 Romans 7:14b.
68 Pratt, p296.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p275.
72 Wilberforce, chapter II, pp24-25.
73 Ibid., pp25-26.
74 Ibid., pp26-27.
75 Ibid., p27.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., pp28-29.
78 Pratt, p275.
79 Ibid.
80 J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, (1559), 2.1.7, ed. J.T. McNeil, Library of Christian Classics, vol xx, p250.

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- 81 Wilberforce, chapter II, p34.
82 Pratt, p71.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid., p73.
87 Wilberforce, chapter II, p39.
88 Ibid., pp60-61.
89 St. Augustine, Confessions, 8.12, translated by F.J. Sheed, (1943), p170.
90 Roland Bainton, Here I Stand, (1983), p65.
91 Wesley, Journal, 24 May, 1738, Journal, pp97-98.
92 Bebbington, p14.
93 Ibid., p15.
94 Calvin, p921.
95 Ibid.
96 Pratt, p165.
97 Ibid., p222.
98 Ibid., p224.
99 Ibid., p505.
100 Ibid., p507.
101 Wilberforce, chapter III, p117.
102 Ibid.
103 Pratt, p275.
104 Ibid., p167.
105 Ibid., p140.
106 Wilberforce, chapter III, p119.
107 Hennell & Pollard, p87.
108 Pratt, p289.
109 Hennell & Pollard, p51.
110 Ibid., p53.
111 Pratt, p485.
112 Ibid., p495
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid., p468.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., p469.
121 Ibid., p75.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid., p299.
125 Ibid., p392.
126 Ibid., p421.
127 Ibid., p486.
128 Ibid., p501.
129 Ibid., p332.
130 Ibid.
131 Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, (1656), pp186ff, quoted in J.I. Packer, Among God's Giants, (1991), p403.
132 Pratt, p413.
133 Hennell & Pollard, p139.
134 Ibid., p140.
135 Pratt, p77.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.

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- 138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
140 For a complete discussion see Melvin E. Dieter in Five Views on Sanctification, (1987),p17.
141 Pratt, p429.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid., p134.
145 Ibid., p354.
146 Wesley's view should not be misrepresented as suggesting that the Christian would inevitably live the sinless life. This would fail to take account of disobedience. His point was, however, that such a perfect life was possible through obedience.
147 Pratt, p40.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., p94.
150 Ibid., p193.
151 Ibid.
152 See chapter 2.3.
153 Pratt, p297.
154 Ibid..
155 Ibid., p368.
156 Ibid., p369.
157 Stephen Neill, A History of Christian Missions, (2nd edition, 1986), p222.
158 Bebbington, p3.
159 Ibid., pp12-14.

3 The development of Evangelicalism

3.1 Evolution in doctrine

Evangelical theology and doctrine were not static. The diversity of the early years of the nineteenth century contained a number of different strands of Evangelical opinion from a variety of background traditions. A process of development continued into the mid and later years of the Victorian era. It was in the middle years of the Victorian period that the character of Anglican Evangelicalism changed into a more clearly defined 'church party'. This was due to a number of reasons, including doctrinal developments and the response to the rise of Tractarianism, which I have charted elsewhere.¹

John Keble's Assize Sermon of 1833 is often seen as the starting point of the Oxford Movement.² The sermon was partly in response to the suppression of the Irish bishoprics and represented an assertion of the spiritual rights of the Church against the establishment. Within three months of the sermon, Newman published his first Tracts for the Times, where the accent was placed upon apostolic descent as the basis of authority for the clergy. It was clear which direction the Oxford Movement was going to take.

This was demonstrated in the Tractarian discussion of the relationship of Scripture and tradition. Evangelicals saw the two as being given equal weight. Three Tractarian publications in particular caused concern amongst Evangelicals: Keble's Primitive Tradition (1836), Newman's The Prophetical Office of the Church (1837) and Manning's The Rule of Faith (1838).³ The key to biblical interpretation was seen as the church of the apostolic age, by which was meant the first five centuries. As Toon points out, the main issue was of the potential existence of an oral tradition transmitted through the church of identical value to the agreed divine revelation in Scripture.⁴ William Goode, in an Evangelical response,⁵ maintained that the Fathers did not express a united view, and were primarily concerned with refuting specific heresies

facing the church. The Tractarians often seemed to rely on the consensus of merely half a dozen patristic writers.⁶ Placing excessive weight on the views of the apostolic Fathers of the patristic period implied that the apostles had left behind not only the Scriptures, but also particular doctrinal interpretations in order to combat future heterodoxy. The Tractarians, on the other hand, saw this reclaiming of the Laudian Anglican tradition as a means of bolstering the authority of Scripture, partly as their response to the liberal challenge to scriptural orthodoxy. Evangelicals also resisted the Oxford Movement's idea of 'catholic consent', the idea of one accepted position of the whole church. Since Jesus had made it clear that future heresies would appear, the church would always consist of wheat and tares, and never only of wheat. Hence, any notion of 'catholic consent' was, by definition, impossible.⁷ The Tractarian response to this was to stress the concept in spite of the tares. Goode claimed that the Tractarians overestimated the place of the Fathers, who, on the contrary, actually supported the notion of divine revelation being contained only in Holy Scripture.⁸

The divergence between these two movements of spiritual renewal meant that despite some shared concerns caricature often replaced mature engagement, the result being a lack of accurate appreciation of the outlook of each party. One effect of this disputation was an increased Evangelical emphasis on the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. In the face of the Tractarian challenge, Evangelicals could not afford the earlier luxury of debate over the nature of inspiration, but had rather to affirm its fact. Goode referred to Holy Scripture as 'the sole infallible and authoritative Rule of faith.'⁹ Bishop Daniel Wilson of Calcutta in The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture as the Rule of Faith (1841) claimed that to exalt Tradition was to 'convert the keeper into the interpreter of the Bible,' that it substituted 'a gloss upon our heavenly Father's will' and that its consequence was 'to distil the doctrine of inspiration,' putting 'the word of man for the word of God.'¹⁰ This hardening of the view of biblical inspiration thus became a characteristic of 'party' Anglican Evangelicalism as a result of the claims of Tractarianism. The later consequences were well illustrated by Bishop J.C. Ryle who, as Ian Farley has noted, believed in the plenary inspiration of Scripture, every chapter,

verse and word, even the letters.¹¹ It contained no error, not even of historical fact.¹² Interestingly Ryle specifically rejected the alternative views of inspiration discussed by the Eclectic Society at the beginning of the century, namely the inspiration of important doctrines, or of the ideas but not the words, or the possibility of occasional mistakes.¹³ Ryle also expressed the later Evangelical position, following Goode, in playing down the whole role of the Fathers, due to the weight attached to them by the Tractarians, describing them as overrated.¹⁴

Newman in his Lectures on Justification (1838) gave prominence to both imputed righteousness and infused righteousness. Justification, hence, involved both a pronouncement of pardon for past sins and a making righteous of the man who received that declaration, thus blurring the Reformed distinction between justification and sanctification.¹⁵ Newman, in an emphasis derived from the Greek Fathers, sought to develop an understanding of justification which was dependent upon the divine indwelling in humanity; a position which he distinguished from both Luther and traditional Roman Catholic doctrine. However, Evangelicals, such as James Garbett, linked Newman's nuance with a view of the formal cause of justification as inherent righteousness.¹⁶

The Tractarians developed the idea of 'reserve', that the atonement, and indeed other doctrines, were essentially mysterious and should only be taught gradually, and assuredly also profoundly, as the baptized lived out their Christian life under increasing obedience to the will of God. Thus, the Tractarian Isaac Williams in Tract 80:

The prevailing notion of bringing forward the Atonement *explicitly* and *prominently* on all occasions is evidently quite opposed to what we consider the teaching of Scripture, nor do we find any sanction for it in the Gospels. If the Epistles of St. Paul appear to favour it, it is only at first sight.¹⁷

It was not just the Evangelical understanding of the atonement which was at stake, but, at least in the eyes of the Evangelical movement, also the centrality of the doctrine.

In 1853, William Goode claimed that the theological differences between Tractarianism and Evangelicalism could be traced to different views on the nature of the visible and invisible church. The Roman and Tractarian errors of apostolic succession and the exaltation of the priesthood derived from too much importance being attached to the visible church.¹⁸ Thus to the Tractarian, episcopacy was of the very 'being' of the church, on which the validity of the presbyteral order depended. Evangelicals generally, although not universally, accepted the distinction between bishop and presbyter as instituted by Paul's consecration of Timothy and Titus, and saw episcopal government as the most superior form of church government, but denied the centrality accorded to it in the Tractarian system, or that it represented any channel of special grace.

The effect of these views were clearly seen on the understanding of the sacraments. Newman referred to faith as the internal instrument of justification and baptism as the external.¹⁹ The Tractarians emphasised regeneration. To the Evangelical critics of the Oxford Movement if the sacrament of baptism was seen as the means of justification, even if only the outward sign, then it was the nature and sufficiency of the atonement that was ultimately at stake. Hence, the earlier Eclectic Society considerations of baptismal regeneration in which a variety of views were expressed gave way to a simple rejection of the concept.²⁰ This situation was exemplified in the Gorham case. Bishop Ryle understood baptism in the same manner as circumcision, and denied any baptismal regeneration. Hence, according to Ryle, the salvation of children who had died did not depend upon whether they had been baptised.²¹

In the case of the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, the question did not even feature at the Eclectic Society. There were a number of opinions prevalent in the eighteenth century and the Tractarian position can be seen as a response to memorialist views. Although the Tractarian viewpoint was complex, William Goode, in his lengthy treatise, The Nature of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist (1856), summarised their doctrine: that the body and blood of Christ formed one compound

whole with the bread and wine and 'hence that the Body and Blood of Christ are received by *all* the communicants, whatever their state of mind may be.'²² According to Goode, the Tractarians believed that the Body and Blood were received by the unbelieving communicant as well as the believer - contrary to Article 29 - and also that the Body was eaten by the mouth - contrary to Article 28, which stated that the reception of the Body was by faith.²³ The Evangelical reaction was a reassertion of the memorialist perspective from their Reformed heritage.

The Evangelical riposte to Tractarianism demonstrated their commitment to the authority of Scripture and the pivotal place occupied in their theology by the doctrine of the atonement. The Oxford Movement expressed its own concerns through the development of its ecclesiological and sacramental theological opinions. The Evangelical party replied with a hardening of their views on Scripture, reaffirmation of the centrality of the substitutionary atonement, and a reaction against the Tractarian understanding of church and sacraments by a restatement of Reformed beliefs. Their response was, thus, a mixture of the positive and the negative, involving a reclamation of the Puritan application of the Bible to all areas of church and sacraments. The effect of the Tractarian movement meant that for the Evangelical, issues of Bible, church and sacrament were no longer issues on which varied opinions could be held. Thus, Protestant Evangelicalism emerged as a definite 'party' within the Church of England.

A further question concerning the evolution of Evangelical doctrine, largely unrelated to the response to Tractarianism, though important for understanding later Evangelical belief and practice, was the issue of God's action in the world. The nature of divine providence had featured in earlier debates at the Eclectic Society but as greater importance came to be attributed to the subject, other aspects came to the fore. The key matters were the Second Advent of Christ, the nature of the 1,000-year reign of Christ portrayed in Revelation 20 (the millennium), and the whole theme of apocalyptic imagery and its relationship to contemporary events.²⁴

3.2 National Protestantism

Among the diverse elements of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, one important aspect to emerge was what has been characterised as Ultra-Toryism²⁵ or Protestant Constitutionalism²⁶ and which I have referred to as national Protestantism.²⁷ The essence of this tradition was that it 'encompassed a sense of Protestantism as the fundamental substance of the British constitution.'²⁸ The late 1820s and early 1830s were a time of great political ferment and constitutional change, including Catholic Emancipation, the repeal of the Test Act and the Reform Bill of 1832. To the national Protestants what was at stake was the constitution itself. Closely connected to the threat to the constitution was an implied risk to the Established Church. The relief of Roman Catholic disabilities would imperil the Protestant nature of the constitution, and the movement for political reform would also lead to church reform. Peers, always conscious of constitutional issues, and, of course, not subject to the pressures of re-election, were among the most prominent national Protestants, including the Earl of Eldon, the Duke of York, the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of Winchelsea. But even in the lower house there were the stirrings of national Protestantism, most especially amongst Evangelicals. There were a number of links between the two movements.²⁹ Various members of the House of Commons took up national Protestant issues from an Evangelical perspective, though there were a range of views and few adopted the strident political Protestantism of some of the Ultras in the upper house. Nevertheless, Sir Robert Inglis, John Pemberton Plumptre, Michael Sadler, George Finch and Captain James Gordon - the last named being the founder of the British Reformation Society - all took up the national Protestant cause. There was significant overlap - though not an identity - between this group and the Recordites, that group of Evangelical members of Parliament who took their lead from The Record. Not all Evangelicals took this line. Wilberforce and his followers were more moderate, looking rather to the Christian Observer. An indication of the range and diversity of view is shown by a comparison of Wilberforce and Ashley. The former followed the Christian Observer and embraced Catholic Emancipation with some

enthusiasm. Ashley came to take a lead more from The Record, though was not a Recordite as such, and also voted in favour of Catholic Emancipation, but with significant reluctance.

3.3 Evangelicals and the Family

Evangelicalism was above all, the religion of the home.³⁰ As Puritanism centred around the State, and the Oxford Movement would focus around the Church, so Evangelicalism was to make the home the kernel of its interest, emphasising family life, family joy, and family worship.³¹ Parents had a particular responsibility for their children, not least for their spiritual well-being. Indeed, Henry Thornton wrote that it 'is through the institution of families that the knowledge of God and of his laws is handed down from generation to generation.'³² The picture of the Victorian Evangelical household which has been left to us reflects a terror and seriousness.³³ The emphasis seems to have been on prohibition, Sabbath observance, restrictions on leisure,³⁴ and the abrasive introduction of children to death and the death-bed in order to awaken their spiritual needs.³⁵ This, however, is an incomplete picture, as indeed has been recognised by these same writers in varying degrees. Such rigour was not simply the product of Evangelicalism but also echoed the social and cultural expectations of Victorian society. It is thus a mistake to build a picture of Victorian Evangelical family life solely through the eyes of modern perceptions, values and opinions. From the diaries and letters of the Evangelical families can be obtained a picture of family life far more balanced, far more joyful and far more liberated, albeit within the framework of vital religion.

At the heart of the Evangelical family was family prayer and worship. In discussions at the Eclectic Society, John Venn saw the ground of this practice as expediency rather than scriptural injunction,³⁶ Josiah Pratt that it grew out of the notion of Christian families as societies consecrated to God³⁷ and John Clayton saw it as a fair inference from Scripture and knew of no family where such practices had not been conducted without blessing.³⁸ The Eclectics were also clear that the reading of Scripture should

be brought before the family, and that it was the responsibility of the father as head of the house to study the commentaries and then bring the passage before the rest of the family in his own words and relate it to the news of the day.³⁹ Regularity was essential. The Wilberforce household seems to have had about ten minutes of prayer each evening at about a quarter to ten, read by William 'very slowly in a low, solemnly awful voice.'⁴⁰ Later a period of morning prayer was introduced which including hymn singing.⁴¹ The whole household, family and servants, all attended.

There can be no doubt that such a regime was ordered and methodical and that in later years it could contribute to the picture of the disciplined austerity of the Evangelical household. This was undoubtedly reinforced by the restrictions and prohibitions that were imposed on the children of Evangelical families, especially in relation to the Sabbath. Hot food and newspapers were both taboo on Sundays; toys and games were locked away and the mind of the children was turned to the destiny of the soul, not least the fears of hell.⁴² A particular aspect of this was the insistence of childhood encounter with death. So with Lucy Thornton:

Our Lucy stared rather than wept at the scene. "Why Lucy", said Mama, "perhaps the next burial may be yours".⁴³

Nevertheless, Wilberforce, for example, was very conscious of the need to avoid his own children coming 'to associate religious observance with austerity and gloom.'⁴⁴ Religion should be rendered as congenial as possible.⁴⁵ Wilberforce played games with his children, cricket, racing, even blind man's buff. There were visits to places of interest and picnics.⁴⁶ The children of the Evangelical families played together. Marianne Thornton's diary records a fancy dress party in 1808; she came as Mrs Slipslop, Samuel Wilberforce as the Pope (!) and Tom Macaulay as Napoleon.⁴⁷

The offspring of these Evangelical families went various ways, into atheism or high churchmanship or Roman Catholicism, even, of course, from within the Wilberforce household itself. But others became respected leaders and figures within the Evangelical party, and within the public affairs of the nation. Not all looked back on

family life with memories only of fear and austerity. E.L. Woodward referred to 'our own tranquil life and pleasures, all very simple, were so very happy.'⁴⁸ Harsh judgement should be avoided, for the distinctiveness of Evangelical family life lay in this pursuit of happiness and in the commitment of fathers, mothers and children to each other, but in a framework which had Jesus at the core.

3.4 Evangelicals and Society

The relationship of the Evangelical movement to the society in which it was placed, in particular to the social and cultural norms of that society was an ambiguous one. This relationship mirrored the varied foundations of Evangelicalism as well as the social precepts of the age. Derived from the Puritan emphasis on membership of the elect, there was a concern for the safeguarding of purity. Hence behaviour and moral instruction were important, and anything that could be seen to corrupt the elect was to be avoided. However, again perhaps at least partly due to the stress given by the Puritans to independence, self-reliance and individualism, the leading Evangelicals frequently belonged to the expanding middle class of merchants, bankers, lawyers and politicians, having 'achieved distinction in their respective callings,'⁴⁹ and hence the tendency was to criticise the modes of recreation of the lower classes, whilst remaining more ambivalent towards the leisure activities of the higher classes. Sydney Smith, rather cynically, argued that Evangelicals were keen to restrict the amusements only of those earning less than £500 a year.⁵⁰ This comment was less than fair, although undoubtedly the leading Evangelicals were affected by the prevailing social customs.

The major reason for objecting to such worldly pursuits as theatre, cards, dancing and even walking in the public gardens was the danger of corruption from the association with the unconverted.⁵¹ These activities constituted a waste of time, and indeed simply ignored God's purpose for his people, that of fulfilling his will on earth.⁵² But there were differences within Evangelicalism, and indeed between denominations. Thus Simeon did not object to playing cards with an elderly sick relative, but others

objected even to the possession of a pack of cards.⁵³ The denominational variations also reflected the ambiguous relationship of the Anglican Evangelicals to middle-class culture. Dancing, largely the preserve of the middle classes, was uniformly condemned by dissenting publications, but defended by some Evangelicals, especially by certain correspondents in the Christian Observer. Few dissenters, of course, frequented with the dancing elite. Similarly dissenters were more vehement in their condemnation of field sports. Attendance at the theatre was disapproved of by all Evangelicals; Simeon even regarded it as a case in which a wife could legitimately disobey her husband,⁵⁴ but again it should be noted that the middle-class association with the theatre was itself waning, and so the attitude of the Claphamites also embodied, at least partially, the changing attitude of their non-Evangelical contemporaries. The prevailing sentiment among Evangelicals, however, was that the theatre encouraged sin and depravity, by depicting 'blasphemy, adultery, duelling, murder and suicide,'⁵⁵ all of which were glorified for the sake of entertainment.

Evangelicals were essentially people of the word, generally distrusting the senses and emotions. This was also illustrated in their estimation of art and the artistic. Certainly art could have no place in worship; it disguised the indispensable simplicity of the gospel. It does seem, however, that Evangelicals accepted a place for religious art in the privacy of the home, even if not in the church or chapel.⁵⁶ Since it had no religious value, some Evangelicals followed the Puritans and rejected art altogether, while others recognised its positive role in enhancing life. The stance adopted towards music was slightly different, as it was widely regarded as 'a most acceptable evangelical recreation.'⁵⁷ Indeed, it was as a consequence of the Evangelical Revival that hymnody had come to play such a prominent role within Christianity. Music was, however, judged entirely by its sacred function, different from art, which some Evangelicals saw as being of independent value. Thus secular hymn tunes were disliked and music was not to become a performance separated from the Christian life, although Wilberforce acknowledged that the music listened to did not always have to reflect the language or sentiments of religion.⁵⁸

The Evangelical relationship to culture was more complex than the negative attitude frequently assumed. Certainly there was the wish to maintain the morality and purity of God's people from the corruptions around them, not least those displayed in worldly pursuits. But the actual practice in Evangelical households of attitudes to dance, cards, field sports, art etc. varied and to a substantial extent approximated to the social and class norms of the time as much as any agreed Evangelical position. Thus the dissenters, who tended to be recruited from the lower middle classes, were more united in their condemnations of pursuits of the middle classes, to whom the Evangelicals of the Established Church, for the most part belonged. Thus Sophia Cunningham's diary for 1808, amidst the records of her husband's preaching and visits to the poor, also detailed whom they visited and whom they dined with and who visited and dined with them - traditional activities of the higher classes. If the traditional middle-class pursuits were out of bounds, or at least restricted, Evangelicals had to find other outlets for their social energies. This was largely accounted for by activism, activity in voluntary societies, and especially missionary societies. The famous May meetings were an unrivalled opportunity for such enthusiasm. Marianne Thornton, with much insight, recognised that the May meetings provided much opportunity for religiosity, oratory, disputation and reconciliation: 'very amusing to we good people who do not go to plays but seriously speaking it is sad to see such tricks played before High Heaven.'⁵⁹

The relationship of Evangelicals towards politics was as ambiguous as its relationship to culture, due to the competing claims of the Puritan concept of the 'godly commonwealth' and the pietist position, inherited from Wesley, which prohibited discussion of active political questions.⁶⁰

There were two significant aspects of the relationship of Evangelicals to politics. First, there was the general attitude to society adopted by Evangelicals. A considerable number of Evangelicals were people of note in their professions, including politicians. This group had an innate conservatism, a concern for order and responsibility in

society; although this should not be overestimated as it reflected the common view of most of the ruling classes and, indeed, much of the lower class. The Claphamite Evangelicals, the 'Saints', were, within the accepted structure, nothing less than radical in their times by promoting the responsibility of the higher classes towards the lower, part of the breadth of their understanding of divine providence, although, of course, these paternalist ideas were really very old. This explains the personal resolution of the Clapham sect, with Henry Thornton, Zachary Macaulay and William Wilberforce giving away substantial proportions of their income,⁶¹ the commitment to voluntary action for the relief of the poor, and the accusation of mainly modern critics of working for rather than with the poor, and always with the hidden agenda of evangelism.⁶² The reality was, of course, more complex than suggested by the critics who frequently judge by the standards, opinions and presuppositions of the liberal later twentieth century.

Second, there was the major influence on Evangelical thought of their campaign against slavery. Wilberforce was converted in 1785 and first took up the question in 1787. Anti-slavery was not, of course, the sole preserve of Evangelicals. Their adoption of the cause partly reflected the spread of anti-slavery sentiment among the middle-class intelligentsia, although undoubtedly Evangelicals were at the forefront of the formation of such opinion. The intense cruelty of the trade which was becoming more widely known must have been one factor.⁶³ This can only have offended against the vital religion of the heart in which the benefits of Christ's atonement were for all who believed. There was also the personal influence of members of the Clapham Sect; Granville Sharp had launched the anti-slavery campaign in 1772, James Stephen and Zachary Macaulay had both experienced the evils of slavery at first hand and on their return home had dedicated themselves to fight against it.⁶⁴ Their impact was immense. Wilberforce dedicated much of his life to the struggle. It rehabilitated the principle of Evangelical involvement in social questions at the political level.

3.5 Evangelicalism and changes in cultural thought patterns

In the complex interrelationship of theological belief and wider philosophical currents it is difficult to discern the direction of influence. Dr. Edward Norman has contended that 'the social attitudes of the Church have derived from the surrounding intellectual and political culture, and not, as churchmen themselves always seem to assume, from theological learning.'⁶⁵ Bebbington has argued from a similar perspective in the case of Evangelicalism. He has argued that it was the successive waves of the Enlightenment, Romanticism and subsequently Modernism which were formative for Evangelicalism.⁶⁶

Through this analysis, Bebbington has explained the changing nature of the Evangelical tradition, and the reasons why certain beliefs were both modified in content and came to prominence in particular periods of time. Thus, despite the fact that scholars have tended to see Evangelicalism at least partly as a reaction to Enlightenment rationalism, Bebbington has sought to align the two outlooks.⁶⁷ Although he acknowledges the resistance to the assumptions of the Enlightenment within a part of Evangelicalism, especially the Calvinist element represented by Whitefield and his successors, Bebbington has maintained that the Evangelical movement 'was permeated by Enlightenment influences.'⁶⁸ He quotes the influence of Locke, the place given to reason by, for example, Jonathan Edwards, and the adoption of the inductive method more generally. Indeed, he claims that the 'Evangelical version of Protestantism was created by the Enlightenment.'⁶⁹

The key to Bebbington's argument is the transformation of Evangelicalism as the prevailing form of philosophical thought moved from that of the Enlightenment to Romanticism. This latter influence led to a greater emphasis on the visible and the sensual - which Bebbington illustrates by reference to Edward Irving's developed understanding of the institutional church.⁷⁰ Nature, feeling, experience and intuition were other characteristic Romantic idioms which Bebbington relates to Evangelicalism. There was thus, 'a new appreciation of the dramatic, the extraordinary

and the otherworldly element in religion.⁷¹ This successive influence of Enlightenment and Romantic thought was demonstrated most effectively by reference to the adjustments which took place in Evangelical eschatology in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In outline, the theological determinants of the Evangelical understanding of mission around 1800 were seen as reflecting the assumptions of the Enlightenment, especially those of optimism and progress. By 1825 the emphasis had shifted to a heightened concern for supernatural intervention, a pessimistic outlook, and hence a harking back to the paradise of the past, rather than progress towards, and into, the future; views, it is claimed, that owed much to the overall cultural influence of Romanticism.

In assessing Bebbington's observations on the Evangelical movement it is necessary to consider both general historical scholarly debates and specific features of the application to Evangelicalism. Firstly, not all scholars have accepted the broad thesis of the determining influence of patterns of cultural thought on religion and theological ideas. Jonathan Clark, in English Society, 1688-1832, criticised the sweeping and wide thematic approach of the Whig interpretation of history - closely allied with Enlightenment thought - for failing to recognise the importance of religion in eighteenth-century England and its relationship to the order and structure of society. Similarly in relation to Bebbington's assertion, Hugh McLeod has commented that 'disappointingly little is said about the long-running debates concerning the impact of Evangelicalism on nineteenth-century politics.'⁷²

In the second place Bebbington's use of the categories of, particularly, the Enlightenment and Romanticism needs to be examined. In the same way that Evangelicalism was not a single monolithic movement, so also with these other intellectual phases. The tendency has been to treat the Enlightenment as a unity, centred on the French intellectual elite.⁷³ In that context the Enlightenment's themes were seen as harmony, rationalism and progress towards individualism and atheism. Scientific discovery contributed to this process, a paradigm shift occurred in world view, and the church was accused of involving mankind in superstition, dogma and

ignorance.⁷⁴ But general trends always need to be nuanced by the particular context. According to Porter, the setting in England was, rather, one of comprehension and piety.⁷⁵ A recognition of the breadth and shades of opinion of the Enlightenment, even the varieties of thought among deists,⁷⁶ can help explain both the Christian adoption of rationalism, and the embracing of the principles of political economy by some Evangelicals. Whereas Bebbington has, with great insight, recognised the variety of thought and emphases within the Evangelical movement, he has not done so in the same way with his discussion of the dominant philosophical movements which play such an important role in his thesis. In the same way the term Romanticism is a broadly-based expression encompassing a wide range of cultural, social and intellectual emphases that developed in reaction to those of the Enlightenment. Its concerns were with the imagination, the sensual, the use of the perception, in response to the apparently cold rationalism of the Enlightenment. So, in poetry, Romantics, 'sought to give new dimensions both to nature and the human mind.'⁷⁷ Frye has also referred to 'the recovery of original identity.'⁷⁸ Bebbington draws on such an understanding to explain increased biblical literalism, and the place of the millennium.⁷⁹ Harris also notes that 'under the influence of Romanticism, Satan became a hero.'⁸⁰

In a review in Albion, J. Diedrick maintains that there is a reductiveness in Bebbington's use of these philosophical categories. He is not alone in thinking that Romanticism has been made to explain too much,⁸¹ but it is unfair to characterise Bebbington as reducing Romanticism to emotionalism.⁸² But the reality is that this association of cultural trend to Evangelical opinion was more nuanced than suggested by Norman generally or by Bebbington in connection to Evangelicalism. The influence was two-way. The nature of this two-way relationship was demonstrated by Shaftesbury and the importance in his thought of Evangelical theological belief as a motive for his social work; a motive yet difficult to disentangle from cultural determinants. Hence Evangelicalism cannot be seen as either completely allied with or totally in reaction to Enlightenment thought. Rather it was the result of a series of

developments over time, including a reaction to the prevailing intellectual climate, but was not merely a rejection of it. That there was a core content to Evangelical belief, drawn significantly from the background in the Reformation and in Puritanism, does not deny cultural influence, but does require recognition also both of the limits of such determination, and indeed, the reverse flow of direction.

Wolffe has summarised the critique of Bebbington's thesis as follows:

The somewhat monolithic fashion in which Bebbington views these movements contrasts with the subtlety of his analysis of the varied strands within evangelicalism, and needs to be balanced by the recognition that, at least in the nineteenth century, the relationship between evangelicalism and its cultural environment was very much a two-way one.

This cauldron of developments and influences had a significant impact upon the distinctiveness and characteristics of the Evangelical movement. The mainstream of Evangelical opinion came to display a more specific and rugged Protestantism. John Wolffe has noted that the impact of anti-Catholicism on Evangelical identity does not invalidate Bebbington's delineation of Evangelical characteristics, but does require more precision in their application,⁸³ a point of general criticism which was made in chapter 2.5. In particular it was the hardening of Evangelical views on biblical inspiration, and the vigorous application of Reformed theological views to the church and the sacraments, that led to this more rigid Protestant identity. Of course, anti-Catholicism now formed part of Evangelical activism.⁸⁴ However, the alternative model of Evangelical identity offered in chapter 2.5 partly explains these developments. The authority of the Scriptures was perceived by Evangelicals to be threatened. Hence they sought to re-emphasise and reassert that authority. The doctrinal concerns of Evangelicalism were always those of the Reformation; they were brought into even starker perspective by this renewed anti-Catholicism, including Anglo-Catholicism. The spiritual centre of Evangelicalism was the personal relationship with Christ and the continuing action of God in the life of the believer. This aspect of Evangelical identity illustrates how the differing strands of the Evangelical tradition developed. It explains why Evangelical Protestants distinguished

themselves from political national Protestantism. The Protestant constitution may have been important but, certainly for the Evangelical, the relationship of the individual to Christ was the issue of supreme gravity. This point, together with the hardening of biblical literalism, also helps to explain why one strand of Evangelicalism came to overemphasise the continuing action of God in the life of the believer, and hence so developed into millennial speculation which, at least in part, characterised Evangelicalism in the 1820s. The mainstream of Evangelical belief adopted influences from both the increased prominence given to biblical literalism and millennialism.

¹ Richard Turnbull, 'The Emergence of the Protestant Evangelical Tradition,' *Churchman*, 1993, no. 4, volume 107, pp339-350.

² S.W. Gilley, *Newman and his Age*, (1990), p111.

³ Peter Toon, *Evangelical Theology 1833-1856*, (1979), pp113-114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p123.

⁵ William Goode was the son of the William Goode who was a member of the Eclectic Society.

⁶ William Goode, *The Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*, (1842), quoted in Toon, p126.

⁷ Toon, p127.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p130.

⁹ Goode, *Divine Rule*, ii., p61, quoted in Toon, p128.

¹⁰ D. Wilson, *The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture* (1841), p29, quoted in Toon, p127.

¹¹ I.D. Farley, 'J.C. Ryle, Episcopal Evangelist', (Durham University PhD, 1988), p94.

¹² *Ibid.*, quoting J.C. Ryle, *How Readest Thou?* (1852), p6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p95, quoting J.C. Ryle, *Whose Word is this?* (1877), pp22-23.

¹⁴ Toon, p205.

¹⁵ J.H. Newman, *Lectures on Justification* (1838), quoted in Toon, pp150-151.

¹⁶ Toon, p154.

¹⁷ Isaac Williams, *Tract 80*, quoted in Toon, p38.

¹⁸ Goode, *Divine Rule*, quoted in Toon, pp176-177.

¹⁹ Toon, p158.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p195.

²¹ Farley, p84.

²² William Goode, *The Nature of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist*, (1856), vol 1, p2.

²³ *Ibid.*, p3.

²⁴ The importance of this doctrine, and its application to Evangelical missionary practice and social thought, will be developed particularly in chapters 8, 10 and 11.

²⁵ J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain*, (1991), pp22ff.

²⁶ I.S. Rennie, 'Evangelicalism and English Public Life, 1823-1850' (University of Toronto, PhD, 1962)

²⁷ Turnbull, pp341-342.

²⁸ Wolfe, loc. cit.

²⁹ For a full discussion of the relationships of the two traditions, see Wolfe, *Protestant Crusade*, c3.

³⁰ I. Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness*, (1976), p179.

³¹ Balleine, pp110-111.

³² Henry Thornton, quoted in D. Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture*, (1984), p97.

³³ As, for example, in S. Butler, *The Way of All Flesh*, (1903).

³⁴ Bradley, pp181-183.

³⁵ Rosman, pp103-104.

³⁶ Pratt, p198.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p193.

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- 40 The Farington Diary, 19, July, 1806, quoted in D. Newsome, The Parting of Friends, (1966), p33.
- 41 Ibid., p34.
- 42 Bradley, pp183-187.
- 43 S. Meacham, Henry Thornton of Clapham 1760-1815, (1964), p23; Rosman, p104.
- 44 Newsome, p35.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid., p36.
- 47 Bradley, p189.
- 48 Ibid., p193.
- 49 Spring, p36.
- 50 Rosman, p68.
- 51 Ibid., p74.
- 52 Ibid., p89.
- 53 Ibid., p72.
- 54 Ibid., p76.
- 55 Ibid., p77.
- 56 Ibid., pp147-148.
- 57 Ibid., p134.
- 58 Ibid., pp134-142.
- 59 Meacham, p135; Rosman, p80.
- 60 Bebbington, p72.
- 61 Balleine, p149; Hylson-Smith, p93.
- 62 F.K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians, (1961); J.H.R. Moorman, A History of the Church of England, (1952), A. Vidler, The Church in An Age of Revolution, (1961).
- 63 Balleine, p150; Hylson-Smith, p85f.
- 64 N. Scotland, 'The Social Work of the Clapham Sect: an assessment', Themelios 18/1, 1992, pp16-20.
- 65 E.R. Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970, (1976), p10.
- 66 Bebbington, p273.
- 67 Ibid., p50f.
- 68 Ibid., p57.
- 69 Ibid., p74.
- 70 Ibid., p78f.
- 71 Ibid., p81.
- 72 H. McLeod, 'Varieties of Victorian Belief,' (Review Article), Journal of Modern History, 1992, vol 64, no. 2, pp321-337.
- 73 R. Porter & M. Teich (eds.) The Enlightenment in National Context, (1981), p4f.
- 74 R. Porter, The Enlightenment, (1990), p3.
- 75 Porter & Teich, pp6-9.
- 76 Rupp, p207, 260ff.
- 77 R.W. Harris, Romanticism and the Social Order, (1969), p17.
- 78 N. Frye, Study of English Romanticism, (1968), p18.
- 79 Bebbington, pp80-92.
- 80 Harris, p36.
- 81 McLeod, pp321-337.
- 82 J. Diedrick, Albion, (1991), vol 23, no. 2, pp338-340.
- 83 J. Wolfe, 'Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity in Britain and the United States, 1830-1860,' in M.A. Noll, D.W. Bebbington & G.A. Rawlyk, Evangelicalism, (1994), pp181-183.
- 84 Ibid.

4 Shaftesbury's place within Evangelicalism

A recognition of the complexity and the development of the Evangelical movement is essential in understanding both Shaftesbury's place within that tradition, and the various influences on him which equipped him for his life's work in Evangelical mission and social action.

4.1 Background and influences

Anthony Ashley Cooper was born on 28 April, 1801. His family life was difficult and his relationship with his parents less than congenial. He claimed that his mother was guilty of dereliction of duty towards the children¹ - there were three other sisters and five other sons - and lack of kindness.² Ashley remained at loggerheads with his father for much of his life. He stated later, in his diaries, that his parents lacked love and affection for him and his relationship with them was dominated by fear.³ Hence, Shaftesbury's subsequent happy marriage and his intense love and concern for his own children - some of whom beset him with problems, not least debt - were a significant testimony to the impact of the Evangelical centrality of the family on his personal life. Ashley hated school, which had been characterised by bullying and cruelty.⁴ After two years of carefree life in the household of a clergyman in Derbyshire, Ashley entered Oxford University in 1819, having avoided the army career his father had in mind, due to the intervention of a family friend, for which Ashley was eternally grateful.⁵ He worked hard and thoroughly deserved the First Class honours he gained in Classics. Although this is not incompatible with the view sometimes offered that he was driven by 'stiff religious prejudice,'⁶ that his 'religious beliefs were extreme and inflexible'⁷ and that he 'flatly denied the value of intellect in religion,'⁸ it is sometimes forgotten that he was a highly intelligent man, perfectly capable of engagement with theology and the formulation of theological opinion. This suggestion in the biographers stems directly from a failure to understand adequately the nature of the Evangelicalism to which he was committed and his place in that complex tradition. For a man in Ashley's position the normal career path was a political one, and he was

duly returned in the 1826 election for the pocket borough of Woodstock, with which his family had some connection, naturally in the Tory interest. Ashley's objective was to perform his duty in public life as marked out for him by divine providence.⁹ A remark such as that one requires caution in interpretation. It was not without genuine religious significance, but also represented the intertwining of religion with the accepted paternalistic views of the aristocracy.

A considerable influence on Ashley as a boy was the family housekeeper, Maria Millis. Her influence is acknowledged in the biographies, although there is little evidence available, and perhaps a firmer assessment is needed. In his autobiographical fragment, recorded in Hodder, Shaftesbury recalled the special care of Maria, who had been his mother's maid before marriage. Maria was an affectionate and pious woman, undoubtedly of Evangelical conviction, teaching the young Ashley to pray, to turn his mind to higher things and she read him stories from the Bible.¹⁰ A poem received from her on his eighth birthday wished on Ashley earthly and eternal blessings.¹¹ In 1865 he referred to 'Anna Maria Millis, the old Housekeeper, to whom, under God, I owe the first thoughts of Piety and the first actions of Prayer.'¹² Whereas Maria's influence did not result in Ashley's Evangelical conversion, its importance should not be underestimated. Perhaps the nearest parallel was Saint Augustine, who referred to drinking in the name of the Saviour with his mother's milk.¹³ The depth and lasting effect of this influence was equally significant for both Augustine, with his mother, Monica, and Ashley, in the case of Maria. It reinforced in Ashley the concern for the things of God, for the discipline of Bible reading, study and prayer, that went far beyond the normal piety of the times outside of Evangelicalism. It represented a crucial first step.

Shaftesbury was an aristocrat and saw society as divided into orders or classes, each with particular responsibilities and duties. Hence in comparing life on his family estate with a factory district he referred to 'a people known and cared for, a people born and trained on the estate, exhibiting towards its hereditary possessors both deference and sympathy, affectionate respect, and a species of allegiance demanding protection and

repaying it in duty!' ¹⁴ Thus it was the responsibility of the aristocracy to govern. However, with responsibility came duty, and the particular duty of the governing classes was to care for the lower orders; 'every one must take that in which his various circumstances will give him the best means of doing good,' Ashley commented in adopting his political career. ¹⁵ This paternalism was a view widely held. Thus, Bishop Phillpotts, a high churchman, maintained that the passage of the Reform Bill amounted 'to something very like revolution,' ¹⁶ Bishop Murray that no-one 'entertained a greater respect for what was termed the people than he did, so long as they maintained their respective and private stations,' ¹⁷ and Thomas Calvert, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, that 'we live in times when the evils of life press heavily on the lower orders of the community, and when more than ordinary exertions and sacrifices are required on the part of the rich to enable them to bear up under the weight of their privations and sufferings.' ¹⁸ Ashley maintained, however, that the ruling classes were in frequent neglect of their duties. ¹⁹

Among the influences on Ashley was the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey. Ashley declared himself to 'have derived the greatest benefit from the study of your works.' ²⁰ Southey, like Ashley, lamented the rise of 'millocrats', the expanding industrial middle class, for whom everything seemed to be determined by money and nothing by duty or responsibility; 'I know not where the love of gain appears in more undisguised form than in a cotton-mill.' ²¹ Ashley's basic objection to political economy was couched in social terms:

No wonder that thousands of hearts should be against a system which establishes the relations, without calling forth the mutual sympathies, of master and servant, landlord and tenant, employer and employed. ²²

Ashley suffered from bouts of severe depression and feelings of lack of self-worth. This pessimism and despair seem to have increased with age. This was especially shown in his diary entries. ²³ Certainly too much should not be read into the revelation of character from a diary, volumes which were intended to remain private, being regarded of value only to himself and as being full of contradictions and private

thoughts.²⁴ Nevertheless, the external testimony of Henry Fox, who sensed a dash of madness in Ashley as early as 1821,²⁵ and that of Florence Nightingale, that had Shaftesbury not been devoted to the reform of the asylum he would have been in one,²⁶ testify to a darker side in his psychological make-up. However, proper perspective needs to be maintained. Expressions of such deep anxiety and depression can at least partially be explained by the lonely furrow he ploughed. As the era moved on, Shaftesbury certainly remained committed to his traditional, paternalistic social views. Few were with him. Again, devoted as he was to the religious dimension, he gave his whole life to the pursuit of justice and relief for the poor and for their salvation. Add to that the burdens of debt, family background and his own deeply religious understanding of man's depravity, and it is hardly surprising that his private diaries reflected such oscillations of mood, and periods in the dark abyss.

Nevertheless, it is excessive to make such a claim for clinical manic depression as Finlayson hints at.²⁷ It should be remembered that Shaftesbury was offered places in the government repeatedly, the last time in 1866, when he seems to have refused the office of Home Secretary, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Lord Presidency of the Council.²⁸ He turned down the offers of Cabinet rank because it would have required him to 'withdraw myself from the many and various pursuits which have occupied a very large portion of my life,' and that there were 'yet fourteen hundred thousand women, children, and young persons to be brought under the protection of the Factory Acts.'²⁹ Politicians are no more exempt from madness than others, but it would seem extraordinary if Shaftesbury had been repeatedly offered positions in the government if he had suffered from such serious mental disorder. At the same time his constant refusal of office, as well as demonstrating great principle and strength of character, must undoubtedly have been burdensome to him, as to whether he had made the right decisions given his inner desire to serve in office.³⁰ Shaftesbury's character was complicated, and his career provided ample opportunity for his bouts of depression. Nevertheless, aristocratic eccentricity should not be confused with madness. Shaftesbury remained in full control of his faculties to the

end, and pursued his objectives with vigour. He was undoubtedly sustained by his Evangelical faith. Indeed just as his social views were intertwined with his faith, so also his pessimistic character was also reflected in, or by, his particular place within the Evangelical tradition.

4.2 Conversion to Evangelicalism

The issue of when Shaftesbury became an Evangelical is important for understanding the relationship between his religious views and his social action. The biographers are split. The Hammonds seem to think that Shaftesbury was an Evangelical all his life, due to the influence of Maria Millis,³¹ while Battiscombe opts for 1835 under the influence of Edward Bickersteth.³² Best suggests 1834,³³ a point agreed on in a moderate and helpful analysis by Finlayson.³⁴ All of these examinations suffer from the failure to appreciate the nature of Evangelicalism.

The Hammonds make two errors. Firstly, they fail to recognise the connection in Ashley's early thought between the faith which he had received from Maria Millis and his aristocratic paternalism. What he had learnt from Maria was the name of God and the importance of the Bible. It was a small step to apply God's name to his views on the social order of society. Hence his early opinions abounded with the name of God, with Christian vocabulary and indeed with the God of order. Thus, in 1825 he referred to warm and generous sentiments being 'purified in Heaven,'³⁵ that he was inclined to 'found a policy upon the bible,'³⁶ and that God 'is absolutely forgotten.'³⁷ Hodder notes that although in his early days, he never forgot to apply Maria's concern for prayer and Bible reading, 'his conduct was regulated by Christian instincts, but not by any settled principles.'³⁸ The link to order was shown in his diary entry of 13 August, 1825, discussing, in rather disjointed form, the First Discourse of Thomas Chalmers. Thus he said that 'monarchy is the great principle in physics', the 'solar system typical of government on earth,' 'morals will follow physics' and that 'monarchy is the most perfect form.'³⁹ Thus order in creation meant similar method in the social structure on earth. This was Shaftesbury the aristocrat speaking, albeit under the influence of a

spiritual upbringing. Mathematics to Shaftesbury spoke of the benevolent wisdom of God.⁴⁰ The concept of a God of order remained important to him throughout his life but at this stage did not reflect an Evangelical faith. He remarked in 1820 that a preacher had failed to prove him a complete sinner and could not prevail on him to repent.⁴¹ He was not yet an Evangelical.

The second mistake of the Hammonds, which flows from this, is their claim that when Shaftesbury entered politics, he 'became, if not the nominal leader of the Evangelical movement, by far its most important and active champion.'⁴² If he was not yet an Evangelical, this could not have been the case, and there is no evidence that he adopted such a role upon entering Parliament. His early involvement in the House of Commons mirrored more his position in the aristocracy than the leadership of any religious group. He was associated with the crisis in the Tory party following Canning's succession of Lord Liverpool, was offered a junior post in 1827 and refused it out of loyalty to Wellington, changed his views on Catholic emancipation following Wellington and Peel, and accepted junior office under the Duke in 1828.⁴³ He was despondent about his career and future in politics, but it was conscience that required him to remain in the station to which providence had assigned him;⁴⁴ and that position was clearly not at the head of any Evangelical party.

Best and Finlayson also reveal the problem of historians analysing the religious and theological position of Ashley without a full investigation of the framework of his Evangelical belief. They assert that Ashley displayed a deepened and heightened sense of his Evangelical faith during the summer of 1834. There is much evidence to support this greater intensity of faith. He referred in his diaries to having, 'by God's grace, a deeper sense (and yet how shallow!) of His religion,'⁴⁵ that 'to all subjects I prefer theology,'⁴⁶ and that he did not see any 'symptom of awakened religion among those who aspire to be our rulers.'⁴⁷ The key reference is seen to be the diary entry for 7 August, 1834, where he referred to the corruption of the human heart and the 'great, necessary, and most comfortable doctrine of the Atonement.'⁴⁸ Thus Finlayson grabs at the appearance of a distinctly Evangelical vocabulary, explicit for the first time, to

suggest what amounts to conversion to Evangelicalism, although Finlayson acknowledges that Ashley appears to have undergone no dramatic conversion.⁴⁹ Best actually asserts conversion during the summer of 1834.⁵⁰ Batiscombe points out that a careful reading of the passages does not support this view,⁵¹ but offers no reasoning and goes on to make a serious error of analysis herself. However, if Ashley had undergone any sort of conversion, or reached the end of a process of gradual conversion, he would undoubtedly have referred to it more directly. In fact, the reference is simply to corruption and atonement; theological words only. Ashley's use of such terminology is more likely to be simply a reflection that he had spent much more time in a far-reaching study of theology, in his own words, 'to attain deeper acquaintance with critical theology.'⁵² This is surely the explanation for the use of specifically theological technical terms without the further explanation which would have been necessary if this had constituted conversion. This is further reinforced by the diary entry of 7 September, 1834, in which Ashley recorded that he had read Hannah More's memoirs and once again uses specialised theological vocabulary, this time the language of justification.⁵³ The use of such technical terms is in fact quite unlikely in the immediate aftermath of a conversion. Rather they illustrate deeper, and specific reading.

Batiscombe dates the conversion, or at least the sharpening, from 1835 and the meeting with Edward Bickersteth.⁵⁴ She correctly places Bickersteth as a leading Evangelical, with a particular mode of belief known as millenarianism. The point, however, was that Bickersteth's view of millenarianism, which was adopted by Ashley, was only one of the views within Evangelicalism, and not of the essence of Evangelicalism itself. The meeting with Bickersteth then, may have resulted in Ashley embracing a particular emphasis within Evangelicalism, but it cannot be said to account for his conversion to Evangelicalism itself.

At what point then did Ashley become an Evangelical ? It is more likely that the pivotal date in Ashley's process of conversion, a course which started before that date and continued afterwards, was the spring of 1826. The events leading up to that time

had a profound influence on Ashley and distinctly affected the type of Evangelical faith he was to adopt, and his theology of social action. The evidence can be assessed in four categories; specific references of Ashley to a 'change of view'; the instances when Ashley was called a 'Saint'; the impact of the financial crisis of 1825-1826; and the development of 'party' Evangelicalism.

The religious education of a young aristocrat like Ashley would include a suspicion of Dissent. He recalled reading a commentary with great interest until discovering that it was written by a Dissenter.⁵⁵ He went on to make two significant comments. Firstly he said that 'one of the first things that opened my eyes was reading of Doddridge being condemned as a Dissenter.'⁵⁶ Secondly, he goes on to say:

It was not till I was twenty-five years old, or thereabouts, that I got hold of 'Scott's Commentary on the Bible,' and, struck with the enormous difference between his views and those to which I had been accustomed, I began to think for myself.⁵⁷

The commentary referred to was that of the Eclectic Evangelical, Thomas Scott. In his diary entry for his twenty-fifth birthday he recorded that 'latterly I have taken to hard study,⁵⁸ repeating at the end of the year, that he had formed 'great plans of deep study.'⁵⁹ These references can be taken to indicate some sort of conversion for Ashley, although it does not seem to have been the instant conversion frequently sought for in the lives of Evangelical leaders; demanded, that is, by modern historians. The hard study referred to by Ashley must have been on biblical and Evangelical works, notably Doddridge and Scott's biblical commentary. Indeed, he noted in early 1827 that the first chapter of Romans demonstrated the 'insufficiency of a "natural religion",'⁶⁰ and a week later, 'I firmly believe the "Trinity".'⁶¹ Finlayson notes that his diary entries for the previous few months did indeed reveal evidence of his reading in religious and literary works.⁶² To refer, then, to an opening of the eyes seems a much closer indication of Evangelical conversion than the later use of theological language after reading critical theological works. This is reinforced by Ashley's second comment on his change of view that clearly indicated a change in Ashley's way of thinking, away from his prior conception of God towards the Evangelical

understanding of God. This independence of mind was most likely to have been a consequence of some sort of conversion experience.

At the exact time that Ashley was studying hard, leading up to his "change of view", in the winter of 1825-26, the financial markets crashed. The crisis arose from overspeculation and excess economic stimulation during booms in foreign trade and in foreign investment.⁶³ Confidence collapsed in a cycle of inflationary and deflationary fears and bankruptcies soared from October 1825 onwards.⁶⁴ This crisis may have altered Ashley's view of God, from a God of order and regularity, operating only through his natural laws, to an interventionist God, acting, when he chose to, by way of supernatural intervention in human affairs. That must be part of the change of view referred to by Ashley in 1826. This is reinforced by a comment in his diary on 12 November, 1827:

It seems to me that philosophers of all ages have been led into their fanciful errors about God's power and proceedings, by having taken for granted that the Almighty had spent His utmost strength and wisdom in the formation of man and the world we inhabit, else why so limit His methods of acting, and define modes by which He must have been governed? All these reasonings are formed from the belief that we see all that He has done, and view the laws as the full effect of His power. Why does Leibnitz otherwise talk such trash as that 'God must come into time and space' before He can perform a miracle? Has He no means of suspending His laws but by becoming subject to them?⁶⁵

This sort of view of God, very different from Ashley's former view of God and society, can only have come about as the result of some significant crisis or combination of particular events. One such occurrence then may have been this financial crisis of 1825-1826. As noted, in early 1827 Ashley had denied natural theology⁶⁶ and later that year he saw 'the Finger of God,' at work in the death of Canning.⁶⁷ Not only does this change form part of his conversion; it also prepared the way for the adoption of the premillennial convictions of Edward Bickersteth. Indeed the business cycle of boom and depression fitted in very well with ideas of an interventionist God; it also matched the alternation in Ashley's personality of periods of optimism and pessimism, joy and gloom.

The third aspect to consider is evidence in the period 1826-1834 of distinctively Evangelical emphases in Ashley's thought, most importantly the two occasions on which he was referred to as a 'Saint'. Even before these references Ashley was poring over Evangelical sermons,⁶⁸ and, perhaps in line with his changing understanding of God, was reading the Book of Revelation⁶⁹ - including making some early anti-Catholic comments - and declared his trust in providence that did seem to be going beyond the usual statements.⁷⁰ The first time when he was referred to by the appellation 'Saint' was on 28 April, 1829:

Yesterday I heard (at Hatfield) that I was considered A SAINT. I do not regard it; with all my faults, I fear that I shall never have the fault of being too good.⁷¹

The 'Saints' were that group of Evangelical Members of Parliament that gathered around Wilberforce and Clapham Common. The second occasion was from his diary entry of 24 August, 1829, when Lady Cowper remarked that Ashley had a high sense of religion and was 'almost a Saint'.⁷² On this occasion Ashley also rejected the appellation, acknowledging his high sense of religion but repudiating any suggestion of fanaticism.⁷³ Battiscombe,⁷⁴ Finlayson⁷⁵ and Best⁷⁶ all use this as evidence that Ashley cannot have been an Evangelical at this stage. However, there are other points that need to be made against this interpretation. Firstly, the April diary entry does not in itself warrant Battiscombe's statement that Ashley 'hotly denied the imputation of being "a Saint"'.⁷⁷ A straight reading of the text seems rather to suggest a modesty in Ashley's reply regarding a title, rather than denial of the Evangelicalism implied by its use. Indeed the very designation 'Saint' was one applied to Evangelicals by those outside; it was a contemporary nickname,⁷⁸ and does not seem to have been used by its intended recipients themselves. Hence, a modest disavowal of the title by Ashley would seem quite natural. In addition it should be noted that the very fact that others applied the title to Ashley twice in 1829 certainly suggested that he was already displaying sufficient Evangelical characteristics for others to call him one.

This is reinforced by another diary entry in 1827 in which Ashley noted how others seemed to consider him pious:

How I revolt at anything like religious sentiment merely to catch admiration..... Yesterday a man took the opportunity of my presence to teach his child points of religious instruction, etc. He sought my applause, I could perceive. No doubt he means well towards the child, but the pretension displeased me.⁷⁹

Much of Ashley's reading at this time was of a religious nature; there were references in his diaries to intense prayer, an early understanding of the threat of biblical criticism, and a conviction of his own shortcomings.⁸⁰ He referred to 'a more enlarged view of things,'⁸¹ and 'that it was necessary to cleanse and sweep away that structure of corruption and beastliness which had wholly obscured the real purpose and calling of mankind.'⁸² Finally, it should be noted that Ashley was considered sufficient of an Evangelical to sit on the Select Committee on Sunday Observance in 1832,⁸³ and that it was a leading Evangelical, Sir Andrew Agnew, who acted as intermediary between Ashley and George Bull when Ashley was invited to take up the factory question.⁸⁴

Some elucidation must, however, be offered of the deepening of Ashley's Evangelical emphasis displayed from 1834-1835 onwards. Part of the explanation is that of increased knowledge and a process of development from the time of his 'change of view'. Nevertheless, it was from this point that Ashley started to play a more significant role in Evangelical societies. The answer seems to be rather the growth within Ashley's thought of 'party' Evangelicalism, that is, an increased stress on the implications of Evangelical belief for the nature of the Church and its ministry. This period was also the formative time for the Oxford Movement. In 1833 on a tour of Italy Ashley attended Catholic mass, there being 'no Protestant place of worship,'⁸⁵ and described the ceremonial as 'tedious and unscriptural,' 'everlasting movement and gesture, with numberless repetitions of robing, candles, incense, and drawling chants.'⁸⁶ However, two quite separate events can be suggested as the reason for Shaftesbury's advance into party Evangelicalism. The first was the passage of the Reform Act in 1832, vigorously opposed by Ashley. He recognised that one result of

constitutional change would be church reform, possibly imperiling the important principle of church establishment. Although anxious to protect 'the rights, privileges, and dignity of the Church,'⁸⁷ he recognized that 'Church Reform (if any) must be extensive; it may be so, and yet be safe if rightly founded.'⁸⁸ The key to such reform must be an encouragement of lay involvement in the church and a playing down of pretensions to a sacerdotal priesthood; the result was the Church Pastoral Aid Society, with its particular feature of lay agency. Ashley also increasingly felt the need to defend the Protestant position of both church and state. The second event was Ashley's adoption of premillennialism. The result was a heightened view of the literal inspiration of the Scripture, a concern for supernatural divine intervention, the Second Advent, and final judgement. This intensified Ashley's Protestant position, but also his own particular understanding of the tradition, led him to an involvement in numerous Evangelical societies, both missionary orientated and directed towards social welfare. It also marked his card distinctly as a party Evangelical.

Thus it can be concluded that Ashley's crucial passage into the Evangelical faith occurred in 1826, in circumstances that clearly affected his understanding of God. This faith continued to develop over time and led to his adoption of premillennialism in 1835. Combined with his concern for the nature of the church from his visits to Italy and the prospects of church reform, together with his increased desire to defend the Protestant position of church and state, this led him increasingly into the adoption of party Evangelical positions.

4.3 Shaftesbury and Evangelicalism

Shaftesbury's understanding of the corruption of humanity and the necessity of the atonement, placed him within the mainstream of the Evangelical tradition. These concerns played a significant part in his conversion. In the mid-1830s Ashley began to keep a diary of his religious reflections, which contained much comment on human depravity.⁸⁹ The human heart was referred to as deceitful and wicked, and any notion of man's perfection was to be held in horror.⁹⁰ The impossibility of relying on man for

justification meant that it was to God, and in particular to the work of Christ on the cross, that one must look to for salvation. Ashley also commented that 'the hardest of all notions to expel is the notion of self-righteousness.'⁹¹ He later commented: 'The best act that the best man ever did, contains in it that which is worthy of condemnation.'⁹² And, of course, the great saving truth for humanity corrupted by sin was 'salvation by a crucified Redeemer.'⁹³

Like Wilberforce his interest was with the specific doctrines of sin and atonement, the need for a personal relationship with the Saviour rather than generalities, which turned people away from the great truth of a crucified Saviour.⁹⁴ One consequence of this pessimistic outlook on humanity was an optimistic view of God, and the need for the message of salvation to be carried afar. This had been the motivation of Simeon's moderate Calvinism which gave the impulse for missionary work and was neither the prelude to universalism, nor a mere gathering in of the elect.

Ashley held in tension his understanding of God as both a God of natural order and a God of intervention both after 1826 and, indeed, after 1835. The early Evangelicals embraced science in accordance with their conception of natural theology as reflecting the order, wisdom and goodness of God. Hilton makes the point that those who supposed that there was a permanent natural law operating in the universe looked to science with confident expectation.⁹⁵ It was only later in the century when scientific method and investigation were set up in opposition to religion that Evangelicals, including Shaftesbury, opposed such methodology, but not science itself. In 1829 Ashley remarked that he had the previous night held forth to an audience on Astronomy and he hoped that his remarks might 'lead them to reflect more deeply on the immensity of power and goodness in the Creator!'⁹⁶ Two days later he remarked on having spent a night observing the heavens, in the company of the astronomer Sir James South, and that despite being 'a wicked man,' 'still there is within me a spirit of love and adoration which bursts forth at the sight of any of nature's glories.'⁹⁷ In his old age Ashley reflected that he was at that time 'passionately devoted to science.'⁹⁸

He asserted that: 'Every fact in science, if rightly used, is an evidence to God's truth as revealed in the Bible.'⁹⁹ Ultimately science would prove Scripture.

Shaftesbury's paternalism also mirrored this view of God. So, for example, the Sabbath showed God's wisdom and order, and was intended also for the whole of society. The setting aside of one day was of particular benefit to the poor.

The longer I live the more I reverence and adore the benevolent wisdom of God, which has set apart one day in seven for His service and man's refreshment. It is the peculiar right, privilege, and comfort of the poor.¹⁰⁰

Thus, fortified by his traditional aristocratic paternalism, Shaftesbury continued, in this respect, to stand in the tradition of Wilberforce and Simeon, of an Evangelical 'natural theology'. The change came with the move, in and after 1826, to a more interventionist understanding of the nature of God. This may partly have come about through Ashley's relationship with Edward Bickersteth. He first met Bickersteth in 1835 and subsequently *spent time with him at Watton Rectory*.¹⁰¹ *Bickersteth was a former secretary of the CMS and, hence, his Evangelical credentials were impeccable. Bickersteth had originally adopted the popular Evangelical view of the missionary enterprise. He looked for 'the gradual conversion of the world, by the spread of missions,*¹⁰² and was sceptical about the role of the study of unfulfilled prophecy, noting that 'the immediate work of the Lord is disregarded for the uncertain future.'¹⁰³ By 1832 he had become a convinced premillennialist. Ashley's association with Bickersteth led to him also adopting a position of premillennialism, but one influenced by Bickersteth's own particular understanding of the events connected with the millennium, their relationship to the present dispensation and their implications for missionary work and social reform.¹⁰⁴

Ashley's views on the Bible were uncompromising and clearly placed him more on the biblicist wing of Evangelicalism. There was an obvious link here to premillennialism with its concern for the literal fulfilment of the word of God and its bearing on historical events. His basic maxim was to 'let the Bible tell its own story, use its own

language, make its own appeals. Enforce all these, but add nothing of your own.¹⁰⁵

Shaftesbury clearly asserted the notion of plenary inspiration.

Depend upon it, my friends, that there is no security whatever except in standing upon the faith of our fathers, and saying with them that the blessed old Book is 'God's Word written', from the very first syllable down to the very last, and from the last back to the first.¹⁰⁶

Ultimately, the Mosaic creation, the authenticity of the Pentateuch, the deluge, Noah's Ark, Joshua, the miracles of Moses and the Red Sea, would be proved.¹⁰⁷ Every syllable would become clear.¹⁰⁸ He rejected the idea of different degrees of inspiration.¹⁰⁹ The only principle of interpretation was that 'nothing but Scripture can interpret Scripture.'¹¹⁰

In The Record, Ashley declared:

Let us then, as Protestants, stand by that which alone was the pillar and ground of truth - the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible.¹¹¹

But Scripture was also to Shaftesbury a crucial component of the Christian life, to be studied devotionally, in private. So, regarding his own personal study of Second Chronicles, he remarked: 'It should be studied, weighed, and prayed over, hour after hour, by every man in public life.'¹¹² It should, indeed, be the subject of contemplation and deep thought: 'How much is opened by the least meditation of the Bible!'¹¹³ It should be applied in both private¹¹⁴ and public life.¹¹⁵

The Bible was the Word of God and Shaftesbury considered himself firmly under the authority of the Bible. He felt many only accepted Scripture as far as it suited them, and 'such will be the religion of the future, in which Vishnu, Mahomet, Jupiter, and Jesus Christ will all be upon a level.'¹¹⁶ The Bible to Shaftesbury spoke not only to the intellect but also to the heart, the centre of the emotions. Faith and gratitude both belonged in the heart.¹¹⁷ Thus Shaftesbury emphasised that the Bible had to guide the whole of life and being.

Shaftesbury's understanding of Church and Sacraments linked his Evangelical faith and party Protestantism. Shaftesbury certainly believed in large parts of national

Protestantism, and acted accordingly. Although he had changed his mind and supported Catholic Emancipation in 1829, he considered it a matter of expediency and for the purposes of 'substituting in their stead other defences for Church and State.'¹¹⁸ However, his commitment to Protestantism took on an increasingly religious tone for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was the development of his own religious views. His adoption of premillennialism and its application by many, even if not directly by Ashley, to world events and human affairs, led to much association of the imagery of Revelation with the papacy. This was reinforced by opposition to the Tractarian movement within the Church of England, and specifically to the 'Papal aggression' of 1850 when a Roman Catholic hierarchy was reconstituted for England and Wales. Shaftesbury saw the use of territorial titles by the new Roman Catholic bishops as a claim to sovereignty; 'Mark the true reason: the Romish Church claims sovereignty and jurisdiction over every baptized soul.'¹¹⁹ He clearly felt that Rome had been encouraged to act by the activities of the Tractarians within the Church, and this partly explains his determination to oppose ritualism: 'Let us turn our eyes to that within, from Popery to Popery in the bud; from the open enemy to the concealed traitor.'¹²⁰

Throughout his life the political defence of Protestantism was intertwined with theological opposition to Tractarianism. The two elements perhaps came together most clearly in the campaign for a Protestant bishop in Jerusalem. This was opposed by most Tractarians both because of their repudiation of Protestantism and their sympathies for the rights of the Eastern Church. The campaign was also an important part of Ashley's theology of the return of the Jews to Palestine, as well as an expression of political Protestantism. Ashley emphasised the doctrines he opposed from Rome: 'false and heretical doctrines,' 'auricular confession - the most monstrous, perhaps, of all the monstrous practices of the Roman system,' 'a deep-seated corruption of faith and doctrine, enticing, and intending to entice, the people from the simplicity of the Gospel, and to lead them to submit to the sacerdotal forgery of a sacrificing priesthood, and the necessary and inevitable train of abominable superstitions.'¹²¹

This anti-Catholicism was also embodied in Shaftesbury's understanding of the sacraments. The importance he attached to attending the Lord's Supper should not be underestimated. Thus he said on Trinity Sunday, 1841: 'Took the Sacrament as a fitting and comfortable preparation for the coming times of personal and political difficulty.'¹²² And on Easter Sunday, 1873; '..took the Lord's Supper. God be praised!'¹²³ This entry also showed Shaftesbury's theological objection to the Roman interpretation of the sacrament.

When reading St. John, and the last words on the Cross, "It is finished", convinced that, if the doctrine of transubstantiation be true, Christ would have said "It is begun". It is begun, the series of sacrifices, now commenced by my death, to be repeated to the end of time. Again in Corinthians: "Ye show forth the Lord's death till He come". On the Romish assumption, we do not *show forth*, or *proclaim*, or *commemorate*, the Lord's death each time we take the Holy Sacrament. We *cause* His death, we *renew* it, we *compass* it. All alike foolish and blasphemous.¹²⁴

Protagonists rarely give weight to the carefully worked-out positions of opponents. Shaftesbury may well have misunderstood the Catholic point of view, but to him Roman doctrine and practice contradicted the principles of the Reformation and the Thirty Nine Articles. The link was thus made between Evangelical doctrine and Evangelical church practice. Shaftesbury came to see that the one had to be applied to the other, and in the Church of England that meant opposition to Papal aggression, Tractarianism and Ritualism.

Thus it can be seen how these various aspects of Evangelical thought and practice came in their adoption by Shaftesbury to act as catalysts to move him away from moderate Evangelicalism to a more precise party, Protestant Evangelicalism. Once his social views are added into the equation, we find a complex interplay of influences. This was especially so in the precise nature of the premillennial views which he accepted and in their application to society. It is from this interaction, from this interchange of theological and social beliefs, that something of Shaftesbury's dynamism emerges in relation to Evangelical missionary endeavour and social reforming activities and campaigns. Shaftesbury acted as something of a link between

the early missionary-orientated Evangelicalism and the later rigorism of party Protestantism. Similarly, in his view of God, there remained a constant interaction in his thought between order and intervention. He thus stood both within and apart from the tradition of Wilberforce.

¹ G.B.A.M. Finlayson, Shaftesbury, p13.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p14.

⁴ E. Hodder, The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (3 vols, 1886), vol 1, pp38-39.

⁵ Ibid., p51.

⁶ Hammond, p261.

⁷ Finlayson, p606.

⁸ Battiscombe, p334.

⁹ Finlayson, p33.

¹⁰ Hodder, vol 1, pp36-37; pp50-51.

¹¹ Finlayson, p14; poem quoted in full in Battiscombe, p7.

¹² Southampton, University Library, Broadlands Papers, SHA/MIS/73

¹³ St. Augustine, Confessions 3,111, Sheed, p44.

¹⁴ Southampton, University Library, Broadlands Papers, Shaftesbury Diaries, 29 June, 1841, SHA/PD/2. All future references to the manuscript diaries will take the form - Diaries, date, archive reference.

¹⁵ Diaries, 17 December, 1827, SHA/PD/1

¹⁶ Bishop Henry Phillpotts, Reform Bill, Hansard, 11 April, 1832, col 274. All references to Hansard refer to Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, 3rd Series.

¹⁷ Bishop George Murray, Reform Bill, Hansard, 13 April, 1832, col 401.

¹⁸ Norman, pXX.

¹⁹ The nature of paternalism and Shaftesbury's place within that framework are fully discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

²⁰ Lord Ashley to Robert Southey, 12 September, 1830, quoted in Hodder, vol 1, p114.

²¹ Robert Southey to Lord Ashley, 13 January, 1833, quoted in Hodder, vol 1, p146.

²² Ashley, Article on Infant Labour, Quarterly Review, vol 67, December 1840, p180.

²³ Finlayson, p600.

²⁴ Hodder, vol 1, pvi.

²⁵ Henry Fox, 'Journal', quoted in Battiscombe, p16.

²⁶ C. Woodham Smith, Florence Nightingale, 1820-1910, (1956), p589, quoted in Finlayson, p600.

²⁷ Ibid., pp600-601.

²⁸ Hodder, vol 3, pp211-212.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Battiscombe, chapter 9.

³¹ Hammond, pp238-239.

³² Battiscombe, p99.

³³ G.F.A. Best, Shaftesbury, (1964), p54.

³⁴ Finlayson, p103.

³⁵ Diaries, 10 October, 1825, SHA/PD/1.

³⁶ Diaries, 13 October, 1825, SHA/PD/1.

³⁷ Diaries, 14 October, 1825, SHA/PD/1.

³⁸ Hodder, vol 1, p43.

³⁹ Diaries, 13 August, 1825, SHA/PD/1.

⁴⁰ Battiscombe, p26.

⁴¹ Finlayson, p18.

⁴² Hammond, p239.

⁴³ Finlayson, pp30-32.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp33-34.

⁴⁵ Diaries, 9 June, 1834, SHA/PD/1.

⁴⁶ Diaries, 3 July, 1834, SHA/PD/1.

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- 47 Diaries, 14 July, 1834, SHA/PD/1..
 - 48 Diaries, 7 August, 1834, SHA/PD/1.
 - 49 Finlayson, p103.
 - 50 Best, p54.
 - 51 Battiscombe, p99.
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114 For example see references in diaries; 28 October, 1827; 20 May, 1827, SHA/PD/1; 11 October, 1857, SHA/PD/7.
115 Diaries, 17 April, 1827, SHA/PD/1.
116 Diaries, 18 March, 1868, SHA/PD/8.
117 Diaries, 31 January, 1871, SHA/PD/9.
118 Diaries, 5 February, 1829, SHA/PD/1.
119 Hodder, vol 2, p332.
120 Ibid., pp332-333.
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5 Evangelicals and Political Economy

The relationship of Evangelicals and economics has been rarely investigated. Evangelicals expressed widely different views on economic issues, as, indeed, did other Christian traditions. The range of opinion among Evangelicals was, partly at least, a consequence of the variety of theological motivations, which is not surprising given the numerous strands which went to make up Evangelicalism.

5.1 The Enlightenment, natural theology and Political Economy

Enlightenment thought had a significant impact upon the relationship of Christians, including Evangelicals, to economics, both as a theoretical science and in the policy prescriptions which were recommended.

Within the theistic context of the Enlightenment in England, the Newtonian universe of natural law was usually understood in terms of a benevolent and supernatural Creator and Designer. Newton appealed to the argument from design, especially in the eye and in the bodies of animals.¹ The application of this understanding to political economy led to a central role being granted to money and commerce;² these mechanisms were designed by God for the smooth running of the business system. In this setting, the Enlightenment's characteristic harmony was seen in Voltaire's description of the Royal Exchange as the meeting place of various religions and Christian confessions for the benefit of mankind.³ Here, however, also lay the beginnings of the commercialisation of relationships that Shaftesbury so regretted. Nevertheless, as a result, many theologians came to adopt natural theology as moralists adopted natural law.⁴ Political economy was one expression of these ideas.

Reason became the focus of the debate between orthodox theologians and Enlightenment opinion, specifically so in response to deism. Apologists sought to affirm reason, though without completely supplanting revelation. This trend was demonstrated by works of 'evidences', notably those of William Paley⁵ and later John Bird Sumner,⁶ an Evangelical, who also embraced the principles of political economy.

Joseph Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature (1736) also formed part of this reaction. Revelation came to be defended by dividing history into dispensations and arguing that the revelation of miracle and divine action in the earlier period could not be judged by the later standards of reason.⁷

Paley endorsed natural theology by maintaining that humanity could ascertain quite clearly the marks of design in the structure of both the universe and man himself. Nevertheless, he rejected the deist position of the perfection of nature by a recognition of defects in the divine machinery, remedied by the special intervention of God, ultimately in the person of Christ.⁸

In his Natural Theology, apart from his famous analysis of the workings of a watch, Paley considered the eye as an example of divine design, in particular the adaption of the eye of the fish to water:

...it is in the construction of instruments, in the choice and adaption of means, that a creative intelligence is seen. It is this which constitutes the order and beauty of the universe.⁹

Paley argued that particular purposes were achieved through general laws via the means of an apparatus such as the eye rather than by the creation of a new law or the suspension of an old law. Unlike the deists, however, Paley concluded in favour of a personal deity.¹⁰

In engaging with the deists within the framework of reason, however, the orthodox theologians showed themselves to be children of their age. Their main appeal was to natural theology, particularly to arguments from design and cosmology. It was certainly true that the apologists sought to maintain their orthodoxy on themes like the personal nature of the deity and the recognition of imperfections in the system, but nevertheless their defence of revelation was on the basis of reason and in the affirmation of human rationality the nature of sin was diminished.

Enlightenment thinkers in England responded to social need in various ways. Porter asserts that it was the 'distinctive dilemma of the English Enlightenment' to bring together the individual and social aspects of society.¹¹ The central focus of the response in England was not state power, but private and voluntary activities.¹² For some, individual 'emancipation stiffened into the iron laws of Ricardian political economy,'¹³ shown, for example, by the political economist Nassau Senior's role in the reform of the Poor Law. For others, there was a role for the state in bringing about the improvement of human conditions, an illustration here being Edwin Chadwick's involvement in public health and sanitation reform. The Evangelical, Thomas Chalmers, embraced the maxims of political economy and also a wide range of voluntary, charitable, and humanitarian activities. These illustrations demonstrate the complexity of the response to social need of those influenced by the Enlightenment and are a further reminder of the need to avoid treating these intellectual and philosophical trends as monolithic.

There were both continuities and discontinuities between the orthodoxy of Paley and the Evangelical world view. Anstey rather follows Bebbington in that while recognising the distinctiveness of the Evangelical outlook, claims that 'it had more affinities with the thought of the eighteenth century as a whole than is commonly supposed.'¹⁴ The intricate nature of that relationship, and the evident inconsistency of the Calvinist elements of Evangelicalism with Enlightenment thought, was discussed in chapter 3.5. To the extent that Evangelicals adopted the natural law view of the universe and Newtonian scientific method it was, thus, a relatively small step to accept political economy to a greater or lesser extent. Anstey demonstrates the place of natural theology in the Evangelical view, noting the caution shown in detecting interference with the regular course of nature,¹⁵ and that Wilberforce referred his readers to Butler's *Analogy*.¹⁶ He argues that Evangelicals embraced the spirit of the age by endorsing the concepts of liberty, benevolence and happiness, but gave them a more profound dimension. Thus liberty was seen as freedom from sin.¹⁷ It is, however, inadequate to maintain the quintessential nature of the Evangelical

understanding of the human relationship to its God and then to argue that it represented simply a deeper expression of the dominant cultural environment. The discontinuities should also be mentioned. The Christian Observer, the Eclectic Society and individuals like Granville Sharp all closely associated providence with specific contemporary and historical events.¹⁸ In this they were quite different from Paley and Butler and reflected the Evangelical concern to maintain a more direct involvement of God in his world rather than to view him merely as a remote designer. Conversion was, of course, essential to the Evangelical scheme, and there could surely be no more certain instance of God's continuing action and intervention than in an Evangelical conversion. Similarly, Wilberforce's Practical View, protested against the Enlightenment view of man and its emphasis on a benevolent disposition as a substitute for vital religion. Indeed, Wilberforce had a powerful sense of the particular guidance of providence in his own life, contemplating in his journal on providential encounters with Milner, discovering Doddridge's Rise and Progress, and on protection from evil and danger.¹⁹ Nor did Wilberforce's emphasis on sin and the need for atonement reflect the Enlightenment temper.

It was natural theology which linked Evangelical opinion and the Enlightenment, and which was expressed in political economy. The possibility of an Evangelical natural theology was, however, severely limited, due to the emphasis on sin, depravity and the need for atonement. To the Evangelical, these beliefs were 'the root of his whole world-view,'²⁰ and also a continuing 'part of the heritage of the Church through the ages,'²¹ not least of course of the heritage of the Reformation. This in turn partly explains substantial resistance to political economy from many Evangelicals.

The unquestionable concern for divine order within the Evangelical tradition was due more to the continuing influence of Reformation thought, especially that of Calvin, than to the Enlightenment. This line of theological reasoning can also be traced in Simeon's writings.

Calvin's position was determined primarily by the status of the Fall, although there has been continuing controversy over whether in fact Calvin did allow for a natural theology.²²

..I speak only of the primal and simple knowledge to which the very order of nature would have led us if Adam had remained upright.²³

There had been a conscious turning away from God, and yet a seed remained, albeit corrupted.²⁴ God had also planted clear and prominent marks in the universe so that no-one could make a plea of ignorance. Hence, Calvin saw God's glory manifest in the 'distinct and well-ordered variety of the heavenly host.'²⁵ He summarised the connection of divine order in the universe, human sin, and providence as follows.

For with regard to the most beautiful structure and order of the universe, how many of us are there who, when we lift up our eyes to heaven or cast them about through the various regions of the earth, recall our minds to a remembrance of the Creator, and do not rather, disregarding their Author, sit idly in contemplation of his works ? In fact, with regard to those events which daily take place outside the ordinary course of nature, how many of us do not reckon that men are whirled and twisted about by blindly indiscriminate fortune, rather than governed by God's providence?²⁶

Calvin can be distinguished from the Enlightenment tradition and the Christian apologists like Butler and Paley by the controlling nature of his understanding of the Fall. The conditional clause meant that for Calvin only a theoretical natural theology was possible. For him, the relationship of revelation to the natural knowledge of God in creation was that in 'Jesus Christ, the theme of Holy Scripture, we recognise also the glory of God as Creator shining in the world.'²⁷ Thus Calvin's distinctive position was of the primacy of revelation, under which God the Creator could certainly be known in nature.

The continuing character of divine providence was essential to Calvin; 'we see the presence of divine power shining as much in the continuing state of the universe as in its conception.'²⁸ God was not only the Creator, but also 'everlasting Governor and Preserver,'²⁹ not only establishing the framework but also sustaining, nourishing and caring for it. Calvin used the sun as an example. The sun gave light and heat but God

could dispense with the need for the instrument of the sun and act himself directly if he so wished. Thus Calvin quoted Joshua 10:13 when the sun stood still for two days and Isaiah 38:8 when its shadow went back by ten degrees.

God has witnessed by those few miracles that the sun does not daily rise and set by a blind instinct of nature but that he himself, to renew our remembrance of his fatherly favour toward us, governs its course.³⁰

Thus general and particular providence came together in a way that distinguished Reformed and Evangelical teaching. Indeed, it can be suggested that without the understanding of the particular, the general becomes idolatry, due to the influence of man's corruption and sin. This has particular implications for the understanding of the role of political economy in Evangelical thought.

...providence means not that by which God idly observes from heaven what takes place on earth, but that by which, as keeper of the keys, he governs all events.³¹

Simeon also was clear that, for the natural man, natural religion had no practical value.³² None of the ancient philosophers had been able to decipher the writings of God upon ordered nature.³³ The reason for this was sin. The works of creation did, theoretically, allow for the discernment of God, but sin had overridden such natural inclination.³⁴ Only with the benefit of revelation could God the Creator be apprehended in the natural universe. Simeon, at times, appeared to grant more than Calvin to the natural knowledge of God the Creator,³⁵ perhaps following Paley here in the appeal to the example of the design of a watch, but he also emphasised the distinction.

There are those ready to hear somewhat of God as manifested in creation. But of his manifestation in redemption they will not hear.³⁶

Simeon was less explicit on the nature of providence. Nevertheless there were a number of references in the Horae Homilecticae which illustrated Simeon's providential framework.

In his discussion of Matthew 10:30 ("the very hairs of your head are numbered"), Simeon commented that it was not the existence of a Supreme Being which was at stake, 'but the extent of his agency, and the interest which he takes in the affairs of men.'³⁷ In principle, Simeon quite clearly associated himself with particular rather than general providence.

To imagine a *general* Providence, and to deny or question his *particular* agency in every thing that occurs, is absurd in the extreme. The doctrine of a *particular* Providence is fully confirmed...³⁸

God's omniscience and omnipotence required him to be in control of the whole universe. Scripture showed all creatures to be subject to his control as well as the sun, moon and stars.³⁹

There was, thus, a detailed, elaborate interaction between reason and revelation, and also between general and particular providence, in the core Reformed tradition which formed part of Evangelicalism. The variety of views adopted by Evangelicals on political economy depended upon the weight given to the different parts of this theological system. For some, like, Sumner, the concern for divine order, perhaps indeed influenced by the intellectual setting of the Enlightenment, meant an acceptance of the principles of political economy. But it was not necessarily so, and the concern for sin did mean that many were not prepared to equate God's hand with the invisible hand of economic law. Divine order for some, like Shaftesbury, was not placed in economic relationships, but in the patriarchal ordering of society.

5.2 Christians and Political Economy

Adam Smith's An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776) can be seen as 'the fountainhead of classical economics,'⁴⁰ or at very least that which 'launched the classical tradition in economic thought.'⁴¹ Smith has been described as 'the great founder of political economy who set the stage upon which future economists would perform.'⁴² Smith not only defined the essential concepts of an economic model, such as value, price, cost, exchange, but also advocated a minimalist

approach to government intervention in the workings of markets.⁴³ Smith's foundational model was not static, and was adjusted and developed by later political economists, notably Malthus, Ricardo and Mill.

The classical economic model can only be evaluated within the framework of how Smith and his successors understood the universe. This view was essentially appropriated from the philosophical tenets of the Enlightenment. It was an economic outlook, analogous to Newtonian mechanics,⁴⁴ deriving from natural law, mirrored in both man's innate nature and in the economic laws that governed the universe. Thus, for Smith, nature was ordered and harmonious. He established his moral view of the universe in his Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759). He saw man as composed of three sets of motives: self-love and sympathy, freedom and propriety, and labour and exchange.⁴⁵ Smith saw means as adjusted to ends especially in the mechanism of the bodies of plants and animals.⁴⁶ These ideas came to be applied to man's economic activity in the classical model.

Smith's fundamental economic assumption about man was his natural propensity to barter. This led directly to the division of labour.

It is the necessary, though very slow and gradual, consequence of a certain propensity in human nature which has in view *no such extensive utility*; the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another.⁴⁷

This has to be placed alongside an essential selfishness in humanity. The innate inclination to barter arose from the quest for self-advantage.⁴⁸ Bargains were struck in the economic field on the basis of self-love and the advantage that could be gained from the trade, but the economic mechanism allowed the satisfaction of others to be gained by each serving his own interests.⁴⁹ Here lay the basis of the classical economic model, and the basis for its expression in political economy, that by the individual pursuit of self-interest (as implanted by nature), not only were personal demands met, but also the needs of others in society, and, hence, through this mechanism, the greater public good was achieved.

This attitude reflected an optimistic understanding, not so much of human nature, but of the operation of the laws of economics. The economic system itself constituted a mechanism regulated by the principles of equilibrium. Disequilibrium was assumed away, or at least dealt with within the economic system. Thus any interference with the system was to be resisted.

Although Smith himself acknowledged there were issues of just distribution, the classical economists generally (Ricardo perhaps being an exception), were concerned rather with a model of production.⁵⁰ Smith dealt with the problems of distribution, not by economic theory, but by further appeal to the framework of natural law which governed his work. The same natural law which had ingrained in man the predilection to barter for his own advantage had also given him intrinsic principles 'which interest him in the welfare of others and make their happiness necessary to him.'⁵¹ These various natural sentiments acted on each other as a system of checks and balances.⁵² Nevertheless, 'the Divine Being conducts the universe to produce the greatest possible quantity of happiness, and hence, the job of caring for all of mankind is best left to Him. Men perform their proper functions when they attend to their own happiness and that of their families, friends and country.'⁵³ Thus to summarise:

Smithian man, then, is roughly equal by natural abilities and equipped with a propensity to exchange; he is also motivated principally by self-interest in his economic dealings, and he is provided by nature, slowly and spontaneously, with a system which perfectly suits him and one which naturally makes his inherent self-seeking fit him for society. And from this desire of every man to seek his own advantage and to improve his condition arises all public and private wealth.⁵⁴

It is no easy task to disentangle the connection between Christian theology and political economy. For some clergy it was 'a supplementary revelation' and for others 'a repugnant perversion of traditional Christian values.'⁵⁵ Soloway also emphasises that 'many of the Church leaders who were to guide the Establishment through the critical years of reform were considering the relationship of the Church to the lower orders not only in Malthusian terms, but within the general context of political

economy.⁵⁶ This illustrates well the influence of Enlightenment rationalism upon economic thought generally, and also specifically within orthodox theology. There seems, in fact, to be something to be said for both Edward Norman's and Jonathan Clark's alternative views of the influence of society on theology and of theology on society. Bishops, and others of various theological positions, could be found on both sides of the argument over political economy. Waterman notes that several theologians made a significant contribution to both the technical science of economics and the values of their generation.⁵⁷ Political economy and theology overlapped when the social questions of poverty and its causes, equality and competition arose. Waterman correctly poses the question:

Were these to be regarded as beneficent or tragic; as indicators of 'contrivance' by a benevolent and omnipotent Creator, or as the inescapable consequences of the expulsion from Eden ?⁵⁸

Waterman goes on to say that these early Christian political economists supplied answers that 'tended strongly in the optimistic, non-tragic direction, for the most part reflecting the survival of eighteenth-century natural theology...and a widespread reluctance at that time to grasp the nettle of original sin.'⁵⁹ This explains clearly why non-Evangelicals would embrace political economy. It also hints, with the emphasis on sin, why Evangelicals were more divided in their attitudes, which reinforces the same general point made in the previous discussion of the understanding of natural theology within the Evangelical tradition.

The connection between natural theology and political economy was exemplified in Malthus,⁶⁰ and much of later Christian political economy developed in reaction to Malthus' writings. Malthus, in his Essay on the Principle of Population, the first edition of which was in 1798, but which went through several editions and changes, developed a principle of population growth which would naturally lead to inequality, poverty and competition. Government interference was futile in the face of a natural economic law. Paley accepted that as a result of this natural law, property would be irregularly distributed.⁶¹

Political economy was not, of course, monolithic, and various lines of thought developed.⁶² Malthus' approach was essentially pessimistic - the emphasis being placed on the checks of poverty and disease - whereas many political economists wanted to assert a more harmonious view of economic relationships.⁶³ Edward Copleston, Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, and Bishop of Llandaff (1828-49) stressed that the law of population would lead to increased labour, increased production, and hence to human progress.⁶⁴ Soloway notes that Malthus accepted that one result of his positive checks of evil and suffering was indeed to create exertion, and hence economic progress. However, he did not expand upon it, that task being left to later writers.⁶⁵ Thus political economy provided a stick through the inevitable poverty inherent in Malthus' theory, and the carrot of inequality acting as a natural spur to industry and efficiency.⁶⁶

Not all Christians accepted the integration of Christian theology and political economy. Soloway records Bishop Watson receiving a demand from a Bath clergyman to denounce Malthus' essay 'as an insidious attack upon the Gospels designed to bring benevolence into contempt,' and 'a monstrous rejection of Christ's teaching to infer that the poor had no right to live unless they could obtain subsistence by their own labour.'⁶⁷ Evangelicals were represented on both sides of the argument, as determined by their particular Evangelical beliefs. The most prominent names among Evangelicals who propounded the principles political economy were John Bird Sumner,⁶⁸ Bishop of Chester (1828-1848), and Archbishop of Canterbury (1848-1862), and Thomas Chalmers.⁶⁹

5.3 Evangelicals, economics and providence

In the same way that Bebbington has sought to demonstrate the general influence of the Enlightenment on Evangelical thought, Boyd Hilton in The Age of Atonement has specifically related Enlightenment rationalism, expressed in political economy, to Evangelicalism. The several influences which affected the wider Christian attitude

towards political economy, also had an impact on Evangelical thought. Whatever definition is adopted of an Evangelical, Sumner and Chalmers certainly were Evangelicals theologically. Hilton seems to define Evangelical in economic, rather than theological terms.⁷⁰ Although he presents a useful survey of the variety of theological thought among Evangelicals,⁷¹ in his discussion of social and economic opinions "evangelical" becomes an adjective to describe a type of economic thought rather than a noun, representing a substantive belief in its own right.⁷² Thus for Hilton evangelical economics extends far wider than the Evangelical constituency.⁷³ This even extended to the anachronistic comment that the banker Samuel Lloyd Jones, Lord Overstone, would have called himself an Evangelical earlier in the century even though he never actually used the term.⁷⁴ This weakens effective analysis of Evangelical views. The effect is to cloud the different approaches of Evangelicals and the diverse theological motivations which formed the foundation for their economic methodology.

The links between Christian theology, Evangelical theology and political economy were achieved through the doctrine of providence. Thus Jacob Viner has pointed out that the natural sentiments within man described by Adam Smith were endowed by divine providence, and indeed that Smith's whole argument was a significant application of the providential and teleological argument to human behaviour, which was also applied to the physical universe and the construction of animals.⁷⁵ Hence, 'all this psychological apparatus is providential; it is designed by God for the benefit of mankind and it is presumptuous for man, even if he be a moral philosopher, to find flaws in it.'⁷⁶ Indeed the whole natural law framework of classical economics seemed to fit well with the strand of Evangelicalism which emphasised the order and harmony of the universe operating through a system of cause and effect, of second causes rather than a first cause. The optimism of the classical model was reflected in the cheerful and hopeful future expectations of this element of providential theory; hence the weight given in the classical model to harmony and equilibrium. The paradoxical difference in the classical model between the pursuit of individual self-interest and the

overall achievement of the public good could only be explained by the providential design of the laws of political economy and competition. One result of competition was inequality. This was not perceived as a major problem within the framework of the classical economic model, as it was more concerned with a model of production than one of distribution.

Sumner was thus able to reconcile Malthusian principles with the wisdom and goodness of the deity.⁷⁷ In his two-volume Treatise On The Records Of Creation (1816) Sumner adopted Malthus' ideas of a natural law of population and the need for subsistence as part of God's divine plan for human progress. However, rather than this natural law leading to the positive checks of vice and misery, he preferred enlightened self-restraint. Thus he reinterpreted Malthus in a more optimistic manner. To Sumner the natural law of population directed men to industrial initiative which would lead to universal welfare. This was closer to the original *Wealth of Nations*. Human sin was explained by the corruption of the original utopia, which created want and scarcity in the first place.⁷⁸ However, it was when the Christian political economists departed from notions of future rewards and punishments altogether that differences arose with the Evangelical position.

There was some affinity of language between political economy and Evangelicalism, although the connections can be overplayed, hence disguising the essential theological basis of the Evangelical attitude to economics. The dominant vocabulary of political economy was that of contract and exchange.⁷⁹ The connection to the Evangelical doctrine of the atonement was obvious. The relationship of debtor and creditor mirrored the Evangelical understanding of the connection between sinful humanity and God. Since corporate bodies did not have a future life in which to receive their just punishments or rewards, then this had to be effected in the present world. Hence 'there was a tendency to regard innocent bankrupts as sacrificial offerings, beloved of God, and atoning vicariously for the sins of a commercially fallen world.'⁸⁰ But affinities of language, the borrowing by Evangelical theology of the language of the market place, can surely be used to emphasise the discontinuity between the two as

much as any continuity. The competitive forces of the market provided the this-worldly rewards and punishments required by the prevalent concept of life as a period of testing and trial. Although this understanding did, to some extent, fit well with the classical Evangelical view of the human life on earth as being a time of probation, it should be remembered that for the Evangelical the probation on earth was for eternal life in heaven where the ultimate rewards and punishments would be received. Indeed commercial reward in this life was viewed as much as a temptation or snare as a consequence of divine blessing propounded through the iron laws of economics.

One of the themes of this thesis is the recognition of variety, whether within Enlightenment thought, Evangelical opinion or economic views. In the area of the relationship of Evangelicals to economics Hilton has presented the broad issues. Although he has recognised diverse opinion his general hypothesis has been of the mainstream dominance of a moderate Evangelicalism which expressed itself in economic thought in the acceptance of political economy. But overall premises also need to be balanced by specific studies. Hilton acknowledges that he has given less weight to the continuing Calvinist tradition than Bebbington.⁸¹ The continued presence of Calvinist, at least moderate Calvinist opinion, within the Church of England as well as outside of it, is of considerable importance for understanding the socio-economic views of Evangelicals, particularly because of the stress on sin, and needs to be given more prominence than in Hilton's discussion. The central place of moderate Evangelical thought and the influence of natural law on Evangelicals is demonstrated in Hilton's comments regarding attitudes towards business. Chalmers features strongly in the analysis.⁸² Although alternative Evangelical understandings are noted, particularly in the earlier part of the period, the thrust of the argument was of the dominance in Evangelical thought of the natural laws of business; hence there was opposition to paternalistic intervention,⁸³ and an emphasis on 'an unregulated market operating freely in a context of Christian exhortation.'⁸⁴ In addition, 'providentialism was becoming unfashionable,'⁸⁵ and there was a 'confidence that if God loathed bad merchants, he adored good ones.'⁸⁶ The Evangelical view of business

life as a this-worldly life of temptation, trial and retribution led many, including Chalmers, to demand the repeal of the Usury Laws, which even Hilton describes as 'one of the central planks of scriptural economics.'⁸⁷ Hilton sums up the position well:

Evangelicals had no such desire for economic expansion, but they did believe that if capitalists were to achieve commercial (and spiritual) salvation through resisting temptation, then they must first be tempted to the utmost.⁸⁸

Hilton notes the opposing view offered by Richard Jones, who as well as maintaining that the natural demand for profit might not be legitimate viewed the repeal of the Usury Laws as being a fearful experiment on the morals of the people, which, of course, was exactly what Chalmers intended; Jones wanted government intervention.⁸⁹

In his investigation of Evangelical attitudes to business then, Hilton places excessive stress upon the moderate Evangelical tradition, its dominant role, and its link through natural theology to political economy. While acknowledging the other Evangelical views which were current, he does not permit sufficient critical analysis of the important and continuing place for such opinions in the later parts of his 'age of atonement'. The central concerns of his thesis mask the diversity. Indeed, in his chapter on Evangelical attitudes towards business, he misses the opportunity for further investigation of local studies and inquiries into the particular context and gets lost instead in pursuing his broader themes through geology and medicine.

These concerns can be supported by more detailed contextual studies of the type summarised by Jane Garnett.⁹⁰ She refers to the 'complacent identification of Protestantism and commercial progress'⁹¹ in the 1830s and 1840s. That Evangelical concern went deeper and further than Hilton would allow is clear to Garnett.

In examining the pattern of commercial crises, evangelical ministers were at one with other commentators in recognizing that dishonesty and recklessness were evidently chargeable not just to individuals, but to certain widely prevalent methods of conducting business.⁹²

Religion and political economy could not be simply equated and the latter regarded as intrinsically moral.⁹³ She quotes the prominent Evangelical, Hugh Stowell, in noting

that 'Protestant pride in Britain's economic progress could become detached from genuine religious values.'⁹⁴ Garnett, unlike Hilton, notes the influence of later revivals on Evangelical economic ethics and states that 'the simplified pieties of political economy, as it was popularly understood and incorporated in conventional morality, were inadequate to underpin a truly evangelical responsibility.'⁹⁵ It is this sort of understanding which the wide-ranging generalist approach of Hilton fails to engage with in any sufficient or comprehensive manner. Garnett proceeds to point out Evangelical criticism of free trade, of unfair competition, careless accounting procedures and indeed on the long-term trading practices of bankrupts.⁹⁶ Hilton has failed to recognize the on-going Evangelical critique of business; their views were a good deal more complex than he suggests, and, indeed, more influenced by Evangelical theology than he allows for.

Certainly, mid-Victorian evangelical critics were keen to reform the capitalist system, not to overturn it, but this did not imply a lack of commitment to challenging the ways in which social good and individual self-interest had been glibly elided. Evangelicals appealed to the individual conscience, but this was recognised as operating in a complex structure of social ethics.⁹⁷

Although G.M. Young in his portrait of the Victorian era notes that 'the virtues of a Christian after the Evangelical model were easily exchangeable with the virtues of a successful merchant or a rising manufacturer,'⁹⁸ Evangelicals held different views of the nature of divine providence which led some to embrace political economy, and some not.

Essential to the classical model was international free trade based on the principle of comparative advantage. Nations, through the division of labour, specialised in the products they produced most efficiently and traded these commodities with other countries which had specialised in other areas, to the advantage of both. Thus providence was credited with providing the economic incentive to trade by giving different products to different territories,⁹⁹ and with promoting universal brotherhood,¹⁰⁰ again reflecting the optimistic strand of providential theology. Viner notes that Scripture expresses some hostility to commerce, and that 'the idea was



treated by its supporters substantially as an element in natural rather than revealed theology.¹⁰¹ Thus, once again, it should not be surprising that Evangelical attitudes to commerce were at least somewhat ambiguous.

This same providentialist emphasis also led to an alliance between free trade and the missionary movement. Thus, Andrew Porter comments:

The peak of missionary confidence and perhaps too of commercial support for missions, the imperialism of the Gospel and of Free Trade went hand in hand.¹⁰²

Industry and commerce would bring about moral and religious improvement,¹⁰³ and 'the purposeful combination of legitimate trade and missionary work above all held out the best prospect of peace, security, and civilized relations between black and white.'¹⁰⁴ Indeed the prominent Clapham Evangelical, Thomas Fowell Buxton, was adamant that with legitimate trade, the slave trade would succumb to the forces of competition.¹⁰⁵ Thus, 'civilization, Christianity, and commerce were on the verge of becoming identical in the evangelical mind.'¹⁰⁶ It was a common view that bringing Christianity to the heathen also offered, as Brian Stanley has pointed out, 'unlimited social and economic development.'¹⁰⁷ Providence theory even allowed Evangelical missionary supporters to welcome the outcome of the opium wars against China, the morality of which they condemned, because the resulting commercial freedom opened up China to the missionary societies.

The most significant aspect of Christian opinion on the opium trade is the increasing willingness of missionary advocates to harness the cause of the gospel to the aspiration of free trade imperialism.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, Porter does recognise some ambiguity in Evangelical attitudes,¹⁰⁹ and notes a breaking down of the impact of providentialism and rationalism on Evangelical theology,¹¹⁰ and, after 1870, 'the greater difficulty by far lies in finding evangelicals who had confidence in the beneficial association of Christianity and commerce.'¹¹¹ Despite Porter's suggestion that theological views had little to do with this rise and fall,¹¹² Shaftesbury was illustrative of how Evangelical theological

thought moved attitudes towards trade in another direction, reflecting closely the biblical ambiguity about commerce and far from endorsing business and Christianity. Indeed Stanley's reference to Shaftesbury's Parliamentary opposition to the opium trade, not only on moral grounds, but also because of its effect on legitimate trade, fails to understand Ashley's view on free trade.¹¹³ His otherwise admirable article does, however, recognise fully the apparent anomalies in the theory of providence which led to the Evangelical view represented by Shaftesbury.¹¹⁴

Thomas Chalmers is presented by Hilton as 'the main exemplar of evangelical economics.'¹¹⁵ He was undoubtedly a prime example of an Evangelical who adopted political economy as a set of theoretical principles and sought to put them into practice in the parish. He was a renowned preacher and pioneered a series of social experiments in St. John's parish in Glasgow to reinforce his opposition to compulsory poor relief in favour of a voluntary system. Of his many works, a number are of particular interest, especially his Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns (1821), On Political Economy (1832) and his two-volume Natural Theology (1833).

Chalmers' world view was largely that of natural theology, but one which demanded the presence of a personal deity. Thus although Chalmers himself affirmed the historical nature of the Mosaic account of creation, an argument for God still remained.

There are certain alleged processes in geology which if true show unequivocally, we have long thought, the marks and footsteps of a Divinity.¹¹⁶

Whatever geology might have to show concerning successive generations of eras and species, there was still the need for a point of definite commencement. Thus, '...if we can but demonstrate a beginning for any such separate and independent races in the physiological kingdom, we shall obtain in our opinion the nearest possible view that is anywhere afforded within the limits of our creation of the fiat of a God.'¹¹⁷ He argued that there was nothing in any of the discovered laws or forces of matter which could explain the origin of the present order, other than a God. When the formation of

complex anatomical systems were considered this argument was reinforced 'to almost the force of infinity.'¹¹⁸ He aligned himself with Paley whose theological works he described as the most precious of the previous half-century.¹¹⁹

In the second volume of his Natural Theology, Chalmers considered in detail how the natural order affected both the economic and political well-being of society. He asserted a natural law of property and appealed to the law of self-preservation, which led to industry, and the law of relative affection, an intrinsic quality of humanity, which led to compassion for the distress and destitution of others. In England, what should have been implanted in the heart, the state 'hath taken the regulation of this matter into its own hands.'¹²⁰ Hence, Chalmers rejected the principle of government intervention on the grounds of the violation of the natural order. So, 'the force of law and the freeness of love cannot amalgamate the one with the other,' and 'we cannot translate beneficence into the statute-book of law, without expunging it from the statute-book of the heart.'¹²¹ Compulsion would lead to the 'extinction of goodwill in the hearts of the affluent and of gratitude in the hearts of the poor.'¹²² Thus duties had been replaced by rights. If everything were organised on the basis of rights there would be no need for compassion. Hence, respect of rank, office and monarchy 'forms an original or constituent part of our nature.'¹²³ Rank and order in society gave peace and stability.

The superior wisdom of nature is demonstrated in the mischief which is done by any aberration therefrom - when her processes are disturbed or intermeddled with by the wisdom of man. The philosophy of free trade is grounded on the principle, that society is most enriched or best served, when commerce is left to its own spontaneous evolutions; and is neither fostered by the artificial encouragements, nor fettered by the artificial restraints of human policy. The greatest economic good - or, in other words, a more prosperous result is obtained by the spontaneous play and busy competition of many thousand wills, each bent on the prosecution of its own selfishness, than by the anxious superintendence of a government, vainly attempting to medicate the fancied imperfections of nature, or to improve on the arrangements of her previous and better mechanism. It is when each man is left to seek with concentrated and exclusive aim, his own individual benefit - it is then, that markets are best supplied.¹²⁴

This had strong resonances of Adam Smith and the "invisible hand", a hand, quite clearly in Chalmers view, of the Almighty Himself. Thus, according to Chalmers, it '...strongly bespeaks a higher agent, by whose transcendental wisdom it is that all is made to conspire so harmoniously and to terminate so beneficially.'¹²⁵ To obtain the public good from the selfish individual movements of a vast multitude of people must surely require a presiding wisdom.¹²⁶ Chalmers saw in economic terms that it was the role of capital which ensured the maintenance of equilibrium in the system, and hence such self-regulation left economic intervention by man unnecessary 'precisely because of a previous moral and mental regulation by the wisdom of God.'¹²⁷ Political economy had been established by God to bring together both prudence and moral principle with physical comfort.¹²⁸

Chalmers' understanding of the way that divine providence worked was contained in chapter 3 of book 5 of the second volume of his Natural Theology, which was entitled 'On the Doctrine of a Special Providence and the Efficacy of Prayer.' It showed how Chalmers maintained a place for particular providence within the Enlightenment framework of natural laws and secondary causes. But it illustrated also how Chalmers stood in the Enlightenment heritage.

Chalmers' basic point was that nature was a good deal more complex than often understood. Prayer did not alter the ordered working of the universe, but operated through second causes. So if there were prayer for wind on a voyage, there was no miracle, but it was yet God who may have caused the wind to blow. At each level of the complex meteorological processes that gave rise to the wind, the regularities of nature may still be observed, but ultimately 'there is a hidden intermediate process which connects the purposes of the divine mind with the visible phenomena of that universe which He has created.'¹²⁹ Thus God answered prayer, but out of sight,¹³⁰ yet He is not banished from the universe. General and particular providence belonged together. Thus it can be seen how Chalmers as an Evangelical embraced political

economy as part of the providential design of God while still retaining a place for God in continuing control of the universe.

It is significant that Chalmers' framework for understanding political economy emerged in his early work, Natural Theology. In 1832 he published a more academic volume On Political Economy. This treatise was highly Malthusian. Like Malthus, Chalmers assumed an ever increasing population, so that economic improvements did not necessarily lead to a general increase in wealth.¹³¹ Hence 'the highway to our secure and stable prosperity is, not so much to enlarge the limit of our external means, as so to restrain the numbers of the population, that they shall not press too hard upon that limit.'¹³² The original framework of Adam Smith had been expanded in different directions. The Ricardian model was 'expansionist, industrialist, competitive and cosmopolitan' and its objective 'was economic growth through capital accumulation and the international division of labour.'¹³³ This process, which was essentially optimistic, would lead to more wealth and greater happiness for all classes. The alternative understanding, that of Malthus and Chalmers, was cyclical and retributive. Thus, 'trapped in a world of finite resources, economically as well as ecologically, the Malthusian's instinct was rather to restore equilibrium by diminishing production, both of people and of things.'¹³⁴ The providential character of the "invisible hand" in the mechanism of political economy was not quite so obvious after all. Yet, however the mechanism of economic law was understood, the policy prescriptions remained largely the same.

5.4 Political Economy and economic policy

The real battleground over Evangelical attitudes to political economy was not models and treatises, but concrete economic policy. By the beginning of the nineteenth century 'the axioms of political economy had, in the minds of some policy-makers, achieved the scientific status of Newtonian laws of nature.'¹³⁵ The approach was that of natural law; the self-regulation of economic forces and minimum governmental

interference. The methodology showed itself in three main areas of socio-economic policy: the Poor Laws, factory legislation and the Corn Laws.

5.4.1 The Poor Laws

The Poor Laws had a long history of development and interpretation.¹³⁶ Peter Dunkley rightly asserts that the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 formed part of a wider and 'mounting challenge to an older order,'¹³⁷ and that 'in espousing poor law reform in 1834, the Whigs addressed fundamental issues concerning the socio-economic ordering of their society and the role and function of their own class within it.'¹³⁸

Under the Poor Law, which originated in 1601, the local parish was responsible for the assessment, collection and administration of the poor rate, with a right of appeal to the magistrate. Under the Law of Settlement a parish could remove a person within 40 days of arrival to prevent an application for relief. In 1782, Gilbert's Act 'sanctioned the principle of relieving the so-called "able-bodied" without requiring them to enter the workhouse,'¹³⁹ the principle of outdoor relief. In 1795 the justices at Speenhamland in Berkshire introduced the principle of allowances subsidising wages in response to an unprecedented rise in the price of wheat. There was also the Roundsman system whereby farmers took on excess labour at agreed rates in lieu of their poor rate assessment. The fundamental criticism of the system was that it sapped 'the initiative of agricultural workers and thus contributed to the unprecedented rise in poor relief expenditure in the years before and after Waterloo.'¹⁴⁰

Political economists criticised the Poor Law for a number of reasons. Firstly, they made the overall criticism of ineffectiveness.

By the early 1830's, any attack on the unreformed poor laws was certain to benefit from a critical tradition that for decades had pointed to the administration of relief itself as the prime cause of an advancing tide of pauperism.¹⁴¹

The cost of relief and the incidence of pauperism in the population seemed to be positively correlated.¹⁴² Thus spoke George Grote M.P., in the Parliamentary debate on the Poor Law Amendment Bill, with strong hints of Malthus:

...the Poor-laws throughout most parts of England are so administered as to corrupt and degrade the labourers to the last degree; to afford a premium on idleness and improvidence; and to place in the worst and most destitute condition the most deserving characters - those labourers who work the hardest, and who defer the period of marriage from an anxious desire to maintain their independence. Men of this last character are repudiated and driven from employment, and reduced to the lowest pittance.....what is there to prevent them from being all gradually debased and demoralized by the withering influence of pauperism.¹⁴³

Secondly, there was the principle of "less-eligibility". This represented the political economists' belief in self-help, to ensure 'that the poor would be reluctant to look to the public authorities for aid.'¹⁴⁴ The principle was enshrined in the report of the Royal Commission in 1834, and stated that the policy of relief should be such as to always render the position of the pauper to be lower ("less-eligible") than that of an employed labourer. Relief was not to be based on the need to relieve poverty so much as to be itself an incentive to the claimant to return to independence. Thus John Richards M.P. stated that 'the principal provision of the Bill was that which went to deny relief to the able-bodied pauper, except in exchange for labour.'¹⁴⁵

Thirdly, and also apparent in the Royal Commission's report, was the associated criticism of the principle of outdoor relief. Dunkley comments that only 'those who were prepared to accept aid under mandated terms would come within the purview of public relief authorities.'¹⁴⁶ The workhouse thus came to be used as an instrument of socio-economic policy. The test for the genuineness of the application for relief was the petitioner's willingness to enter the workhouse. The essential link in the eyes of the political economists between work and relief, broken by Speenhamland, was to be restored. The critics assumed that much poverty was voluntary; one opponent of the Amendment Bill remarked that 'the Bill seemed to treat poverty as a crime.'¹⁴⁷

Raymond Cowherd traces the dramatic shift of Evangelical opinion, away from the humanitarian reform and application of the Poor Laws, towards that of the political economists, 'the natural law reformers.'¹⁴⁸ He locates this shift in the influence of Malthus on Evangelical opinion. Malthus' principle of the exponential growth of population in comparison to resources led to a general pessimism about the future and lent support to the notion 'that the Poor Laws aggravated the misery which they were designed to remedy.'¹⁴⁹ The point was that the provision of outdoor relief encouraged the increase in population, and hence increased further the burden on the poor rates. This was especially so in areas which granted child allowances. Theologically, Malthus viewed the current life as a time of probation, training and discipline, in preparation for the blessedness of the future life. Poverty should prompt voluntary relief efforts by Christians, but any attempt to make charity compulsory was an attempt to reverse the laws of nature.¹⁵⁰ Thus poverty was reconciled with divine providence, as it had been also by Evangelical divines - Sumner, Chalmers and also Charles Jerram. Thus 'some Evangelicals had come to accept Malthus's opinion that the Poor Laws were the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the moral conditions of the working classes.'¹⁵¹

The Evangelical Christians, in particular, found in Malthus's principle of population a justification for the multitude of voluntary agencies which they had designed for the education and improvement of the working classes.¹⁵²

However, not all Evangelicals took this line. To consider the increasing dominance of political economy in the formulation of Poor Law policy in isolation, including its influence on Evangelical opinion, 'would be to ignore the fact that social legislation such as the New Poor Law formed part of the wider response of England's rulers to dislocation in a society undergoing substantial change.'¹⁵³ Part of the reason for the shift of opinion generally in favour of the political economists was due to the breakdown of the view of 'an organic conception of society,'¹⁵⁴ a society of sacrifice and duties rather than rights, of 'mutuality and interdependence,'¹⁵⁵ rather than independence and competition. The old Poor Law was closely associated with this

view of society. The aristocracy were able to exercise their paternalistic duty for the poor through their role as magistrates, which had a prominent place within the administrative system of the Poor Law.¹⁵⁶ The issue was hence constitutional¹⁵⁷ and also affected by the relationship of local to national government.¹⁵⁸

There were many Evangelicals who located at least part of their understanding of divine providence in this organic conception of society. This element of Evangelical opinion continued to defend generous poor relief. Michael Sadler, the Evangelical M.P. for Newark until 1831, 'denounced in turn the law of population, the New Poor Law, usury, Free Trade, and competition.'¹⁵⁹ Sadler tried eight times between 1830 and 1832 to secure Poor Laws for Ireland,¹⁶⁰ certainly against the prevailing sentiments of the time. Even Sumner adopted a less stringent position in the aftermath of the 1834 Act. He recognised the necessity of state aid in the face of extreme economic dislocation, the anomaly of extreme contrasts of wealth and poverty, adopted a more pessimistic attitude, and failed to engage in any defence of the Poor Law he had helped frame, according to Soloway, due to stronger Evangelical recognition of sin, especially in the attitudes of employers.¹⁶¹

5.4.2 Factory Reform

Many of the issues of the Poor Law debate were raised again in the question of factory reform. In December 1831 Michael Sadler, then the Tory M.P. for Aldborough in Yorkshire,¹⁶² introduced a bill to restrict factory hours, which was subsequently referred to a Select Committee. However, in the first election of a reformed Parliament, in December 1832, Sadler, now standing at Leeds, was defeated. It subsequently fell to Lord Ashley to take up the mantle. Ashley was forced to compromise, the result being the Factory Act of 1833, one provision of which, restricting the hours of labour for twelve- and thirteen-year-olds to eight hours, was to come into force on 1 March, 1836. On 9 May, 1836, the President of the Board of Trade, the M.P. for Manchester, C. Poulett Thomson, introduced a Factory

Regulations Bill into the House of Commons to repeal this provision of the new legislation.

The debate is instructive for delineating the key issues of political economy which opponents of factory reform advanced: the issues of interference, unemployment and foreign competition. Thus when Poulett Thomson introduced the Bill, he spoke as follows:

...children between twelve and thirteen years old, like their seniors, might decide for themselves; and if they thought proper, might work for twelve hours per day.....the inspectors, manufacturers and all the opponents of the [1833] Bill, had stated, that if the clause referred to were allowed to continue law, the inevitable consequence would be that all children between the ages of twelve and thirteen years would be thrown out of employment.....Capital and industry would then find their way into other countries, and England, which depended on foreign markets for the sale of two-thirds or three-fourths of our manufactures, would be undersold abroad.¹⁶³

These arguments were advanced by the political economists against any sort of protective or (paternalistic) humanitarian legislation. Government intervention was an interference against nature; a truly benevolent approach would recognise that the result of interference was not relief, but unemployment or further misery. Factory legislation would have the same effect as a tax on manufacture, rendering goods less competitive, causing further unemployment and distress.

John Bowring, the member for Kilmarnock, stated that 'he mistrusted that interference on behalf of the poor which the poor were themselves to pay for'¹⁶⁴ and objected to the argument of the 'meritorious classes of society'¹⁶⁵ deluding themselves that the wages of the poor 'like everything else, did not depend on supply and demand.'¹⁶⁶ The meritorious classes were presumably the aristocratic paternalists, like Ashley. Peter Ainsworth, M.P. for Bolton-le-Moors, regarded legislative interference with labour as 'vexatious, oppressive and uncalled for.'¹⁶⁷ Poulett Thomson, referring to the possible extension of restrictions to adults, protested against 'the most grievous tyranny upon those who having only their labour to sell had a right to make the most of it.'¹⁶⁸ The M.P. for Leeds, Edward Baines, summed it up when he said that 'there was not a set of

children in this kingdom better fed, better clothed, better lodged, and more healthy than the children in the factories.¹⁶⁹

The issue of unemployment was more one of argument about consequences. The supporters of factory reform rejected the assertions that the failure to repeal the provision would 'at once put an end to the occupation of 35,000 children, according to the opponents of the law as it stood, or of 25,000 or 27,000 children, according to the best estimate Ministers had been able to make.'¹⁷⁰ Ashley called upon the report of the Royal Commission to refute this suggestion and the radical member for Oldham, John Fielden, himself a mill owner, was convinced that 'not thirty-five would be thrown out of work.'¹⁷¹ Certainly there is no evidence that factory legislation resulted in any significant reduction in employment. Real wages fell between 1835 and 1842, mainly due to inflation, and this is most unlikely to have meant reduced employment; indeed rather the contrary.¹⁷²

Poulett Thomson claimed that the direct effect would be to reduce the nation's competitive edge, particularly in overseas markets, and Ainsworth that the legislation 'would tend to ruin the manufacturers by provoking foreign competition,'¹⁷³ while Bowring again succinctly laid down his free trade views.

But look to the emancipated countries - look to Switzerland - remote from all the means of supply, but without a Custom-house - without a tax on food or labour - without any legislative interference - without factory Bills or Boards of Trade, or protection of any sort - her manufactures had found their way to every market of the world - and her people had grown and prospered in the unbounded liberty of exchange.¹⁷⁴

Opponents of the relaxation on hours complained of the House being 'assailed with the cry of "beware foreign competition",'¹⁷⁵ but they also advanced detailed statistical evidence of the increase in exports despite the reductions in factory time enforced by the 1833 Act, showing that there was nothing to fear from such competition. Indeed, Charles Hindley offered statistical evidence taken directly from Poulett Thomson's own factory in Manchester.¹⁷⁶

5.4.3 The Corn Laws

The Corn Laws, like the Poor Laws, had a long and complicated history and brought together many of the same principles concerning the ordering of society and government intervention. Various groups had an interest in the Corn Laws. The producers of corn were the tenant farmers of the landed aristocracy, keen to maintain high prices and restricted markets. The rural agricultural labourer was both a factor of production and a consumer. Restrictive tariffs kept corn prices high; the issue was whether this led to higher or lower wages. As the principal consumers, the industrial labourer was *interested in maintaining low prices, but had no concern in the output*. The middle-class mill owners were both consumers and urban employers, enjoying a double benefit from low corn prices, since low corn prices also relieved wage pressure on them.

The principal legislation was the Corn Law of 1815, which had replaced a sliding scale of import duty with an absolute prohibition on importation at prices below 80s and no duty at all above this price.¹⁷⁷ Blake described this as 'one of the most naked pieces of class legislation in English history,'¹⁷⁸ and Hilton that it was 'bitterly resented by radicals, manufacturers, and the urban poor.'¹⁷⁹ What seemed like the high point of protection in fact resulted in the landowners succeeding 'to the position occupied for centuries by the corn dealers and millers as the object of opprobrium to the consumers.'¹⁸⁰

Many saw in repeal significant implications for international relationships, as well as being based on sound principle. Thus Palmerston:

I support it, because I think it calculated to promote the welfare, the comfort, the happiness, and the prosperity of this country; and because it seems to me to be founded on principles which tend to secure to mankind that great and inestimable blessing, the continuance of international peace.¹⁸¹

Richard Cobden, M.P. for Stockport from 1841, reinforced the claims of international peace and the supremacy of the policy of free trade.¹⁸² If it could be demonstrated that

there was no link between prices and wages, then the fear of agricultural labourer of low wages would be removed. Benjamin Hawes, M.P. for Lambeth, produced statistics showing the prices of wheat and agricultural labour moving in opposite directions.¹⁸³ Thus, 'the price of labour was not dependent on the price of corn.'¹⁸⁴ Peel also asserted that 'there is no direct connexion between the wages of the agricultural labourer and the price of wheat.'¹⁸⁵ Both Hawes and Peel appealed to the idea of human capital as part of the explanation for changes in wages. Thus a 'skilful, intelligent, honest labourer was worth more, all other things the same, than an unskilful and dishonest one.'¹⁸⁶ Peel quoted comparisons of differing skills being employed in various counties with differing wage rates.¹⁸⁷

In response John Pemberton Plumptre, M.P. for East Kent, claimed, that in his own experience, 'during the last half century the price of bread had influenced the rate of wages as much as 100 per cent.'¹⁸⁸ When corn was at a low price farmers both employed fewer labourers and paid those that they retained less.

There was also the issue of rents. A fall in corn prices would mean cuts in wages as tenants had to maintain rents to landlords - hence the protectionist argument on the relationship of wages and prices. Free traders were torn between arguing that free trade would not damage rents, and gleefully *proclaiming that rents would indeed* fall.¹⁸⁹ It was also disputed whether foreign competition and trade would, by expanding markets, lead to higher wages and standards of living for all,¹⁹⁰ or increase imports, reducing land in production and tax receipts,¹⁹¹ while increasing dependence on foreign corn.¹⁹²

Behind the Corn Laws lay the conflict of rural agricultural interests and urban commercial interests; essentially between two traditions. Once again the issue was seen in constitutional terms. The Anti-Corn-Law League was condemned as 'a most unconstitutional body';¹⁹³ one member 'looked with great confidence and hope to the right rev. prelates of the other House, who, he trusted, would stand by the Altar, the Throne, and the Cottage.'¹⁹⁴ George Finch, the Conservative member for Stamford,

declared that the measure 'introduced more sweeping changes in the Constitution of the country than had ever yet been projected by any Administration.'¹⁹⁵ The League had its greatest success among the urban middle and lower classes, those who had perhaps the most unambiguous self-interest in the prospect of the cheaper food brought about by repeal.¹⁹⁶

The Poor Laws, the movement for factory reform and the Corn Laws lay on the boundary between two ideas of society, between the spirit of one age and the spirit of another. Finch berated John Fielden, the radical member for Oldham, and proponent of protective factory legislation for inconsistency in also advocating free trade. Interference to protect children in factories was, however, *entirely consistent with* protection for manufacturers.¹⁹⁷ The logic of this argument should not be dismissed and returned to the question of relationships within society, and the paternalism of the aristocracy.

¹ Isaac Newton, Opticks, (1704, 3rd edition, 1721).

² Porter & Teich, pp12-13.

³ *Ibid.*, p14, quoting Voltaire, Letters concerning the English Nation (1734), p44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p15.

⁵ William Paley, A View of the Evidences of Christianity, (1794), in Paley, Works, Edinburgh, (1842).

⁶ J.B. Sumner, Evidence of Christianity, (1830).

⁷ V.F. Storr, The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century, 1800-1860, p34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p59.

⁹ W. Paley, Natural Theology, (1802), in Paley's Works, (1842), p444.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p523.

¹¹ Porter & Teich, p16.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Roger Anstey, The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, (1975), p158.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p159.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p162.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p160.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p174.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p164.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² E. Brunner, Nature and Grace, and K. Barth, No !, in Natural Theology, (1946), translated by P. Fraenkel.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1.2.1, p40.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.4.4, p51.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.5.2, p53.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.5.11, pp63-64.

²⁷ W. Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, (1956), p51.

²⁸ Calvin, Institutes, 1.16.1, p197.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

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- 30 Ibid., 1.16.2, p199.
- 31 Ibid., 1.16.4, pp201-202.
- 32 H.D. McDonald, Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1700-1960, (1979), p216.
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- 36 Ibid., vol 5, p234.
- 37 Ibid., vol 11, p325.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid., p326.
- 40 B.A. Corry, Money, Saving and Investment in English Economics 1800-1850, (1962), p1.
- 41 W.J. Barber, A History of Economic Thought, (1967), p17.
- 42 E.L. Paul, Moral Revolution and Economic Science, (1979), p5.
- 43 Ibid., p6.
- 44 Barber, p21.
- 45 Ibid., p25.
- 46 Paul, p11.
- 47 Adam Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, (3rd edition, 1812), p26.
- 48 Paul, p19.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Ibid., pp17-18.
- 51 Ibid., p11.
- 52 Barber, pp25-26.
- 53 Paul, p15.
- 54 Ibid., p20.
- 55 R.A. Soloway, Prelates and People, (1969), p93.
- 56 Ibid., p92.
- 57 A.M.C. Waterman, 'The Ideological Alliance of Political Economy and Christian Theology, 1798-1833,' Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol 34, no. 2, April 1983, p231.
- 58 Ibid., p232.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 T.R. Malthus, 1766-1834, Professor of Modern History and Political Economy and author of the Essay on the Principle of Population, (1798).
- 61 Waterman, p234.
- 62 Hilton, Atonement, pp36-55.
- 63 Soloway, p96ff.
- 64 Ibid., pp104-105.
- 65 Ibid., pp102-103.
- 66 Waterman, p238.
- 67 Soloway, p93.
- 68 J.B. Sumner, 1780-1862, Bishop of Chester, 1828-1848, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1848-1862. A convinced Evangelical, who opposed the Oxford Movement, denied baptismal regeneration as essential to the doctrine of the Church of England, and author of numerous Evangelical writings.
- 69 Thomas Chalmers, 1780-1847, Church of Scotland minister, Calvinist and Evangelical, held Chairs of Moral Philosophy and Theology, and led the disruption of 1843 that led to the foundation of the Free Church of Scotland.
- 70 Hilton, Atonement p29.
- 71 Ibid., pp3-35.
- 72 Ibid., pp29-30; p39.
- 73 Ibid., pp29f.
- 74 Ibid., p133.
- 75 Jacob Viner, The Role of Providence in the Social Order, (1972), pp79ff.
- 76 Ibid., p81.
- 77 Soloway, p95.
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6 Paternalism and Victorian society

Evangelicals were among those who adopted paternalistic attitudes towards socio-economic policy. It is thus important to understand in more depth the nature of paternalism within the structure of Victorian society. The industrial age marked the point of transition from an older form of society, 'an open aristocracy based on property and patronage,'¹ to a society of class awareness, power consciousness, individualism and ambition. The former society was agrarian and personal, the latter urban and impersonal. It was in this traditional configuration of society that some Evangelicals located their principal understanding of God's providential design rather than within economic laws. Those Evangelicals who adopted such an approach sought in various ways to apply the principles of the old order to the emerging social problems of the new industrial society.

Jonathan Clark's views on the relationship of religion and society also give weight to the continuing vitality, albeit on a reducing scale, of the older, organic nature of society after 1832. It was not just religion that has been played down by modern scholars, with their excessive concern for the course of democratization and assertion of class rights, but also the whole structure of the monarchy and aristocracy.² According to Clark, the depiction of the industrial revolution as a process of rapid transformation is a myth; rather the picture being one of slow change.³ There is some truth in this claim, although Clark, with his own polemic intent, is too stark in his presentation of the views of modern historical scholars as propounding the idea of sudden change. Joanna Innes in a review article comments that few historians would be surprised to see the eighteenth century characterized in the sorts of terms Clark uses⁴ and Patrick Joyce has noted the survival of paternalistic attitudes among both operatives and employers into and beyond mid-century.⁵

6.1 The structure of the organic society

David Roberts in his study of paternalism,⁶ defined the paternalist's basic assumptions concerning the framework of society as 'authoritarian, hierarchic, organic, and pluralistic.'⁷ Harold Perkin uses the divisions of a classless hierarchy, property and patronage and a dynamic society.⁸ Peter Dunkley simply describes the prevailing model of society as that of deference or subordination, by which he means the acceptance and legitimization of the hierarchical society.⁹ What is clear is that the old order was highly structured and based on a system of mutual obligation, of dependency rather than independence. It was also a model of contrasts; reverence and submission to authority was matched by the obligations and duties of those who held legitimate power; the chain of hierarchy was matched by bonds of union within the social system forged on personal communication and intercourse.

The authoritarian nature of this model of society demanded obedience from those of whom such compliance was due. It was essentially a model of deference to those placed further up the hierarchy. This authority was exercised in their various realms by landowners, magistrates, and archdeacons.¹⁰ This hierarchical society was, of course, part of the providential design of God and seen as 'necessary and beneficial.'¹¹ Perkin has reworked statistical information for the years 1688-1803 to demonstrate the composition of this pyramid structure based on rank and position. Thus the nobility and gentry, who were placed at the top, and accounted for fewer than 1.5% of families, received approximately 15% of the national income. At the other end of the scale, the share in the national wealth of the working labourers, who consisted of over 33% of the population in 1803, was only 16.5%.¹² However, the real point here is one of dependency. The model was not just authoritarian and deferential. Society was seen as organic, as being held together by the various ties, bonds and connections within the system. Thus 'reliance on this concept of social organisation involved the governors in various commitments to their subordinates.'¹³ Indeed, 'a structure of stratification presupposes claims of superiority and the general acceptance of those

claims, since the structure could not exist in the face of massive assertions of equality.¹⁴

Whether a plowman or a bishop, each individual had his function, his place, his protectors, his duties, his reciprocal obligations, and his strong ties of dependency.¹⁵

This society was essentially local. The bonds of union were personal ones. The hierarchy was based on the ownership of property, especially land. But place and function within this society were not uniform. There were numerous hierarchies and sub-hierarchies. There were relationships within families and between families, between landlord and tenant, between magistrate and poacher, between poor law guardian and pauper. The landed interest provided the magistrates, lords lieutenant and deputy lieutenants; artisans, traders and professional men controlled the boroughs and at parish level, the squirearchy and tenant farmers provided overseers, constables and churchwardens.¹⁶ The clergy had a particular role in the promotion of social harmony in this divinely ordered society.¹⁷

It is a mistake to dismiss this model of society as simply outdated and outmoded, adhered to only by those landowners who were themselves out of touch with the changing face of society and seeking to protect their own privileges. The fact that such a concept of society was embraced by large sections of the population must go some way to explaining the absence of a revolution in England along the lines of that in France. Clark notes that many labourers felt that their common interest lay in preserving the hierarchical system.¹⁸ He also points out that the model was seen as divinely ordered, reflecting a natural order, rather than a contractual view of society. Christian theology was closely connected with this view of society. The argument from correspondence emphasised the ordered and hierarchical nature of the divine sphere.¹⁹ This shows the importance of religion in shaping ideas about society, often neglected.²⁰ But the model was essentially local, rural and agrarian. The impact of urbanization, although gradual, was to bring tensions into the model by way of

changed relationships and changed expectations on the part of both proprietor and labourer.

6.2 The nature of paternalism

The fundamental ingredient of the paternalist's understanding of the social relationships within society was that everyone had appropriate duties. Natural rights based on natural law were rejected. The rights of the landed interest depended upon the performance of their obligations. Thus, according to Roberts, a belief 'in social duty and function, not in individual and inalienable rights, defines a good paternalist.'²¹ The duties of the poor were conscientious service and deference. More important were the responsibilities of the aristocracy. These duties could be described as 'ruling, guiding, and helping.'²² Thus the landlord was bound to protect those who lived on his land and served him, while at the same time ruling with firmness so as to maintain order. Guidance meant a concern for the moral well-being of those connected with the landlord. The proprietor was also expected to help those of his estate who were poor. Thus the poor law would be administered with compassion; soup, coal, cheap rents, and the provision of cottages, allotments, schools and, crucially, winter employment may all have figured in the paternalism of the landlords. These commitments would be performed under many guises, but, notably, those of landlord and magistrate. Harold Perkin makes the very pertinent observation that paternalism was based upon 'permanent vertical links which, rather than the horizontal solidarities of class, bound society together.'²³ Economic and industrial change in the agrarian economy (surplus labour and high food prices contributing to the decline of all-year employment) pointed towards 'this "proletarianization" of the agricultural labourers.'²⁴

The principle of locality was of particular importance to the nature of paternalism, which could best be understood and implemented in small spheres of influence, especially the landed estates of the squirarchy. In this context there was much social interaction, even intimacy within the hierarchy of society which encouraged everyone to carry out their duties towards each other. The relationship was, hence, more of a

personal one than a commercial one. In this way in each locality people could 'be held together by the reciprocal bonds of authority and deference and by clearly defined rights and duties.'²⁵ Industrialisation and commerce threatened this pattern.

Great moneyed interests with no roots in local places or the past threatened to dissolve those bonds and customs that united the balanced commonwealth.²⁶

In the expanding industrial cities, anonymity was possible, whereas in the rural villages personal relationships could not be avoided. Indeed, 'it was in the expanding towns that a new class society was to outgrow the personal bonds of the old society.'²⁷ Nevertheless, even in the countryside practices may have differed between closed villages, where the landowner exercised a firm grip over all aspects of life, including the vetting of the political views of his tenants and subordinates,²⁸ and open villages, with more mobility of labour and less direct contact with the landowner.

The church too had a crucial role to play in local paternalism. Roberts sums up the paternalistic social outlook of the landed Tory squire:

The Tory paternalist believed that property and then church, acting in local spheres, could best provide for the poor, deal with criminals, and clean towns. For them property and the church involved duties as well as rights, benevolence as well as self-interest.²⁹

The paternalist's attitude to the role of government was ambiguous. Roberts has shown the variety and complexity of paternalistic social attitudes in early Victorian England, and this was also reflected in different views over governmental intervention. The question was whether government had any role in making up for the failings of property and church.

If there was a core paternalistic attitude then it was in the call for the protection 'of the weak, helpless, poor, and ill.'³⁰ Paternalists of all the varieties described by Roberts³¹ supported Lord Ashley's ten hour amendment to the Factory Act in 1844. However, as the role of government expanded many paternalists adopted a more laissez-faire view. Thus the paternalists were split over the Corn Law, over subsequent legislation

introduced by Shaftesbury, and over the increasing centralization and bureaucratization of government. The passion for locality was partly responsible for this. If the paternalistic ideal depended on local action and local intercourse, then the increase in power of centralized Poor Law commissions was unlikely to be welcomed. It was, indeed, the squirearchy that led the opposition to the implementation of centralized machinery in the Public Health Act of 1848. Thus we are left with Roberts' picture of the country squire.

The paternalist mentality of the country squire was a curious mixture of prejudice, self-interest, local loyalties, and benevolence.³²

Nevertheless, as Dunkley has pointed out, the very nature of the reciprocity of the model, of 'mutuality and interdependence,' 'points to an organic conception of society that is incompatible with the degradation of subordinates.'³³ Paternalism was a complex phenomenon, involving real people in real relationships. The problem with paternalism during the early industrial revolution was with the practice of the model.

6.3 The practice of paternalism

Rural England in the early nineteenth century was not quite so ordered and deferential as the model of paternalism outlined might suggest. Poaching, cattle maiming, rick burning and rioting were rife;³⁴ there were bread riots in East Anglia in 1815 and a labourers' revolt in 1830.³⁵ Dunkley has analysed the actual practice of paternalism in considering the role of the magistracy in the administration of the Poor Law in the period before the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.³⁶ He shows that at the local level, through landowner involvement in the administration of the Poor Law as magistrates, the ideals of the model were still practised. Although statistics require caution, Dunkley reports contemporary surveys as showing that in 1831 nearly 10% of the population was in receipt of poor relief and that in some southern counties the figure was as high as 17%.³⁷

The day-to-day administration of the Poor Law lay with guardians and vestries recruited, in rural areas, from the lower gentry. This also allowed the church some

influence, if the local clergyman chose to exercise it. The major landowners were usually in place as county magistrates. The interventionist role of the magistracy took two forms. Firstly, there was the role of the magistrates' appellate jurisdiction.

Under the Old Poor Law, the responsibility of the landowners to ensure the labourers' subsistence was recognized in the right of the poor to appeal to the bench against the relief decisions of the overseers and the ratepayers in vestries.³⁸

An appeal involved the overseer in appearing before the magistrate, often many miles away, and hence was often conceded by default.³⁹ This gave the pauper a valuable lever over the local overseer and vestry. The jurisdiction of the magistrates in these cases extended beyond parish boundaries and benches intervened on appeal from neighbouring districts in the absence of local magistrates. Dunkley demonstrates this by highlighting this complaint from vestries in response to a survey sent out by the Royal Commission of 1834.⁴⁰

Secondly, there was a more direct involvement in the administrative, financial and supervisory aspects of the Poor Law.⁴¹ Magistrates would enforce their policies towards the Poor Law through local Petty Sessions where two or three local magistrates could exert a dominant role. Petty Sessions was often independent of the larger jurisdiction of Quarter Sessions.

The essence of such a system of administration was that the large proprietors, in the guise of magistrates, remained independent within their localities of larger jurisdictional entities, including the quarter sessions, whose decisions the individual justices did not always regard as binding.⁴²

The extent of magisterial intervention can be gauged from the replies to queries sent out by the Royal Commission of 1834. A significant degree of magisterial intervention is found in those counties that were suffering most from agrarian distress. In the case of five eastern and southern counties,⁴³ over 80% of the parishes that replied reported that the magistrates controlled relief.⁴⁴

The consequence of magisterial intervention was a more generous distribution of relief. Indeed, in response to the Royal Commission's question, over 93% of

respondents claimed that 'circumventing magisterial influence would mean a more stringent and economical distribution of aid.'⁴⁵ The Commission also found continued use in the southern counties of the Speenhamland bread scales, invariably associated with magisterial decisions.

It is clear that landowners made some attempt, through their roles as magistrates, to maintain their paternalistic obligations towards the poor. Since the tenant farmers and ratepayers who formed the vestries tended to have more interest in keeping down the poor rate, the role of the magistracy was crucial.

However, Dunkley, concerned to show that there was still some semblance of the practice of paternalism at this time, in order to balance extensive scholarly opinion of the complete breakdown of the model, does warn against too readily ascribing to the landed gentry, 'a deep-seated sympathy for the poor.'⁴⁶

It has long been recognised that this paternalistic model faced crisis during the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ More particularly this loss of confidence has been seen as centred on 'the abdication on the part of the governors,'⁴⁸ or the 'landowners' wholesale abandonment of their paternal responsibilities.⁴⁹ Roberts refers to a latitudinarianism within society which not only affected religion, but also weakened commitment to any belief, including paternalism.⁵⁰ The paternal relationship had always been based upon the principle of reciprocal relationships; now 'the paternal relationship had become distinctly one-sided, with the higher ranks continuing to insist on discipline and filial obedience, but no longer willing to reciprocate with a benevolent overlordship.'⁵¹ Perkin refers to 'the deliberate dismantling of the whole system of paternal protection of the lower orders which had been the pride of the old society and the justification of its inequalities.'⁵² This clearly also had practical effects on the ground.

Both Sussex's limited effort at education, and its failure to build adequate housing suggest that a truly paternalist concern to instruct and house the poor was felt by only a small minority.⁵³

...the reports of the 1847 Committee on Settlement make it clear that in housing, the model squire and the cottage-building earl were rare and the indifferent landowner common.⁵⁴

The Sussex Agricultural Express referred to 'less residence, low wages, and instead of the resident squire giving workers good cottages, good wages, a cow and a garden, a few prizes at agricultural association dinners.'⁵⁵

Demolishing cottages or just not building them was an evasion of the responsibilities of property, the very antithesis of paternalism, yet nineteen witnesses before the Select Committee on Settlement [1847] spoke of the practice as widely done.⁵⁶

Clark notes the weakening of the mutual ties between landlord and tenant,⁵⁷ and Soloway the dominance of the extension of commercial interests at the expense of the real welfare of the community.⁵⁸ The paternalistic model was breaking down. That, of course, does not mean that there were no continuing examples of local paternalism. Roberts finds evidence of paternalistic activity on the part of fifty to sixty Sussex gentlemen; but there were an estimated 700 such gentry in the county.⁵⁹ This shows both the strength and the weakness of Jonathan Clark's thesis. There was less of a sudden collapse of the system than perhaps supposed; paternalism continued to be practised long after 1832. But if some scholars see the periods before and after 1832 as too sharply discontinuous, most do recognise the continuities also. Clark's contribution has been rightly to emphasise this continuity, and it is a matter of some importance in understanding Shaftesbury's work.

Various reasons have been offered for this decline. Clark notes the replacement of the argument from correspondence by the argument from design reflected in, for example, Paley's Natural Theology.⁶⁰ Apart from reinforcing his point about the scholarly neglect of the role of religion, this also shows how some Evangelicals were able to change their understanding of divine ordering from the paternalist, hierarchical society to economic and natural law. That others still saw God's providence in the ordering of society actually allowed a more dynamic approach to social policy by allowing for a range of interventions in socio-economic affairs.

Perkin traces a path of abandonment relating to the jettisoning of the principle of protection of the working population. According to Perkin this was reflected in the provocation of the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 and reached its zenith in the reform of the Poor Laws.⁶¹ It is perhaps too much to follow Perkin's view of a deliberate dismantling of the system. What his observations do, however, is point to an increasing tendency to centralization, whether in legislative action, or bureaucratic control, and away from the local sphere of personal relationships so essential to the paternalistic ideal. This bureaucratization led to a remote and absentee control and denied the individual both the opportunity and responsibility of decision making.⁶² This had its associated implications at local level, especially the multiplication of the duties expected of the landlord.⁶³ Paternalism was becoming more institutionalised through savings and clothing clubs etc., as well as allotments, and hence more remote.⁶⁴ Relationships were increasingly commercial, rather than personal, based on hard cash. The traditional centres of allegiance and authority, family, church, class and community, were being 'superseded in institutional importance by the great impersonal connections of property, function, and exchange.'⁶⁵ Property was now defined in commercial terms rather than as conferring status, authority and responsibility.

The landowners of England, when it came to rents, cottages, leases, wages and allotments believed in the profit motive, hard bargaining and market forces.⁶⁶

All of this represented the onward march of political economy and the triumph of a rationalist world view which emphasised the uniform, mathematical, mechanical and impersonal relationships of economic laws rather than the personal ones of paternalism.⁶⁷ Industrialisation was weakening the rural constituency. Although there were, of course, model paternalists among the industrialists and mill-owners,⁶⁸ such as the Gregs of Bollington and Styal, the Ashworths and Thomas Ashton, they were but 'forty or fifty exemplars to 4,800 factory owners, not to mention thousands of mine owners and tens of thousands of owners of small manufactures and workshops.'⁶⁹

If some Evangelicals placed their understanding of God's providence in the laws of economics, to others, the dislocations in the economic system meant that such an approach underestimated the power and impact of sin. Shaftesbury picked up this emphasis on the corrupting nature of sin. But if the economic order were corrupted by sin, where was God's natural order reflected? Shaftesbury's Evangelical faith interacted with his natural aristocratic paternalism. The structure and order of society mirrored God's provision, and hence it was here that the superintending providence of God was located, rather than in the economic order. Nevertheless, the breakdown of this order did reflect sin, as did the specific evils of the factory system and industrialisation. Shaftesbury essentially placed his understanding of both order and sin within personal relationships rather than in external laws and forces.

¹ Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, (1969), p17.

² Clark, p9.

³ *Ibid.*, p67.

⁴ J. Innes, Past and Present, 1987, No. 115, pp177.

⁵ P. Joyce, Visions of the People, (1991), p100.

⁶ David Roberts, Paternalism in Early Victorian England, (1979).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p2.

⁸ Perkin, pp17-62.

⁹ Dunkley, Crisis, p25.

¹⁰ Roberts, p3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Perkin, pp18-22.

¹³ Dunkley, Paternalism, the Magistracy and Poor Relief, p371.

¹⁴ Dunkley, Crisis, pp25-26.

¹⁵ Roberts, loc. cit.

¹⁶ Perkin, p40.

¹⁷ Soloway, p22.

¹⁸ Clark, p68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp79-87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p278.

²¹ Roberts, loc. cit..

²² *Ibid.*, pp4-5.

²³ Perkin, p49.

²⁴ Dunkley, Crisis, p36.

²⁵ Roberts, p270.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p18.

²⁷ Perkin, p51.

²⁸ D. Souden & D. Starkey, This Land of England, (1985), p86.

²⁹ Roberts, p80.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p190.

³¹ Roberts offers a division into Romantics, Peelites, Churchmen, Country Squires, Whigs, and Anglo-Irish, which although helpful in clarifying the different strands within paternalism has the disadvantages of rigidity and excessive breadth.

³² Roberts, p259.

³³ Dunkley, Crisis, p27.

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- 34 Ibid., p28.
35 Perkin, p181.
36 Dunkley, Paternalism, The Magistracy and Poor Relief, pp353-380.
37 Ibid., p374.
38 Ibid., p378.
39 Ibid., pp378-379.
40 Ibid., p379.
41 Ibid., p376. Also, Poynter, p11.
42 Ibid., p377.
43 Buckinghamshire, Essex, Wiltshire, Huntingdonshire, and Dorset.
44 Dunkley, Paternalism, The Magistracy and Poor Relief, p383.
45 Ibid., p386.
46 Ibid., p393.
47 Roberts, p19; Dunkley, Crisis, p168; Dunkley, Paternalism, Magistracy and Poor Relief, p372.
48 Perkin, p184.
49 Dunkley, Paternalism, Magistracy and Poor Relief, loc. cit.
50 Roberts, loc. cit.
51 Dunkley, Paternalism, The Magistracy and Poor Relief, p373.
52 Perkin, loc. cit.
53 Roberts, p122.
54 Ibid., p140.
55 Ibid., p117.
56 Ibid., p139.
57 Clark, p372.
58 Soloway, p187.
59 Roberts, p120.
60 Clark, p80.
61 Perkin, pp188ff.
62 R.A. Nisbet, Tradition and Revolt, (1968), p71.
63 Roberts, p131.
64 Ibid., pp132-133.
65 Nisbet, pp61-62.
66 Roberts, p142.
67 Ibid., p16.
68 Clark, p67.
69 Roberts, p183.

7 Shaftesbury, Paternalism and Political Economy

Shaftesbury belonged to the landed aristocracy. As the heir to estates in Dorset his early career followed the usual path. In his election address for Woodstock in 1826 he defended the British constitution, especially against 'the demon of Popery'.¹ In 1834, he embarked on the normal aristocratic tour of Europe, designed to expose the country's next generation of rulers to its cultured sights and influences, especially Italy.

The real distinctiveness of Shaftesbury's understanding of society and the role of the proprietorial elite within it was revealed when this rural, local, paternalistic, aristocratic and landed circle, to which he belonged, met with the urban society of emerging industrial England and its new classes of millowners and mass labour. His views reflected his traditional paternalistic background, but did not fit exactly into the model laid out in Chapter 6. This was undoubtedly due to the interplay of his Evangelical Christian beliefs with his traditional background.

7.1 Rights and Duties in Society

Shaftesbury's view of society was of a structured, hierarchical, class society, ordered as such by God, into which all were called to various stations. Thus the watercress girls were called to their position in life and society as much as he was called to his, of labouring for the poor, and in every case it was the providence of God which placed each in their respective stations.² Such a structure was ordered and harmonious. Thus speaking to the operatives of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire:

...I ever declared that you were intelligent, loyal, honest-hearted men; that you respected the rights and property of all, and that you never had asked anything, nor would ever attempt to demand anything inconsistent with the rights of all classes and degrees of society; that you earnestly sought to be at peace with your employers, and that an hour of difficulty would show your attachment to the Constitution which had befriended and aided you.³

Nevertheless there was, in the paternalistic model, a dynamism to the structure of society, that allowed people to move from one class to another, notwithstanding the

call of God to a particular station or rank in life. Shaftesbury too was representative of this view, and in his Parliamentary speech on an amendment to the Factory Bill in 1844 he gave as an example a particularly benevolent millowner, Kenworthy of Blackburn.

I set great store by the opinions of this Gentleman last named, because he has passed through all the gradations of the business, and has by his own talent and integrity, raised himself from the condition of an operative to the station of a master.⁴

Speaking in 1869 on factory legislation at a memorial to Richard Oastler, Shaftesbury saw the impact of the improved conditions and better education of the children as meaning that they were 'better fitted to be citizens of this great country, and to rise, if God so will it, even to higher stations than those to which they were called at present.'⁵

The sense of calling was very strong in Shaftesbury's thought, and very particular. In 1827 and 1828 he clearly saw that it was a political career which was the station to which providence had called him;⁶ indeed, as he later recorded in his diary, it was God who had called him to his whole career, 'a Lodging-House, a Ragged School, a Vagrant Bill, a Thieves' Refuge,' 'small works compared with the political and financial movements of the day,' 'and yet I would not change it.'⁷ It was, of course, what he was also suited to by birth and situation, as he himself acknowledged.⁸

Shaftesbury was adamant that the aristocracy had duties imposed by property as well as privileges.

Let hon. Gentlemen take the opportunity, and affirm by their votes that night the principle which was at all times valuable, but in those days was essentially necessary - that property and station had their duties as well as their rights.⁹

The key was a balance between the rights and duties of all classes, but a particular emphasis on the paternal responsibility of the wealthier and landed elite for the labouring poor. If implemented this would lead to harmonious relationships, and,

consequently, peace and security for all, within, of course, the divinely ordained structure of the hierarchical society.

But I dare to hope for far better things - for restored affections, for renewed understanding between master and man, for combined and general efforts, for large and mutual concessions of all classes of the wealthy for the benefit of the common welfare, and especially of the labouring people.¹⁰

I have studied to produce a good understanding between the employer and the employed.¹¹

...we may hope to see the revival of such a good understanding between master and man, between wealth and poverty, between ruler and ruled, as will, under God's good providence, conduce to the restoration of social comfort, and to the permanent security of the empire.¹²

Shaftesbury even advocated a Council of Conciliation to prevent disputes and strikes and to 'foster a better understanding between employers and employed.'¹³ This restoration of an improved relationship and harmony he declared to be his 'great object.'¹⁴ This was not all just pious paternalistic sentiment, but formed part of his appeal to the factory operatives for practical action in this direction:

In the second place, I would counsel you to begin by an address to your employers; by an appeal from the work-people of each mill to the proprietor of it, and earnestly, though respectfully, to entreat their sympathy and co-operation towards the abatement of your excessive labour. It is a matter of the highest importance that this great end should be attained, if possible, in unison with the feelings of your employers, and not in despite of them. I cannot too strongly urge the expediency, nay, the necessity, with a view to the speedy and happy adjustment of the question, of a good understanding between master and man.¹⁵

In the 1860s numerous private Bills came before Parliament to provide for the construction and extension of the railway system. Frequently these Bills provided for the destruction of dwellings, often those of the labouring classes. Shaftesbury continued to be an advocate of the obligations of the more powerful group to the weaker, moving 'that the parties undertaking these great works should be held responsible to the parties whom they displaced.'¹⁶

The local nature of the paternalistic model, and the way in which this implied mutual duty and harmonious relations was well illustrated by a description in The Times of Shaftesbury's revival of the tradition of harvest-home, an extensive extract from which demonstrates the depth of his commitment to the paternalistic ideal.

The good old British custom of harvest-homes has just been revived on St. Giles's estate, Dorsetshire, the seat of the Earl of Shaftesbury....The labourers and servants on the various farms, numbering about 350 assembled during the morning in the yard adjoining the mansion of St. Giles's, under the care of their respective employers, and shortly afterwards proceeded to church, headed by a band of music...On returning from church a bountiful dinner was provided for the guests beneath a spacious tent that had been erected and gaily decorated for the occasion, and each of the party was apportioned a supply of good old beer, sufficient to "cheer, but not inebriate"...The noble EARL rose and said.....He thought these celebrations were of great value in bringing together all classes of society - he thought they were of value, to show that they were all dependent one upon the other....if they derived any from these good things at his hands, he had received them from the hand of God; he was but the channel for conveying them to his neighbour....he trusted.....that they would endeavour to perform that which was the highest honour to which they could attain - to do their duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call them...he was sure that if landlord and tenant, employer and employed, those who had property and those who had none - except that honest property of their labour - would join in one great effort to advance each other's welfare and to maintain their Christian character, they would arrive at that condition of things which was the happiest and safest that could be attained in this fallen world. And now he wished them hearty joy. The park was open; there was a band for their amusement, and cricket and other games would be provided.¹⁷

The divine ordering of society was also mirrored in the relative roles of male and female and, in fact, in the whole domestic economy. Indeed one of Shaftesbury's concerns with the employment of women was that they were 'drawn from their domestic duties and occupations.'¹⁸ After describing the extent and heavy burden of female labour in the factories, he asked:

Where, Sir, under this condition, are the possibilities of domestic life? how can its obligations be fulfilled? Regard the woman as wife or mother, how can she accomplish any portion of her calling? And if she cannot do that which Providence has assigned her, what must be the effect on the whole surface of society?¹⁹

The effect in practical terms was that few women could make or mend shirts,²⁰ or, because they were occupied in the factories, could not 'cook, wash, repair clothes or take charge of the infants.'²¹ This was partially due to lack of time and partly to deficiency of education. Men were often at home, having been worn out in the factories, but they were unable to perform any of the 'especial duties that Providence has assigned to the females.'²²

He (Lord Ashley) believed that no man, whether Frenchman or Englishman, could cook so economically as a woman.²³

It was in Shaftesbury's eyes essential to both 'the peace and welfare of society, and to the comfort and well-being of the working classes, that females should be brought up with such a knowledge of domestic arts and household concerns as may enable them efficiently to discharge the various duties of wives and mothers.'²⁴ Indeed in the reduction of hours in factories there was now time for these female operatives to learn not just to read and write, but also to 'knit and sew.'²⁵

Shaftesbury's view was not just that male and female were ordained for different roles, but that the divine ordering extended to the whole family unit, and, of course, ultimately to society. To take children away from the family setting due to early employment within the factory system or into agricultural gangs was the critical cause of the breakdown of the domestic economy.²⁶ The divine ordering of the family was closely linked to the state of cleanliness and health of the home, for only if the sanitary condition of the home was in harmony could the domestic duties be performed with order and decency, a point still being made by the noble Lord less than two years before his death.²⁷

God has committed to every one a duty; and bear in mind your first duty to your children and your husbands imposes upon you the necessity of giving them a cleanly, cheerful and happy home.²⁸

Traditional rural paternalism was based on the principle of cow and cottage; that is, the provision by the landlord of a stable, clean and secure home and also the means for a certain amount of independent production. Shaftesbury strove to apply the same

principles to the new industrial economy. He did so by whole-heartedly embracing the issues of public health and the provision of dwellings for the labouring classes. Between 1842 and 1884 Shaftesbury spoke fifty-two times in Parliament on these issues. His concerns ranged from the Public Health Bill, the Crowded Dwellings Bill, Working Men's Dwellings Bill, Artisan's Dwellings Bill and numerous railway, improvement, and sanitary measures. He referred to 'the immense amount of moral and physical evil which resulted from the condition of the dwellings of the working classes in the great towns,'²⁹ and indeed 'that, until their domiciliary condition were Christianised (he could use no less forceful a term), all hope of moral and social improvement was utterly vain.'³⁰ In many districts allotments were provided and the operatives cultivated these in their leisure hours 'and in some instances raised not only vegetables for themselves, but enough food for a cow.'³¹ The pressure on land in London prevented any widespread adoption of the principle of allotments, but Shaftesbury defended with some vigour the provision of parks and open spaces for the working classes, and, partly, his concern to reduce working hours was to provide more time for moral and religious improvement. It was, however, the overwhelming impact of the industrial economy on the labourer, the movement away from an essentially local economy and the extent of evils exposed by Shaftesbury and others that led, under the influence of Evangelical faith, to an adjustment to the traditional paternalistic ideal.

7.2 Paternalism, Sin and Evangelicalism

The basic problem with the application of the paternalistic model to the industrial economy was that the relationships on which it depended were breaking down. Wealth was now seen as conveying power rather than responsibility, proprietors were often absent from their districts, and neither sickness nor industrial injury was regarded as conferring a responsibility to provide either compensation or even temporary relief.³² Ashley had already made clear that the failure of the industrial economy to provide for

mutually dependent relationships between the various groups concerned was a major reason for the hostility of working people.³³

The evils of the factory system revived 'the ancient feud between the House of Want and the House of Have; and property and station become odious, because they seem founded on acquirements from which multitudes are excluded.'³⁴ The poor tended to regard 'capital odious, for wealth is known to them only by its oppressions.'³⁵ In the debate on the *Employment of Women and Children in Mines and Collieries*, Ashley told the House that the Commission which had been set up had 'shown you the ignorance and neglect of many of those who have property, and the consequent vice and suffering of those who have none.'³⁶

The extent of the breach of duty was emphasised by the fact that millowners sat as magistrates on cases involving their own factories.³⁷ The magistracy were now regarded as enemies and oppressors.³⁸

Such violation of duty was a breach of the natural order as defined by God. In short it constituted sin. All classes were ignoring their responsibilities and obligations:

...avarice and cruelty are not the peculiar and inherent qualities of any one class or occupation - they will ever be found where means of profit are combined with great, and, virtually irresponsible power - *they will be found wherever interest and selfishness have a purpose to serve, and a favourable opportunity.*³⁹

There is, I know full well, an ample, probably an equal, amount of temptation and sin in every profession, station, calling or pursuit.⁴⁰

Evils like these outraged the laws of nature, and resulted in both physical and moral degradation.⁴¹ Shaftesbury warned against those 'who erect capital into a divinity and worship it with ten times more intensity than the God who created them.'⁴²

Employments necessary to mankind were deadly to man only by man's own fault, and it was when we 'enter on the path of luxury and sensual gratification, that begins the long grim catalogue of pestilential occupations.'⁴³

The breakdown in the domestic economy was also 'a perversion as it were of nature, which has the inevitable effect of introducing into families disorder, insubordination and conflict.'⁴⁴ Similarly this breakdown was shown in the insubordination of children who assert their own rights against the interference and control of their parents.⁴⁵ Given that the labour of many children was now essential to family income, children had indeed a powerful weapon. Conjugal and parental duties were now denied,⁴⁶ or neglected or at best not known.⁴⁷ It was not just that children were insubordinate, but there was also a neglect of duty by parents, in, for example, not providing for the education of their children even when the means were available to them.⁴⁸ This Shaftesbury declared to be a reversal of 'the order of nature, and the precepts of revelation.'⁴⁹ A direct consequence was the increase in crime and immorality. In Shaftesbury's eyes this represented a poisoning of the 'very sources of order and happiness,'⁵⁰ an annulment of the providential institution of domestic life,⁵¹ indeed, a 'sinful neglect of care and duty.'⁵²

Whatever has a tendency to withdraw mankind from the duties and influences of domestic life, and slacken the bonds which nature has ordained, hurts the state in its citizens. Of old the manufacture was conducted in the cottages, and notwithstanding occasional abuses, the result was good. A man with his family worked together at the loom, and the articles required were produced at no expense of conjugal intercourse and parental duty.⁵³

Industrialisation led to a modification in the nature of relationships. Thus, relationships between classes, between individuals, and within families changed from the local and paternal to the commercial. Ashley in the 1840 debate in the House of Commons on the Employment of Children drew attention to the 'legalized slavery' whereby a family effectively offered a child as security for a loan, but the child could never earn enough to allow his parents to pay off the loan.⁵⁴ Referring to a pamphlet by John Fielden, M.P. for Oldham, Ashley, in his article on the factory system for The Quarterly Review, showed how the relationship between employer and employed, and master and men, had altered so dramatically. Enormous profits had whetted the appetite for more; and as a result night working was introduced, such that 'the beds

never got cold;' all this alongside excessive labour, beatings and starvation.⁵⁵ The result was a revenge of nature in disease and fever.⁵⁶ Man was treated as a machine,⁵⁷ and children became of less value than cattle,⁵⁸ and valued only in terms of the amount of work that they produced.

Sin lay at the root of the Evangelical creed; it could not be ignored. Indeed all would be called to account for the privileges with which they had been entrusted.

But let us draw our resolutions from a higher source, recollecting that all wealth, talent, rank and power, are given by God for His own service, not for luxury; for the benefit of others, not for the pride of ourselves; and that we must render an account of privileges misused, of means perverted, of opportunities thrown away.⁵⁹

The evils exposed of covetousness and oppression were so great that 'we must weep.....over crimes so widely spread and so deeply rooted,' and 'we can at best retard, without averting, the day of retribution;'⁶⁰ 'the mischief now done is irreparable, and destined to hasten the evil day which, in God's just anger, has long impended over us, and yet might have been averted.'⁶¹ Judgement was inevitable.

Rather let us believe that no blessing can accompany those riches which are produced in suffering and crime, but that eventual mischief must descend on a system which afflicts so large a portion of our race.....⁶²

Sin was seen by *Shaftesbury* not only in terms of the breakdown of paternal duties, but also in the depth and extent of the evils against humanity themselves. There were hints here of a corporate and structural understanding of sin. Thus the system of climbing boys had led 'to more misery and more degradation than prevailed in any other Christian country.'⁶³ Indeed it was impossible to be a Christian country in which 2,000 fellow creatures were doomed to 'excruciating and intolerable agony' because gentlemen preferred climbing boys to machines and magistrates connived at breaches of the law.⁶⁴ The employment of women and children had forced them away from God's providential destiny.⁶⁵ In the House of Commons debate on the Employment of Children in Calico Print Works, Ashley noted the working conditions as leading to

hundreds thronging into the beer houses to enjoy lewd cabaret. The impact of sin was clear, and so was the responsibility:

What a monstrous perversion of the noblest faculties, of talents bestowed to refine and elevate mankind! But their guilt is our guilt; we incur it by conniving at it - certainly not by repressing it.⁶⁶

He reinforced this point in his diary entry for 7 February, 1845:

God give us His Holy Spirit to amend our hearts and lives, for we are desperately wicked - they who do such things, and we who do not prevent them. Shall I deliver my poor children in the Print-works ? God be with me !⁶⁷

Evil was natural, requiring 'nothing but man as he is.'⁶⁸ A comparison of Shaftesbury's understanding of sin with that of Sumner in his early writings shows the greater stress laid upon sin by Shaftesbury. In 1815 Sumner warned his more Calvinist colleagues 'to preach less of the sinfulness of man to the lower orders,' since the poor 'feel a sort of pleasure which need not be encouraged, when they hear their superiors brought down to the same level.'⁶⁹ But this universal sinfulness was exactly Shaftesbury's point. This appreciation of the penetrating nature of sin in humanity and the radical surgery needed to deal with it help explain why Shaftesbury could not accept the maxims of political economy.

So, too long basking in the hope of God's good providence, the 'long-suffering of the Almighty invites us to repentance; evils that have engulfed other nations, suspended over us for a while, and then averted, exhibit the mercy - and the probable termination of it.'⁷⁰ Thus:

Let us catch at this proffered opportunity, which may never return; betake ourselves with eagerness to do the first works; and while we have yet strength, and dominion, and wealth, and power, 'break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of our tranquillity.'⁷¹

Rather than invoke curses, 'far better is it for us, at most humble distance, to imitate those gracious and holy tears which fell over the pride, and covetousness, and ignorance of Jerusalem.'⁷²

I wish that every one would daily and hourly set before his eyes, and confess, his sin and the sin of his people: what we have received and done as individuals and as a nation; what we have left undone; what, in the despite of God's long-suffering, we persist in leaving undone; our hopes and fears; our loves and hates; our enormous wealth, and still more enormous covetousness; the cry of the poor, and the sensuality of the rich; and then, if there be but the smallest spark of grace in the soul, we shall, one and all, exclaim with Job, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes'.⁷³

In his article in the Quarterly Review on Infant Labour in December 1840, Ashley also appealed to natural rights as a basis for action.

But this furnishes to us an additional motive to undertake their defence; and, on behalf of England and the Christian faith, to assert those inalienable rights which belong to their nature, and are independent of their station.⁷⁴

The combination of the appeal to natural rights and Evangelical faith was effectively summarised in Lord Ashley's call for a Commission of Inquiry into the employment of children.

...I have been bold enough to undertake this task, because I must regard the objects of it as beings created, as ourselves, by the same Maker, redeemed by the same Saviour, and destined to the same immortality.⁷⁵

Thus Shaftesbury brought together an emphasis on the created order and the ultimate end of humanity, with the need for redemption, the centre of Evangelical faith, faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. When this was added to the stress on stewardship and judgement, something of the Evangelical basis of Shaftesbury's social views begins to emerge. Shaftesbury summarised his position thus:

The moral precepts and the doctrines or dogmas of Christianity were inseparably connected. He only could receive the full force of the moral precepts of Christianity who received the dogmas and mysteries with implicit belief; and in vain would they attempt to enforce upon the minds of children the binding nature of the parables of the "Good Samaritan," and the "Sower," or any of the other beautiful and moral precepts of the New Testament, if they left them under the conviction that He who delivered them was a mere man, and not the true and eternal Son of the living God. It was from that great truth that the Christian precepts derived their force, and it was by that truth alone that it would be possible to regenerate mankind.⁷⁶

7.3 Shaftesbury and Economic Policy

It was noted in chapters 5 and 6 that the local and personal nature of paternalism often led to a resistance to government intervention in socio-economic affairs. Shaftesbury's characteristic Evangelical emphasis on sin, judgement and repentance led him to adjust the traditional model of paternalism to make specific provision for corporate action by government. It was the intensity of evil and individual corruption in the wider context of an industrial economy, understood as sin, that demanded such intervention.

Shaftesbury's amended model of paternalism included a parental role for government. Thus, *'the State has an interest and a right to watch over, and provide for the moral and physical well-being of her people,'*⁷⁷ and:

Let the State but accomplish her frequent boast; let her show herself a faithful and pious parent; such efforts, be assured, will not be lost in the sight of God, and her children will speedily rise up, and call her blessed.⁷⁸

Hence, Shaftesbury's acceptance of the principle of intervention; a 'principle of interference.....first made effective in 1833, when Lord Althorp, then Leader of the House of Commons, having taken my Bill into his own hands, put a limit to the labour of children under nine years of age, and then laid down the rule of Factory Inspection.'⁷⁹ So, here in later life, Shaftesbury successfully turned the tables on his earlier opponents by pointing out that they had from that point forward conceded the basic principle of intervention. This principle Shaftesbury carried with him throughout his career; thus on Building Regulations he asserted 'the absolute and immediate necessity of some speedy legislation,'⁸⁰ and on public health, that 'the Sanitary State of the Metropolis requires the immediate Interposition of Her Majesty's Government.'⁸¹

Shaftesbury was undoubtedly mindful of the coming together of complex traditions in his response to the evils brought about through industrialisation. He showed his own distinctiveness when writing on the Ragged Schools in The Quarterly Review, by appealing to the combination of these traditions, with echoes of Isaiah.

We have an established church, abundant in able and pious men, and she boasts herself to be the church of the people. We have a great body of wealthy and intelligent dissenters, who declaim, by day and by night, on the efficacious virtues of the voluntary principle. We have a generous aristocracy and plethoric capitalists, and a government pledged to social improvements. Who will come forward? Why not all?⁸²

The principle of intervention was demanded by the extent of evil within the industrial system. Thus Ashley declared in announcing his intention to introduce a Bill to regulate the employment of women and children in mines and collieries that he proposed, 'in the first place, and at once, to cut off the principal evils,'⁸³ and in respect of the Building Regulations and Borough Improvements Bill, the 'House could have no notion of the immense amount of moral and physical evil which resulted from the condition of the dwellings of the working classes in the great towns.'⁸⁴ In a letter to the editor of The Times, responding to a speech made by Richard Cobden, Shaftesbury again linked health and legislation.

The great mass of the working people, whatever their qualifications, have nothing but the courts and alleys of crowded towns to which they can resort. These, through the neglect of the Legislature to enact sound building regulations, have been so constructed by the avarice of the speculators that health is impossible within their range.⁸⁵

So overwhelming was this evil, referring especially to the employment of women in mines, that protective legislation was almost a religious requirement:

I think that every principle of religion - I think that every law of nature calls for such a step.⁸⁶

Looking back in later life, Shaftesbury, proposing the Second Reading of the Payment of Wages in Public-houses etc, Bill, said that he believed such intervention 'to be demanded alike by the law of God and the welfare of the people.'⁸⁷

Government intervention had protected the weak against the strong, and had enhanced the honour of the nation; even if it did constitute interference with the liberty of the subject, it was to the benefit of the nation.⁸⁸ In his Quarterly Review article on Infant Labour, Ashley referred to 'the success of mercy by statute.'⁸⁹ The role of legislation

was to direct and excite the lagging duty⁹⁰ of those who had the means and the knowledge to provide a remedy.⁹¹

By legislation you have removed manifold and oppressive obstacles that stood in the way of the working man's comfort, progress, and honour. By legislation you have ordained justice, and exhibited sympathy with the best interests of the labourers, the surest and happiest mode of all government. By legislation you have given to the working classes the full power to exercise, for themselves and for the public welfare, all the physical and moral energies that God has bestowed on them; and by legislation you have given them means to assert and maintain their rights; and it will be their own fault, not yours, my Lords, if they do not, with these abundant and mighty blessings, become a wise and an understanding people.⁹²

And again, showing the influence of his Evangelical faith:

...We should first, as far as possible, regulate the building of houses, the width and construction of streets.....*And among your other remedies you must resort to parks and playgrounds.....I should like to see gymnasiums attached to every one of our schools....There is nothing economical but justice and mercy towards all interests, temporal and spiritual, of all the human race.....when people say we should think more of the soul and less of the body, my answer is, that the same God which made the soul also made the body....it must be treated and cared for according to the end for which it was created - fitness for his service...If St. Paul calling our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost, said we ought not to be contaminated by sin, we also say that our bodies, the temple of the Holy Ghost, ought not to be degraded by filth when it can be avoided, and ought not to be disabled by unnecessary suffering. Therefore, all that society can do it ought to do to give every man full, fair and free opportunity to exercise his moral, intellectual, physical and spiritual energies, so that everyone may be able to do his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him.*⁹³

The happiness principle, the responsibility of promoting the happiness of his fellow man, was, provided the source of that happiness was acknowledged, part of the Evangelical world view.⁹⁴ Once the legislative principle had been established, it followed that a large part of Shaftesbury's work should take place through the sponsorship of legislation. But it was not only so, and his patronage and concern for voluntary societies, both in the field of Christian missionary endeavour and of Christian social concern, demonstrated the continuing interaction of his Evangelical theology with his paternalistic tradition.

In the debates on the proposed amendment to the Poor Law in 1834, Ashley was largely absent, in fact on his European tour. Finlayson points out that he does not appear to have been opposed to the new Poor Law and was not involved in the Anti-Poor Law Movement.⁹⁵ This is, however, too simple a statement. Throughout his tour Ashley had deliberately 'avoided both newspapers and conversations' on political subjects.⁹⁶ Before his departure abroad he had taken up the mantle of the Ten Hours Movement, after careful consideration, and only if he were able to give it his full attention. His silence cannot be taken as indicative of his support for the Poor Law Amendment Act. It is, of course, not known which way Shaftesbury would have voted on the Bill had he been present in the House, and in any event only twenty members opposed the Bill, but concern ran much deeper. Shaftesbury would no doubt have been part of that anxiety. Firstly, his close association with Michael Sadler should be recalled. Sadler was an implacable opponent of the Poor Law Amendment Bill. It was from Sadler that Ashley took over the role of *Parliamentary spokesman for the Ten Hours Movement*. He held Sadler in high esteem.⁹⁷ Secondly, there was the paternalistic influence on Shaftesbury at this time of Robert Southey, reinforcing his sympathy for the poor.⁹⁸ Thirdly, in later interventions on the Poor Law, Shaftesbury clearly sought mitigation of the particular issue which lay at the centre of the battle to amend the legislation in 1834, that of outdoor relief. Thus in a question in the House of Lords in 1862, Shaftesbury, referring to distress in Lancashire, asked for 'a relaxation of the rigid rules of the Poor Law in respect to relief, more especially in respect to the labour test.' These people 'were disposed to work if work could be found for them to do' and hence in these circumstances 'the enforcement of the labour test would be most cruel and injudicious.'⁹⁹ This does not conclusively demonstrate what attitude Shaftesbury would have taken to the 1834 Bill, but does show that he was within the paternalistic tradition that opposed that Bill.

On the Corn Laws, Shaftesbury's position was more explicit, and shows his own distinctive place within the wider customs and practices of paternalism. He had long espoused the protectionist cause; we 'were summoned, every Session, to make a plain,

unconditional resistance to the repeal of the Corn Laws.¹⁰⁰ There could have been no other position. Shaftesbury belonged to the agricultural interest, was elected by an agricultural county as a protectionist, and it was clearly in the interests of agriculture to maintain the Corn Laws. The argument of rural paternalism and protectionism was that a high price of corn allowed for the local practice of paternalism by the landed proprietor. By October 1845, Ashley's views on the Corn Laws were changing. He could see that 'their destiny is fixed' and that eventual abolition was only a matter of time. He appealed to his constituents to accept this, and to negotiate a gradual abolition of the Corn Laws while they still had the ability to do so.¹⁰¹ The effect of this was to isolate Ashley from both free traders and protectionists.¹⁰² When Peel brought forward his Bill it was for the *immediate and total abolition of the Corn Laws*. Ashley felt no alternative but to support that Bill, but rather than oppose the interests of his constituents he resigned his seat. It is not easy to discern the reasons for this change of opinion. Part of it lies in a distinction between the paternal interest and the agricultural interest, traditionally regarded as synonymous. Industrialisation changed that. With the breakdown of the traditional, rural, local, paternal system, indeed with Ashley's increasing sense of such neglect of duty as sin, the argument of the free traders that the likely reduction in the price of corn following repeal would be the policy which would most benefit the labouring classes, must, undoubtedly, have come to bear more heavily on Ashley.¹⁰³

It was Shaftesbury's emphasis on sin that distinguished his views both within the wider understanding of political economy and in his position within the tradition of paternalism. By placing the understanding of order in social structures, rather than the uncertain invisible hand of economics, Shaftesbury was more able to defend government intervention in socio-economic affairs as the necessary means of restraining sin and removing evil. Sin must, for the Evangelical, lead to repentance. All have to give an account of themselves at the end of time. Hence present and future rewards and punishments cannot be separated as they often were by Evangelical political economists; rather, in line with the Evangelical emphasis on both general and

particular providence, so also future and present understandings of rewards and punishments had to be kept in balance. This balance helps explain Shaftesbury's commitment to both evangelism and social welfare.

- ¹ Hodder, vol 1, p57, quoting John Bull's report of the Woodstock election.
- ² Shaftesbury, The Times, 14 October, 1858, 19 May, 1869 and 1 August, 1872.
- ³ Ashley, The Times, 4 April, 1848.
- ⁴ Ashley, Factory Bill, Hansard, 10 May, 1844, col 911.
- ⁵ Shaftesbury, The Times, 19 May, 1869.
- ⁶ Finlayson, pp33-34.
- ⁷ Diaries, 7 April, 1853, SHA/PD/6.
- ⁸ Ashley, quoted in Hodder, vol 1 p105.
- ⁹ Ashley, Mines and Collieries Bill, Hansard, 16 May, 1843, col 467.
- ¹⁰ Ashley, Factory Bill, Hansard, 10 May, 1844, col 914.
- ¹¹ Ashley, The Ten Hours Factory Bill, Hansard, 29 January, 1846, col 392.
- ¹² Ashley, Employment of Women and Children in Mines and Collieries, Hansard, 7 June, 1842, col 1321.
- ¹³ Shaftesbury, Masters and Operatives Bill, Hansard, 19 July, 1866, col 1061.
- ¹⁴ Shaftesbury, Memorial To Richard Oastler, The Times, 19 May, 1869.
- ¹⁵ Ashley to The Chairman of the Lancashire Short-Time Committee, The Times, 18 July, 1844.
- ¹⁶ Shaftesbury, Metropolitan Railways - Displacement of Labourers, Hansard, 28 February, 1861, col 1069.
- ¹⁷ The Times, 4 November, 1856.
- ¹⁸ Ashley, Children in Factories, Hansard, 20 July, 1838, col 384.
- ¹⁹ Ashley, Hours of Labour in Factories, Hansard, 15 March, 1844, cols 1092-1093.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, cols 1093-1094.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, col 1099.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 22 March, 1844, col 1384.
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- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, col 892.
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- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Ashley, The Ten Hours Factory Bill, Hansard, 29 January, 1846, col 393.
- ³⁵ Ashley, Employment of Children, Hansard, 4 August, 1840, col 1270.
- ³⁶ Ashley, Employment of Women and Children in Mines and Collieries, Hansard, 7 June, 1842, col 1321.
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- ⁴⁰ Shaftesbury, Letter in The Times, 4 April, 1856.
- ⁴¹ Ashley, Hours of Labour, col 1086.
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- ⁴³ Ashley, Employment of Women and Children, col 1348.
- ⁴⁴ Ashley, Hours of Labour, col 1096.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, col 1097.
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8 Mission, the Millennium and the Evangelical quest for purity

Evangelical theology was not static and during the first third of the nineteenth century; it went through significant evolution and change, particularly in relation to mission. The main missionary societies that had been founded in the early years of the century had become the focus of Evangelical activism; it was also in these societies that a realignment of ideas about mission became most apparent.

8.1 A change in perception

This development was essentially a renewed insight into the understanding of the nature of God and his relationship to the world. It was closely connected to the growing interest in theories associated with the millennium and had a profound impact upon missionary theology and, indeed, upon the place of social welfare within that framework.

The concept of the millennium was derived from chapter 20 of the book of Revelation, where it is stated that the saints will rule over the earth for a thousand years. The general view of Evangelicals in the eighteenth century was that the millennium would come in gradually through widespread conversion and this would then be followed by the Second Advent of Christ. This outlook was known as postmillennialism and fitted easily with Enlightenment optimism about human progress. Some considered the promised millennium to be an exact future period of a thousand years, others took the more Augustinian line of its fulfilment within the spiritual life of the church which, when combined with Lockean rationality, brought into close association the future success of the church and the progress of man and society.¹ In either event the Day of Judgement was removed into the distant future. The role of the missionary societies, and indeed, of the British nation, was to be instruments in the divine hands for the conversion of the world, and hence, the bringing about of the millennium.

This optimistic Evangelical missionary theology was challenged by a number of factors. Firstly, there was the relative lack of success of the missionary enterprise. The euphoria of the early years of the century had not been sustained. Conversion on a worldwide scale seemed so far away that doubts crept in about both the methods employed and the theological reasoning which underlay them. Secondly, the impact of revolution in France led many people in Britain to examine their Bibles to try to comprehend the shattering and extraordinary events that were taking place in the world. Due to their attachment to the Scriptures, Evangelicals were prominent in this development. Thirdly, the increasing influence of Romantic thought was shown by the desire to seek shelter and protection from industrial change. Paradise had always been offered by Evangelicals in heaven but was now desired on earth, and soon.

These concerns led to an alternative view of the millennium. Essentially, the thousand years of blessing, peace and felicity needed to arrive earlier than previously suggested. A careful reading and exegesis of Revelation showed that Christ would reign on earth with his saints for the thousand years. Hence the Second Advent must occur before rather than after the millennium. Thus this scheme became known as premillennialism. The usual expression of premillennialism was one that sought to understand *historical and contemporary world events within a biblical chronology that would lead up to the Second Advent*; this was called historicist premillennialism. There was a less popular view known as futurist premillennialism which expected an imminent return of Christ but associated the events and images of Scripture mainly with the period after the Second Advent. This scheme was associated mainly with John Nelson Darby and the Plymouth Brethren, but became more popular within the Evangelical mainstream through, for example, Horatius Bonar, as the problems of fitting history to prophecy increased.² The effect of both was to bring timescales forward, including, therefore, the Day of Judgement, and to give increased weight within Evangelicalism to the special actions of divine providence, and of divine intervention in the human world.

Premillennialism was characterised by pessimism. Edward Irving, minister of the Caledonian Chapel, a Church of Scotland congregation in Hatton Garden, and an important figure in the rise of premillennialism, dismissed the views of the moderate Evangelicalism of Clapham as 'not the millennium of scripture, but the optimism of the philosophers.'³ For Irving the only hope for the chaos of the world lay in the Second Coming of Christ. Missionary societies and missionary committees were human attempts at human achievement. An overemphasis on missionary work was an interference with the rightful action of God. This sort of outlook proved particularly attractive to Calvinists with their stress on divine election and predestination. The purpose of the preaching of the Gospel was more that of a witness than a means of conversion. The connection can also be discerned here to increased biblical literalism and, due to the Calvinist elements, and the closeness of the Day of Judgement, to the need for the church to be pure in readiness for its role as the bride of Christ when the Lord returned.

These developments were clearly demonstrated in the doctrinal tensions in the missionary societies in this period, exemplified in Edward Irving's address to the LMS in 1824, the crises in the Bible Society, and the emphasis in the London Society on *unfulfilled prophecy, including the literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine*.⁴ This last feature, which became common in millennialist thought, led to a surprisingly early charge of enthusiasm in 1809.⁵

David Hempton comments that 'the attempt to reach back in history for the pure reformed faith, with its emphasis on God's sovereignty and the need for rigorous personal holiness, was a religious version of Victorian romanticism.'⁶ The same general point about the impact of Romanticism on Evangelicalism made by Bebbington was discussed in chapter 3.5.

8.2 Election and Apostasy

The concept of election was a deeply biblical and theological idea. It was understood as God's choice of the ancient nation of Israel for the execution of his divine purposes and, after the death of Christ, as continued in his New Testament people, the church. In the nineteenth century this theological principle came to be expressed by Evangelicals in the sense of Britain's role as an elect nation under God and called by him to particular tasks. The changing face of Evangelicalism also led to a significant alternative view of this role.

It was the emergence of national Protestantism that gave rise to the application of this theological understanding of the elect nation to Great Britain.⁷ In the eyes of the national Protestants, the British constitution was in near-perfect God-given form. Hence the need to resist any proposals for change. It was only a small step from this position to make a claim for the elect nation status of Britain, God's chosen nation, with its Protestant constitution and Established Church. This was reinforced by the Evangelical emphasis on mission, and the foundation of the missionary societies; it was the responsibility of God's chosen nation to take the gospel to the heathen.

The CMS in particular was characterised by views of an expected advancement of the gospel through human means, partly due to this understanding of Great Britain as an elect nation. Thus the Committee was able to 'pray, that, while every country under Heaven brings the tribute of its stores to Great Britain, she may return to them treasures more valuable than silver and gold,'⁸ and rejoiced that 'the Prayers of our Liturgy are offered up by the Natives.'⁹ The Annual Report for 1824-25 stated:

...your Committee cannot but avow their full conviction, thankfulness to Him who guides all things to the advancement of His kingdom, that, amidst numberless and augmenting difficulties, that kingdom is steadily advancing.¹⁰

The CMS President, Admiral Lord Gambier, also illustrated this position:

...of all the nations of the world, that in which we lived was the most blessed....what nation is so great...the land of plenty and abundance....we had a church, the nearest ...to perfection, of any Christian communion....we had a constitution unparalleled.¹¹

And referring to the mission of CMS:

The Almighty God had prepared the great work, and he would still continue to bless it, that his name might be spread over the earth, and his saving health be extended to all nations.¹²

There are two particular problems with this idea of election. Firstly, the designation of a nation as elect often depends upon which nation the Evangelical is set in. In America, in the decades after the revolution, the idea of that nation as God's chosen nation flourished, and even grew into intense millennial speculation.¹³ Indeed, Mark Noll sees the sense of elect nationhood as 'a peculiarly evangelical possession.'¹⁴ Secondly, election carries responsibility, and if the emphasis of the optimistic strand of Evangelical opinion, demonstrated in the Christian Observer and in the CMS, was that England was the chosen nation to fulfil God's purposes, there was an increasingly strong section of Evangelical opinion, influenced by premillennialism, that placed greater weight upon the possible dangers for an elect nation that failed to remain faithful to God - to the Evangelical critics of the Evangelical missionary societies, elect Britain had become *apostate Britain*.

These developments brought out into the open the increasing challenge to the optimism of the missionary societies. This success-orientated theology, the overconfidence, and the reliance on human means, rather than divine means, was faced with increasing Evangelical opposition. Irving criticised the CMS for pursuing a success theology rather than a witness theology, and the Bible Society's failure to open meetings in prayer and with Bible reading.

An object the wildest, and most frantic, and most opposite to God's word, which ever deluded the minds of men - to wit, the conversion of the whole world - hath been started within these last thirty years.¹⁵

...in all their public meetings, in all their reports, and in all their publications, they speak of nothing but universal conversion and millennial blessedness, not only to the apostate nations of Christendom, but to the whole earth, so that truly we are come to that poverty and negation, and I may even say contradiction, of faith, which the Lord representeth as immediately preceding his coming, and the concomitant of those days of wickedness, dark and gross as were the days of Noah and Lot.¹⁶

To Irving all this spoke of Evangelical accommodation with the world. As he put it, 'the religious world hath no such exemption....but are themselves under the evil influence, less observable perhaps, by being more disguised, but truly the same in principle and in working.'¹⁷ The latter days would be evil, not good.¹⁸ The church thought it was 'steering full sail into the pacific and blessed region of time, when we are hurrying headlong, stern foremost, into the jaws of an almost inevitable whirlpool.'¹⁹

Truth had given way to error and men 'speak of a sermon [as they] speak of a dinner.'²⁰ The Church was apostate, and Evangelicalism itself was not exempt. The Church was dominated by 'the incessant hunt after preferment' and damaged by the spectacle of 'bishops of the church dying with hundreds of thousands in their chest.'²¹ Evangelicalism preached justification by faith only in words, but, in practice, demanded works by insisting on an attitude of self-doubt towards the God-given assurance of salvation, and almsgiving was now in public rather than in private.²² There was some evidence for these criticisms in the attitudes of missionary society committees and the publication of subscription lists. Cuninghame associated lukewarm Laodicea with the churches of the Reformation and noted 'that the character of that church too closely resembles the existing state of things, not to strike attentive observers of the moral signs of the times.'²³ The demarcation lines in this dispute were starkly drawn. In sermons before the London Society, both Daniel Wilson and Charles Simeon defended the use of human means granted by God. According to Simeon an overemphasis on miraculous intervention would 'paralyse all exertions,'²⁴ a point reinforced by Faber's comment that if the Jews were to be the missionaries to the Gentiles, 'where is the utility of labouring to bring about an event, unless we have

good reason to believe that the appointed time of its accomplishment is near at hand.²⁵ The CMS stated that the 'work is the Lord's but he carries it on by means and instruments,'²⁶ and later specified two of particular importance, the sending of missionaries and the employment of the press.²⁷

Nevertheless, many premillennialists demanded that Evangelicals remained pure by disassociating themselves from such societies. This was brought to a head by Edward Irving's sermon before the LMS in 1824. In his address For Missionaries after the Apostolic School Irving chastised the drift away from the supernatural dependency on God which had characterised the apostles. The patronage and human organisation of the missionary societies demonstrated this drift from purity. His emphasis on the faith missionary cannot have endeared him to the committee of gentlemen 'in black coats and white neckties.'²⁸ He repeated a similar charge the next year before the Continental Society. Missionary endeavour had no hope of success; what awaited the world was not the optimistic progression towards the millennial kingdom but the dramatic intervention of God in judgement in order to inaugurate that kingdom. Hugh McNeile also reflected this view before the London Society in his sermon of 1826 when he noted that the missionary societies' 'loudest notes of triumphant congratulation, are those, which announce the acquisition of some human patronage.'²⁹ The genteel committees of the missionary societies were deeply shocked. Irving's criticism reverberated around the Evangelical world. Henry Drummond demanded that Evangelicals come out of the Established Church at the 1828 annual meeting of the Continental Society, and the prominent Hugh McNeile reaffirmed a Calvinist doctrine of election, which demanded the preaching of the gospel as a witness, rather than the means for the conversion of the world.³⁰

This change of perception, with the associated reinterpretation of the meaning of election, had a significant impact on the Evangelical understanding of the Bible. The study of unfulfilled prophecy led to a more literal approach to the Bible. Both the world and the Church were compared to the Scriptures and found wanting. It is,

therefore, not surprising that the Bible Society, centred on the Scriptures, became also a focus for this Evangelical quest for purity.

8.3 The Apocrypha crisis in the Bible Society

The prevailing Protestant and Evangelical view of the Scriptures was that they constituted the Word of God. The perspicuity of Scripture was also an accepted position; the message of salvation was clear from the Bible, and was accessible to all who were able to read them. This lay behind the Bible Society's constitution which guarded against the insertion of any note or comment in Bibles distributed by the Society.³¹ The difficulties of the 1820s in the Bible Society originated in the practice of overseas auxiliary Societies using parent society grants to distribute the Scriptures in the form sanctioned by local churches, which in the case of Roman Catholic countries included the Apocrypha.

Although there were some early tensions over local discretion regarding the Apocrypha,³² by 1813 it would seem that the Committee was implicitly permitting, even if not advocating, its inclusion in overseas editions.³³ As Evangelical views of the Bible hardened, it was not surprising that this matter began to attract the attention of the Committee. A compromise solution restricted parent society grants to the canonical Scriptures, while allowing flexibility over local funds. In August 1822 a grant of £500 was made to Leander Van Ess, a Roman Catholic priest, and the Society's agent in Germany, to purchase 8,000 Bibles in sheets to which he would personally finance the integration of the Apocrypha.³⁴ The Rev. Dr. William Thorpe gave notice of a motion which came before the Committee on 6 December, 1824.

That it is contrary to the first law of this Society, which declares that the Society's "sole object shall be to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without Note or Comment," to aid in publishing or circulating any edition of the Bible containing the Apocrypha.³⁵

The Committee adjourned the discussion, but subsequently passed a resolution restricting Bible Society grants to the printing and publishing of the Canonical books.³⁶

In the rising atmosphere of Evangelical purity, such a compromise had little hope of providing the solution. The Bible Society remained associated with the publication and circulation of the Apocrypha. While the Edinburgh Bible Society remonstrated against the Apocrypha, twenty-six members of Cambridge University, including prominent Evangelicals such as Professor William Farish, William Cecil, Baptist Noel, Legh Richmond and Charles Simeon, supported the circulation of the Apocrypha on the grounds that in Roman Catholic countries this was the only way of ensuring the distribution of the Scriptures. The Committee then rescinded all previous resolutions.³⁷ Henry Drummond and twenty-five others demanded the restoration of the original motions on the Apocrypha.³⁸ Compromise failed and a special committee was appointed. J.W. Cunningham and Zachary Macaulay proposed a simple ban on the application of Bible Society funds to the printing or circulation of the Apocrypha, and Sir Robert Inglis and Charles Simeon proposed an amendment suggesting the establishment of separate funds.³⁹

The names attached to these protests, resolutions and amendments illustrated the problem of defining purity for the Evangelical world. The question was whether the undiluted, pure, Word of God was to take priority over the wider objective of Christian mission, in one or two specific instances of difficulty. There was never any desire or intent on the part of the Bible Society to publish or circulate the Apocrypha in any other circumstances than those created by the issue of the distribution of the Scriptures in Roman Catholic countries. The problem in the Evangelical quest for purity was the definition of the boundaries of purity in real situations. Purity was obviously not entirely pure.

The Bible Society President, Lord Teignmouth, opposed the inclusion of the apocryphal books, a view endorsed by the Special Committee and on 21 November, 1825 by the General Committee.

That the funds of the Society be applied to the printing and circulation of the Canonical Books of Scripture, to the exclusion of those Books and parts of Books, which are usually termed Apocryphal; and that all copies printed, either entirely or in part, at the expense of the Society, and whether such copies consist of the whole or of any one or more of such Books, be invariably issued bound; no other Books whatever being bound with them: and further, that all money grants to Societies and individuals be made only in conformity with the principle of this regulation.⁴⁰

Who could have expected that the doyen of Evangelical missionary societies would have been forced to spell out the purity of its practices with such precision ?

The majority seems to have been about four to one,⁴¹ though Simeon, Farish, Dealtry, Steinkopf and the secretary, Brandram, were in the minority and entered a protest, but to no avail. At the annual meetings of 1826 and 1827 regulations were approved which specifically excluded the Apocrypha from the remit of the society's objective of circulating the Holy Scriptures, excluded pecuniary aid for any society which circulated the Apocrypha, and required that the biblical books be issued bound and also that the use of proceeds from the sale of Scriptures granted by the Society be retained under the control of the Society.

The problem with conflicts over purity of doctrine, belief or action is that rarely are the solutions pure enough for all concerned. So it was with the Apocryphal controversy; the resolutions, received with acclamation by the annual meetings of 1826 and 1827, were rejected by the Edinburgh Bible Society, which described the Committee as Socinians and Deists.⁴² Indeed, immediately after the resolution of 25 November, 1825 had been passed, the Committee received a letter from the Edinburgh Bible Society which stated that they could:

...conceive nothing can effectually restore the Bible Society to the purity of its original subject, which does not put an effectual check upon the circulation along with its publications, directly or indirectly, of those books which are declared to be uncanonical.⁴³

The new regulations were deemed to be capable of evasion. At the annual meeting of 1827 Edward Irving sought from the Committee an acknowledgement of its error that it circulated adulterated copies of the Word of God, that auxiliaries which so

disseminated the Scriptures should be placed in a secondary position to those that did not and that vacancies on the Committee should be filled only by orthodox believers, and all this out of 'a holy jealousy for the purity of God's word.'⁴⁴ Attempts to force the resignation those who had supported the continued inclusion of the Apocrypha failed and, hence, most of the Auxiliary Societies in Scotland seceded from the main Society. Indeed, of the forty-eight Scottish auxiliaries contributing to the parent society in 1825, only eight were doing so in 1828.⁴⁵

8.4 The conflict over doctrinal tests

Only Evangelicals could fall out over prayer. The place of prayer within the understanding and practice of mission was central to the Evangelical quest for purity in the 1820s and early 1830s. Of course, such an approach was directly related to the increased Evangelical emphasis on God's intervening special providence and the reaction to an approach to mission orientated towards human effort. In addition to conflict over the place of prayer, in the aftermath of the secessions over the Apocrypha crisis, the question was also raised of whether membership of the Bible Society should be formally restricted by way of doctrinal belief. In 1830, under the influence of Irving, Drummond, Haldane and Lord Mandeville, and also the prophetic concerns of the Albury Conferences, with the associated shift in the Evangelical understanding of God, various local auxiliaries decided to open their meetings with prayer. Resolutions were passed by the Guernsey and Rugby Auxiliaries demanding separation from Socinians, and one from Derby advocating the introduction of prayer at all meetings.⁴⁶

In 1831 the Committee in the annual report stated, in relation to the opening of general and committee meetings in prayer, 'as their almost unanimous judgment, that, viewing the peculiar constitution of the Society, that they cannot advise the adoption of the measure.'⁴⁷ This peculiar nature of the constitution the Committee spelt out more clearly in reaction to the demand for membership tests:

That this Committee, feeling that it is their duty not only to confine themselves to the prosecution of the exclusive object of the British and Foreign Bible Society, but also to uphold the simplicity of its constitution, under which the contributions and assistance of all persons, without respect to religious distinctions, are admissible....⁴⁸

Thus the question was, once again, that of the relative position within Evangelical thought of the principle of mission and of doctrinal belief. The Bible Society, like many of the early missionary societies, was founded upon the principle of catholicity. The issue was the extent of catholicity. Right back at the beginning of the Bible Society, the idea of the society as a business had been extended by John Owen to a comparison with Lloyds of London; debates between Calvinism and Socinianism had no place; the Bible Society's concern was with the promulgation of the Scriptures as Lloyds was with the underwriting of insurance.⁴⁹ Religious activities such as sermons and prayers were studiously avoided at Society meetings.⁵⁰

The Committee sought to defend the principle of catholicity by referring to 'the simplicity of which sincere Christians of different denominations have been enabled to give to each other the right hand of fellowship, and to enjoy a delightful communion of brotherly love one with another.'⁵¹ The Committee recognised that, on occasion, human glory had replaced divine glory, and that the breadth of Christian opinion allowed within the Bible Society had sometimes been publicly exceeded, but nevertheless maintained that 'the union in the Bible Society is a union without compromise.'⁵²

This discussion revealed both the penetrating analysis of the doctrinal purists and the dangers inherent in that position, which the Committee also sought to point out. Who was to define doctrinal purity? And could not the very quest for purity be itself equally dangerous ?⁵³

The introduction, too, of the name of one class of subscribers, as no longer fit to remain members of the Society, would only prepare the way for the introduction of another, by those who may discover fresh grounds of objection.⁵⁴

Appeals to the Scriptures in these circumstances were irrelevant as all parties concerned would readily ascribe to such declarations; the problem lay in each party 'reserving to themselves the right of interpreting those words.'⁵⁵

At the annual meeting of 1831 at which this report was presented, J.E. Gordon Esq., the founder, in 1827, of the British (later Protestant) Reformation Society, and the Rev. Lundy Foot, moved amendments to the Report to restrict membership of the Bible Society to Trinitarian Christians. Foot's amendment sought to exclude 'those who deny the Divinity and Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.'⁵⁶ The proposers of the original motion of acceptance of the annual report appealed to the catholic basis of the Society:

...it is obvious that the Institution does owe mainly its great strength to the union of different bodies concentrated for this one object.⁵⁷

Gordon, for his part, deliberately excluded the issue of prayer, because he said the issue of prayer was bound up with the issue of the Trinitarian commitment of the membership of the Society.

...you cannot form a Society whose Members can unite in Prayer; since there are in it, knees which will not bow to that Name which is above every name, and tongues which will not confess that our Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.⁵⁸

Gordon was constantly interrupted from the floor but pressed home his point that the Society could not and should not ignore the religious implications of its objective of the distribution of the Scriptures; to do so would reduce the Bible Society 'to the low and degrading operation of a Bookselling Company.'⁵⁹ Gordon then came under pressure from both floor and platform; his exposition of Scriptural texts was criticised on the grounds that the Society's purpose was to circulate the Scriptures without note or comment - a position supported by Lord Bexley from the Chair, though surely of rather spurious application to a speaker at the annual meeting.

It was also rather a moot point as to the extent of Socinian influence in the Bible Society.⁶⁰ Gordon quoted examples of Unitarian ministers gaining influence in local

auxiliaries, a claim that prompted the audience at the annual meeting to demand their names, but a position supported by the respected Rev. Charles Hawtrey. Lundy Foot then proceeded to move his amendment, seconded by Baptist Noel. Noel maintained that a society calling itself a Christian society and which believed in the divinity of Christ could not associate with those who denied His divinity. He summed up the position:

...we have been accused of designing to form an Exclusive Church. But what evidence is given of this? It is said we wish to exclude. But whom do we wish to exclude? We object to none but the Unitarian: we only exclude from the Church of Christ those who do not acknowledge His divinity, and therefore are not of His Church: they are not even Nominal Christians.⁶¹

The amendments were both defeated, and the original motion of adoption of the annual report was carried. How long can the pure remain tainted by the impure? On 7 December, 1831 the Trinitarian Bible Society came into existence. Ultra-Tory national Protestants were highly prominent among its founders.⁶² Among its objects was not only a Trinitarian membership requirement, interpreted formally as excluding not only Socinians but also Roman Catholics, but also the offering up of prayer and praise at all its meetings. Division in the ranks of the Trinitarian Bible Society was always likely with this combination of premillennial Irvingites and Tory national Protestants. Although many of those who left did in fact return to the ranks of the Bible Society, there was also in the succeeding years the adoption by the senior society of some of the principles with which the rebels were concerned in the early 1830s. And the schism did strike to the core of the Society; their respected Librarian, T.P. Platt, was among the seceders.

8.5 Purity and unity - implications for later developments

Roger Martin describes the 1820s as a watershed in the history of the Bible Society.⁶³ In fact this decade was more a turning-point for the Evangelical understanding of mission. The demands for purity of doctrine and action resulted from this process of the changing Evangelical concept of mission, together with the Evangelical reaction to

the dismantling of national Protestantism through the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic emancipation. In the Bible Society there was also the added tensions of the relationship of the parent Society to the auxiliaries, always a sensitive area, especially in Scotland.

Martin maintains that these two controversies within the Bible Society of the 1820s and early 1830s seriously weakened the pan-evangelical movement, and held out the prospect of a bleak future if even the Bible Society, with its simplicity of constitution, was to prove unable to weather the storms of theological and denominational dispute.⁶⁴ This is somewhat too narrow a view. Arguments about purity can lead to a very clear demarcation of positions when the reality of the matter is far less clear. The Bible Society had neither desire nor intention to engage in the wholesale distribution of the Apocrypha. Neither party particularly approved of the Apocrypha and both groups preferred the dissemination of non-apocryphal bibles on the Continent, even in Roman Catholic countries. Perhaps even more amazing was the fact of the survival of the Bible Society as the major force of Evangelical unity, indeed the most potent such force, even after the emergence of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846.

Nevertheless, the Apocryphal controversy did lead to a serious examination by the Society of its intentions. Evangelical theology came to acknowledge the essential nature of some of the principles which lay behind the quest for purity, and which came to influence the future development of Evangelical mission. This was particularly so in the second generation of missionary societies founded after 1830, but was also demonstrated in the continuing societies, including the Bible Society, even if these questions were not adopted in the starkness with which they were presented in the 1820s. Statements to the annual meetings of the societies of a more interventionist tone regarding spiritual warfare and the visitation of cholera, despite the apparent defeat of the pro-test party, were an early demonstration of this. The whole area of the relationship of evangelism and social reform also mirrored these developments. The longer-term consequence was that a more mature Evangelical theology came to prominence from the mid-1830s.

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- ¹ E.R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, (1970), p4; W.H. Oliver, Prophets and Millennialists, (1978), p23.
- ² Twentieth century Evangelicalism has been deeply influenced by this futurist view.
- ³ Sheridan W. Gilley, 'Edward Irving, Prophet of the Millennium,' (Unpublished manuscript), p18.
- ⁴ London Society, 1st Annual Report, 1809, p9.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 2nd Annual Report, 1809-10, p23.
- ⁶ D.N. Hempton, 'Evangelicalism and Eschatology', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, vol. 31, number 2, 1980, p189.
- ⁷ J. Wolffe, God and Greater Britain, (1994) is a general survey of this tradition from mid-century; it was also a feature earlier in the century, and with the quite specific understanding of Britain as an elect nation.
- ⁸ 'An Account of the Society prefixed to the first Report of the Committee', 1801, Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society.
- ⁹ CMS, 39th Annual Report, 1838-39, Proceedings, p129.
- ¹⁰ CMS, 25th Annual Report, 1824-25, Proceedings, p201.
- ¹¹ The Record, 9 May, 1828, (Supplement).
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ M.A. Noll, 'Revolution and the Rise of Evangelical Social Influence in North Atlantic Societies,' in Noll, Bebbington & Rawlyk (eds), p118.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ E. Irving, 'Signs of the Times in the Church', Quarterly Journal of Prophecy and Theological Review, (1829), p655.
- ¹⁶ E. Irving, The Last Days: A Discourse on the evil character of these our times, (1828), p31,
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p41.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p28.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p36.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p45.
- ²¹ Irving, 'Signs', p648.
- ²² *Ibid.*, pp644-645.
- ²³ W. Cuninghame, Doctrine of the Millennial Advent, (1828), pp19-20.
- ²⁴ C. Simeon, London Society, 10th Anniversary Sermon, 1818, p3.
- ²⁵ G.S. Faber, London Society, 14th Anniversary Sermon, 1822, p26.
- ²⁶ Rev. Thomas Scott, CMS, 1st Anniversary Sermon, 1801, Proceedings, p51.
- ²⁷ CMS, 1st Annual Report, Proceedings, p86.
- ²⁸ Gilley, p5.
- ²⁹ Rev. H. McNeile, London Society, 18th Anniversary Sermon, 1826, p31.
- ³⁰ The Record, 29 May, 1828.
- ³¹ Bible Society, Laws and Regulations of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Rule 1.
- ³² W. Canton, The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, (1904-1910), p335; G. Browne, The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, (1859), p97.
- ³³ R.H. Martin, Evangelicals United, (1983), p124.
- ³⁴ Bible Society, Minutes of the General Committee, 2 August, 1822; also, Martin, p126.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 December, 1824.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 20 December, 1824.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 March, 1825.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 April, 1825.
- ³⁹ Bible Society, Minutes of Special Committee, 19 July, 1825.
- ⁴⁰ Bible Society, Minutes of the General Committee, 21 November, 1825..
- ⁴¹ Canton, p341.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p344.
- ⁴³ Bible Society, Minutes of the General Committee, 19 December, 1825.
- ⁴⁴ Edward Irving, Bible Society, 23rd Anniversary Meeting, Monthly Extracts, 31 May, 1827, p14.
- ⁴⁵ Martin, p131.
- ⁴⁶ Canton, pp354f.
- ⁴⁷ Bible Society, 27th Annual Report, 1831, pxvii.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pxviii.
- ⁴⁹ Martin, p88.

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- 50 Ibid.
51 Bible Society, 27th Annual Report, 1831, plxxxiiif.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Bible Society, 27th Anniversary Meeting, Monthly Extracts, 31 May, 1831, p468.
57 Ibid., p470.
58 Ibid., p475.
59 Ibid., p476.
60 Martin, p108, pp138-139.
61 Bible Society, 27th Anniversary Meeting, Monthly Extracts, 31 May, 1831, p493.
62 Martin, p139.
63 Ibid., p123.
64 Ibid., p124.

9 Shaftesbury and the missionary societies

The list of representatives of voluntary societies who attended Shaftesbury's funeral, contained at the back of Edwin Hodder's biography, illustrates the extent of both Shaftesbury's personal involvement and indeed the whole milieu of Evangelical social and missionary work. Six societies have been selected for investigation here. They are, in order of foundation, the Church Missionary Society ("CMS"), the British and Foreign Bible Society ("Bible Society"), the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews ("London Society"), the London City Mission ("LCM"), the Church Pastoral Aid Society ("CPAS") and the Ragged School Union ("RSU"). These have been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, they exemplified a broad range of Evangelical concerns, both evangelistic and social. The distinctions were not, however, so marked as might have been expected. Secondly, they embodied a mix of Established Church societies and interdenominational ones. Thirdly, the widely variant dates over which these societies were founded allows for the discussion of theological development over time. This is especially important in comparing societies each side of the watershed of 1830. Fourthly, they represented a significant part of Shaftesbury's life and work. He was President of four of them, Vice-President of one, and had significant connections with the other, the LCM, which studiously avoided hierarchical patronage. Through investigation of his involvement at Committee level and his addresses to the annual meetings, the underlying beliefs which influenced Shaftesbury's involvement can be traced. A coherent analysis of his theological beliefs can thereby be ascertained and used to obtain a considerable insight into the motivations of his life work. Fifthly, there were examples from within some of these societies of specific issues of tension over the place of social welfare. Examples of these strains can be seen in both the continuities and discontinuities in belief between Shaftesbury and the societies which he supported, but also in the way in which he was able to hold together such conflicting positions in a creative way.

9.1 The place of the voluntary society

Shaftesbury's life calling revolved around a commitment to legislative intervention and both the evangelistic and social action of God's people expressed through voluntary societies. In Victorian England a wide spectrum of such voluntary societies developed, ranging from visiting societies and working men's organisations associated with industrialisation to Evangelical social missionary societies. These societies were neither new nor exclusive to the nineteenth century, but there was then a significant expansion. They were characterised by an independence from state aid, although over time there was an increasing advance of centralised power and intervention - the 1870 Education Act being an important peak. These societies formed part of a middle-class identity.¹

These general features also fitted the increasing number of societies under Evangelical control and advancing Evangelical aims. Wilberforce's greatest influence was amongst the upper middle classes. Hence early Evangelical societies often represented the voluntary work for God of the middle class, especially middle-class women. This was reinforced with the process of industrialisation when the working class became the object of middle-class pity and activity. Indeed, as secular groups formed benefit societies such as building societies and working men's clubs, which in turn sponsored clothing clubs and the like, the poorest sections of society were frequently excluded from membership.² Nevertheless, the parallels between Evangelical societies and the broader compass of voluntary bodies, although important, were not exact. Morris claims that the majority of workers for voluntary societies were unpaid.³ This was undoubtedly true for many small, local Evangelical societies, but it was not true for some of the bigger missionary organisations, one example being the LCM, which also had a stated aim to recruit agents from the same class as those who were to be visited.

The draw of the voluntary society to the proponents of political economy, whether Evangelical or not, was that it kept social welfare apart from state intervention and allowed for the distinction between deserving and undeserving poverty to be

ascertained by the voluntary visitor, while still meeting the Christian concern for the poor. Shaftesbury, however, represented an entirely different element of Evangelical opinion. Morris gives a more local example of this aspect of Evangelicalism in the Rev. Vaughan Thomas, who extolled the virtues of the old Poor Law in the cholera visitation on Oxford in 1832.⁴

The attraction for Shaftesbury of the voluntary society was due partly to his Evangelical principles, but also to his paternalism. Morris points out that the 'pressure on food supplies and the increased extent of urban migration, together with technological, workplace and ideological change worked together to disrupt many crucial social relationships.'⁵ For a paternalist like Shaftesbury, the voluntary society, especially the local body, with aims centred on the provision of social relief, allowed for the continuation of paternalistic and rural relationships and responsibilities in the environment of an urban and mass population. In the emigration from rural village to town, families brought with them the familiar concepts of social relationships.⁶

Morris also points out how elites arose to control these voluntary societies:

The president was often a high-status...leader, often a major industrialist, the secretary usually a solicitor, and the treasurer perhaps a local merchant or banker.⁷

Morris sees this as a compromise between middle-class independence and the continuing reality of a hierarchical society:

Such societies devised elaborate hierarchies of patrons, vice-presidents, trustees and grades of membership to acknowledge this.⁸

Heasman also points out both the impact of middle-class guilt over socio-economic conditions and the Victorian desire for publicity and power encouraged by the patronage structures of such societies.⁹ From the perspective of Evangelical societies, this was also undoubtedly true; and especially so for many of the national societies, which sought patronage from the nation's elite rather than local fashionable society. This practice was also one of the catalysts in the theological dispute over the relative place of human and divine means in Evangelical missionary societies. Even in those

societies which were not directly Evangelical there could also be a division over the question of purity which often divided the patrons of high status from the ordinary and committed members. Morris gives by way of example a dispute in 1836 in the Leeds Temperance Society over the introduction of an exclusive teetotal pledge. The Committee seemed as much concerned by the erosion of their social authority as by anything else.¹⁰

The increase in state power during the nineteenth century was partly due to the fragmentation of the voluntary attempts to relieve poverty. Voluntary societies were frequently local and largely operated by independent groups with diverse aims and no strategic organisation. There were attempts to provide co-ordination, the Charity Organization Society founded in 1869, which cut across into Evangelical work, being the best example. Morris comments that by this time, however, it was recognised that the bulk of relief work would need to be undertaken with the authority of the state, and that this society acted as more of a pressure group upon government to initiate action than as a direct stimulus.¹¹ Given the extent of Evangelical work, and of Shaftesbury's particular combination of the legislative and the voluntary, this statement is too strong; but this trend was becoming established. Heasman has persuasive evidence that there was a remarkable increase in voluntary charities after 1850, and despite the 1870 watershed, there was still an upward trend at the end of the century. Much of the reason for this must rest with the Evangelical societies, which did not form a central part of Morris' study.¹² Heasman claims that 'as many as three-quarters of the total number of voluntary charitable organisations in the second half of the nineteenth century can be regarded as Evangelical in character and control.'¹³

In short the voluntary society could be seen as a form of institutionalised paternalism. It could also be criticised as a forum of social control that allowed middle-class elites to continue to exercise their authority and power; and indeed to provide continued legitimacy and stability for such power.¹⁴ But Morris also recognises the important contribution of these societies; a genuine search for solutions to the problems of an

urban society, and a recognition of the need, not just to suppress social radicalism, but also to provide for leisure and culture.¹⁵

There is an obvious connection between the sociological development of the voluntary society and the use of such mechanisms by Evangelicals for their work. Nevertheless, the parallels are not exact and as well as sociological and cultural reasons for the Evangelical enterprise there were also theological reasons.

Heasman points out the connection between revivalism and Evangelical social work.¹⁶ Part of the motivation for social reform was the theological concern 'to make the world a more suitable place to which Christ should return.'¹⁷ The American evangelist Charles G. Finney visited England with this message in 1849-51 and 1858-59. More precise formulation to this theological understanding was given by D.L. Moody in his evangelistic campaigns of 1867, 1873-75, 1881-84 and 1891, which also helped recruit workers for voluntary Evangelical social societies. All of this took place within the context of the premillennial emphasis in Evangelical thought. Indeed, much of it occurred during the crucial decades of Shaftesbury's own involvement. In Shaftesbury's own mind there was undoubtedly a mix of traditional paternalism and theological conviction. But the latter should not be underestimated or subsumed to the former. It was this theological foundation that allowed Shaftesbury to maintain in balance his social and evangelistic concern, expressed through both legislative action and voluntary societies.

9.2 Commitment and involvement

Shaftesbury's engagement with these missionary societies was one of extensive personal dedication. He remained an active contributor to these, and a vast range of other local societies for up to fifty years, from the mid-1830s, right up to his death in 1885. He involved himself in Committee meetings, delegations, and personal contact with agents and missionaries with vigour, as well as with the chairing of meetings and

the making of speeches. Evangelical belief required a personal response. Evangelical mission required personal action.

Shaftesbury was elected Vice-Patron of the London Society in 1835, and in 1848 became President. His occupation of office was no figurehead appointment. He served on a Committee to consider the training of missionaries,¹⁸ led a delegation to Palmerston about the persecution of the Jews,¹⁹ obtained letters of introduction with regard to a visit connected with the erection of a church in Jerusalem,²⁰ secured the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Society,²¹ and even obtained a statement of the tax deductibility of subscriptions to it.²²

Shaftesbury participated in the very foundation of the CPAS; he was not the initiator, but he did take the Chair at the inaugural meeting²³ and recalled his involvement on a number of occasions.²⁴ He was elected President for that first session and remained so until his death, attending every single annual meeting in the intervening period, with just one exception.

Shaftesbury accepted the invitation to become a Vice-President of the CMS on 25 April, 1837.²⁵ As with all the societies with which he was involved, Shaftesbury took the responsibility seriously. He joined delegations about Sierra Leone,²⁶ to the Bible Society,²⁷ and to present a petition to the House of Commons in opposition to the Opium Trade.²⁸

He became Vice-President of the Bible Society in 1846,²⁹ and President in 1851, shortly before his succession to his Earldom.³⁰ Once again he took an active part in representing the society's interests to government and reporting back to the Committee. Thus he acted on behalf of the Committee in discussions over the admission and location of the Bible Society to the Great Exhibition in 1851,³¹ while on a private visit to Italy acted for the society over some property it owned and over Bible distribution,³² and also expressed his concern to the Committee over the prices charged for Bibles by the branch in Nice and the general management of its affairs.³³

Shaftesbury's relationship with the LCM was less formal due to the particular constitution of the Society. His connection grew from the 1840s as an occasional speaker at the annual meeting, but was more particularly a matter of the individual relationships he established with specific missionaries.

Shaftesbury occupied the chair at the first meeting of the RSU in 1845, and did so each year up to 1884. In February 1843, he had responded to an advertisement in The Times on behalf of the Field Lane Ragged School seeking help and assistance. Shaftesbury's personal involvement in the wide range of organisations and societies that grew out of the RSU was extensive. He had a particular concern for the well-being of the costermongers, that proud, close-knit group of barrow holders and flower girls who always struggled to make ends meet. He was committed to giving every aid and assistance in his power to the benefit of the poorest classes of the Metropolis, in 1866 becoming President of the Golden Lane Mission, which was aimed especially at the costermonger community. So devoted to the coster mission was Shaftesbury that he even said, 'I should not regret if my last words were words of prayer for such a work as this.'³⁴ Shaftesbury referred to himself as K.G. and C. - Knight of the Garter and of the Costermongers.³⁵ He even subscribed for his own barrow in a Barrow Club and his own donkey in a Donkey Club.³⁶ The Reformatory and Refuge Union and the Shoeblocks' Brigades were other bodies which emerged from the RSU with Shaftesbury's active patronage and support. His personal dedication frequently extended to visiting areas of deprivation, often in the company of the City Missionary for the district,³⁷ and he chaired not only the national RSU meetings but also those of very many local ragged schools.³⁸

The bringing together of these facts from the records and archives of the various societies concerned shows the profound extent of Shaftesbury's commitment to and involvement with these societies. However, it is also true that Shaftesbury was often overflowing in his praise of individual societies, even contradictory. To the anniversary meeting of the Bible Society in 1863, he claimed that his love and

admiration for the society was so deep, 'that I would willingly give it my whole heart, my whole substance, and my whole life, without any hope of being thanked for so doing,'³⁹ and at the 1885 meeting he ended his remarks with 'and my prayer shall always be that I may die in harness.'⁴⁰ To Shaftesbury the Bible Society was 'the greatest and best of those Societies.'⁴¹ But he also was making similar comments about the CPAS. Thus he declared that 'I never was called by God's mercy to so happy and blessed a work as to labour on behalf of this Society,'⁴² declared the CPAS to be 'the very best Society, to my mind, that ever existed in these realms,'⁴³ and went on to say, of CPAS, in 1855, that it was:

...a Society which, for simplicity of purpose, purity of doctrine, singleness of heart and principle, is unrivalled among all our religious Societies - a Society which comprises within itself the elements and features of many other Societies, and which will lie at the root of the perfection of many of our Societies.⁴⁴

Shaftesbury was not boastful of his connections to, or zeal for, these societies. He was not a seeker of high office. He had on a number of occasions refused cabinet office, he had also turned down, for a time, the award of the Garter, and when there was speculation about the vacant Chancellorship of Oxford University he commented:

I had rather, by God's blessing and guidance, retain those places for which there are *no candidates* - the chairs of the Ragged Union, the Colonial Dormitory, the Field Lane Refuge...⁴⁵

Shaftesbury's overexuberance in the praise of these societies reflected not only his enthusiasm for his life's work, but also that romantic streak in him often referred to. It may have coloured his perception of the societies, it may even partially explain his commitment to such a range of seemingly diverse societies, an inability to see contradictions or inconsistencies between them or between his own beliefs and those of the societies he supported. But such an analysis could only be very partial. It fails to take proper account of the depth of Shaftesbury's theological thought and indeed the development of Evangelical missionary thought.

Moreover, his excessive praises for the Bible Society and for the CPAS did not blind him to areas of difference and disagreement between him and the societies. He recognised that his personal views might sometimes have been too strong to be countenanced by the societies he supported from the Chair. Shaftesbury vigorously opposed the proposed revision of the Authorized Version of the Bible in 1870. The Bible Society maintained a strict neutrality in the matter and was disturbed when Shaftesbury signed a letter to The Times, in his capacity as President, opposing the revision. Shaftesbury agreed to write a second time pointing out that the first letter had been written in a personal capacity, but he indicated that he would not remain silent on the matter, and effectively offered to resign, a proposal rejected by the Committee.⁴⁶ Then in 1873 he decided to address the CPAS annual meeting on the subject of church reform, which he felt should be followed by his resignation as President, since his strong views might lose the society both support and finance. Once again, it was not accepted.⁴⁷

What is clear is the depth and extent of Shaftesbury's determination, sincerity and fervour in his relationship to the various Evangelical societies. What is also apparent is the vigour of his personal beliefs. No doubt, on occasion, his romanticism was expressed in his unceasing and uncritical praise for these societies. But he did recognise points of tension and conflict. More crucial is the question of the theological precepts which enabled Shaftesbury to hold together his beliefs with his commitment to such a wide range of societies.

9.3 Aims and objectives

The various societies under consideration had an extensive and wide-ranging catalogue of aims and objectives which undergirded their work. The first of the societies to be founded was the CMS, a society whose history was closely intertwined with the early history of the Evangelical movement within the Established Church. On 12 April, 1799 a meeting of prominent Evangelical clergymen and laity formed

themselves into a Society for the purpose of 'sending missionaries to the Continent of Africa, or other parts of the heathen world,' noting also, that 'it is a duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel amongst the Heathen.'⁴⁸ Two principles stood out: first, the singleness of the objective, and second, the necessity of evangelism. These were the distinctive and characteristic principles in the foundation of Evangelical mission societies. Thus the aim of the Bible Society was 'to encourage a wider dispersion of the Holy Scriptures,'⁴⁹ that of the London Society being of 'exciting the attention of the Jews to the words of eternal salvation,'⁵⁰ that of the LCM being 'to extend the knowledge of the Gospel....among the inhabitants of London,'⁵¹ that of the CPAS, being the 'salvation of souls, with a single eye to the glory of God,'⁵² and that of the RSU being the assistance of young and old alike 'in the study of the Word of God...and the Instruction of the Children of the poor in general.'⁵³

There were other links between the aims and objectives of the societies. Particularly in the those founded after 1830, with the increasing impact of industrialisation and secularisation, there was a significant commitment to placing the state of the nation before the people, in order to generate concern for their spiritual well-being. This motivation also had the effect of drawing wider attention to the temporal and social needs of the poor.

The Committee of the CPAS noted the problem succinctly in 1838:

Still, how lamentable a disparity remains, in too many instances, between the multitudes to be attended, and the number of their appointed overseers!⁵⁴

To the CPAS the spiritual destitution of the nation, whether it was the rail-road navigators, 'living in a state of spiritual darkness and moral depravity'⁵⁵ or simply the people living 'in a melancholy state of unconcern generally as to their eternal good, parents and children living without God in the world,'⁵⁶ meant that 'something analogous to missionary effort is no less intensely needed by our heathen at home, than are the heralds of salvation by the heathen abroad.'⁵⁷ The reports and documents

of the LCM also illustrated the same emphasis. The intention of the LCM was to bring the gospel to those who did not frequent the churches,⁵⁸ and hence, 'to supply the forgotten and the destitute with the bread of life.'⁵⁹ One of the main methods used was that of domiciliary visitation, the objective being clearly 'the spiritual improvement of London.'⁶⁰

On every occasion the Agent presents a tract, and when he gains admission (if permitted) he converses with the different members of the family - tells them of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ - reads a portion of holy Scripture - urges their attendance upon public worship - the sanctification of the Sabbath - the religious education of the children...⁶¹

The claim by W.W. Champneys, the Evangelical Rector of Whitechapel, in 1849, that the CPAS had brought to the attention of the nation its appalling spiritual state,⁶² was a characteristic also frequently attributed to the LCM.

9.4 Theological principles of the societies

A review of the theological principles of the various missionary societies will demonstrate both the continuities and the development of Evangelical theological belief. Some aspects are unexpected and distinctive characteristics can also be discerned. This will help to locate and explain Shaftesbury's commitments, beliefs and involvement in these societies.

What were the uniting theological factors which underpinned the missionary societies? Certainly among the interdenominational societies there was a very strong commitment to Evangelical catholicity. Thus the Bible Society sought unity around the Scriptures, seeking 'to embrace the common support of Christians at large,' among all 'who profess to regard the Scriptures as the proper Standard of Faith.'⁶³ The LCM declared itself to be 'a Catholic, not a Denominational Institution,' on the grounds that 'the Redeemer never meant that a perishing world should wait for its salvation, until the Church has reached that general unanimity which, it is generally admitted, cannot be found on this side of eternity.'⁶⁴ The RSU also declared that 'this Union shall exclude no denomination of evangelical Christians.'⁶⁵ The founding principles of the

London Society also included the same point; Christians should 'equally rejoice in the conversion of a Jew, whether within or without the pale of their own peculiar establishment.'⁶⁶ The Committee called for 'a complete union of prayers, talents, and exertions: and it is our earnest desire, that the word *denomination*, may be lost in that of *Christianity*, in support of an institution of such great importance.'⁶⁷ Sadly, at least for the London Society, it was not to be.

The principle of lay agency united the CPAS, the LCM and the RSU. Lay agency was demanded by the Word of God,⁶⁸ and the example of Luke was advanced as a lay assistant to Jesus.⁶⁹ The laity had to be awakened to their responsibility for evangelism.⁷⁰ It was also frequently stated that the practical demands of ministry in an urban and industrial environment meant that lay agency was essential if the mass of the people were to be reached. Thus the commitment to lay agency represented a combination of an Evangelical theological view of ministry and of the practical demands of mission. The pastoral assistants of the CPAS, the missionaries of the LCM and the teachers of the RSU were all ministers of the gospel with responsibility for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

All these societies were resolute in their dedication to the Protestant Evangelical faith, apart from the Bible Society, which limited itself to the distribution of the Scriptures, and not their interpretation. Nevertheless, it was a basic Protestant principle that possession of the Bible was itself access to the means of salvation. The CPAS accepted the necessity of conversion - a classic mark of the Evangelical - and Edward Bickersteth, at an annual meeting, declared that the atonement was the primary message to be proclaimed,⁷¹ another particular characteristic of Evangelicalism. The CMS had been founded from amongst the Evangelicals of the Eclectic Society upon the principles of conversion. The emphasis in the London Society upon the interpretation of prophecy gave centrality to the Bible. The RSU sought to bring the influence of the Bible to bear upon the children with whom it was in contact. The LCM had a doctrinal statement of Protestant Evangelical belief.

An important matter of unity, and somewhat unexpectedly so, was the question of eschatology. Here there occurred a process of development within Evangelical thought of crucial importance for understanding Shaftesbury's concerns and commitments. It might not be surprising to find weight given to eschatology in the London Society, but it certainly is to discover it so prominent in the CPAS, the LCM and the RSU. The CMS should not be entirely excluded from this analysis, though for the most part the CMS demonstrated the points of contrast within the changing scene of Evangelicalism which was described in chapter 8. Indeed, as noted there, even after the Apocrypha and Test crises, the Bible Society was also influenced in a similar way.

The London Society was, of course, particularly interested in the prophecies of the millennium because they had a direct relevance to the future prospects for the Jewish people. Specifically with regard to the millennium, McNeile emphasised the importance of preaching 'not only of the first coming of the Son of Man in great humility, but *also* of his second coming in glorious Majesty; not only of his presiding in judgement over all nations, but *also* of his restoring the kingdom of the nations unto Israel.'⁷² Bickersteth resisted the spiritualisation of the Second Coming and also emphasised the contrast of humility and glory.⁷³ No-one was in any doubt that the Second Advent was to involve the personal reign of Christ on earth.⁷⁴

There were, however, a number of open references to interventionist eschatology in official statements from the committees of the other societies, partly due to the involvement of the same personalities. Bickersteth addressed the CPAS in these terms in 1845.

Oh may we and they be prepared and ready for the personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, now, as I believe and have long testified, near at hand, and be strengthened to confess him and be faithful unto death in all the trials through which we may yet have to pass.⁷⁵

In that same year, Francis Close declared that the united opinion of philosopher, prophet, political economist and geologist was 'that some great and awful crisis is at hand.'⁷⁶ The Committee acknowledged that 'the Christian's song is ever of mercy and

of judgement.⁷⁷ The annual report of 1867 reflected ruefully on cholera, commercial failure, stagnation of trade and loss of life at sea and in collieries as examples of arrows of pestilence.⁷⁸

So also in the RSU. The work of the ragged school teacher was seen as pre-empting the age of the millennium. Christ alone was to be preached; such 'will be the prominent fact in the millennial age; for the "Lord alone shall be exalted in that day". Hence the thorough worker in Ragged Schools loves to antedate that glorious era...'⁷⁹

The concern for eschatology in these societies was a illustration of that change which took place within Evangelical theology in the 1820s. It shows how the interventionist principles which came to prominence in the quest for purity were adopted into the mainstream of Evangelical thought. This eschatology, however, was no millennial extremism, but a maturing of Evangelical thought; a recognition of the insights of the prophetic critics, but adopting these concerns within the accepted framework of Evangelicalism. This mature Evangelical eschatology provides much of the basis for understanding Shaftesbury and the Evangelical social reformers.

In practical terms this renewed eschatological concern was expressed by increased demands for reliance on divine, rather than human means. The CPAS asked for earnest prayer to 'call upon the Lord of the harvest to raise up amongst us faithful men for the work of the ministry.'⁸⁰ The state of the nation led to a recognition of 'the awful state of spiritual darkness and destitution.'⁸¹ In the longer established societies this movement was shown mainly by calls for prayer,⁸² including the opening of meetings with prayer. This policy caused continuous division in the Bible Society until its adoption in 1858, but had been accepted without such conflict in the CMS in 1828.⁸³ Prayer was also prominent in the RSU, which, in addition, sought to hold together in tension the human and divine means in mission.⁸⁴ The RSU also reflected the concern with a spiritual battle:

The contention is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.⁸⁵

The LCM was less explicit about the eschatological emphasis, but no less affected by the development of Evangelical thought in this area. The LCM's resistance of patronage has already been noted. The justification offered by John Cumming at the first public meeting was an illustration of this developed eschatological concern, but in more moderate terms than in the challenges of Irving and McNeile in the mid-1820s.

They began to feel that they had relied too much on an arm of flesh, and, therefore, they retraced their steps, and began with simultaneous oratory to knock at heaven's gates, and to beseech God to arise and plead the cause that is his own.⁸⁶

The LCM was clear of 'the necessity of the influence of the Spirit of God, to give efficacy and success to the measures pursued,' and of the 'helplessness of man, and of every institution of man, without the presence and blessing of the Spirit of God.'⁸⁷

These societies also showed distinctive theological characteristics which do not so easily fit a pattern. The CPAS operated specifically within the Established Church. The CMS perhaps continued to display more of a classical postmillennial position. To see the extension of episcopacy as part of the divine plan through CMS tended to reinforce rather than diminish Evangelical scepticism of the elder society.⁸⁸ The London Society brought together national Protestantism and Evangelical eschatology, shown most clearly in the campaign for the Jerusalem bishopric. The distinctive position of the LCM lay in its commitment to the evangelisation of the poor, and the use as agents of the same class of people as the target subjects of the mission. The RSU had a particular concern for the social and temporal needs of the poor and so stressed the theological unity of body and soul.

The relationship between the CPAS and the LCM showed both the unity and diversity of the Evangelical tradition in the 1830s. Donald Lewis has noted that Anglican Evangelicalism was in great ferment at this time, especially over the relationship of church order and evangelism.⁸⁹ Indeed the foundation of the CPAS can be seen partly as a reaction against the establishment of the interdenominational LCM. On the other

hand there was some opposition from Evangelicals to the CPAS, on the grounds that the society was insufficiently aggressive towards parishes with unfaithful pastors.⁹⁰

It would be wrong to make too much of the diversity. In the aftermath of the quest for Evangelical purity of the 1820s, CPAS represented the emergence of a renewed Evangelical mainstream, bringing together national Protestantism and Evangelicalism: that some of each of those traditions remained outside the CPAS was a natural consequence of two traditions coming together. There was also significant overlap of support for both the CPAS and the LCM within the Established Church; and it was often laymen like Shaftesbury who provided the strongest links between the various societies.

9.5 The place of social welfare in the missionary societies

Within the range of missionary aims expressed by these societies the material and physical well-being of the people was explicit only in the RSU. But it is surprising how extensive a commitment to temporal welfare there existed in the other societies, founded, at least on the face of it, for very different reasons. In particular the positions of the London Society, the CPAS, the LCM and the RSU were significant. The Bible Society's sole concern with distribution meant that it was not in a position to practise temporal relief.

The biggest impact that temporal or social claims made on the missionary societies arose from the fact that their agents came into contact with social need through their everyday work. The CPAS was a good example. Its aims were explicitly evangelistic and the means it adopted were the provision of assistance to aid the pastoral work of the ordained ministry. It was widely accepted, indeed it was part of the rationale for the church establishment, that temporal relief formed some part of ministerial duties. Hence, the CPAS recognised that its policy of pastoral support would release ministerial time which could be applied to social relief.⁹¹ Evangelicals in the parishes were concerned for both the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people.⁹² It is a sign

of the dominance in historical research and writing of the historians of the Oxford Movement and its successors that concern for the temporal welfare of the populace is frequently restricted to a few colourful high church slum priests, and the continuing work of Evangelicals in the parishes is often neglected.

The impact of scenes of poverty should not be underestimated:

The scenes of misery and wretchedness, of ignorance and spiritual destitution, which I have been called to witness in my pastoral visits, and at the cottages of the sick and dying beds of the poor, can never be forgotten or obliterated from my mind.⁹³

A City Missionary noted that lodging houses 'literally swarm with vermin,'⁹⁴ and another reported as follows:

I have seen beds so extremely dirty that they would hardly be fit accommodation for pigs; and the stench of the room is perfectly intolerable.⁹⁵

Referring to one particular landlord, a City Missionary commented:

Although he receives enormous rent, he will not be at the expense of having water in any of his houses.⁹⁶

It should not be assumed that the agents and missionaries ignored the underlying structural questions. One missionary could not resist comment on social conditions in Spitalfields:

...there is no question as to the fact, that the wages of the silk weavers are very low, although their hours of work are very long.....The missionary has to witness many scenes of poverty and distress, and to hear much complaint concerning the low price paid for labour.⁹⁷

The duty of temporal as well as spiritual care was seen as a mark of a minister's personal integrity:

they naturally question his interest in their spiritual welfare, unless he is able to show them, by deeds as well as by words, that he really sympathises with them in all their sorrows, and that he is anxious for their temporal welfare, as well as for their spiritual and eternal good.⁹⁸

If it was the practical experience of pastoral visiting that brought the issue of temporal relief to the forefront, there were theological reasons which determined the response. This also seems to have been the case with the London Society - at least in the period up to 1819. It was the experience of Jewish people, who often faced persecution from their own communities, even their own families, which prompted the emphasis on temporal welfare.⁹⁹ The result of persecution was often poverty.¹⁰⁰

Mr. Hirschfield stated that in consequence of his being baptised last week he had been discharged from the employ of Mr. Sampson. Resolved that the Rev. Dr. Schwabe and Mr. Lyon be requested to enquire into his case and that he be allowed One Guinea for the present week.¹⁰¹

The unity of body and soul was a frequent theme as societies faced the question of response to social need. So the CPAS, although dedicated to evangelisation, noted in its annual report of 1861, that 'Christian principle should show itself in the endeavour to supply the wants of the perishing body as well as those of the soul,¹⁰² and also that its agents were becoming 'dispensers of the "bread that perisheth" as well as of that which endures to eternal life.'¹⁰³ The RSU declared its theological purpose as the development of Christian character and 'by a living faith in a crucified Redeemer prepare both soul and body for the life that is to come.'¹⁰⁴ Explicitly the LCM affirmed the priority of the soul over the body, but that did not prevent some speakers at the annual meeting affirming this theological principle of unity:

I hear, in another case, that an individual was ill and almost in a state of starvation; and if not for the visit of one of your missionaries, that person might have been starved to death; so that both for body and for the soul we find your Institution doing a great and effectual work.¹⁰⁵

The eschatology which has been shown to be an unexpectedly prominent theological emphasis within the missionary societies was an important impulse to the provision of temporal welfare. The London Society, in a report on the activities of its Female Asylum, provided a good summary of the relationship:

...in future years there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God, on account of those who, under the patronage of the London Society, have sought within the walls of this Asylum a refuge from the storm of an accusing conscience, and a shadow from the heat of divine wrath, at the feet of that Redeemer who came to seek and to save....¹⁰⁶

Shelter from divine wrath and judgement meant the provision of both temporal and spiritual welfare for the Jews and fitted well with the premillennial emphasis within the London Society. Several decades later, the same principles were used by the RSU in maintaining that ragged schools 'formed an ark of shelter from an impending storm of evil; they have proved a beacon to warn off from the quicksands of sin; they have been a harbour of protection to the distressed.'¹⁰⁷ This meant shelter from current evil and also from future judgement; and shelter no doubt for both the recipient of the relief and the Evangelical activist who dispensed it. Even the LCM, despite its own tensions on the matter, in at least one article, linked the social welfare of the poor to the Last Judgement.¹⁰⁸ In his 1845 speech to the CPAS, Bickersteth maintained that those that neglected the poor, both spiritually and temporally, would face an awful retribution on the day of judgement, as indeed would the nation itself.¹⁰⁹ The Evangelical looked to the Bible as the sole source of authority for action; indeed the development of premillennial eschatology was due to a more literal interpretation of the Bible. The RSU, however, was more than aware of the direct biblical injunctions regarding care for the poor.

In all the laws of Moses, care for the poor, the needy, and the fatherless, is a prominent feature; and it is very remarkable that nearly all the threatened or inflicted punishments on the Hebrew nation are connected with a neglect of the poor.¹¹⁰

From the beginning the agents of the London Society were empowered to administer temporal relief by way of payments of up to two shillings and six pence.¹¹¹ During its early years the London Society established a free school,¹¹² provided clothing on a number of occasions,¹¹³ and, in order to facilitate employment, founded a basket manufactory and a printing office.¹¹⁴ The influence of the RSU upon the education of the poor grew rapidly. The first annual report noted twenty schools, 2,000 children

and 200 teachers,¹¹⁵ while the 24th report in 1868, reported 237 schools and 31,357 scholars.¹¹⁶ The 10th report in 1854 reported on RSU activities covering industrial classes, Shoe-Black Brigades, placing scholars in employment, emigration, mothers' meetings, libraries, Penny Banks and Clothing Funds.¹¹⁷ By 1870 the list had extended to cover meals societies, sanitary associations, libraries, flower shows and rag collecting, Shoe Clubs, Coal Clubs, Provident Clubs and Barrow Clubs.¹¹⁸ This all sounds remarkably similar to the activities reported in the correspondence of the CPAS, whose grants were not specifically for temporal relief, but which made such relief more likely. The more extensive domiciliary visitation made possible by CPAS brought the ministers of the gospel into closer contact with the people, so that 'they do not hesitate to consult us in all their difficulties, both temporal and spiritual.'¹¹⁹ Other correspondence and reports referred to the establishment of clothing clubs, provident societies and instruction societies,¹²⁰ savings funds and Dorcas Society,¹²¹ sick and burial clubs,¹²² and the more effective seeking out of the distressed poor during a severe winter.¹²³ Later reports mentioned the opening of soup kitchens,¹²⁴ the use of a church for temporal relief¹²⁵ and the distribution of meal tickets.¹²⁶

The reaction to the visitation of cholera was significant for both the practical response and theological commitment of the societies to the provision of temporal relief.

Champneys told of his team effort, alongside his parish Scripture Readers and Visitors, and made possible by the support of the CPAS, during the cholera of 1849-1850. He obtained supplies of medicines and made it known that this medication was available by obtaining an order from his house, and some 600 persons were thus supplied.¹²⁷ Champneys believed that in order to be effective, temporal aid needed to be separated from spiritual help, but he passionately believed that Christians were bound to be interested in both. Nevertheless:

...it occurred to me, after the cholera had departed, that the 600 persons who had been benefited by the medicine given to them might, by gratitude, be drawn together to receive medicine for their souls; and by the aid of the District Visitors I invited them to a special thanksgiving service in our great school.¹²⁸

Similar stories could be found from within the RSU. At least one should be allowed to speak for itself.

Ragged School teachers have been found equal to this crisis. Bible in hand, they have not been afraid to enter into the most wretched hovels, where parents and children, dying or dead, demanded their Christian sympathy. Caring, however, like their Divine Master, for bodies as well as souls, by the medicines provided by the Ragged School Union, they were the means of arresting in very many cases the terrible disease which was rampant in the infected districts. By these means they reached many hearts which, if inaccessible to Christian doctrine, can at least understand Christian action.¹²⁹

Even a City Missionary commented during the 1866 cholera outbreak that several 'Jewish families are attacked by cholera. I endeavoured to do them good temporally and spiritually, by procuring for them, in the first instance, medical aid, and, in the second place, by reading to them the Word of God.'¹³⁰ Once again there is an interesting comparison with the general histories of the period, which centre upon the work of the Anglo-Catholic slum priests in the cholera outbreaks, rather than the more widespread activities of the Evangelicals.

The last example, from the City Missionary, was illegal under the rules of the Mission, which gave priority to the spiritual. It illustrated well the tension faced by the LCM between its official policy and the response of the Missionaries on the ground when faced with temporal and social need. This conflict of interest was also felt in the London Society, which attempted to make separate provision for the temporal and spiritual aspects of their work. This was done through the establishment of the Operative Jewish Converts' Institution, supported from the first by prominent Evangelicals such as Charles Simeon, William Marsh and Charles Hawtrey.¹³¹ Shaftesbury became Vice-Patron of the Institute in 1875.¹³² However, the problems and tensions had continued¹³³ and so temporal relief was brought back under the auspices of the Society in 1844, though it continued to be funded separately. This approach of the segregation of funds was also adopted by the CMS. The work of the CMS overseas often brought the missionaries into contact with poverty and social

need. The Committee were concerned that funds were used for the purposes subscribed. Thus in 1861, £2,000 was collected and sent out for famine relief to India, but the Committee, determined to avoid confusion, issued a circular asking that the funds for famine relief not be diverted through the Society.¹³⁴ The LCM sought to keep the spiritual and social apart by directing those in need to other societies, though not without difficulties.

The extent of Evangelical participation in social relief is highly significant and rarely recognised. That such involvement stemmed from a theological commitment has not been recognised at all. This social concern and activity took place on a number of levels and was not without its difficulties and tensions. The amount of reporting and recording of temporal relief and social welfare in the journals and documents of the CPAS is of particular note. In its 21st annual report, in 1856, the Committee claimed the credit for the widespread amelioration of social conditions in an important insight linking Evangelical voluntary effort with legislative intervention.

The Committee believe that, indirectly, much of this activity is to be attributed to the labours of the Society, whose publications have brought to light the frightful social as well as the religious degradation in which large masses of the population were sunk. Within the last few years, sanitary, reformatory, and other valuable measures for the amelioration of the temporal and physical condition of the people have been adopted with the greatest success, as well as the erection of Churches and Schools, and the multiplication of Pastors, for their spiritual well-being.¹³⁵

It is of considerable importance that Shaftesbury was so closely involved with many of the reforms described. Legislative intervention to improve social conditions was welcomed by the society, a recognition of the effect of sin, which Bickersteth had also hinted at. In 1862 the Society demanded legislative action for the protection of miners, in 1868 it welcomed the extension of the Factory Acts to cover all trades and occupations, and in 1871 the Committee returned to the sanitary condition of the population:

All who value the temporal and spiritual interests of their fellow-men should exert themselves to the utmost to enforce the duty of carrying into effect the wise provisions of the Legislature for promoting the health and comfort of the labouring classes.¹³⁶

A few years later the Society noted that 'private enterprise alone has failed to provide healthy homes for the increasing multitudes.'¹³⁷

This theological concern for the socio-economic welfare of the people of industrial England sits ill with Boyd Hilton's analysis in The Age of Atonement. Hilton falls into the trap of generalisation without the detailed analysis of the Evangelical movement on the ground. The emphases reflected in the reports of the CPAS and the analysis presented here could not be further from Hilton's understanding of evangelical economics; indeed this conclusion derives from examination of an evangelistic missionary society in which social welfare featured much less prominently than in, say, the RSU. So here was an Evangelical missionary society supporting interventionist economics both through individual action and state legislation. Here was a missionary theology with an understanding of sin that went further than the moral. Life may partly have been a trial, a period of probation, but there was also a theology which demanded action. Hilton, of course, has made a significant contribution in recognising the change in millennial traditions within Evangelicalism. He fails, however, to recognise the depth of lasting theological motivation for socio-economic intervention within the mainstream of the Evangelical movement.

9.6 Tensions over the place of temporal welfare

9.6.1 The development of the tension

Shaftesbury's understanding of the appropriate place of social welfare within the work of the various missionary societies was not without strain. This was, perhaps, likely given the range of societies concerned. The development of this tension was perhaps best illustrated by the re-emergence in the 1850s of pressure for meetings of the Bible Society to be opened in prayer. This move, which was endorsed by Shaftesbury, demonstrated his relationship to the evolution of Evangelical eschatology, which has implications for his understanding of the place of social welfare. In December 1853

Shaftesbury received a letter from the Bath Auxiliary of the Bible Society commending a memorial which urged the Committee to open all meetings, whether committee meetings, public or private meetings of the society, with prayer; the stated intention being the exclusion of Socinians from the society.¹³⁸ Shaftesbury passed the matter on to the Committee to deal with, but made clear his desire to attend the relevant meeting.¹³⁹ Some eighteen months later, Shaftesbury was setting out his views with more force. The prominent premillennial activist, the Rev. Dr. William Marsh, had, together with thirty-three others, submitted a memorial in which they implored 'those who have influence in the Society without further delay to introduce a practice, which...cannot fail to bring down an increased blessing on the operations of the Society.'¹⁴⁰ Shaftesbury replied to the memorial on 6 June, 1855, noting that he should be 'inexpressibly gratified were any plan proposed and accepted which would enable us with common consent to open all the meetings of the Bible Society by public and united prayer.'¹⁴¹ He went on to reflect on the difficulties - unsurprisingly, those of whether the prayer should be liturgical or extempore, and whether offered by a clergyman of the Established Church or a dissenting minister. Shaftesbury showed both his own pious commitment to the principle of prayer, and his catholicity of approach to mission in rounding off his response:

For myself let me add I have no scruples at all. I prefer the liturgy of the Ch. of England but I can join in the prayers of a Dissenting Minister...¹⁴²

The place of prayer was related to the view of eschatology which prevailed. But there was no repetition of the crises of the 1820s and 1830s. By 1858 prayer was certainly in use at the public meetings of the society. It was a reflection of the change in the Evangelical understanding of mission and indeed of the nature of God that had been deeply influenced by the stark, yet potent, criticisms of the premillennial activists of the earlier decades. It was not, however, a straightforward adoption of premillennialism. This was the context in which the tensions over the place of social welfare within the work of the missionary societies arose.

9.6.2 Theology or social control

Theological reasoning formed an important part in the motivation of the wide range of Evangelical missionary societies, as a basis for both evangelistic and social mission. A less charitable view might, however, see these societies as expressions of social control by the middle classes in the light of the challenge of industrialisation to bourgeois social and political power. To what extent was Evangelical mission aimed at pacification of the masses ?

The traditional Evangelical concern for moral reformation, combined with the Protestant Tory view of the state, could certainly be seen in terms of social control. Indeed the whole edifice of Victorian paternalism could be understood in this way. The social structures of squire and village could be seen as worked out in the urban industrial setting by the middle-class activists of the missionary societies. There is, however, a danger of generalisation; the nuances of the paternalistic tradition¹⁴³ are as important in understanding the situation as are the variants of Evangelical belief. The paternalistic tradition did carry with it a concern that went beyond the personal and moral into the social and structural. Evangelicals did not deny that the activities of the CPAS lay agent, the City Missionary, the Scripture Reader or the Ragged School teacher would have a moral reformatory impact, but they did not ignore the need for wider socio-economic and socio-political and structural reforms. There were, however, a range of Evangelical views. The line of Evangelical thought that most emphasised socio-political reform was strongly influenced by Tory paternalism. Nevertheless, as Donald Lewis notes, quoting Shaftesbury as evidence, Evangelical missionary agents were no mere subsidiary moral police force but were committed to the salvation of souls.¹⁴⁴ Baptist Noel commented that if the accusation against the LCM by Chartists and Socialists was that the Mission sought to teach the poor to be content with their position in society, it would actually reduce the effectiveness of the missionaries since these doors would be closed against them.¹⁴⁵ In other words, the claim that the LCM was in the business of social control was a contradiction of the aims of the LCM and if true would actually work against those objectives. Modern

writers have also reinforced this suggestion of social control. Hence K.S. Inglis has maintained that 'to the most articulate and class-conscious working man, the Christian missionary was a representative not only of a faith but of groups which were defending an unjust set of social arrangements.'¹⁴⁶ The impact of this carefully constructed statement should not be underestimated. Even in Inglis' analysis it referred only to the most politically motivated and aware section of the working classes. The LCM, in particular, carried with it the advantage that its agents were drawn from the very classes that they sought to serve. The assertion that Evangelical mission was an aspect of social control is more a reflection of a particular approach to social analysis than it is a balanced scholarly reading of the motivations for Evangelical mission. The reality was more complex; various elements of Evangelical opinion were intertwined with diverse political outlooks.

Christopher Soper, in Evangelical Christianity in the United States and Great Britain, writes as a political scientist on the question of what it was that provided cohesion to the formation of Evangelical movements with political objectives. Soper provides a comparative analysis of several social theories which lie behind group formation. His central assertion is that the creation of Evangelical political groups depended not on group theories such as rational choice theory or status theory, but rather ideological motivation;¹⁴⁷ in other words it is quite consistent to claim that it was Evangelical theology which furnished the motivation for the formation of Evangelical social missionary societies. It can be said in evaluation of Soper's analysis that it is written from the point of view of social policy and is weak in its analysis of Evangelical theology and its variants, and is also based upon moral issues, temperance (in the nineteenth century) and abortion (in the twentieth century); it would have benefited from a more rigorous analysis of the theology, and of its application to socio-economic concerns. Nevertheless, his main point still stands.

Thus it can be concluded that the Evangelical missionary societies included examples, perhaps the RSU in particular, of societies dedicated to both evangelistic and social mission, which were formed for ideological, not social policy or political reasons. It

was this ideological commitment to Evangelical theology that gave the missionary societies their cohesion. Thus the assertion that Evangelicals were seeking to exercise social control through their missionary societies must be relegated to a secondary place.

9.6.3 Shaftesbury, the LCM and the City Missionaries

The tension between evangelism and social welfare was most acute in the LCM and was demonstrated by the contrast of the theoretical position of the Committee and the practical response of the missionaries. The LCM Magazine carried a number of articles in its early years dealing with *Christian responsibility for the poor*,¹⁴⁸ an approach which sought to illustrate both the Christian charity of the Committee and their priority of evangelism. The General Committee formally considered the issue of temporal relief as early as April 1839, demonstrating how quickly the strain had arisen in the life of the mission.

The subject of temporal relief being granted by the Missionaries was then referred to when it was unanimously resolved that as the object of this mission is purely of a spiritual nature it is not deemed consistent nor expedient that the missionaries should be Almoners of the temporal bounty of the benevolent on their districts being assured that their religious labours will be hypocritically sought for if the poor have the idea that the missionary has it in his power to distribute money....or is partial in such distribution that he will be treated with indifference or contempt. At the same time this Committee cannot but....their deep interest in the comfort and temporal welfare of the poor and have no objection to the missionaries recommending such cases as may appear to them truly distressing either to their superintendents or other benevolent individuals and induce them to relieve such cases without it appearing to the poor to have been done by missionaries.¹⁴⁹

The Committee expanded on this view through the LCM Magazine, appealing to Thomas Chalmers. The combination of the functions of almoner and religious teacher had always been resisted by the LCM, though this had not been without opposition.¹⁵⁰ The fundamental problem was that the one function contaminated the other. It was never clear whether a person's attraction was to the Christian message or to the offer of relief.¹⁵¹ The Committee wished to emphasise the difference in function of the

various Christian societies. The LCM's objective was spiritual, but by drawing attention to social evil others could be encouraged to take the subject up.¹⁵²

Subsequently, the LCM Magazine reprinted the Society's constitution and bye-laws. The rules in relation to temporal relief were clear.

The missionaries are most careful to avoid the *giving* of temporal relief, as not their department of Christian effort, and as most materially interfering with the integrity of their especial work.

The missionaries are strictly forbidden from writing letters soliciting aid for persons in distress, or for objects connected with the district, except with the special leave of one of the Secretaries.¹⁵³

However, there was evidence from the LCM Magazine and the Minutes of the Committee that missionaries did respond directly to the social needs with which they were faced.

The extreme poverty and frequent destitution of the Spitalfields population present further difficulties in their instruction. When the cravings of hunger are inflicting pain on the bodies of the people, they are naturally indifferent to other matters. And very many are the families who are thus circumstanced, and who, when the missionary speaks to them of religion, while they are wanting bread, consider that he is mocking them.¹⁵⁴

And the response of the missionary?

He dared not to direct her to the Saviour as the bread of life, until he had first saved her from starving, by furnishing her with the bread that perisheth.¹⁵⁵

Not only was this a clear breach of the rules of the Mission, but it was a clearly reported case of temporal relief in the official magazine. Indeed the Mission's stated priority of the spiritual seems in practice to have been reversed by the missionary.

This tension surfaced on a number of occasions and prompted the intervention of the Committee. In January 1851 the Committee received a letter from the Leicester Square soup kitchen seeking co-operation with the missionaries, but the Committee replied that 'the giving of temporal relief was not in accordance with the constitution

of our Society.¹⁵⁶ The tension, and indeed the compassion of the Committee, was shown in 1861 when the Long Alley district missionary, J.M. Catling, wrote to The Times expressing thanks to the London Philanthropic Society for a supply of bread and coal tickets for the relief of the poor on his district. He was summoned before the Secretaries to answer the charges of writing to the newspaper without permission and for being involved in the distribution of temporal relief.¹⁵⁷ Catling convinced them 'as to the extraordinary temporal distress at present prevalent in the mission district,¹⁵⁸ and that the incumbent of Spitalfields, being overwhelmed with demands for relief, had called in the City Missionaries for help. Catling was reprimanded for breaking the rules on writing to newspapers, but, on account of the unusual circumstances, the ban on missionaries giving temporal relief was temporarily suspended.¹⁵⁹ Just fifteen days later this suspension was rescinded.¹⁶⁰ The strain in the Committee's position was unbearable; the demands of the missionaries in the practical situations on the ground were proving very difficult to balance with the Committee's theoretical position.

Less than six months later, the Committee had to deal with a report of another missionary, J. Taylor, being involved in the administration of temporal relief, a fact the missionary himself positively denied.¹⁶¹ In 1867 the Committee held a long conversation 'on the dangers to which the missionaries were again exposed to being drawn in to the administration of temporal relief in their several districts.'¹⁶² The Committee ordered a letter to be circulated to the missionaries which was printed in the magazine for January 1868. In this letter the Committee acknowledged that 'the rules of the Society, as to missionaries not giving away temporal relief, have not been so generally observed as in former years.'¹⁶³ The main reasons seem to have been cholera and cold weather.¹⁶⁴ The circular could not have been clearer. Almsgiving would be injurious to the missionaries' main work. Nevertheless, distress could be referred on to the appropriate agencies, but once this was done each was to be restricted to their appropriate field of work, the benevolent agencies to the relief of the temporal, the City Missionaries to the spiritual. The rule was repeated. Missionaries were not to engage in temporal relief.

Clear, possibly, but effective, certainly not. The Committee acknowledged in the next issue of the magazine that many inquiries on the subject had been received.¹⁶⁵ One response of the missionaries was clear from the minutes of the LCM General Committee on 6 January, 1868.

A member of the Committee having stated that an impression was abroad among the missionaries that after they were not allowed to be the almoners of temporal relief their wives might be in some conversation on the subject. Thereupon.....the origins of the impression being correctly traced it was agreed that....the missionaries be informed that the rule of the Society must be considered as referring to their wives as well as to themselves.¹⁶⁶

Whatever the official position of the Committee, the missionaries on the ground were clearly not convinced. The Committee tried to reinforce its position in the magazine.

More than thirty years' experience only leads the Committee to the fuller assurance that the principle laid down by them so long since is the only sound principle on which a Mission like theirs can act.¹⁶⁷

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Committee, the issue would not go away; indeed it could not, given the nature of the Mission's operations by the domiciliary visitation of the poor. In 1870 the South East London Committee of the LCM asked the General Committee, 'whether the missionaries...might be allowed to deliver their cards, in evidence of their approval of care for temporal relief, on account of the great amount of distress now prevailing.'¹⁶⁸ Again the Committee decided that they could not depart from their rules. The difficulty of maintaining the segregation of spiritual and temporal relief had been shown by the missionaries' practical experiences, but if the rules were to be relaxed, the Committee was faced with the impossible question of just how much temporal distress was necessary for the usual requirement to be softened.

The problem worsened. At the same Committee meeting Mr. Rennie 'observed that 7 of his missionaries at Bermondsey had been disregarding our rules in this respect, but they had been stopped by him. It was agreed that they be seen by the Sub-committee, and also.....that Bothwell also be seen by them, as to the part he takes in a soup kitchen.'¹⁶⁹

So then, a carefully constructed policy of the Committee outlawing the involvement of City Missionaries in the administration of temporal relief was placed under severe strain by the practical experiences of the missionaries themselves. To the missionaries the separation of body and soul implicit in the Committee's policy was unsustainable in practice. The Committee should not, however, be accused of lack of compassion. Indeed the agents themselves would undoubtedly have agreed about the ultimate supremacy of the spiritual objectives of the mission, but they could not ignore, as they believed that Jesus would not have ignored, notwithstanding Thomas Chalmers, the need for oven bread as well as living bread, and they could not pull back from such practical initiatives as helping on a soup kitchen.

Shaftesbury interpreted the objectives of the LCM in a somewhat different way from that of the Committee. This raises the question of how Shaftesbury was able to maintain his own zeal for the LCM in the light of these different claims. The crux of the answer lay in the fact that Shaftesbury's principal relationships were with the individual City Missionaries rather than a formal relationship with the Committee. Indeed John Weylland commented that 'he drew to himself several of the early Missionaries, and it was by them that he was led into active co-operation with the Committee.'¹⁷⁰ *Shaftesbury was not beyond helping on soup kitchens himself.*

Yesterday to soup kitchens in...saw many..hungry, yet...God be praised, twelve hundred had a meal.¹⁷¹

A significant amount of the evidence gathered by Lord Shaftesbury for use in his campaigns for social reform was collected in co-operation with the missionaries of the LCM; one example being the reform of the common-lodging house.¹⁷² Ashley told the 1848 annual meeting that:

I ought to stand forward at this emergency, and declare what I have seen and heard in my many peregrinations through the dens and recesses of this metropolis in company with your admirable and devoted missionaries.¹⁷³

He acknowledged his debt in an Introduction to a book by J.M. Weylland, Our Veterans; indeed, in 'all difficulties of research, our first resource was to the City

Missionaries, because we knew that their inquiry would be zealous and immediate, and their report ample and trustworthy.¹⁷⁴

Two names featured regularly in Shaftesbury's connections with the missionaries, Thomas Jackson and Roger Miller. Speaking at the Mansion House in 1881, Shaftesbury referred to his long association with Jackson and his work among thieves, 'both as to their present and future state.'¹⁷⁵ In 1848 Ashley introduced into the House of Commons a Bill to facilitate emigration, the aim being to assist felons and others desirous of reformation to start a new life. Jackson arranged a meeting for London's thieves at which Lord Ashley addressed them on the issue of emigration. Over three meetings 394 individuals were present, all of whom had been in prison for theft. Jackson clearly stated that he was concerned with both their spiritual and temporal condition.¹⁷⁶ Ashley and Jackson co-operated closely over the emigration scheme, but it remained outwith the official sanction of the LCM. After Jackson's death the obituary in the LCM Magazine noted that Jackson 'was regarded with especial favour by Lord Shaftesbury.'¹⁷⁷ Shaftesbury frequently visited Jackson and his work, sometimes even unannounced.¹⁷⁸

Roger Miller died in a railway accident in 1848, and at the Annual Meeting, Ashley noted that he had '*lived with him on terms of intimacy and friendship; I may say, that day by day, and night by night, we have perambulated the places of which you have been hearing.*'¹⁷⁹ Weylland noted that Ashley 'even visited with him upon the district, and made use of the information he gained in the House of Commons.'¹⁸⁰ After Miller's untimely death, Ashley appealed through a letter to The Times for provision for his wife and family.

Weylland noted Ashley's personal concerns and links. The City Missionary had been instrumental in inaugurating a Ragged School. Ashley presided at the meeting and later entertained the missionary and school teachers at his own house.¹⁸¹ Miller was closely associated with Ragged Schools and responsible for Ashley's first formal connection with the LCM in 1845 when he presided at the fourth annual meeting of

the Broadwall Ragged School in South London. Miller had gathered 130 ragged children into a school but with hundreds excluded sought to expand the accommodation; Ashley heard of the enterprise and sent for Miller, the life-long friendship ensuing.

Ragged Schools often brought Shaftesbury into contact with individual City Missionaries. The Ragged School Movement itself originated with the LCM, although the Mission declined to adopt the venture as an official part of its work, perhaps because of the dual purpose, temporal as well as spiritual, of the Ragged Schools. Nevertheless, the LCM always indicated its general support and many of the missionaries were, and remained, closely involved. Ashley, at the LCM's 1848 annual meeting, said 'whenever you enter a Ragged School, remember this - we are indebted for nine-tenths of them to the humble, the pious, the earnest City Missionary.'¹⁸²

These personal links with the missionaries were very influential on Shaftesbury and it was through co-operation at this level that he was able to pursue his concerns for the eternal and temporal welfare of the poor of London as a companion of the LCM, notwithstanding the official position of the Committee.

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⁵ *Ibid.*, p100.

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¹¹ *Ibid.*, p109.

¹² Heasman, p8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p14.

¹⁴ Morris, 'Voluntary Societies', p115.

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²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 April, 1841.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10 August, 1841.

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²³ Shaftesbury, CPAS, *Abstract of Report and Speeches at the Annual Meeting of CPAS*, 1877.

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10 Shaftesbury and the Millennial Tradition

The Christian understanding of the end is closely associated with how the believer relates to current society. Evangelicalism and eschatology in the nineteenth century form a complex subject, but a detailed examination will demonstrate the breadth of this aspect of the Evangelical tradition, as well as the various attitudes to mission which form part of the consequences of eschatological outlook. Shaftesbury's biographers have also noted the importance in his thought of eschatology, especially in relation to the Second Advent of Christ. This was reflected in numerous diary entries, the words of the Book of Revelation, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus', which he had stamped, in Greek, on all his envelope flaps and his concern for the Jews and their restoration to Palestine.¹ Nevertheless, no systematic attempt has been made to place Shaftesbury within the millennial tradition, an important task given the range of views within millennialism. It is rather more usually dismissed as part of the strange creed of Evangelicalism, or as Battiscombe put it, 'wine that will not travel.'² The reality was a good deal more complex than much of current scholarship allows.

10.1 History, millennialism and apocalyptic

The last decade of the eighteenth century saw a renewed concern for the prophetic speculation of the end of history together with the foundation of missionary societies dedicated to the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the world, with a glorious future ahead. It was the conflict between these two views which disrupted the Evangelical world in the 1820s.

At one extreme lay apocalyptic movements, whose sense of the imminence of the Second Advent led them into schism, and in some cases to seek to establish the millennial kingdom on earth, and, at the other, the secularisation of the idea of progress, holding out the prospect of perfect future without God. Sometimes these ideas were combined into a sort of secular apocalyptic. In this case, the concept of human advancement met with the idea of the millennium, and this was, on occasion,

expressed in the formation of an ideal community dictated by the principles of love, optimism and progress, rather than by God. Robert Owen's community at New Lanark and his involvement with the Harmony community on the banks of the Wabash illustrated this Enlightenment desire for a new social order of justice, equality and freedom.³ However, as Professor Oliver has noted, the study of prophecy in nineteenth-century England was a normal intellectual activity, an activity with a long tradition, and with widely diffused ideas.⁴

World crisis has always led some to seek solace in the imminent hope of divine intervention. The emphasis in millennialism on the physical return of Christ reflected yearnings for material comforts, for the new earth that was promised, hope for release from oppression and anger at the church for its apostasy and failure.⁵ Apocalyptic movements were thus often characterised by the desire to separate from the world and to manifest the conditions of the millennium on earth. The aim was to recreate the circumstances of paradise before the fall.⁶ Thus many apocalyptic movements demonstrated continuities with orthodox Evangelical theology, but came to be dominated by the vision and the practical establishment of the messianic kingdom. Examples abounded, especially in America, where the idea of stepping out into the wilderness to build God's kingdom was embodied in groups as diverse as the Mormons, the Shakers, and the Rappites. Indeed it has been suggested that this same vision had been current in the Puritan communities of New England in the seventeenth century, although this understanding has been rejected by Reiner Smolenski.⁷ Frequently such groups came to be overshadowed by one person, a prophet who claimed direct inspiration from God, and who, as in the case of Joanna Southcott, came to understand herself in messianic terms.⁸ Add to all this the Millerites and the Irvingites and it can be seen that there was a wide range of views within millenarianism and apocalyptic.

10.2 Advent and the millennium

If the postmillennial tradition mirrored continuity within the world, with the millennium representing a progressively achieved improvement upon the present,⁹ then the premillennial tradition emphasised discontinuity, revolutionary change, and a complete reversal of worldly fortunes. Indeed to the premillennialist the claims of progress were an occasion to invite the divine wrath rather than divine blessing.¹⁰ G.T. Noel was one of many commentators and preachers who adopted this position. He laid out his views in A Brief Enquiry into the Prospects of the Church of Christ in connexion with the Second Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ, a series of discourses first published in 1828 and again in 1840. He summarised the premillennial understanding of Christ's future kingdom:

...the language of Scripture suggests the expectation of a kingdom to be established upon the earth, under the *personal* and glorious sceptre of Jesus Christ.¹¹

John Hooper adopted the same basic principle. The Bible taught us to expect 'the *speedy* and glorious appearing of the Son of Man,'¹² an event closely connected with the restoration of the Jews, the destruction of the antichrist and the resurrection of the saints.¹³ William Cuninghame stated as fundamental the doctrines that 'the Lord comes in person...and reigns with his saints over the earth during the Millennium.'¹⁴ William Marsh maintained that Christ would 'personally introduce the millennial dispensation,'¹⁵ and that 'the seat of this kingdom is fixed, not in heaven, but expressly upon the earth.'¹⁶

The objective of this kingdom on earth would be 'to *retrieve* the apparent ruin....to realise the original purpose of God in the creation of Adam.'¹⁷ At the Second Coming the first resurrection would be of the dead in Christ, who would rise in their resurrection bodies, and, together with the saints alive on earth - whose bodies would be miraculously transformed - would ascend to meet the Lord in the air as he descended. The millennial reign would then commence with Jesus and his elect saints ruling together. The ungodly on earth would be overthrown, the Jews restored, Satan

bound, the Spirit poured out and then would follow the conversion of the world.¹⁸ At the centre of this kingdom was the earthly city of Jerusalem. Following the millennial reign there would be a brief resurgence of evil, quickly subdued, then the general resurrection, the day of judgement, and the end.¹⁹

The characteristics of this kingly rule and new earth were reinforced by James Begg. The 'Lord Jesus will indeed dwell upon the earth, and be "the King of Israel".²⁰ And man would be restored to his true position:

But when the power of the First and great Seducer is destroyed from the earth, when the reign of universal holiness has commenced; and when, by cordial attachment to God through his Son, man shall have become fit to be again entrusted with primeval authority, under Christ, he shall again stand forth as the honoured and acknowledged lord of all the inferior creation.²¹

The promise of a new earth held out by the prophet Isaiah should be understood in the natural sense despite efforts to spiritualise the meaning such that 'however dissimilar in their natures and habits, all become men of holy character and harmless disposition.'²² Begg wondered that 'it should ever have been denied, that this resurrection is literal and the reign personal, and that those who live and reign with Christ are His arisen and glorified saints, redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'²³ The millennium would bring about the restitution of all things, even of the animals, 'to that state of submissive docility in which they originally were in Eden's garden.'²⁴ Following the millennium - which Begg conceived of as a limited time, but not a literal thousand years²⁵ - Satan would be released and delude humanity for a short time and then the 'overthrow of this apostasy is followed by the general resurrection,²⁶ at which the unrighteous, who had not risen at the first resurrection, would be raised together with all those who had died during the millennium.

William Marsh also referred to 'the special government of the nations, by the immediate presence and interposition of the Lord.'²⁷ He summarised his position as follows:

Here then we have an epitome of prophecy unfulfilled. In a general point of view, it is a new and marvellous victory or deliverance, to be achieved by special divine interposition; and comprises the overthrow of his enemies; the restoration of the Jewish people to the divine favour; the communication of salvation or Christianity to all the Gentile nations; and the establishment of a theocracy over the world at large. This is to confer universal happiness, and call forth the gratitude and praise of the whole creation, animate and inanimate: and to participate in this reign of blessedness, the suffering church will be raised and glorified.²⁸

The resurrection to be brought about by this divine intervention was literal, premillennial, and restricted to the righteous, as Revelation 20 contained 'not one word of condemnation, but all is triumph, and joy, and reward.'²⁹ Marsh also emphasised the divine character of this intervention; this victory was not to be achieved by ordinary means.³⁰

The contrast of this picture with progressive postmillennialism can be illustrated by reference to Thomas Jones's Sober Views of the Millennium, published in 1835. For Jones the Second Coming was spiritual and the kingly reign of Jesus was a spiritual one in the church through the ages.³¹ Jones' commitment to a theology of progress was shown by his insistence that what 'now exists will grow into greater maturity at the time of the Millennium.'³² The only personal appearance of Christ will take place at the end, at the time of judgement and the resurrection of all the dead.³³ The onset of the millennium will be gradual, and it was evident that 'the Millennium is not yet at the door.'³⁴

There were three important elements in the premillennial tradition. First, there was the stress on divine agency. The arrival of Christ heralded a complete reversal of the fortunes of the world. The catalyst was the Second Advent, not the human means of missionary societies. Second, there was the emphasis on the material. The great hope held out by the premillennial tradition was the hope of the restoration of the universe. This was no other-worldly theology, but one that demanded the reign of Christ on earth, which Oliver describes as the key feature of the millennium.³⁵ Third, there was

the question of 'whether we can ascertain, by any accredited marks, the place which the *present time* may occupy in this extended chart of the future.'³⁶

Noel's work was published in the midst of the Albury conferences, five of which were held between 1826 and 1830. Some 30-40 people attended the first conference in November 1826, including Daniel Wilson and James Haldane, although both William Wilberforce and Thomas Chalmers declined invitations. The agreed statement reflected the outline, later given much substance of detail by Noel. The present dispensation would end in judgement, on both church and nation, the Jews would be restored, judgement would be followed by the millennium, a time of universal blessedness, but the millennium would be preceded by the Second Advent. It was also argued that the French revolution had brought to an end the important prophetic period of 1,260 years, marking the close of the power of the papal antichrist, and that the vials of the apocalypse then began to be poured out.³⁷

Shaftesbury's diaries are full of references to the Second Advent, although rarely do they expand on his understanding of the associated events. The Second Advent was an event to be prayed for³⁸ and the only real basis of hope for mankind.³⁹

Every hour of reading, every hour of reflection, strengthens me more and more, God be praised, in the conviction that the Second Advent is the hope for all the ends of the earth.⁴⁰

Shaftesbury acknowledged his own dependency on this hope of the Second Advent by emphasising the state of constant expectation in which he lived.

I do believe that if one were to pluck from me my knowledge and hope of a future state, nay, less than that, my constant and immediate desire of it, I should be 'of all men most miserable.'⁴¹

This level of expectancy led him to contemplate the Second Advent, 'Behold He cometh with clouds!' and to plead that the intervening days should, in the providence of God, be shortened.⁴² Thus for Shaftesbury the Second Advent was to be soon,⁴³ but no date could, or indeed should, be set.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, nothing should be allowed to

delay the Advent,⁴⁵ and everything done to hasten it.⁴⁶ Shaftesbury was committed to...

...the preaching of the Second Advent of our Blessed Lord. Pay no attention to excited and angry critics, who charge such a scheme with all the extravagancies of the fifth monarchy, and the millennial inventions. The Second Advent, as an all-sufficient remedy, should be prayed for; and, as a promise, should be looked for. The mode, form, and manner of that event are not revealed, and therefore no business of ours.⁴⁷

Rarely did Shaftesbury enter into details of his views of the millennium. Nevertheless, he was clear in principle that what was involved was the personal and earthly reign of Jesus.

Dear old Duchess of Beaufort here; talked much on the Second Advent; we both agree and delight in the belief of the personal reign of our blessed Lord upon earth. I cannot understand the Scriptures in any other way...⁴⁸

Thus, Shaftesbury certainly seems to have accepted the idea of the saints reigning on earth with Jesus. Earlier he had remarked that 'nothing can be universal but the reign of our blessed Lord on the throne of David, when there shall be 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill towards men,' 'even so come, Lord Jesus!'.⁴⁹

While at Windsor Castle he reflected on a picture of Edward VI - always the Protestant hero - and his own late son Francis:

They are probably now together humbly and joyously adoring their blessed Lord; and as they sleep in Him, so will they come with Him! 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'⁵⁰

The power of God's intervention was forever to the front of Shaftesbury's mind, and in very practical ways, whether it was in the hope for the prevention of Sunday labour in the Post Office,⁵¹ or in relation to slavery in the United States.

And yet my impression is that the thing is drawing to a close; the darkest moment, when the help of man is visibly impotent, when all the powers of Satan seem developed and confirmed, God interposes for His people; and so He will here.⁵²

An essential part of Shaftesbury's motivation in missionary concern and social action was his understanding of the power of God's direct divine interposition drawn from his imminent expectation of the Second Advent.

This prospect of the Second Advent also provided Shaftesbury with personal spiritual sustenance, especially when his thoughts turned to those loved ones who had passed before him, in particular, after the death of his beloved wife, Minny, and during the final illness of his daughter Constance. The hope of the Second Advent was the hope of being reunited in heaven with those who had been closest to him.⁵³

10.3 The Day of Judgement

A combination of the increased weight being given to prophecy, the development of historicist premillennialism, and the failure of the missionary societies to bring about the anticipated conversion of the world, led to a more pessimistic strand of Evangelical opinion. Revival, which had originally prompted the gradualist approach of the missionary societies, was now seen as a threat to order.⁵⁴ Begg summarised the premillennial view:

While men delude themselves with the idea of a peaceful introduction to the Millennium, the Scriptures represent it as being immediately preceded by one of the most awful catastrophes with which the earth has yet been visited.⁵⁵

It was this postmillennial optimism that led Evangelicals into the quest for purity analysed in chapter 8. The Day of Judgement was not far off, but near at hand. Indeed, in some very real sense, judgement had already begun in this world. As Irving expounded this message in the setting of the Evangelical missionary societies, others provided the theological support for the position. John Hooper saw the preaching of the gospel in all the world, the prevalence of iniquity and the degenerate state of the professing church all as 'signs and harbingers of the glorious appearing of the Son of Man, - of the resurrection of his saints, - and of his millennial glory.'⁵⁶ That the message of Irving could be adopted in some measure without embracing Irvingism

was also a demonstration of the breadth of opinion within the millennial tradition. Indeed Haddon Willmer has usefully pointed out that the study of unfulfilled prophecy was primarily a renewal movement for contemporary Evangelicals.⁵⁷ William Marsh was, as ever, more measured, but no less certain as to the end. The apostate Christian church would be overthrown,⁵⁸ and this would characterize the Second Advent.⁵⁹

Thus judgment begins where most light has been afforded.⁶⁰

Marsh also saw the conversion of the world as marking the Second Advent, but in accordance with the premillennial tradition, this conversion would be achieved in the millennial period by Christ's special intervention.⁶¹

To Shaftesbury the Day of Judgement was above all a *time of giving account to God*. Certainly it involved the separation of the righteous from the reprobate, but it also involved acceptance of responsibility for actions on earth. This day would 'exhibit some fearful reckonings', including Herod for the murder of the innocents and Louis XIV for his massacres in Germany.⁶² Sins were not to remain unpunished, a point Shaftesbury had already made in relation to Britain's unholy role in the opium War against China.⁶³ The judgement day then was to be a day of reckoning for the stewardship of the gifts of God:

God in His mercy grant to me and mine...that the years which He shall give may be years of usefulness; and that they present not, at the Great Account, a mere record of things received, but of things hoped and done in His worship and service.⁶⁴

When visiting Rugby school, to consider whether it would constitute a good school for his son Antony, Shaftesbury demonstrated the interaction of his theological convictions with his traditional paternalism. He was seeking somewhere that would inculcate 'a just estimate of rank and property, not as matters of personal enjoyment and display, but as gifts from God, bringing with them serious responsibilities, and involving a fearful account,'⁶⁵ a point he repeated later.

Rank, leisure, station are gifts of God, for which men must give account.⁶⁶

The idea of stewardship in connection with the Second Advent was reinforced by Matthew 24, which Shaftesbury referred to when reading Scripture with Francis while the latter was ill:

Read the seventh of Revelation for the glories and bliss of the other world, and the twenty-fourth of Matthew for the present duties and occupations of this.⁶⁷

Thus it can be seen that Shaftesbury always sought to maintain the tension between hope for the next world and responsibility in this, a responsibility for which all were accountable to God. This was a significant aspect of Shaftesbury's concern for social action in this world. His own words summarise.

A man verging upon sixty must expect disappointments. And so do I. Yet, nevertheless, I have many moments of aspiration and hope. Though sometimes faint and feeble almost to inanition, I am, at other times, vigorous, lively, and forward, as in the best days of my youth; and I feel a singular reluctance to withdraw from the field, dark and dismal though it be, while there appears the smallest opening for God's service. Man must not estimate what good can be done by his own proportion of big and little. God called me to the relief of the factory population, and gave me strength accordingly. The work was great and conspicuous. He may call me to some obscure, inferior, and, humanly speaking, paltry effort. The work may be short and without honour. Yet, at the day of final account, the last may be more than the first; "the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim may be worth all the vintage of Abi-ezer." This is why I cannot resolve to retire, though I see clouds gathering around, and, within and without, am not what I was.⁶⁸

10.4 Historicism and the Signs of the Times

Premillennialism was marked by a more literal approach to the interpretation of Scripture. This was not, however, new; the Puritans had been divided between those who interpreted the key texts in these alternative ways.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it was biblical exegesis which underpinned the entire system.

The key elements of the prophetic work of biblical exegesis were the visions of the future of the books of Daniel and Revelation. The book of Daniel contained a vision of four kingdoms, the last of which was divided, and from which would arise a power,

a spiritual despotism, which would last 'a time, times and half a time' (Daniel 7:25). The "time" was deemed to correspond to a year; hence the verse referred to a total time span of three and a half years, or 1,260 days. Exegetes used the principle of Numbers 14:33 to maintain that one day was equivalent to one prophetic year (the "year-day" theory), to demonstrate that this spiritual bondage would last 1,260 years. Further references to 1,260 days in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6 were seen as confirming this reference. The question remained of exactly how these time periods were to be applied to the history of the church. An alternative schema was provided by the seven seals and trumpets of Revelation; but the principle was the same. These symbols covered the whole of history; the only issue was the precise identification.

Exegetically this historicist tradition owed a great deal to Joseph Mede (1585-1638). Mede sought a consistent interpretation of the images of Revelation. The seven trumpet blasts represented the history of the church, including the acquisition of temporal power by the Pope and the spread of the Muslim religion (the locusts) and the Turkish empire (the horsemen). The final trumpet portrayed the restoration of Israel and the destruction of the beast, associated, of course, with the Church of Rome. With the imagery of the pouring out of the vials, Mede saw the faith of the Protestant martyrs. The actual identification of the beast with Rome goes back to Luther. Mede was essentially a professional exegete, and resisted interpretations of the future. He was appealed to by later commentators on both sides of the millennial divide, but by his adoption of historicism he prepared the way for premillennialism.

This development of historicism illustrated the early desire of Protestantism 'to find meaning for the Reformation in sacred, providential history.'⁷⁰ Zakai identifies Carion's Chronicle, (1552), as the first major work of Protestant historiography which linked prophecy and history by associating Daniel's four monarchies with the Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian and Roman empires.⁷¹ This was, of course, a reversal of Augustine's eschatology.

Protestant historiography returned eschatology, the apocalypse, and the millennium to time and history... ..imbued secular history...with divine significance, thereby negating the dualistic view of history such as was adhered to by Augustine.⁷²

Thus the Reformation itself was placed within the divine history, the Church of Rome became the Antichrist and the Puritan Thomas Brightman 'drastically altered England's role in providential history from that of Foxe's Elect Nation to the part of Laodicea,' reflecting 'a terrible fear that England would soon be called to account.'⁷³ Hence the papacy became the antichrist as well as the thing anti-christian, and antichrist 'was seen in a hostile nation as well as in an apostate church. He was also observed, if in a lesser degree, in churches other than that of Rome.'⁷⁴

If the beginning of a period is unknown, the alternative is to locate the end and work back. This is exactly what the Evangelical prophetic writers of the nineteenth century did. In doing so they returned to the accepted Protestant tradition of historicism, including understandings of election and judgement that came again to prominence with the Evangelical quest for purity. Indeed, historicism had already become more prominent during the debate with deism. It was a relatively simple step to cross the frontier between the recent past and immediate future.⁷⁵ The fourth kingdom of Daniel was associated with the Roman empire. If the period of the French revolution was the end of the 1,260 days, then the beginning had to be around 533. This date corresponded to the emergence of the papacy and the Roman church. Hence the papacy also became associated with the imagery of the man of sin (2 Thess 2), and the great whore (Revelation 19).

Thus Edward Irving, the Albury group, Faber, Hatley Frere and the whole range of commentators and preachers of the 1820s who once again made these identifications stood in a long tradition. Hooper noted 1792 as the end of the 1,260 years, a clear sign of the end,⁷⁶ and Frere even associated Dan 11:30 specifically with the battle of Aboukir Bay.⁷⁷ Irving combined popery and democracy into the symbolism of antichrist.

The emergence of historicism, and the precise identification of the biblical imagery, was not without its difficulties, not least when some commentators attached different interpretations to the symbols. Cuninghame adopted the usual understanding:

Believing with the whole of the protestant churches, that this Man of Sin is an ecclesiastical tyranny which was to arise in the professing church of Christ, within the limits of the Western empire, we discern in the prophetic description an exact delineation of the popes of Rome, and we thus are led to identify St. Paul's Man of Sin with Daniel's Little Horn of the fourth beast.⁷⁸

The most common alternative was to associate the imagery of the beast with either Napoleon or at least the French empire. Samuel Horsley made this connection,⁷⁹ and in the archives of the London Society there is an elaborate document providing detailed identification of Napoleon with the beast.⁸⁰ James Hatley Frere also adopted the association with Napoleon, while G.S. Faber made the identification with revolutionary France, with its worship of human liberty and veneration of men.⁸¹ The Turkish empire was another power that often featured in calculations. The other symbolism of Revelation also prompted much variety of interpretation. At different times, the two witnesses of Revelation 11 were seen as the Old Testament and the New Testament,⁸² the lawful magistracy and the lawful ministry,⁸³ and Lodowick Muggleton and John Reeve!⁸⁴ Similarly, the woman clothed with the sun of Revelation 12 had been identified with both Queen Elizabeth I⁸⁵ and Joanna Southcott.⁸⁶

There was also the problem of the various periods specified in Daniel and Revelation, not least in their reconciliation. The period of 1,260 days was derived by exegetes both directly from the book of Revelation and, by way of the year-day theory, from the book of Daniel. The last chapter of Daniel (12:11) states that the period of time from the establishment of "the abomination that causes desolation" will be 1,290 days, and the person who waits for the end of 1,335 days will be blessed (12:12).

Notwithstanding the problem of the relationship of the first two periods, if the 1,260 days ended in 1792, John Hooper noted, writing in 1830, then on the same principle

the 1,290 days must have passed, and the course of history be well on its way in the 1,335 days.⁸⁷ Having been tied into the historicist system Hooper was thus constrained, and although he simply affirmed that the Second Advent must be near at hand, he was clearly only one step removed from setting a certain date for the event. The end was so near in the view of William Cuninghame that 'many who are now alive shall witness it.'⁸⁸

Frere experienced a similar problem. Writing towards the end of 1830 he was faced with the problem of the relationship of the French revolution of 1830 and that of 1789; he associated each with the two earthquakes of Revelation 11:13,19 and quoted the Morning Watch in asserting that the former brought the latter to completion.⁸⁹ Frere demonstrated his own historicist presuppositions in discussing the symbolism of the seventh vial (Revelation 16:18) during which he engaged in the most detailed historicist exegesis of Revelation 16:17-21.⁹⁰ Frere also dealt with the prophetic periods of 1,260 years, 1,290 years and 1,335 years. Frere, careful and professional exegete that he was, went into more detail than Hooper but with similar problems. These periods terminated in 1792-3, 1822-3 and in 1867-8. The six apocalyptic vials were poured out in the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1792 and occupied the period of thirty years between the end of the 1,260 years and the end of the 1,290 years. These vials were associated by Frere with six political events, namely, atheism, Robespierre's reign of terror, the overthrow of the Papal government in France, the tyranny of Bonaparte, the occupation of France and the revolt against the Ottoman empire, the suppression of revolutionary fervour in the West marking the end of the period of the pouring out of the vial.⁹¹ Thus the period of forty-five years (the difference between 1,335 and 1,290) began in 1823, although Frere was unable to explain an embarrassing seven-year gap before the first political event which marked that period - that of the revolution in France. All of this led Frere 'to fix with certainty the commencement of the period of millennial blessedness, and the expiation of the only remaining ecclesiastical period yet uncompleted, the 1,335 years of Daniel, to the year 1867-8,⁹² preceded presumably by the Second Advent. He saw 1867 as

representing the intersection of various pieces of the prophetic jigsaw 'when Christ will be known and acknowledged both as king and priest, [and] the whole world will be under a theocracy.'⁹³ This was remarkably close to setting a date for the Second Advent. A very similar scheme and position was adopted by Irving.⁹⁴

One challenge to historicism came from S.R. Maitland, who became the secretary of the Gloucester Auxiliary of the London Society. In 1826 he published An enquiry into the grounds on which the prophetic period of Daniel and St. John, has been supposed to consist of 1260 years and rejected the year-day theory⁹⁵ and hence removed the association of contemporary events with prophecy. He went on to point out inconsistencies within the historicist scheme over the identification of the symbolism, especially between Faber, Frere and Cuninghame.⁹⁶

*Looking at the discordant opinions...I must say, that they do not appear to be trifling differences about subordinate matters of detail.*⁹⁷

Indeed, if the church had been delivered into the hands of a blasphemous power, how could it be at such a loss to decide when and how it happened; starting dates for the various historicist schemes varied, and included, 456, 533, 606, 620, 727 and 756.⁹⁸ Maitland rejected the identification of the antichrist with the papacy and engaged in a lengthy exposition to show that there was no hint of any connection before the twelfth century, citing Mede in support.⁹⁹ Thus the saints appeared to have followed the antichrist for 700 years without finding out that they were doing so.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Maitland retained belief in a second and premillennial advent; he simply sought to detach it from Protestant historicism. This helped prepare the way for the futurist school of thought.

A particular question of some controversy in relation to the end times was the issue of the return of the pentecostal gifts. Outbreaks of speaking in tongues in Scotland in 1830 and in Irving's London church the following year were also seen as signs of the times, the breaking in of the divine in preparation for the Second Advent. Differences over the role of the pentecostal gifts were also an indication of the breadth of

millennial opinion. Bickersteth remained a moderate on the issue of the return of the gifts, while McNeile became increasingly disillusioned with the prophetic movement and the emphasis on the gifts, accusing Irving of anticipating the future.¹⁰¹ J.N. Darby having originally embraced the appearance of the gifts, subsequently rejected them as belonging to a future dispensation (after the Second Advent) within the scheme of futurist premillennialism. As for Shaftesbury, very early on he made clear that the revelation of the Bible could never be replaced by that of a latter-day prophet. Thus, 'in no one place are we told of a true Prophet as a new Revelation to instruct us in the latter days,' and 'many false prophets have arisen since Christ, but all have fallen and ...away; and the Holy Bible, by the blessing of God, remains, as it was, seventeen hundred years ago.'¹⁰² Shaftesbury's Protestantism was not going to be overturned by current Evangelical fashion.

In his diary entry for 20 December 1860 Shaftesbury's reference to the gathering clouds showed his concern to discern the signs of the times, those events which would precede the Second Advent.¹⁰³ At other times both astronomical activity and natural disasters featured in his analysis.

Much struck by the increasing frequency of meteors and celestial phenomena - the papers contain fresh accounts almost daily - mark the words of St. Luke "fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."¹⁰⁴

Earthquakes again "in diverse places"; papers full of such accounts; in almost everyday's gazette some...is announced - a violent trembling in Malta; a more serious one at Cairo, and throughout Egypt! "What mean ye by these things"? Are they not among "the signs of the times"?¹⁰⁵

Fundamentally, it was clear to Shaftesbury that the latter days would be evil. Thus he referred to 'these evil days of apostasy and unbelief that will afflict the earth in the latter times.'¹⁰⁶ He regarded evil as natural, good as unnatural; 'evil requires nothing but man as he is, good must find the soil prepared by the grace of God.' The natural tendency was to 'repose in present security,' rather than being 'active to avert a distant peril.'¹⁰⁷

Shaftesbury also showed his attachment to historicism within his millennial beliefs. He wrote of his encounters with the historian, Sir Archibald Alison, and of the immense benefit he had gained from conversation; Shaftesbury noted that Alison 'plainly discerns the French Revolution in the Apocalypse.'¹⁰⁸ One of the characteristics of the last days would be the many testimonies to the authenticity of the Bible.¹⁰⁹ In addition 'the general diffusion and maintenance of the gospel' was seen as a preparation for the Second Advent.¹¹⁰ And in relation to missions in China and Japan:

I see it, I see it, surely I see it; the Gospel will be offered where, in truth, it has been 'preached for a witness to all nations,' and then will 'the end come!' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'¹¹¹

All this fitted very neatly into a Calvinist theology of mission, one linked very closely to the end of time. This Calvinism, combined with historicist millennialism, partly explains how Shaftesbury was able to maintain a commitment to the spreading and preaching of the gospel while still operating with his theology of the Second Advent. In turn this contributes to the explanation of Shaftesbury's dual devotion to missionary endeavour and social action.

Shaftesbury's Protestantism was also linked in to his understanding of the last days. In 1852 two small Florentine shopkeepers, Francesco and Rosa Madiari, were sentenced to five years hard labour by the Grand Duke of Tuscany for their profession of the Protestant religion. Protestant Europe was indignant and Shaftesbury was head of the movement for their support in England. This persecution was itself seen by Shaftesbury as a sign of the end times.

Yesterday to Protestant Alliance to receive deputation on their return from Florence. Let us bless God; He has really prospered us.....Is it no remarkable sign, nay, proof of the latter days, that when two small shopkeepers are persecuted by the hand of tyranny, for righteousness' sake, all Europe is in commotion.....¹¹²

10.5 The place of the Jews

The Jews occupied a central place in the Evangelical theology of the nineteenth century. The London Society acted as a bridge organisation for Evangelicals covering the breadth of the millennial tradition, although by the late 1820s the premillennial influence had become dominant. Differences arose over the order of priority of conversion; premillennialists interpreted Scripture as demanding the conversion of the Jews first, who would then become missionaries to the Gentiles. The key question was the understanding of "all Israel" in Romans 11. Few followed Calvin's exegesis which interpreted the phrase to mean the complete church of believing Gentile and believing Jew.

Murray maintains that the mainstream Puritan view embraced blessing for the Gentiles before and after the conversion of the Jews.¹¹³ Nevertheless the majority of the Jews would be called after the fullness of the Gentiles, and this would be at the end time. However, Murray accepts that from among the Puritans neither William Perkins nor Richard Baxter followed this view.¹¹⁴ Hugh McNeile saw the calling of an elect from Jews and Gentiles, to be followed by a more general conversion after the restoration and conversion of the Jews by the miraculous intervention of Christ.¹¹⁵ Note also James Begg:

Their *national* conversion will be sudden and general, when it takes place. But as many have already been converted to the faith of the gospel, so individual conversion we trust shall yet be greatly increased.¹¹⁶

The secretary of the London Society, Lewis Way, was himself a student of unfulfilled prophecy and noted the connection between the biblical prophecies of the restoration of the Jews, particularly those of Isaiah 11:12 and 27:12-13, and the Second Advent; if restoration came before the conversion of the Gentiles, then the millennium must follow the Second Advent. As Sandeen comments, the 'prophetic timetable had joined these expectations inextricably.'¹¹⁷ Hooper linked 'the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare of Israel.'¹¹⁸ Frere summed up the premillennial position with regard to the Jews in a discussion of Ezekiel 47:1-9:

...the period of the pouring out of the vials of wrath, or of God's casting off the apostate Gentile church, and those nations who have so long held his ancient people in bondage, shall also be the period of their reconciliation, and of their restoration to their own land; by whose instrumentality, as we know from other prophecies, the whole world shall eventually be brought into the faith of the gospel.¹¹⁹

Begg emphasised the premillennial understanding of the literal nature of the restoration of the Jews.¹²⁰ This was reinforced by Irving who understood the restoration of the Jews to be a characteristic of the last days.¹²¹ Again, for Marsh restoration was an act of divine interposition connected with the Second Advent.¹²² The restoration and conversion of the Jews represented a divine reversal of their fortunes. Marsh noted 'how immediately the prophecy [Jeremiah 31:10-11] connects, with this their penitential state, their *general return to their own land*,¹²³ *and in* reference to Ezekiel 37:25, Jeremiah 32:36, 44 and Amos 9:14-15, that these 'passages are so positive and explicit, that they need no comment to elucidate them.'¹²⁴

The restoration of the Jews to their homeland, drawn from the biblical prophecies, added a political dimension to the issue that proved attractive to the national Protestants, which was centred in later years in the campaign for a Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem.¹²⁵ In the premillennial scheme Jerusalem was to be the centre of the earthly reign of *Christ and the saints*. As *Stephen Orchard has noted, this scheme* kindled evangelical imagination.¹²⁶ In the case of James Begg this was undoubtedly an understatement. Begg even claimed that the 'exertions already made in this country in behalf of the Jews, give probability to the view of our ships being "first" employed for assisting them in their return....also countenancing the idea that this modern Tarshish represents the British nation.'¹²⁷ Murray notes that some Puritans had believed in the restoration of the Jews, but not in any renewed theocratic significance.¹²⁸

In Shaftesbury, as in others, attention to the future of the Jews brought together Protestantism, mission and the millennium. Speaking to the London Society, Shaftesbury saw in the objects of that society 'the fulfilment of a long series of

prophecies, and the institution of unspeakable blessings, both in time and eternity, for all the nations of the world.¹²⁹ He thus affirmed the principle of the primacy of mission to the Jews, as the instruments of salvation to the Gentiles, although not denying the acceptability of parallel mission to the Gentiles. In an article in The Quarterly Review in January 1839, Shaftesbury expressed his understanding of the place of the Jews in the fulfilment of prophecy and illustrated also the manner in which he held the tension between the end and its imminence.

That the Jews should be thus degraded and despised is a part of their chastisement, and the fulfilment of prophecy; but low and abhorred as they still are, we now hail for them the dawn of a better day, a day of regeneration and deliverance, which raising them alike from neology and rabbinism, shall set them at large in the glorious liberty of the Gospel. This desirable consummation, though still remote, has approached us more rapidly within the last few years.¹³⁰

Shaftesbury also saw that the fulfilment of the prophecies of restoration were approaching. He was prominent in the campaign to establish a Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem and 1854 he formulated a plan that would grant land rights to Jewish people in Syria:

No one can say that we are anticipating prophecy; the requirements of it seem nearly fulfilled.¹³¹

Thus Shaftesbury's concern for the Jews was intimately connected with the fulfilment of prophecy and the doctrine of the Second Advent.

10.6 The Protestant eschatological tradition

The recovery of eschatology by the Evangelical movement in the nineteenth century was both continuous and discontinuous with the understanding of the subject at the time of the Reformation. Much of Shaftesbury's belief, and his application of eschatology to mission and social welfare, derived from the reclaiming of important elements of Reformation eschatology.

The progress of the Reformation assured Protestants that the rule of antichrist was on the wane.¹³² This was expressed optimistically in the spread of the gospel, an aspect

that increased in the period after the defeat of the Armada in 1588,¹³³ and further in the Puritan writings of the Commonwealth period.

Alternatively, awareness of the persecution of Protestants abroad and fear of the Roman threat at home could be so strong that all hope of deliverance was fixed on the imminent End.¹³⁴

The difference between these two views was often one only of emphasis, although it was an ever present tension in Elizabethan Protestant writings. The two were often held together; antichrist's power was shaken by the spread of the gospel, but the battle could only end with the Second Advent, which was widely seen as imminent. Luther, Latimer, Hooper, Ridley and Bullinger all followed this view.¹³⁵ Attention was directed to the signs of the times, many of which 'were natural calamities or general social disorders such as had been known in most ages.'¹³⁶ A major sign of the end was the increased iniquity which was pointed to by drawing attention to Jesus' comparison of the time before the Last Judgement with the period before the Flood.¹³⁷ The stress was upon the discernment of the signs rather than the setting of dates for the Second Advent which, as Jesus had promised, would remain unknown and unexpected.¹³⁸ The early Protestant tradition then stood between those views that denied the end of the world, and those that set a date for that end.¹³⁹ Bryan Ball has noted that this concern represented the spiritual yearnings of Protestantism for a return to the primitive, biblical and apostolic emphases of Christianity, and that a reading of the New Testament could not fail but to reawaken eschatological interest.¹⁴⁰ Belief in the certainty of the Second Coming was widespread among both people and preachers throughout the Tudor, Stuart and Commonwealth periods.

A turning point in Tudor apocalyptic thought was the defeat of the Armada in 1588, seen by many as a miraculous divine intervention.¹⁴¹ The consequential increase in optimism about the future prospects for the gospel prepared the way for the later seventeenth-century Puritan tradition to view the millennium as a period of future bliss for the church. But in the Tudor period consideration of the millennium was only a minor aspect of apocalyptic thought, 'whose significance can be seen only in the

light of its seventeenth century development.¹⁴² The Tudor Protestant understanding of the millennium viewed it as a period of time in the past, not the future. This was perhaps closer to the Augustinian tradition, but differed from it in seeing the millennium not as covering the whole of history up to the end, but as a literal thousand years leading up to the reign of antichrist. The precise dating varied, but commentators were agreed that the period was in the past.¹⁴³ Exegetical changes in the understanding of Revelation 20, together with the Joachimist tradition and the optimism after 1588 all combined to bring a more explicitly postmillennial view to the fore. Nevertheless, the problem of how to interpret Revelation 20 began to assume more importance. Ball notes the variety of opinion and that 'the overall picture is less of the subjective imposition of fanciful theories by an extravagant minority, than of erudite and honest men genuinely wrestling with an obscure and difficult passage of Scripture.'¹⁴⁴

The role of the Puritan tradition in the development of millenarianism is much disputed. Iain Murray has claimed that examples like Thomas Brightman did not represent the mainstream of the Puritan tradition.¹⁴⁵ Murray redefines the idea of hope: for premillennialism hope lay in the Second Advent; for the Puritans, according to Murray, it lay in the hope of revival in the Spirit before the Second Advent. Although he distinguishes Puritan thought from postmillennialism, he is clearly placing that tradition very much alongside the gradualist approach.¹⁴⁶ Murray differentiates between the human idea of progress and this Puritan hope of continued revival of the church by the Spirit. Certainly this is the case, one being focussed on man, the other on God,¹⁴⁷ but by the nineteenth-century missionary expansion the two did seem to be indistinguishable.

The solution lies in recognizing the variety of opinion among Puritan writers, a variety amply demonstrated by Ball's study.¹⁴⁸ Much of Murray's work draws on the period of, and subsequent to, the Commonwealth, a time of immense Puritan optimism. Most Puritans at this time concentrated on the future hope of revival following the establishment of the Godly commonwealth; although, even then, there were those, on

the fringe, such as the Fifth Monarchy Men, who expected the imminent establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. There was an ever present tension in Protestant and Puritan eschatological thought between the imminence of the end and the extreme sinfulness of the age.¹⁴⁹ In the period before the Commonwealth there was a wide range of Puritan opinion, of which the most common was the imminent expectation of the Second Advent, but without any interpretation of the millennium. Ball quotes from Richard Baxter's The Saints' Everlasting Rest (1649), Richard Sibbes The Glorious Feast of the Gospel (1650), and Christopher Love's The Penitent Pardoned (1657) as evidence of Puritan writers maintaining this view.¹⁵⁰ Professor Oliver locates Edward Bickersteth's eschatological opinions in the nineteenth century in line with this outlook.

This variety is acknowledged by Murray, who recognizes that there was a Puritan school including Richard Baxter which denied any future millennium,¹⁵¹ a point more in continuity with the Tudor apocalyptic tradition. Richard Bauckham comments about William Perkins that 'the lack of apocalyptic fervour...marked him out from so many of his contemporaries.'¹⁵² Thus Murray's references to the last hundred years of Protestant theology as believing in a premillennial advent, followed by conversion of the Jews, and earthly blessing, has more of a Puritan heritage than he concedes by his concentration on later Puritanism. Murray does seem to backtrack a little when he seeks to reconcile the hope of future blessing with the notion of living in expectancy of the end, but this has lost the imminency and the tension which was characteristic of the Elizabethan Puritans, and is a difficult task.¹⁵³

Apocalyptic will always be a prominent feature at times of historical crisis.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, Bauckham sees it as Western Christendom's 'habitual response'¹⁵⁵ to such crises, part of the quest for Protestant self-understanding. It is, thus, not surprising to find that in the turmoil of industrial change concern for apocalyptic grew to prominence once again.

10.7 The breadth of the millennial tradition

Nineteenth-century developments in the millennial tradition mirrored the history of that tradition within Protestantism. There was a recovery of concern for eschatology which drew directly upon the Reformation heritage of Evangelicalism. There were also distinctive aspects of millennialism that arose, or at least came to the fore, in the nineteenth century. Not least among these was the increased interest in the details of the hoped-for millennium. The variety of opinion from within the Protestant eschatological tradition can be seen as an antecedent to a similar variety of view within nineteenth-century millennialism. These differences, often in matters of detail or emphasis, have rarely been recognised, and are frequently subsumed within generalised categories, even with histories of Evangelicalism. It is necessary to appreciate this range of views within millennialism in order to understand the place occupied within the tradition by Shaftesbury.

The usual division between postmillennialists and premillennialists is unhelpful in the sense that it disguises the breadth of views which were accepted within Evangelicalism.¹⁵⁶ This complex spectrum of opinion included the professional exegete, the self-proclaimed messiah, prophets of doom and hope, and restorers of Israel.¹⁵⁷ But even within the various strands of the prophetic tradition there was much variety of thought. There was unity over the need to recover the emphasis on a cosmic parousia and judgement, especially in reaction to Evangelical accommodation to the world, but only a few set a date for the Second Coming, such as Joseph Wolff and E.B. Elliott. There was also a remarkable variety of interpretations of the symbols of Revelation and indeed of the interpretation of the various prophetic periods, with Cuninghame and Frere coming very close to setting a date for the Second Advent.

Cuninghame's understanding of the whole period of the millennium as representing the day of judgement was reinforced by Marsh, who understood the Second Advent:

*as a day of judgement, and awful retribution upon corrupt Christendom at large; as also upon all individual professing Christians, who have hitherto neglected and abused their great privileges.*¹⁵⁸

This shows that many who adopted the premillennial tradition were keen to ensure that judgement and advent were not separated, and, indeed, by doing so, retained a corporate dimension to judgement important for social action.

The Record reflected Evangelical ambiguity about the millennium; in January 1828 it declared as unscriptural the attitude of those who waited 'for the miraculous interposition of the Deity, to accomplish his merciful intentions to the human race,'¹⁵⁹ and that 'it has been by human agency that it has pleased God to spread the knowledge of his truth.'¹⁶⁰ However, by the September the paper rejected the position that the study of prophecy was 'visionary and absurd,'¹⁶¹ though it was concerned at any overemphasis of the subject and a lack of humility in the debate. The following year still saw the paper describe the papacy as the antichrist, the Mystery of Iniquity and Mother of harlots and abominations in the earth.¹⁶² The Record affirmed the principle of the second personal advent and the millennium but acknowledged that the disputes related to matters of timing. In the December the paper launched a major attack on Irving and the Morning Watch for his assault on Evangelicalism.¹⁶³ In the issue of 28 December, 1829 The Record firmly opted for the middle way of proceeding. The study of unfulfilled prophecy was affirmed, but in the manner of the professional exegetes such as Faber and Frere, with disproportionate attention to the subject and an ungracious spirit being firmly criticised.¹⁶⁴

The national Protestants represented an important link between the prophetic party and the mainstream of Evangelicalism. Imbued with historicism in their understanding of the Church of Rome and committed to the Jews' Society, they saw in the failure to defend the Protestant constitution the danger of impending judgement. Rennie notes the outrage felt by Sir Robert Inglis and Michael Sadler in 1831:

The speech from the throne, after the election of May, 1831, contained no allusion to the providence of God. And this at a time when an epidemic of cholera threatened.¹⁶⁵

Simeon and Bickersteth both illustrated this breadth of opinion. Orchard claims that Simeon's connection with the London Society represented his only real venture into millennialism.¹⁶⁶ However, unlike the extreme premillennialist tradition, Simeon's position was one that allowed for the conversion of a portion of both Jews and Gentiles. Edward Bickersteth (1796-1850) became secretary of the CMS, was involved in the foundation of the Evangelical Alliance, and was a close intimate of Shaftesbury, supporting his campaigns of social reform. He noted the divisions in the church over questions of prophecy and in the Bible Society controversy he proposed to subscribe to both the Bible Society and the Trinitarian Bible Society. By 1833 he is regarded as having adopted a premillennial position. He preached the Second Advent and the last judgement, in order to arouse the conscience of his hearers and promote public and personal morality. He combined this with a traditional Calvinist view of mission which understood conversion mission as a witness, a gathering in of the predestined elect, rather than of ushering in the millennium. So Birks notes that Bickersteth remained committed to missionary work, believing 'that they were the plain duty, and one of the highest privileges, of the Christian; and he found new motives for diligence in the shortness of time, and the prospect of a speedy recompense from the Lord in the day of his appearing.'¹⁶⁷ Oliver notes Bickersteth as an example of the distinction he draws between adventists and millennialists, an important distinction, with implications for social action.¹⁶⁸ According to Oliver, Bickersteth resists formal classification within the traditional millennial categories, since he combined 'the sober zeal of the post-millennialist progressive and the probing alarmism of the pre-millennialist anticipator of crisis.'¹⁶⁹ Bickersteth certainly disavowed the more detailed descriptions of the nature of the millennium, while affirming the premillennial, personal coming of Christ as judge and saviour.¹⁷⁰ Oliver also refers to James Haldane Stewart as a further example of a commentator who distinguished between concern for the Second Advent and speculation as to the nature of the millennium, amidst signs of the end.¹⁷¹ Oliver indicates an appreciation of the variety within the tradition when he describes the dissenter James Bicheno as 'an

optimistic postmillennialist with pre-millennial hesitations.¹⁷² Frere saw the divine wrath as coming, and very soon, but remained hopeful of God's mercy, the missionary societies representing signs of divine favour. This 'showed Frere to be a long way from condemning the ordinary operations of providence through human institutions.'¹⁷³

Professor Oliver has come closest to a recognition of the breadth of the millennial tradition, even if the full implications have not been worked out. Millennialism 'is a way of looking at the world, not a set of conclusions; the conclusions which may be reached are extremely diverse, and though their family relationship is apparent, it is a relationship of style, concept, vocabulary and mood, dependent ultimately upon reference back to a common set of biblical texts and symbols.'¹⁷⁴

It is clear that Shaftesbury's concern for the Second Advent, the prominence and importance which he attached to it, firmly located him within that range of views usually described as premillennial. However, Shaftesbury refused to set a date for the Second Advent, and pursued an understanding of the doctrine that demanded a Christian life to be lived out in expectation of an imminent return of Christ. This allowed him to emphasise the duties and responsibilities of Christians for which account would be required at the Day of Judgement. Although Shaftesbury accepted the premillennial outline of the millennium, the details of the period of the millennium did not feature in his writings and reflections, as they did in those of many of the premillennial writers already discussed.¹⁷⁵ This was fully in accord with the Protestant heritage of the eschatological tradition, especially the emphases of Elizabethan Protestantism, and the moderate eschatological position in the nineteenth century occupied by, for example, Edward Bickersteth. Shaftesbury, of course, had a close personal relationship with Bickersteth. Thus like Shaftesbury, Bickersteth repudiated the setting of dates for the Second Advent.¹⁷⁶ What he did affirm, however, was the nearness of the event rather than the distance.¹⁷⁷ This position was also largely that of The Record. Shaftesbury also had connections with the owner of The Record, Alexander Haldane. Shaftesbury prayed with Haldane shortly before the former's

death and noted that Haldane 'ever talked with a holy relish and a full desire for the Second Advent.'¹⁷⁸ Given that The Record had distinctly drawn back from Irving and the more extreme proponents of the Second Advent, this comment, and this relationship is significant in confirming Shaftesbury position within this mainstream Evangelical, yet moderate, position within millennialism.

¹ Battiscombe, pp100ff; Finlayson, pp103f.

² Battiscombe, p100.

³ Anne Taylor, Visions of Harmony, (1987), chapter 4.

⁴ Oliver, pp13-15.

⁵ J.M. Butler & R.L. Numbers (eds.), The Disappointed, (1987), pp11-12.

⁶ Taylor, p10.

⁷ Reiner Smolenski, 'Israel Redvivos: The Eschatological Limits of Puritan Typology in New England', New England Quarterly, 1990.

⁸ J.F.C. Harrison, The Second Coming, (1979).

⁹ Oliver, pp20-21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p23.

¹¹ G.T. Noel, A Brief Enquiry into the Prospects of the Church of Christ in Connexion with the Second Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ, (1840), p11.

¹² J. Hooper, The Present Crisis considered in relation to the blessed hope of the Glorious Appearing of the Great God. and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (1830), p3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ W. Cunninghame, Millennial Advent, p14.

¹⁵ W. Marsh, A Few Plain Thoughts on Prophecy, (1823), p23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp25-26.

¹⁷ Noel, p11.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p89.

²⁰ James A. Begg, A Connected View....of the Redeemer's Speedy Personal Return, (1831), p87.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p80.

²² *Ibid.*, p82.

²³ *Ibid.*, p176.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p78.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p175n.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p227.

²⁷ Marsh, p15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p17.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p109.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p11.

³¹ T. Jones, Sober Views of the Millennium, (1835), pp21-22.

³² *Ibid.*, p25.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp30-31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p35-36.

³⁵ Oliver, p19.

³⁶ Noel, p98.

³⁷ S.C. Orchard, 'English Evangelical Eschatology, 1790-1850' (Cambridge University PhD, 1969), p78.

³⁸ Diaries, 8 August, 1842, SHA/PD/2.

³⁹ Diaries, 25 December, 1842, SHA/PD/2.

⁴⁰ Diaries, 26 December, 1847, SHA/PD/5.

⁴¹ Diaries, 25 May, 1843, SHA/PD/3.

⁴² Diaries, 27 August, 1843, SHA/PD/3.

⁴³ Hodder, vol 3, p11.

⁴⁴ Best, p67.

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- 45 Diaries, 19 October, 1845, SHA/PD/4.
- 46 Diaries, 5 July, 1846, SHA/PD/4.
- 47 Letter from Shaftesbury to Dr. Angus, 27 January, 1870, in Hodder, vol 3, p261.
- 48 Diaries, 17 September, 1847, SHA/PD/5.
- 49 Diaries, 25 December, 1842. SHA/PD/2.
- 50 Diaries, 8 February, 1850, SHA/PD/5.
- 51 Diaries, 20 November, 1850, SHA/PD/6.
- 52 Diaries, 26 June, 1853. SHA/PD/6.
- 53 Diaries, 6 December, 1872; 1 April, 1873, SHA/PD/10.
- 54 W.J.C. Irvine, 'Doctrine and Diplomacy: some aspects of the life and thought of the Anglican Evangelical Clergy, 1797-1837' (Cambridge University PhD, 1979), chapter 6.
- 55 Begg, p246.
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- 57 H. Willmer, 'Evangelicalism 1785-1835', Hulsean Prize Essay, (Cambridge University, 1962), p123.
- 58 Marsh, p49.
- 59 Ibid., p53.
- 60 Ibid., p51.
- 61 Ibid., p38.
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- 63 Diaries, 22 November, 1842, SHA/PD/2.
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- 67 Diaries, 21 May, 1849, SHA/PD/5.
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11 Mission, the millennium and social welfare

Even where scholars have acknowledged the nuances of the millennial tradition, the implications, especially in relation to mission and social welfare, have not been fully investigated. It was the combination of optimism and pessimism, of imminent judgement and present duty, and of the individual and the corporate, which provided the millennial framework for evangelistic mission and social action in the nineteenth century. Both Bickersteth and Shaftesbury were examples of those who adopted this type of outlook. Indeed, Professor Oliver has rightly noted that millennialism was a form of social thought,¹ since it provided a point of contrast with the present state of the world, and allowed for a reversal of current evil. Bernard Capp has commented that an 'emphasis on eschatology is essentially a dynamic attitude, concerned with major transformations in the world,' and indeed that this attitude came to be 'identified with the sector of English Protestantism which still sought change, the Puritans and the separatists.'²

11.1 Eschatology and the social order

The impact of futurist premillennialism was to reduce significantly the interest in any future golden age. The whole scheme was transferred far into the future. This tended to produce an attitude to society of separation and quietism. The Second Coming would provide relief for the despair of social evil.

Converts to premillennialism abandoned confidence in man's ability to bring about significant and lasting social progress and in the church's ability to stem the tide of evil, convert mankind to Christianity, or even prevent its own corruption.³

For Irving, the premillennial concern for the earthly reign of Christ kept the action of transformation in this world. The felicity usually associated with heaven was transferred to the earth.⁴ Irving showed an intensely perceptive analysis of social sin; but the answer, in the light of impending reversal and judgement on the perpetrators,

was separation, since the hoped-for divine intervention was so near. Poor wages, poor housing and excessive hours all figured in the analysis.

Is it Christian-like that these young men and women should be employed from earliest morning till latest evening, with just time enough to swallow their meals, with hardly time enough to refresh themselves with sleep?⁵

Indeed, the breaking down of the obligations of the rich towards the poor, the abuse of rank and station and the lack of sacrifice on behalf of the poor were clear signs to Irving of the last days.⁶ The condemnation was clear, but so was the solution.

Woe unto such a system! woe unto the men of this land, who have been brought under its operation! ...it will grow more and more excessive, until it can no longer be endured by God nor borne by man. I warn you, keep clear of it so far as you are able. Let wealth be held in no comparison with the avoidance of such unholy and inhuman practices.⁷

This illustrated the separatist aspect of premillennialism which emphasised the necessity of a holy church and Evangelical separation from all that was not holy. Nevertheless, both sides of the millennial argument acknowledged a socio-political aspect; desecration of the Sabbath, prostitution, the lottery and slavery brought together the postmillennialist stress on moral improvement with the premillennial insights on imminent judgement.

Stephen Orchard notes a middle position 'that we should be found in the Lord's work when He comes, preparing the way for Him.'⁸ Eschatological doctrine was being translated into a programme of action.⁹ Ignorance of the date of the Second Advent gave the church a permanent state of expectation. Present duty was not to be ignored. William Marsh commented as follows:

Thus the coming of the Lord is represented as a blessed hope, to animate believers in their Christian warfare; and, in order to support them under sufferings, and to stimulate them to exertions in the path of duty..¹⁰

And Edward Bickersteth:

Let the general lethargy of the world around us only the more arouse us, lest we also be sleeping when our Lord shall come.....which I hope may quicken and call forth our efforts in behalf of every good work, and stir up our minds to new life and zeal in following our heavenly calling.¹¹

Bickersteth was also concerned that because of the variety of views concerning the interpretation of prophecy, 'we are losing the power and the sweetness of the hope of his speedy coming.'¹²

The Day of Judgement was crucial for how Evangelicals understood social welfare needs in the present life. The last judgement, the separation of the redeemed and the righteous, was placed at the end of time by all, after the millennium. However, both Cuninghame and Marsh sought to preserve a link between judgement and advent which retained an element of collective responsibility and hence corporate judgement. Judgement also involved giving an account to God for one's stewardship on earth. As Bickersteth put it, the problem with the unconverted was that they were 'living as if this world were the whole of their existence.'¹³ For Bickersteth the necessary vigilance for duty in the light of the Second Coming involved not only confession of Christ and seeking to save souls, but also doing good to others, a duty implied by the parable of the sheep and the goats, and he reminded his listeners that pure religion - the religion so much demanded, of course, by Irving - also involved visiting the fatherless and the widow in their affliction.¹⁴ This partly explains the division among Evangelicals over social action. If giving an account to God was perceived as imminent, then there was an imperative to action on behalf of God's creatures. If the judgement was to be reserved for the far distant future, there may be an incentive to traditional missionary activity, but much less so to social welfare work. Those who took a more interventionist view of God also saw the hand of the Almighty at work in the day-to-day judgement of the nations. This was reflected in calls to prayer and fast days, as well as the discernment of the divine hand in, for example, the events in France, and in the visitation of cholera.

Rewards and punishments always played a part in Evangelical theology. The wicked would not escape. The question was whether this reversal was to be in heaven - the classic postmillennial response to social need - or upon the earth, and when. Oliver notes the turning away of people like Irving from the traditional view of an afterlife of

rewards and punishments.¹⁵ John Hooper accepted that 'knowledge of the times will be of no use unless we reduce it to practice,'¹⁶ though his prescription was essentially separatist and individualistic.¹⁷ Marsh was clear that the rewards and punishments of the life to come would in some way be dependent upon good works in this life.

In what particular way or form this will be manifested, it may not be so easy to determine. There may be a difference of capacity for enjoyment, and there may be different stations of honour and service, in that immense and glorious kingdom. For want of some consideration of this kind, and from the dread of interfering with the essential Christian doctrine of justification by faith, the rewardableness of good works has been too much disregarded, though so frequently asserted in scripture, in connection with this particular subject, the second glorious advent of Christ.¹⁸

Bickersteth appealed to the scriptural association of good works and judgement in the parable of the sheep and goats, and emphasised that the biblical demand on the believer was 'to lay aside every sin, and to walk in newness and holiness of life, in the faith, hope, and love of the gospel.'¹⁹ This love should mean that 'the rich will count it the highest use and privilege of their riches to assist and relieve the distressed,'²⁰ although he also remarked that the poor should be contented and thankful with their lot. He also appealed to the idea of stewardship by reference to the parable of the talents.²¹

The eschatological concerns of judgement and advent were linked to a theological understanding of the unity of body and soul, a connection which was specifically made by Edward Bickersteth.²² The happiness of the spirit at death was only partial, and could not be completed without the happiness which would accrue to the resurrection of the body.²³ The Second Advent represented 'a complete gathering together, and re-union of the whole family of God, in the glories of their risen bodies.'²⁴ It was this essential unity, and, indeed, the corporate understanding of it, that contributed to a concern for the temporal as well as the eternal welfare of God's creation. It meant a concern for the redemption of the body, a prospect which was near rather than distant,²⁵ and which could lead to a general emphasis on the restitution and restoration of the whole creation - reflected in the premillennial emphasis on the new

earth. Both Richard Baxter and Christopher Love emphasised the necessity of the resurrection of the body, so that the body that 'shared in the sufferings and obedience of time...[may]...share the blessedness of eternity.'²⁶ So the task was not to dream of a glorious future but to prepare for it.

The concern for holiness of life and good works in the light of the imminence of the Second Advent represented a continuity with the Elizabethan Protestant tradition; the early Puritans applied their eschatological beliefs to the Christian life in society. Indeed, 'many an Elizabethan preacher took the signs of the nearness of the End as his cue for denouncing the sins of society, exhorting sinners to repentance, encouraging the faithful to holy living and preparedness.'²⁷ *The social sins of the rich* were prominent in Elizabethan sermons.²⁸ Ball notes that 'at a relatively early date, eschatological hope was held to have a direct bearing on the present life of the believer.'²⁹ So also in the nineteenth century, William Marsh wrote:

You will readily admit, that if we could daily realize the second coming of our Lord, and our own eternal state, we should be more influenced by our faith. And the nearer the great period appears, the more we are affected.³⁰

And also Bickersteth:

May our God give to you all a realizing attention then to his sudden coming, and enable you so to *behold it*, as most firmly to expect it, and most diligently to prepare for it.³¹

Christians were to be 'duly alive to our great hope in Christ and his service,'³² and nothing was more designed to 'keep us watchful at our post of duty, than a believing expectation of our Lord's return.'³³ Perhaps Marsh offered the best vision of the creative tension at the heart of this Evangelical spirituality, showing how Christian mission and the earthly, corporate responsibilities of Christians could be combined theologically:

Ever therefore unite in your mind his first and second advent. From Mount Calvary take a view of Mount Zion...³⁴

11.2 Economic and social disturbance

11.2.1 Adjustments to economic theory and economic policy

Differences of opinion among the formative writers on political economy were noted in chapter 5. If the concept of equilibrium was accepted, then the mechanisms through which such self-correction was to be achieved were not. Hence, Smith's basic model was subjected to a process of adjustment and development, primarily by Malthus and Ricardo.³⁵ There were many cross-currents of economic opinion, often submerged in the standard works of classical economics, but which emerge from a review of nineteenth-century British Reviews.³⁶ Malthus accepted the possibility that the economy might not be in equilibrium due to a deficiency of demand and, hence, separated himself from the classical school.³⁷ Ricardo developed a theory of value based upon the idea of human capital rather than Smith's emphasis on wage inputs.³⁸ It was thus not clear how God's providential natural law was actually to work in the field of economics.

The effect of varied views on economics also affected economic policy. One example was the resumption of cash payments (i.e. a gold standard) by the Bank of England, a decision taken in 1819, and fully implemented in 1821. Those in favour of resumption argued on the principles of equilibrium. The need was for stability, and hence justice or equilibrium between debtors and creditors.³⁹ Huskisson pleaded for a return to 'simplicity and truth.'⁴⁰ However, the problem was how to finance any economic depression which might result from short-term disequilibrium. The debate was whether or not the economy was self-regulating.⁴¹ Ricardo supported the immediate resumption of cash payments in 1819,⁴² but some political economists recognised the impact of the process of adjustment to the standard on the poor. Thus Edward Copleston, while fully accepting 'the applicability of the axioms of political economy,' and having shown that they 'did no violence to the commercial world of foreign exchanges,' was also in a good position to maintain 'the inappropriateness of assuming instantaneous adjustment in other walks of life.'⁴³ The depreciation of the currency

likely in adjusting to the gold standard would severely disadvantage the labouring classes, both by increased unemployment and the purchase of necessities on the market immediately.

The process of adjustment in economics is not always smooth, a point emphasised by the events of the financial crisis of 1825-26. The Bank of England had been accumulating bullion sufficient to pay off the small note issues of not only itself but also the numerous country banks. In 1822, however, the government authorised the continuation of small notes by the country banks, with the result that the authorities held unexpectedly large amounts of bullion which in turn now led to an unwise expansion of loan commitments and a wave of speculation,⁴⁴ particularly in foreign loans for Latin America. Share prices rose in early 1825, although fell rapidly as reports came through of the poor performance of South American mining companies. In March, Lord Liverpool warned that speculators could not expect a government rescue when the crash came.⁴⁵ The Bank instituted deflationary policies - removing money from the economy by the sale of government securities. The country banks 'many of them mere retail shopkeepers,' had 'deluged the provinces' with paper notes given their unexpected new freedom.⁴⁶

On 12 December, 1825 the bank of Pole, Thornton & Co. did not open for business, a week after the Bank of England had provided assistance of £300,000 in its capacity as lender of last resort. Pole, Thornton & Co. acted as agent for forty-seven provincial banks. Banking collapse and commercial bankruptcy followed. The impact of the crash, which in fact was relatively short-lived, and was resolved by the swift action of the Bank of England in buying securities and hence effecting an increase in the note issue, was important for two main reasons. First, the collapse of banks and firms was sudden. Thus The Times reported that the failure of Messrs Wentworth, Chaloner and Rishworths 'came upon the public with the suddenness of a thunder-clap.'⁴⁷ Second, the consequences were felt by many ordinary businessmen who had not speculated in mining company shares. Thus the M.P. for the City of London, Thomas Wilson, denied in Parliament that most of the sufferers were speculators and sinners reaping

the consequences of their own actions.⁴⁸ It was this suddenness, together with the unrestricted consequences for both innocent and guilty that allowed the financial crisis to be characterised as an example of the special providence of God, 'an awful pointer to national wickedness, much as the equally indiscriminating cholera was to be greeted in 1831-2.'⁴⁹

On 29 January, 1826 Edward Irving preached a sermon entitled Remarks on Commercial Distress. It was noted in The Pulpit that he compared 'the boundless ruin and desolation, spreading on all sides, to the day of judgement.'⁵⁰ Irving saw the crash 'as God's sign sent to teach this land how superficial are the views of the wisest' and that Britain had for the last century been 'a Mammon worshipping people; idolators of political wisdom, national wealth, and commercial prosperity.'⁵¹ The nation should learn its lesson.⁵² The same point was noted by a correspondent with The Christian Observer:

..the late commercial distresses, which I cannot but consider as being permitted at least, if not sent, as a tender and fatherly chastisement: and as extending a loud call to us to *humble* ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and to place our DEPENDENCE on Him who can bless and blast at his pleasure.⁵³

Even the editorial of this moderate Evangelical newspaper thanked God for the abatement of the distress and saw it as a 'painful memento of the uncertainty of every thing human.'⁵⁴

11.2.2 The Cholera and the wrath of God

Cholera epidemics seriously affected Britain four times in the nineteenth century, in 1831-32, 1848-49, 1853-54 and 1866. Although statistics were particularly unreliable in the 1831-32 epidemic, some 116,000 people died during the four visitations, nearly half of them in the 1848-49 outbreak.⁵⁵ The national response to cholera was important for a number of reasons, including the administrative handling of the matter and the medical debate on the nature and origin of the disease. Morris, concentrating on 1832, also rightly notes that 'religion and morality were central to British society's

reaction to the cholera of 1831 and 1832.⁵⁶ This point is reinforced by Asa Briggs, who notes that there 'is room for a fuller study of the impact of cholera on religious opinion.'⁵⁷ Despite the advances in medical knowledge and the development of the public health bureaucracy, the same was true of the later epidemics. Although the religious response has not been totally ignored by commentators, it is invariably relegated to a subsidiary role, and there has been no profound consideration of the relationship of Evangelicalism to cholera. To do so is essential to an understanding of the nature of divine intervention in society and of the framework of Evangelical social action. The effect of the visitations of cholera can easily be got out of proportion. Tuberculosis and dysentery were greater killers, typhus nearly as much so in 1847 compared to the cholera of 1849.⁵⁸ Cholera, however, was a shock disease, striking apparently indiscriminately, without warning and with dramatic pain and effect.⁵⁹ The theological parallels should not be ignored. Bickersteth's biographer referred to the 'novelty of the disease, its frightful rapidity, and its mysterious nature.'⁶⁰

In 1831 the cholera which had been spreading across Asia appeared in Sunderland due to the laxity of quarantine regulations. The death of a River Pilot, Robert Henry, was diagnosed as due to Asiatic Cholera by two important local medical figures, William Reid Clanny and James Butler Kell, the latter having had experience of cholera in Asia. The local Board of Health rejected the diagnosis. On 17 October, 1831 Isabella Hazard died, but the first official victim of the cholera was a sixty-year-old keelman William Sproat, who died on 26 October. Five days later his son died in the infirmary. On 1 November a nurse, Eliza Turnbull, who had helped move Sproat junior's body suffered an attack and was dead the same day. This case was well-publicised and caused alarm in the town.⁶¹ The cholera soon spread to the surrounding area, with Newcastle infected by the end of November. From there it progressed rapidly northwards into Scotland and somewhat more slowly southwards. The disease reached London in February, although it was a resurgence of the epidemic in the summer months that claimed the most victims. The hot summer weather saw outbreaks over a large number of English cities.⁶² In 1832 the peak month for deaths was August with

7,640 deaths outside of London and 1,240 in the capital. There was a total of 21,882 deaths in England and Wales in the 1831-32 epidemic, 53,293 in the recurrence in 1849, 20,097 in 1854 and 14,378 in 1866.⁶³

The drama of the cholera visitation was heightened by the suddenness of the attack, its apparently random nature and the distressing manner of the death it brought. Thus in Newcastle in the 1853 outbreak there were 1,500 deaths in one month.⁶⁴ John Simon claimed that death had never before scared a population so much.⁶⁵ In the 1849 epidemic the official report noted that 'isolated attacks, at considerable distances as to place, and intervals as to time, may be regarded as one of the laws of the epidemic.'⁶⁶ When death came it was sudden and unpleasant. Virtually all of the 367 deaths recorded in the register at Newcastle-upon-Tyne between October 1831 and March 1832 occurred in under three days from the victim's becoming ill.⁶⁷ William Sproat junior's death was described as follows:

...his voice was alternately hoarse and whispering; there were present continual nausea and jactitation, frequent vomiting and purging of a serious fluid, in which were floating little threads of fibrin; also cramps in the arms and legs.....On the 30th...was extremely restless, and continually biting the bed clothes, or any other object near him.⁶⁸

There were serious failures in the public health administration, especially the denial of the existence of the cholera. In 1832 Kell's insistence on diagnosing Asiatic Cholera led to his exclusion from further developments by the Sunderland medical establishment.⁶⁹ Commerce had, of course, a direct interest in the denial of the cholera since the preventative quarantine measures in force were perceived as damaging to trade. Thus the mining magnate Lord Londonderry petitioned for the removal of quarantine restrictions on Seaham Harbour between Sunderland and Stockton.⁷⁰ As London watched, The Record commented that people seemed 'to *resolve* that it shall not be the Asiatic cholera'⁷¹ and subsequently:

It is surprising with what tenacity vast numbers in the metropolis, and even among the more intelligent, cling to the opinion that the Asiatic cholera is not at Sunderland.⁷²

The general perception had not changed by 1849, when the official report noted:

There is a universal unwillingness to believe that the threatened calamity has really taken place: and all classes shut their eyes against the fact as long as possible. The first cases are either concealed, or are recorded under a false name, on the ground that, though they may be suspicious, they are of a doubtful nature, and that at all events it is unwise to excite alarm.⁷³

The administrative inability to deal with the cholera visitations was mirrored by the failure to improve social conditions, a fact noted by the Pease family of Darlington, in commenting on the 1853 outbreak in Newcastle:

..but it is stated and I fear not unpredicted that since 1849 the town has been entirely neglected as regards breaching of the regulations to prevent the overcrowding of Lodging houses often in the most impoverished parts of the town, the very headquarters of fevers and filth.⁷⁴

This reflected both a certain complacency amongst the wealthier classes that they would not be cholera victims, it being a disease of the poor, though tinged with the fear of the unpredictable, and the continued lack of understanding of the nature of the disease itself. Thus Viscount Beresford writing to Lord Londonderry, while confident that the disease would not affect 'the better orders whose habits will preserve them from liability to the infection at least to a great extent,' also hoped that Londonderry would '*not remain long....in the neighbourhood with your family*' and that 'I would like to see you remove Lady LY - and your children from Seaham neighbourhood.'⁷⁵ Asa Briggs comments that cholera 'was in a real sense "the disease of the poor", but it was not the disease of all the poor.'⁷⁶ The registers in Newcastle show the predominance of lower class victims; occupations given included common prostitute, spinster of intemperate habits, vagrant, widow - a very drunken woman, although the list also extends to artisans, master bricklayer, coopers, a shoemaker - a very decent man, a miller by trade, industrious.⁷⁷ Briggs has demonstrated that the cholera was absent from many areas of insanitary conditions and that the rich were not immune.⁷⁸

Part of the problem was the medical issue of the method of communication of the cholera. Dispute raged between contagionists, who believed that the cholera spread by

personal contact, and miasmatisers, who viewed the disease as airborne or atmospheric. Morris comments that the 'long-established, fairly widely accepted contagionist paradigm was being overthrown by miasmatic thinking in the light of anomalies revealed by diseases like cholera.'⁷⁹ Certainly by the 1849 report contagion had been rejected:

We submit that an attentive consideration of the course of the disease from nation to nation is not favourable to the view of its propagation by contact from person to person.⁸⁰

The contagionists had been able to show that the cholera followed lines of communication across Europe, while the anti-contagionists emphasised the erratic and random character of cholera attacks. The failure to recognise the water-borne nature of the communication of cholera tended to mean that it was social pressure that dictated the position to be taken, or even theological conviction.

11.2.3 Judgement and Sin

The very nature of cholera and its seemingly random manifestation tended to reinforce a theological attitude of an interventionist God dispensing rewards and punishments in accordance with his sovereign will. Hence the theme of judgement was prominent in Evangelical response. There were a number of different elements that featured in the Evangelical attitude to cholera, a fact not recognised by commentators who tend to be social historians rather than theologians.

The affirmation that the visitation of cholera in some way represented the judgement of God on the nation was universal among Evangelicals and accepted by most churchmen. Thus irrespective of the means of communication of cholera, God was the first cause, reflecting the Evangelical and Calvinist emphasis that health, death, business success and pestilence all came from God's hand.⁸¹ Charles Girdlestone, in a series of sermons in Sedgley, maintained that 'God can and will dispense pain as well as pleasure, suffering as well as joy, evil as well as good.'⁸² Ridley, writing of Newcastle, referred to 'the just judgements of God upon us,'⁸³ another pamphlet from

Sunderland warned that a 'HEAVY judgement hangs over us ! A pestilence is approaching us.'⁸⁴ All of this was reinforced by The Record.

How, then, are we to look upon this visitation, this being its character ? Undoubtedly as the visitation and messenger of God. Nothing, indeed, occurs in this world without his high permission.⁸⁵

The same message was illustrated in both the petitions for a national fast in 1831 and in the forms of prayer and thanksgiving used in the various visitations. The understanding of cholera as pestilential judgement did not diminish with the later outbreaks. Thus a petition from Tain saw 'the hand of God lifted up, and his avenging rod stretched out, in the pestilence with which the land is already visited,'⁸⁶ while the form of thanksgiving prayer in 1849 referred to 'the sore judgement of grievous sickness and mortality which has lately afflicted our land,'⁸⁷ and that of 1866 to 'Thy judgements which are abroad in the Pestilence that has now reached our shores.'⁸⁸

Nevertheless, even in the affirmation of God's judgement different aspects can be discerned. Spencer Perceval, a member of Irving's congregation, made virulent interventions in Parliament.

I stand here to warn you of the righteous judgement of God, which is coming on you, and which is now near at hand.....Ye have in the midst of you a scourge of pestilence, which has crossed the world to reach you.⁸⁹

At the other end of the scale, the non-evangelical Bishop of London, Charles Blomfield, also sought to acknowledge the role of the hand of the Almighty by inserting in the preamble of the Cholera Bills references to divine providence in the visitation of cholera.

The stress on judgement also required a cause. Evangelicals were united in acknowledging national, even corporate sin, although there were some differences over what constituted the country's national sins. Thus pestilence and the sword were reserved 'to scourge a guilty land,'⁹⁰ 'an intimation of the righteous displeasure of God against this land, on account of our many and great national sins,'⁹¹ 'we have sinned as a nation against the Majesty of Heaven,'⁹² and the country was a 'guilty nation,'⁹³

'facing the merited wrath of God for the sins of the nation, of their parishes, their families, and themselves.'⁹⁴ The same concerns also featured in sermons and in the various forms of prayer and thanksgiving for deliverance. Thus in 1849 Edward Bickersteth saw the cause of the judgement threatened in the cholera visitation as 'our national and our personal sin,'⁹⁵ a position unchanged from 1832 when he had referred to 'our great national sins.'⁹⁶ The Affectionate Address to the Inhabitants of Newcastle, in 1853 asked:

What is the *cause* of this alarming visitation ? Why hath the Almighty thus smitten us ? We answer, SIN is the cause; yea, the *only* cause. God never inflicts punishment, but where there is guilt.⁹⁷

Charles Girdlestone referred to death as 'in his hand the chastisement of sin,'⁹⁸ while Ackland noted that 'public wickedness and disregard of an Almighty Providence have been followed by public visitations of divine wrath, by general suffering and decay.'⁹⁹

There was a range of opinion when it came to the actual specification of the sins which had made the nation guilty. There was a mix of personal moral failings, departures from national Protestantism, and some concern with a wider understanding of oppression and poverty. Thus An Affectionate Address referred to local sins such as drunkenness, sabbath-breaking and lewdness¹⁰⁰ and Ridley noted infidelity, profanation of the Sabbath, intemperance and general irreligion.¹⁰¹ Ackland called attention to the neglect of vital religion, moral decay and lack of public integrity.¹⁰²

Bickersteth illustrated the breadth of the Evangelical concern with the nation's sins. He condemned sabbath breaking and worldliness, but also luxury and oppression of the poor.¹⁰³ The amount of misery in the lower orders and of luxury in the higher plainly showed the extent of the nation's departure from the divine will.¹⁰⁴ In the same address he included personal sins and transgressions of God's law as part of national guilt, which inevitably also included sins against Protestantism, the grant to Maynooth, and the influence of Popery in both church and nation.¹⁰⁵

To The Record and, of course, to Spencer Perceval, it had been Roman Catholic emancipation that had started the rot; the Reform Bill simply reinforced it. The Record noted the same range of Evangelical opinion.

...that eager thirst of wealth..that oppression by which many of our agricultural labourers have been left, in a land of palaces, to be nearly starved.....drunkenness.... gamblers.....younger clergy.....animate the ball-room... and the fox-hunt.....while the cottage is unknown, the study deserted, their pulpit a stage, and their parish duties like the steps of a tread-mill.¹⁰⁶

Perceval also was quite clear of the extent of the nation's sin.

He trusted to be able to set before the nation the truth of its weakness - first, the increase of crime showed the absence of religion and piety; secondly, the oppression of the poor was beyond his conception. He was lost in astonishment to account for it, and was wholly unable to point out human remedies. This was a matter surrounded by tremendous danger. The rich lived in luxury and plenty; the labourer was in a state of actual starvation, and a degree of distress that ought to harrow up their very souls.¹⁰⁷

11.2.4 Judgement and Mercy

The agreed Evangelical response to impending judgement was a call to repentance and faith in the atonement. Thus An Affectionate Address called for reflection on past life, repentance of sins, belief in Christ and a seeking of God's mercy.¹⁰⁸ Bickersteth called for trust in the atonement.¹⁰⁹ So also did Girdlestone:

First, then, lay the foundation of your hope in Jesus Christ, in the atonement of his blood, in the sacrifice He made for sin.¹¹⁰

And Ackland:

There is but one way: the way of general humiliation and repentance, made acceptable through the great atonement and continual intercession of Christ.¹¹¹

Perceval, as ever, was more strident.

I pray ye to turn to his love before it is too late; for be ye assured that the storm is coming, and that he is nigh, who is at once your God, your Saviour, and your Judge.¹¹²

An important strand of Evangelical opinion sought to give weight to God's mercy alongside God's judgement. The ending of cholera visitations was often marked by days of thanksgiving. However, giving thanks for deliverance after the event may not have required deep theological conviction. Some sought throughout to maintain the tension between judgement and mercy. The prime example was Edward Bickersteth.

Bickersteth understood the operation of divine mercy during the cholera epidemics in a number of ways. First, he saw the history of God's mercy to the nation as reinforcing his understanding that the nation faced judgement. Thus our national sins were aggravated by our national mercies,¹¹³ and the 'singular mercies of England make our sinfulness peculiarly great.'¹¹⁴ Second, Bickersteth saw God's mercy and providence in the deliverance from the cholera, the theme which usually featured in the national thanksgivings.

Again God our Heavenly Father is calling us to humiliation before him. There is a solemn reason why we should humble ourselves. In the year 1832 it pleased God to send the pestilence of Cholera among us; we nationally fasted and humbled ourselves before God, and it was graciously removed, and for seventeen years we have been preserved from any widespread return of that plague....¹¹⁵

Bickersteth brought together his understanding of God's mercy and God's judgement within his providence.

In *mercy*, the voice of Death by this pestilence has ceased to sound from Sunderland; but in *judgement*, it is at this moment (January 30th) sounding from sixteen other places. In *mercy*, 2,124 persons have been restored to health out of 3,084, who have been seized with this disease; in *judgement* for our sins as a nation, we have witnessed the affecting Providence of 960 suddenly called into eternity.¹¹⁶

Thus, in the cholera, both God's judgement and his mercy were revealed. So, 'amidst all the evils abroad, there is hope as well as danger,'¹¹⁷ and 'while we have to sing of these mercies, we have to sing also of JUDGMENTS.'¹¹⁸ Judgement and mercy belonged together. The title of one of Girdlestone's sermons on the subject of the pestilence was On the Goodness and Severity of God illustrating this same theme.

God's judgement and mercy came together in the Christian life of faith and practice. According to Bickersteth a knowledge of God's mercies 'should deepen our sense of responsibility.'¹¹⁹ The final judgement involved not just a separation of the righteous from the wicked, but an account of daily conduct, our stewardship of life, and that judgement was rapidly approaching due to the expectation of the Second Advent. So Bickersteth wrote as follows:

...to the righteous it is a message of mercy and blessing, bringing them at once to the joyful presence of Him whom they love and serve; while to the wicked it is a fearful summons to immediate judgement and condemnation.¹²⁰

The Witness of our daily conduct will be our Judge, and that day is rapidly hastening on when our whole lives shall be reviewed.....Let us often and deeply reflect how our present conduct will then appear.¹²¹

In these last days, let us not forget how much the near and coming final judgement of all men turns upon the fruit of faith in works of mercy.¹²²

Similarly, Girdlestone demanded an amendment of 'both your faith and practice.....you thus continuing in his goodness, would continue also under the shelter of his mercy, and escape the wrath to come.'¹²³ This amendment would involve reading 'more in God's Holy Word,' 'due respect for the authority of the Church,' 'more diligent attendance on public worship' but also ensuring neither 'oppression of the poor' nor 'wronging of the rich.'¹²⁴ Like Bickersteth all this linked together in the Day of Judgement.

Look thou then henceforth in all thy undertakings, look at the great day of judgement to come. Conceive the whole world assembled, the multitude of the heavenly host, and all the nations of the earth: and remember what the Judge hath declared of that day, that He will then deny them who now deny Him, and them who now confess Him, He will then confess.¹²⁵

The theological motivation for social action was thus connected to the Evangelical emphasis on rewards and punishments. The premillennial tradition within Evangelicalism insisted on a this-worldly divine reversal. Hence the stress on

impending judgement on this earth, which had already begun, manifest, of course, in the cholera. Those writers who sought to maintain a balance between judgement and mercy, retained a place within the scheme for mercy to be shown on this earth as well as judgement. Thus Ackland maintained a future reward or punishment for individuals,¹²⁶ but as for nations:

They end with this world; they cannot in a collective manner be called to a future account.¹²⁷

An 'obstinately irreligious and sinful people shall even in this life find *their own wickedness correct them*; and, through the operation of such means as God's just displeasure shall appoint for their chastisement.'¹²⁸ Hence, 'a nation shall be more or less happy and prosperous in this world, in proportion as it fears and honours God, or despises and neglects Him.'¹²⁹

All of this demanded that faith be put into action, certainly for each individual's own life and those of the immediate family, but also in relation to the poor, the hungry and the naked,¹³⁰ although it is somewhat unclear whether Ackland was referring only to suffering Christians.

11.3 Shaftesbury and a new eschatological framework

There remains, however, the problem of explaining why some Evangelicals adopted an active interventionist approach to questions of social welfare in the light of the imminence of the Second Advent, if the usual understanding of the implications of the divine reversal on earth was a quietist approach to contemporary action. The inadequacy of the traditional categories of premillennial and postmillennial has already been noted. In short, they are too static and linear. They cannot explain either how Fifth Monarchists and futurists could offer different explanations of the relationship of the millennium to social welfare and mission while both groups were characterised as premillennialists, or the dynamism of the intermediate position of people such as Bickersteth and also Shaftesbury.

An alternative model would make use of two axes, the horizontal representing the extent of the realization of God's Kingdom on earth in the current dispensation and the vertical the degree of divine intervention. It is the interaction of these axes which gives the framework a more dynamic approach and which allows for four significant categories as well as the movements between them. Thus an extreme premillennialist group, such as the Fifth Monarchists, which demanded the building now of the Kingdom of God on earth, would belong in the interventionist/realized quadrant. The futurist premillennialists of the Plymouth Brethren would be placed in the interventionist/unrealized category. The postmillennial tradition would clearly belong on the non-interventionist side, being in the realized or unrealized section dependent upon the more or less gradual manner in which the millennium was to be achieved. The boundaries between these various options can help explain the eschatology of almost any group.

The intersection is of most interest in that it is at the boundary, not only between realized and unrealized, but also between interventionist and non-interventionist. This pivotal point can help explain commitment to both social welfare and evangelistic mission. The eschatology represented by this intersection is forceful; the *breaking in* of the unrealized to the realized, that is, of the conditions of the millennium into the current dispensation and, also, of the combination of the divine and the human.

The potency of this eschatology was seen in the reaction to economic crisis and to the visitation of cholera. The premillennial principles of divine intervention and judgement were applied to society; yet, at least within one part of Evangelical opinion, the creative tension was maintained between God's judgement and God's mercy. The practical consequences of this have already been shown in the balanced reaction to issues of social welfare within the missionary societies. It also contributes towards a proper understanding of Shaftesbury's theological motivations. This eschatology showed itself primarily in three ways, and Shaftesbury's beliefs fitted well into each category.

11.3.1 The anticipation of the new age

The idea of the anticipation of the new dispensation within the current era was one that marked out this mainstream Evangelical eschatology from more extreme views. It was because the new age of the millennium was to be tasted now (in the same way that judgement also began now on individuals and nations) that Evangelical concern for social welfare was justified. Yet since the millennial blessings could not be fully realised this also provided incentive for evangelism and distinguished Evangelical social reform from Catholic approaches or secular understandings. Edward Bickersteth made this point explicit:

..and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and even joyfully anticipating the time of his return.¹³¹

Bickersteth also described the impact of what he called a realizing view of the Day of Judgement, bringing that heavenly event closely to bear upon the current world.

Have a realizing view of this event as what will suddenly take place; and O what spirituality of mind, what superiority to worldly carefulness and anxiety, what holy diligence in duties, what a heavenly conversation it is calculated to raise you to!¹³²

William Marsh also showed the same profound understanding of Evangelical eschatology. He described the church in the current dispensation as having the 'early rain,' of exhibiting the first fruits of the future golden age.¹³³

Shaftesbury demonstrated cogently the depth of his eschatological belief in his diary entry following the defeat of his Ten Hours amendment to The Factories Bill on 13 May, 1844.

'Cast down, but not destroyed.' I feel no abatement of faith, no sinking of hope, no relaxation of perseverance. The stillest and darkest hour of the night just precedes the dawn. 'Though it tarry, wait for it,' believing that God sends you a trial, and yet bears you up with a corresponding courage; and, although you may pass not the stream of Jordan, it is something that God has permitted you to wash your feet in the waters of the promised land.¹³⁴

This showed supremely the nature of the anticipation of the golden age in Shaftesbury's thought. The present dispensation was not perfect, there was darkness as well as light, and indeed the future period of felicity - that is, the blessedness of the millennium on earth - could not be fully realized in the present era - that is, the stream of Jordan could not be passed - but the benefits, spiritual and temporal, could be experienced in preparation, and be seen as breaking into the current dispensation - hence, the washing of the feet in the waters of the promised land.

This same view was reinforced later in the same year as Ashley reflected on his commitment to the working people.

Shall be much criticised and hated for the character of my speeches to the workpeople; am, nevertheless, satisfied that I am quite right. The 'time' that I seek in their behalf must be considered and treated as the seed of 'eternity;' if it be not so it will *certainly* be useless, and *probably* lead to evil. This has been my object from the beginning, to persuade the working man to reverence the religion which prompts toil, anxiety, endurance, and self-denial on the part of others for his sake.¹³⁵

Indeed he had been propounding this theme since the beginning of that year, 1844.

If the coming year be not more...of good to man and honour to God than the one which is just closed, it ought not to be admitted into the number of the years; it will be a disgrace to Time, and will be no preparation for the period when "Time shall be no longer."¹³⁶

The idea of the hour which he sought to cut off the working day as the very seed of eternity again showed the idea of the future breaking into the present and linked also into the idea of the redemption of time. Bickersteth had sounded the same theme, indeed, a remarkably similar quotation, some eleven years earlier.

Now is the precious seed of eternity. The whole use of time, talents, property, influence, is to glorify God now, and to sow the seed for the future harvest.....How zealous we should be in redeeming time, and in doing good to all around us.¹³⁷

It was this combination of zeal for the conversion of souls - the seed of future harvest - and Christian action for social welfare - the glorification of God now - that marked out this Evangelical eschatology.

In 1870 Shaftesbury was still pursuing the same line. When distributing the prizes to the scholars of his Ragged Schools, with the shadow of W.E. Forster's Education Bill looming large over the RSU, he lamented those who sought to advance the secular at the expense of the religious, those who demanded everything in this dispensation with no regard for the next.

Everything for the flesh, and nothing for the soul; everything for time, and nothing for eternity....¹³⁸

For Shaftesbury, time and eternity were closely and dynamically related. He summarised his views in a letter to Lady Edith Ashley in 1882:

The completion of things is reserved for our blessed Lord. Every living soul should pray, not daily, but hourly, in the closing words of Scripture, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly'...¹³⁹

The breaking in of future time into the current dispensation also meant the present experience of both God's judgement and His mercy. By recognising the interaction of time and eternity Shaftesbury avoided the problem of the Irvingites and other premillennialists who understood God's judgement as something now being exercised on the nations as a prelude to the golden age. By his interpretation Shaftesbury was able to understand both judgement and mercy as occurring in the current time period. In his own capacity as a magistrate in Dorset, Ashley saw his role as being 'by God's mercy, to do judgement and love mercy,'¹⁴⁰ and faced with the difficulty of combining justice and mercy he commented:

Raise then your eyes to the counsels of Heaven, and survey but the millionth part of the outmost verge of God's attributes and operations; unsparing justice and unlimited pardon at one and the same moment.¹⁴¹

During the cholera epidemic of 1849 Shaftesbury again illustrated this point by his prayer, 'Oh, God! Thou art terrible and yet just in Thy decrees.'¹⁴² Shaftesbury had an acute practical sense of the operation of God's judgement in his recognition of man's own part in bringing that judgement upon the nation. This again showed the dynamism in his thought between divine and human action.

It was true that God in his justice might send on offending nations the famine or pestilence; but man does the same, in his evil pleasure to save money or to make it, to indulge ambition, to make himself a name by the devastation of kingdoms, the ruin and starvation of thousands, or to flit in vanity through the mouths of his fellows.¹⁴³

Shaftesbury had an acute sense of national sin, an aspect of belief reinforced by his national Protestantism, but was clear that this was manifested particularly in terms of corporate sin due to disregard for the conditions of the poor. Thus Shaftesbury moved for days of prayer, humiliation and repentance in the cholera visitations of 1849 and 1854 and also with regard to the Irish famine in 1847. He opposed the Opium trade, declaring it to be 'more black, more cruel, more Satanic than all the deeds of private sin in the records of prison history,¹⁴⁴ but the greatest national sin was neglect of the poor:

I wish that every one would daily and hourly set before his eyes, and confess, his sin and the sin of his people: what we have received and done as individuals and as a nation; what we have left undone; what, in the despite of God's long-suffering, we persist in leaving undone; our hopes and fears; our loves and hates; our enormous wealth, and still more enormous covetousness; the cry of the poor, and the sensuality of the rich; and then, if there be but the smallest spark of grace in the soul, we shall, one and all, exclaim with Job, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'¹⁴⁵

As for factory conditions, numerous reports and commissions had disclosed 'sinfulness, cruelty, and peril, that make one's head to be sick, and one's heart to be faint,¹⁴⁶ he declared it to be 'wrong, awfully wrong, that so many able-bodied and willing labourers should want employment and bread,¹⁴⁷ described the conditions in mines and collieries as 'a mass of sin and cruelty,¹⁴⁸ and stated that he shrank 'with a combined feeling of terror and nausea from our national sins.'¹⁴⁹

The connections between sin and the Advent hope was explicit in Shaftesbury's thought.

Took the Sacrament with Minny in peace and comfort. God be praised. Every day discloses some new sorrow; some fresh proof of hopeless efforts to benefit mankind; some additional instances of selfish indifference to the....feelings of others. It is incredible the wickedness of the human Race. I feel it strongly in myself...there is no other remedy among men...our only hope lies in the second and glorious Advent: "even so, come, Lord Jesus."¹⁵⁰

However, mercy also featured prominently in Shaftesbury's thought. The continuance of slavery in the United States led him to pray for mercy and forgiveness.

Oh, Lord, hear our prayer, and maintain Thine own word of mercy, truth, and peace! Have pity on our ignorance and infirmity, and make us to understand why it is that such special and singular horrors, in every form of physical and moral sin, are thus long permitted.¹⁵¹

But such words were not for Shaftesbury simply pious sanctimony. Perhaps it was the practical application of his Evangelical eschatology that so marked him out. The manifestation of national sin which was so apparent to him demanded that he took action so that God's mercy might be worked out through him and his labours.

...then to H. of Lords to move for report of Coroner's Inquest in a poor little Chimney-Sweeper, 7 1/2 year old killed in a flue at Washington in County of Durham - So much for my labour on behalf of the Climbing Boys - But, by God's mercy, good may come out of evil-¹⁵²

Shaftesbury's anticipation of the new age was also worked out in the concept of the 'model' - that is, the establishment of an ideal in contrast to existing circumstances. In his concern for the renewal and improvement of social conditions, he often used this concept, and it can be understood as a way in which social welfare in the current dispensation was a sign of the future era of divine blessing. In an article on Lodging Houses in The Quarterly Review in December 1847, after describing the conditions of common lodging-houses, which had led to the formation of the Labourer's Friend Society, Shaftesbury posed the question of the best method of protecting against depredation a barrel of small beer, the answer being to place alongside it a barrel of strong; 'and we shall now sketch the triumph of their superior barrel.'¹⁵³ This stronger barrel was the model lodging house. The 'indispensable requirements were decency, cleanliness, and essential comfort.'¹⁵⁴ The Labourer's Friend Society, after setting up

some initial dwellings, then 'determined to raise a new house from the foundation, constructed on the best plan, as a model for future establishments.'¹⁵⁵ The article then proceeded with a description of the model conditions and social consequences of the new lodging house.

This same principle of the model was also applied to the notoriously corrupt process of election. When he was returned as M.P. for Bath in 1847, Ashley noted in his diary that he had bribed no-one to vote for him, or even expended any money on the customary election beer; this 'is indeed a model for elections, and heartily do I thank God that the precedent has been set in my instance.'¹⁵⁶

11.3.2 The unity of body and soul

The reuniting of the redeemed body with the soul on earth was of crucial importance to premillennialism. This idea of 'the gathering of the whole Church in the glorious bodies of the resurrection'¹⁵⁷ also led to an emphasis on both the temporal and eternal welfare of humanity; that is, a concern for the whole person.

Shaftesbury constantly sought to demonstrate these beliefs in his life and work. He appealed to the biblical command of Jesus to "feed my lambs". Thus on a factory tour in Manchester he commented as follows:

An infinite number of small children in these works for the luxury of men. This must be my next undertaking; 'Feed my lambs' is the command of our blessed Lord. May he give me grace to conceive and execute a plan for the advancement of His adorable Name, and for the welfare, temporal and eternal, of many thousand souls.¹⁵⁸

Subsequently he prayed:

O God, the Father of the forsaken, the help of the weak, the supplier of the needy, who hast diffused and proportioned Thy gifts to body and soul, in such sort that all may acknowledge and perform the joyous duty of mutual service; who teachest us that love towards the race of man is the bond of perfectness, and the imitation of Thy blessed self: open our eyes and touch our hearts, that we may see and do, both for this world and for that which is to come, the things which belong unto our peace.¹⁵⁹

This same stress on advancing God's name and the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind occurred again and again in Shaftesbury's thought; in his own review of his past achievements in 1851,¹⁶⁰ in connection with the Chimney Sweepers Bill in 1854, when Shaftesbury saw his aim as rescuing the child sweeps in soul and in body,¹⁶¹ and indeed as his own view of the main aim of the Ragged Schools.¹⁶² In the debate on factory legislation, Shaftesbury said that his concern was for everything 'that tends to keep body and soul in a healthy condition.'¹⁶³ Perhaps the best summary exposition of his position was given by Shaftesbury in his Presidential address to the Health Section of the Social Science Congress.

If we be told that spiritual remedies are sufficient, and that we labour too much for the perishable body, I reply that spiritual appliances, in the state of things to which I allude, are altogether impossible.....But when people say we should think more of the soul and less of the body, my answer is, that the same God who made the soul made the body also. It is an inferior work, perhaps, but nevertheless it is His work, and it must be treated and cared for according to the end for which it was formed - fitness for His service. I maintain that God is worshipped, not only by the spiritual, but by the material creation.... And that worship is shown in the perfection and obedience of the thing made. Our great object should be to do all we can to remove the obstructions which stand in the way of such worship, and of the body's fitness for its great purpose.¹⁶⁴

The detailed manner in which Shaftesbury's understanding of the unity of body and soul was worked out in practice within the various missionary societies will be left to the detailed analysis of his theology and practice of mission in chapter 12.

11.3.3 The redemption of the creation

The importance of the redemption of the body as well as the soul was also extended to the idea of the redemption of the whole of the created order. It was the separation of redemption from creation that led to undue emphasis on the spiritual and the next world and a lack of concern for the temporal in this world. Shaftesbury always held these theological concepts together. When visiting a well-run asylum at Hanwell - the welfare of the lunatic featured prominently in Shaftesbury's concerns - he asked:

Could any man, who has the least regard for his fellow-man, as created and redeemed by the same Blessed Lord, behold such a triumph of wisdom and mercy over ignorance and ferocity and not rejoice, and give God the glory?¹⁶⁵

But the distinctiveness of this aspect of Shaftesbury's eschatological position was shown by his concern for the wider created world of animals. He was President of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and particularly concerned with the welfare of costermongers' donkeys. He was a strong opponent of vivisection and in the Parliamentary debate on the Cruelty to Animals Bill appealed to the principles of stewardship, biblical authority and creation. He referred to experiments on the brain of a dog conducted by a German Professor:

And that was the use they made of the creatures committed to their charge - that the account they would render of their stewardship. All he could say was - and he said it truly and conscientiously - that, in every respect, he would definitely rather be the dog than be the Professor. But whether the law was efficient or inefficient, whether vivisection was conducive to science, or the reverse, there was one great primary consideration. On what authority of Scripture, or any other form of Revelation, he asked most solemnly, did they rest their right to subject God's creatures to such unspeakable sufferings?.....The animals were His creatures as much as we were His creatures; and "His tender mercies," so the Bible told us, "were over all His works."¹⁶⁶

In his diary he noted that the clergy and the scientific establishment had abandoned him in his resistance to this evil, 'because I have fought for these unhappy animals,' indeed all of the bishops had failed to support him.¹⁶⁷

It was the continuing providential care of God and the redeemed creation breaking into the current dispensation which gave Shaftesbury's doctrinal emphasis its breadth and dynamism. It was this Evangelical eschatology that enabled Shaftesbury to maintain his commitment to both evangelistic mission and to social reform and action. Indeed in his eyes the two could not be separated. This theological position was also in continuity with the eschatological position of the early Puritan Protestant tradition. It is the practical outworking of this theology that now remains to be considered.

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 - 13 Ibid., p4.
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 - 15 Oliver, p70.
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 - 29 Ball, p194.
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12 Shaftesbury's theology and practice of mission

12.1 Principles of mission

To Shaftesbury mission was an essential part of his Evangelical faith. The societies he was involved with appealed to him by their concentration on specific missionary objectives. Thus he stated that he was attracted to the Bible Society by the 'very simplicity of its design.'¹ The LCM's determination to seek out the poor and despised, so often passed over by other mission societies, led Shaftesbury to comment that "I love the aggressive principle."² Indeed Shaftesbury believed 'the whole spirit of Christianity to be aggressive,'³ a situation demonstrated by the LCM's methodology of systematic district visiting, 'your perpetual activity,'⁴ 'carrying the Gospel to men's hearts from house to house, from heart to heart, from man to man, from soul to soul, from individual to individual.'⁵ Referring to the LCM's use of domiciliary visitation, Shaftesbury, Evangelical of the Evangelicals, noted that the effect would be incalculably greater than 'all the sermons preached in the course of the year.'⁶ This was strongly reminiscent of the Puritan Richard Baxter, and reflected a significant and creative tension between preaching and mission in the Evangelical tradition.

It was Shaftesbury's devotion to the missionary enterprise, at home as much as overseas, that explains his attachment to the principle of establishment. He described the parochial system as 'the wisest of human institutions.'⁷ The intricate network of parishes covering the whole of the land was under serious strain due to abuse and corruption, such as the non-residence of many of the clergy, although the situation was improving in the nineteenth century. In addition to this there were the problems caused by the growth of the industrial population. Thus the system was not 'adequate to the wants and necessities of the population';⁸ hence Shaftesbury's personal commitment to the reform of Sunday evening services in the interests of the working population, as well as support for services to be held outside of the parish church, in theatres or even in the open air.⁹ Shaftesbury saw the principle of establishment and the voluntary principle as working together.

The establishment principle is of vital importance, because it gives firmness, stability, character, and permanence to the institution. But then the voluntary principle must come in to give vitality and energy, and to meet exigencies as they occur, to follow the population in all its migratory wanderings.¹⁰

The establishment principle was also an encouragement to maintaining both social and evangelistic concerns together, as was exemplified in the discussion of the place of social welfare within the CPAS.¹¹

12.2 The Bible and Protestantism

Shaftesbury's view of the Bible was related to his view of mission. His high view of the authority of the Bible meant that he gave a prominent place to Scripture in missionary work. As the Word of God, the Bible was, in effect, its own missionary. Thus, to the annual meeting of the Bible Society in 1846, Ashley proposed a resolution on the place of the Bible, which was accepted unanimously by the meeting. This motion saw the increase in the circulation of the Scriptures as indicative of divine blessing, and also pointed out the need for a supply of the Scriptures to areas where it was lacking, both abroad and at home. It was, according to Ashley, a basic Christian duty, in dependence upon God, to seek to supply this deficiency.¹² He went on to say:

Is it presumptuous to conclude that the providence of God is more immediately occupied in all that relates to His own written word - that word which is the mirror and type of His holy and glorious image, the transcript of His will, the revelation of His love in Christ Jesus, and the chief instrument of His grace to fallen man? And must it not be accepted as a special mark of the Divine interposition, when that word is made easily accessible, and when it comes into the actual possession of large bodies of people?¹³

Here Shaftesbury was illustrating central Evangelical and Protestant beliefs about the Bible. So also, in 1860, he commented, 'that tens of thousands have thrown off their corrupt and ignorant faith, not in consequence of the efforts of preachers, or teachers, or lecturers, but simply and solely from reading the Word of God, pure and unadulterated, without note or comment, without any teaching except the blessed

teaching of God's Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Without note or comment was, of course, a central feature of the Bible Society's objectives in circulating the Scriptures.

Shaftesbury re-emphasised this view in the light of the challenge of Tractarianism and of liberal rationalism. Responding to Essays and Reviews, published in 1860, although this time in alliance with his Tractarian cousin, Edward Pusey, Shaftesbury reaffirmed his Reformed understanding of the Scriptures:

I maintain, that if their principles of interpretation be true, the Bible is not the Book for the poor man, the Bible is not the Book for general and universal circulation. If it be true that the Bible can be comprehended only by the learned, only after long and prolonged thought, by great acquisitions in classical and ancient knowledge, - if that be true, do you not at once, by that admission, shut out the right [of circulating the Scriptures] because you shut out the possibility of private judgement ?¹⁵

The rights of common access and private judgement, and indeed, the clarity of the message of salvation in the Scriptures to all who read them, were basic to Reformed Christianity from which the Protestant Evangelical tradition derived. Socially also, it was this right of private judgement that protected the poor man from clerical domination over his life exercised through the Church and offered him the chance of regeneration. It is, therefore, not surprising that the provision of schools formed a major part of Shaftesbury's life work. His support for the Bible Society was also a logical consequence of such beliefs. He hoped and prayed that 'there may not be a nook or a corner, civilized or uncivilized, on the face of the whole earth, which shall not be reached by the operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society.'¹⁶

This Protestant Evangelical faith was also strongly reflected in Shaftesbury's support for other societies. Indeed he saw the Evangelical societies raised up in the providence of God to defend and spread the faith. He saw the CPAS as 'raised up...to protest against all those heresies and schisms, whether they be presented under the gorgeous mantle of Romanism, or under the more insinuating garb of Anglo-Catholicity.'¹⁷

Thus he commented about the CPAS:

The constitution of this Society is essentially Protestant. It is Protestant in its principles. It is Protestant in its character. It is Protestant in its action. It is Protestant in its organisation.¹⁸

Shaftesbury's national Protestantism also embraced the positive aspects of the concept of Britain as an elect nation, not least in respect of the Jews. So, he was able to 'heartily rejoice, and most heartily pray, that to this nation it may be reserved, to be the instrument in God's hands of carrying on the restoration and the final settlement of his ancient and still loved people.'¹⁹ And again, to the Bible Society, he described the English as 'his chosen people...the fountain from which the Word of God shall flow forth.'²⁰

12.3 Catholicity

Shaftesbury was utterly dedicated to Evangelical catholicity. This was so despite his own attachment to the establishment of the Church of England and his support of peculiarly Established Church missionary societies, notably the CMS and the CPAS. Indeed, he commented on one occasion to the CPAS, that 'I am not such a lover of episcopacy as to think it necessary to salvation.'²¹ His view of the Bible was that it was an essentially catholic document, and he attached great importance to the catholic character of the Bible Society, a common basis of Protestant unity to benefit the nation and to resist the evils of Popery and of Satan - the association of these two being quite clear to nineteenth-century Evangelical eyes.

One important view of this Society is, that it is catholic in its character - catholic in all its operations; that it enables us to form in these realms, in times of singular distress and difficulty, a solemn league and covenant of all those who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" that it shows how, suppressing all minor differences, or treating them as secondary, members of the Church of England and Nonconformists may band together in one great effort, not only of resistance to, but, I hope, of aggression on, Popery and Satan.²²

Shaftesbury then went on to speak of Protestant unity worldwide on the basis of the Reformation commitment to the Bible.²³ In 1858 he reflected upon the Indian revolts

of the previous year and called attention to the reaction of the Evangelical societies.

He told the Bible Society annual meeting:

See how they are all banded together - how minor differences among them are forgotten - how they are all united in one great object...all pressing forward to the same mighty work, all promoted by the same spirit, all working for the same end.²⁴

Perhaps this statement was a little stronger than the reality, but it demonstrated Shaftesbury's personal belief in a Protestant unity around the Scriptures.

Shaftesbury's espousal of Evangelical catholicity was also prominent in his speeches and contributions to other societies. He believed that Evangelical catholicity could bring immense benefit to the masses of the metropolis. So he hoped for 'more union between the Church of England and Dissenters.'²⁵ It was Shaftesbury's overriding concern for the welfare of the ordinary working people that led him to demand united action on their behalf beyond any denominational divisions. There was, in short, a greater purpose of mission. The supreme requirement of imparting the gospel to others was that higher and superior object, and in performing this task the undenominational LCM was contributing to the 'permanency and the welfare of the Church of Christ,'²⁶ and through its operations hundreds of thousands would be added to that church.

Indeed, the Established Church would itself benefit, but nevertheless:

...put all that aside, and let all establishments and all distinctive Churches sink into the ground, compared with the one great effort to preach the doctrine of Christ crucified to every creature on the earth, to every creature that can be reached on this habitable globe.²⁷

A vision that saw the power of the possibilities inherent in Evangelical co-operation could no doubt also see the possibilities of such co-operation for social reform and mission.

In 1845 Shaftesbury noted in his diary his concern for missionary endeavour to London which was inclining him to Evangelical co-operation with Dissent:

Last night Broadwall Infant Ragged School; very humble, but very useful; well received....Many Dissenters; but it is high time to be thinking where we agree, not where we differ. Tens of thousands of untaught heathens in the heart of a Christian metropolis cry aloud for vengeance.²⁸

This was a good example of the various elements of missionary activity which Shaftesbury held together. The meeting was in a Ragged School, a real example of Evangelical social action, both Dissenters and Churchmen were present, the central concern was on untaught heathens, which reflected both social and evangelistic aspects of mission, and the cry was for vengeance, almost with a sound of eschatological judgement.

In 1862 Shaftesbury was pursuing the same line with the RSU:

...all who care for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, to whatever church they may belong, must join together, heart and soul, for the purpose of bringing to completion this great, this mighty undertaking.²⁹

Shaftesbury was something of an enigma in pan-evangelical co-operation. He remained both a Churchman and an Evangelical. He was both critical of Dissent and committed to united action. He was an idealist. Nevertheless, Evangelical catholic co-operation was a reality in his life and work.

12.4 Lay Agency

The principle of lay agency bound Shaftesbury to a number of the missionary societies. In Shaftesbury's view lay agency was 'absolutely and essentially necessary,³⁰ indeed, a principle never to be departed from.³¹ In line with the Evangelical understanding of the centrality of mission in the life of every believer, Shaftesbury maintained:

I hold myself to be, and I hold all my brethren to be, Lay-agents.³²

This was a statement at the level of principle, illustrating the biblical and Evangelical basis of mission and ministry. Shaftesbury explained his particular attachment to the LCM as because the Society affirmed the 'indispensable principle'³³ of lay agency.

There was also a practical explanation for the devotion of Shaftesbury and other Evangelicals to the principles of lay agency, in the particular understanding of the challenge to home mission held out by the changing industrial society of nineteenth-century England. Mission in these circumstances raised questions of manpower, methods and the means of access to the population. Both the CPAS and the LCM were based upon the principle espoused by Shaftesbury 'that if you wish to win working men, you must enlist for that service a vast body of the working men themselves.'³⁴ He commented on the LCM's lay workers that 'not a few of them [are] drawn from the very ranks they are enlisted to assail.'³⁵ The use of the lay agent was the only way that the gospel would penetrate into the depths of London; ministers of religion were simply not the people to gain access to the dens and alleys of London.³⁶ For Shaftesbury, lay agency provided a means 'to penetrate and percolate those large masses to which access [was] very often denied to the ordained minister.'³⁷ He also showed this in his comparison of the London School Board with the voluntary teacher in Ragged Schools.

Ragged Schools reach a depth below them, and occupy a field which can only be occupied by volunteer agents.³⁸

Shaftesbury thus defended lay agency on two levels, theological principle and practical application. Even if the principle were to be conceded that lay agency was irregular and abnormal, the second level principle of necessary application in times of extreme circumstances would have allowed Shaftesbury to embrace lay agency. He sought to ensure that the gospel engaged with the contemporary cultural and social situation, but did so alongside deep theological principle.

Shaftesbury was here beginning to move into the vexed area of Evangelical ecclesiology. Shaftesbury and other Evangelicals valued certain principles of order and discipline above their institutional setting.

Why, the discipline that is practised in your Society is itself sufficient to take it out of the category of what is abnormal, and place it in the category of what is under order, discipline and regularity.³⁹

In 1882 Shaftesbury recalled the scale of early opposition to lay agency, and noted the more recent calls for lay workers to operate under close guidelines and supervision, akin in some ways to ordination vows. Such a narrowing of the view of ministry was anathema to Shaftesbury; it would damage both mission and social welfare. He insisted that for lay agency to be effective amongst the masses the agents had to be trusted.⁴⁰

To Shaftesbury the principles of lay agency were an important part of his theology of mission. It was this theological commitment that brought the wider Evangelical movement into conflict with the liberal establishment of the Church of England. Charles Blomfield, the Bishop of London, opposed the LCM, and the CPAS always remained weak in the metropolis. Blomfield preferred to support church extension. The contrast for Shaftesbury could not have been greater:

"We want men, not churches." How true! I have known many churches without congregations, but I never knew a pious congregation which did not desire, and soon obtain, a place of worship.⁴¹

Shaftesbury repeated his preference for the living agent in 1877⁴² and again in 1879, declaring that the missionary worker was always to be preferred to the material edifice:

A living agent may save the Church: the multiplication of cathedrals will rather tend to sink it.⁴³

This obsession with church buildings in the midst of spiritual destitution was, to Shaftesbury, monstrous and idolatrous.⁴⁴

The privileged ranks of the Established Church had been unable to respond to the challenge of mission to the emerging industrial classes. The necessary response required a much wider view of ministry than ordained ministry. Indeed this was part of Shaftesbury's opposition to Tractarianism. Shaftesbury also saw his understanding and commitment to lay agency as leading to a more effective meeting of the social as well as the spiritual needs of the working population. After all, it was the lay workers

who did the bulk of the visiting and so they were in the best position to deal with social need. Shaftesbury showed in this a breadth of vision that lifted him above many of his contemporaries in his thinking on mission and ministry. In 1881 Shaftesbury pointed out that the success of lay agency had been proved by its practice over the previous forty years.⁴⁵ It was complementary to the parochial system, not a substitute for it. Even those clergy who had once opposed the City Mission now recognised its value.⁴⁶

12.5 Unity of body and soul

The theological unity of body and soul has been seen as forming part of Shaftesbury's framework of eschatological belief.⁴⁷ This principle led logically to the Christian having as much concern for the body, its physical, social, temporal and material welfare, as for the soul, the eternal, the spiritual, the final destination, the ultimate status before God. This view contributed to Shaftesbury's understanding of mission. He expressed it frequently before the various missionary societies and it was an important motivating principle to his involvement. The RSU was an obvious focus of Evangelical social reform, but Shaftesbury reinforced existing convictions in the CPAS, the LCM and the London Society.

In his diary, Shaftesbury recorded his admiration of a worker at the Golden Lane Mission, 'who gives all his spare time to advance the knowledge of Christ and the earthly and heavenly interests of man.'⁴⁸ At the same time he summarised his own feelings:

A wonderful meeting in Golden Lane last night. A spectacle to gladden angels: comfort, decency, education, and spiritual life in the midst of filth, destitution, vice and misery....the work of the Gospel..⁴⁹

Shaftesbury always sought to hold together the temporal and eternal welfare of those with whom he was concerned. He viewed concern for body and soul as equally the work of the gospel. Earthly matters could not be separated from heavenly. It is, therefore, a common inaccuracy to consider the Evangelical movement as concerned

only with the future of the soul. Shaftesbury paid tribute to the teachers of the RSU who devoted so much to 'the advancement of the temporal and eternal welfare of the neglected children.'⁵⁰ And for himself, he declared his determination to labour, 'so long as there is a soul to be saved, misery to be relieved, and ignorance to be enlightened.'⁵¹

Shaftesbury's zeal for evangelism and social reform was also expressed in and through the CPAS. As noted in chapter 9.5 this emphasis within the CPAS has not previously been recognised or investigated. Shaftesbury's own concern for these matters reaffirms the importance of that analysis. Shaftesbury even declared to the CPAS that 'your object was to communicate to them the Word of God, and to promote their temporal and eternal salvation.'⁵² This was not strictly true, but it demonstrated how closely interlinked were the spiritual and the temporal in the practical working out of the stated objective of the CPAS. Shaftesbury was quite clear of the essential role played by the CPAS in support of the parochial system of the Established Church.

Why it has done all this for our beloved Church and her members, and more particularly for the poorer and more destitute, temporally and spiritually, of our population.⁵³

It is not possible to disentangle all of Shaftesbury's theological motivation from his inherent Tory paternalism. He talked frequently about working men being brought more into contact with persons of rank or station. So the ragged children 'adorned the station of life to which you belong,'⁵⁴ and as a result of the concern for the material as well as the spiritual, the lowest classes would become 'as mild and amiable as any of the rest of the human race.'⁵⁵ The principle was the parental principle,⁵⁶ indeed a principle invented by God.⁵⁷ Part of the benefit of legal changes to protect working men was to contribute to this process of pacification and take the sting of blame for conditions away from employers. Hence, in this regard, the CPAS had great social advantages.⁵⁸ It is, however, necessary to read these statements in the light of the Tory paternalistic tradition.⁵⁹ Rather than any motive of social control, Shaftesbury was primarily motivated by the demands of the gospel, both social and evangelistic, an

ideological commitment essential to any social analysis of Evangelical behaviour in the nineteenth century.

And so it was that Shaftesbury implored the agents of CPAS to show the manufacturing population that they had the whole of their welfare at heart, both temporal and spiritual.⁶⁰ His concern, as ever, was for the body and the soul of his countrymen.⁶¹ He urged the agents to render assistance 'in what is temporal as well as in what is spiritual.'⁶² To Shaftesbury the lay agents of the CPAS in particular provided assistance to the ministry, in the whole range of ministerial duties;

If you make a complete separation of the duties of the clergyman from those of the layman, so that he will have to confine himself entirely to spiritual, and have nothing to do with temporal matters, the clergyman will be more than ever incapable of exercising a useful influence over the mass of the laity.⁶³

To Shaftesbury, a visit to a destitute district, probably including a Ragged School, demonstrated the power of the Gospel which the CPAS was putting into practice.⁶⁴ On one occasion, Shaftesbury even went so far as to make a direct link between the CPAS and the movement for the reform of hours in factories.⁶⁵

The Committee's recognition of the important link of the temporal and the spiritual, as exemplified in Shaftesbury's work, was well illustrated in the memorial minute of 1885:

Whatever measures, whether of public policy or private beneficence, are directed to the amelioration of the material and social condition of the working classes, must ever be watched by the Committee of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society with peculiar interest, as having an important bearing on the spiritual progress of the home population, which it is the Society's great object to promote.⁶⁶

In his work with the London Society the temporal welfare of the Jewish people was a theme that frequently came to the fore with Shaftesbury. Once again this gave prominence to an aspect of the Society's belief now often lost.

Now, I think it is the solemn duty of you, and of all of us who profess true Christianity, to take care that if the Jews are persecuted by Christians, they shall be assisted and consoled by Christians.⁶⁷

But Shaftesbury's interest in the ancient people of God went far beyond a concern for those facing persecution. He actually cited '*seeking the temporal and eternal welfare of His peculiar people,*'⁶⁸ as part of the reason for the rich blessings poured out upon the Society, though it was the emphasis on the conversion of the Jews that actually marked the Society out for glory.⁶⁹

Shaftesbury's belief in the unity of body and soul gave him this parallel commitment to the unity of the temporal and the spiritual. In praising the work of the London Society, Shaftesbury said:

I believe that you have gone very far to propitiate the Jewish nation, to conciliate their feelings, and to remove many of the asperities which existed, by the manifestation of sympathy with them in their temporal distress. You are right, above all things, in making the spiritual welfare of that people permanent in your reports, and permanent in your efforts; but I hold it to be your duty as Christian people to come forward to defend them, whenever you can, against cruelty and oppression.⁷⁰

Earlier, in 1839, Ashley had commented to the annual meeting that there was no charity greater 'than that which contributes to the spiritual and temporal relief of the Jewish people.'⁷¹ Shaftesbury's linking of the eternal and temporal welfare of the people was not just theoretical, but also practical and personal; shortly after the post of a Vice-Consul at Jerusalem had been filled, an appointment in which Ashley rejoiced, he noted in his diary that he had sent a contribution for the poor to the Vice-Consul in imitation of the apostolic practice recorded in Romans 15:26.⁷²

Despite the tensions over the place of social welfare within the LCM, Shaftesbury nevertheless viewed the theological implications of the unity of body and soul as worked out in practice by the LCM, even if not in theory. As well as his relationship with individual missionaries, as discussed in chapter 9.6.3, Shaftesbury made his position clear in addresses and speeches to the annual meeting. Shaftesbury unashamedly stated that the LCM's operations had social and political aspects as well as the religious. The social aspect was primarily that of education, and also the moral improvement of the mind. The political aspect was dictated by the belief that, like the

Ragged School movement, the LCM was touching people beyond the pale of civilised society, recognising the political implications of the theological unity of creation, redemption and immortality. The City Missionary penetrated the deepest and darkest holes in London, with the overcrowding, lack of air and clean water, and degeneration against which Shaftesbury stated that he had protested all his life.⁷³

...you will fail altogether so long as the domiciliary condition of the people of London and in our great cities is allowed to remain what it is. What hope can you have of religion and decency when you have, as I have seen, three or four families in a single room? In such circumstances you have everything destructive to the body and the soul of man coming with redoubled force upon those unhappy people.⁷⁴

As early as 1848 Shaftesbury had first made that point to the LCM, about the dual concern for temporal as well as eternal welfare. The mass of the people of London had learnt that there was a body of people who cared for them and were committed to their welfare.⁷⁵ Shaftesbury saw then 'that great associations such as this send forth these men, day by day, and hour by hour, for no purpose whatever but their temporal and eternal good.'⁷⁶ But not so according to the Committee.

The Evangelical based his relationship with God on the experience of a personal relationship; so also it was the experience of the conditions of the metropolis that should dictate relationships between man's fellow creatures, also, of course, created by God. So Shaftesbury was able to call for 'prayers to the advancement of God's honour and the welfare of their fellow-creatures,'⁷⁷ and to see the missionaries as a great body of men, 'well instructed, well armed, and well determined to promote the physical and the religious welfare of this vast and seething people.'⁷⁸ He had earlier described the LCM 'as a manifest and undeniable proof of the practical spirit of Christianity.'⁷⁹ The City Missionary was in a unique position to watch for, and counteract, the rise and progress of evil, be it physical or spiritual.⁸⁰

This emphasis on the unity of body and soul was not distinctively Evangelical. It was, however, an important factor in assessing Shaftesbury's place within Evangelical

social concern because it was an aspect of theological belief often thought to have been ignored by Evangelicalism. This was clearly not so.

12.6 Eschatology

It has already been shown how the traditional understanding of the premillennial advent could induce quietism in the face of social evil, but that for a significant element of premillennial opinion, represented, inter alia, by Shaftesbury and Bickersteth, the opposite was in fact the case. Similarly, it has been shown how, more generally so after 1830, the premillennial emphases of the 1820s came to be integrated into a more mature eschatological understanding which pervaded the Evangelical missionary societies. These aspects of millennial belief were drawn together in the formation of the eschatological framework in chapter 11 within which Shaftesbury's beliefs and actions could be fitted. It is also clear that he expressed and worked out this eschatological perspective in his activities in the various missionary societies.

The nearness of the judgement was to Shaftesbury an impulse to action, not withdrawal:

For, depend upon it, that a day of trial and difficulty will come; and when it shall, and we are found sitting down in peace and satisfaction, - and we are little aware how near that day is at hand, but, rely upon it, that it is near at hand, - in that day of trial and difficulty you will then find that there is no hope, no security, no peace...⁸¹

Shaftesbury recognised that he tended to pessimism - 'I know I am regarded as one who takes a dark view of the future.'⁸² However, it was the discernment of the signs of the times - that is, the interpretation of political events in terms of biblical prophecy - that generated such a negative outlook about the future of the this world, and hence enabled Shaftesbury to rejoice in the nearness of the next. Shaftesbury declared to the London Society that every meeting of the Society was bringing the end 'nearer and nearer', and not withstanding the rhetoric of the May meetings, he firmly asserted the hope of many that 'the last days are at hand.'⁸³ The disorder of many of the world's nations was a symptom for Shaftesbury of the prospect of restoration for other nations,

not least that of the Jews.⁸⁴ And that could only lead to a commitment to the work of the London Society.⁸⁵ This same emphasis on the nearness of the day he commented on to the Bible Society;⁸⁶ he also observed in 1854 that events in the East, together with the general attitude of other nations and universal expectation 'all indicate that great and perhaps disastrous events are not far distant.'⁸⁷ Never far from Shaftesbury's mind was the need to prepare 'to meet the coming day of our Lord.'⁸⁸ The prospect of the nearness of the day was that the nation would be held up to judgement, as would all of the people of God.

God grant, I say, that in the hour of trial, which cannot be far distant for this country and for the whole of Christendom - God grant that it may not be said by the Almighty himself, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."⁸⁹

Neglect of duty in the preparatory period before the return of Christ would lead directly to the judgement of God. Hence Shaftesbury stated that their duty was 'to look at the interval that may elapse between the present period and the final and glorious consummation.'⁹⁰

None would escape the judgement that would accompany the return of Christ. This judgement would be corporate, it would affect 'this people and this nation'⁹¹ and, as has been seen already, the concept of the elect nation became, within this strand of Evangelical eschatological thought, the idea of the apostate nation.

Rely upon it, that a time is coming which shall try all the nations of the earth, and more especially those nations to whom God has intrusted His work.⁹²

Indeed there was 'no certainty that God will allow the door to remain open much longer.'⁹³ In the light of impending judgement the reaction according to Shaftesbury should be that of engaging in the Lord's service, not any form of quietism:

...the time is short, that the period of the great conflict for all nations is coming on; and that that nation and Church alone will stand upright which are found engaged in the service of their Master. Therefore, let us pray, that in the great day of account we may be an acceptable, ay, and an accepted people.⁹⁴

To the RSU, Shaftesbury could not have been clearer:

...I hope and believe that your very souls are bound up in the welfare both temporal and eternal of the thousands and tens of thousands God has committed to your charge.⁹⁵

The key was faithful discipleship.⁹⁶ The majority of the public stood aloof from religious and charitable causes, though whenever there was the prospect of profit, 'the money is dealt out in rapid millions.'⁹⁷ Such attitudes, despite the claim that they led to greater prosperity, would not, according to Shaftesbury, 'avert the great day of account.'⁹⁸

This ideal of faithful discipleship in the interval before the Second Advent was also illustrated in Shaftesbury's combination of divine dependence and human exertion. It had been characteristic of the premillennial tradition that hope should be placed in God rather than in human means. This was part of the explanation for premillennial quietism and withdrawal from the world. Shaftesbury's version of premillennialism helps explain his involvement in the world. So, 'we know that to sow the seed must be our work, but the times and the seasons the Lord has in His own power,⁹⁹ and we 'must guard ourselves against that pernicious error of thinking that success is the criterion of the value of our operations.'¹⁰⁰ Shaftesbury here showed a healthy combination of the divine and the human that distinguished his view from both the overoptimistic emphasis on human means characteristic of Admiral Gambier's expressed desire to the CMS to convert the world and also from a wholly other-worldly premillennial piety. His attitude to Jewish restoration summed it up:

...we should, as far as we can, prepare the way for the return of God's people to their ancient land; ...we should, in humble submission to God, do what we can to smooth their path, and prepare them for restoration. We cannot calculate the period of that great and general issue. But it is for us, according to the means given to us, to say, within what limit it is our duty to diffuse the Word of God - to prepare the people for that great consummation, and leave its final completion to the time and the season which God has ordained in his Almighty will and purpose.¹⁰¹

Shaftesbury demonstrated the same point in his statement to the Bible Society that the various religious societies, 'will yet be used by Almighty God as a vast instrument in the preparation of a people for that great and final day.'¹⁰² It was a theme that ran through all of his missionary society commitments. So, in his obituary, in the LCM Magazine, the writer, his long-standing friend, John Matthias Weylland, recognised this crucial motivating factor for Shaftesbury:

He conversed freely about realising faith, and of the "hope sure and steadfast" being the believer's heritage here, and then of the glory to be revealed, and the recognition of the saints in heaven. As we left the carriage he said, "The one consoling thought for the tried and bereaved is this, that the Lord may hasten his coming. Let us keep the lamp burning and the loins girt waiting for him."¹⁰³

In his speeches to the RSU the potency of this eschatology was again prominent, showing clearly the links between social welfare, eschatology and judgement.

The time is coming when matters will not be measured by the talent, or the ability, or by fine clothes, or by power to speak, or by being on platforms, or by listening to those upon platforms; but the time is coming when matters will be measured by those who have the truest faith, the deepest love, and the most sincere acts of obedience to their Lord and Saviour, and most devoted and strong imitation of his blessed example.¹⁰⁴

The work of the RSU in Shaftesbury's view represented a prime example of divine obedience and faithfulness.

I think that there is no work that can be so acceptable in the sight of our blessed Lord as this care that you manifest for the most destitute, forsaken, and oppressed of the infantile race.¹⁰⁵

What was at stake was not just the welfare and future of the ragged school child, but the very life and existence of the Christian soul, because of the response of obedience to God necessary in the light of the account to be given at the final judgement. That has already been seen to have depended on discipleship in both spiritual and temporal realms. This also tied into the injunctions of Matthew 25, linking judgement with an account of works done in faith on earth. Weylland also noted Shaftesbury's leaning to the epistle of James, where faith and works came together most closely in the canon of

Scripture, and his preference for 2 Chronicles where, quoting Shaftesbury, 'we find the Eternal God revealed, rich in mercy, and terrible in judgements.'¹⁰⁶

Surely here, in the idea of faithful and obedient discipleship in the period before the return of Christ, lay the root of Shaftesbury's work; the legislator and the missionary activist; the supporter of volunteer social reform societies, the defender of Evangelical and Protestant truth: the corporate and the individual, the social and the evangelistic. The eschatological tension of faith realised now, and yet glory to be revealed in heaven, was an essential motivating principle for Shaftesbury in his life work. It reflected the tension of heaven and earth, the breaking in of heavenly power into the earthly realm, and the tension of mercy and judgement.

Shaftesbury was quite sure that the body of people who made up the CPAS would stand in good stead on that judgement day.

I hope and trust that, at all events, whatever other Society may find itself deficient in money, this will not; and that wherever danger and difficulty may arise, the Church Pastoral-Aid Society will be found watching, engaged in the discharge of her duty, waiting for the coming of her Lord, and striving to hasten that coming.¹⁰⁷

Thus, be 'ever looking out for Christ's second coming; be ever preaching to your people His second coming.'¹⁰⁸ The Church was remiss in failing to hold out before people 'the grand consolatory doctrine of the Second Advent.'¹⁰⁹ To the RSU, Shaftesbury called on the annual meeting of 1859 to recollect their privileges, their means and their responsibilities,¹¹⁰ and subsequently, to 'prepare for the advent of the kingdom of our blessed Redeemer.'¹¹¹ Two years later he declared that everything was prepared for 'a most great and most glorious consummation.'¹¹² Shaftesbury summarised his fundamental eschatology, speaking at the annual meeting of CPAS in 1876. He had lost none of his zeal.

I am now looking, not to the great end, but to the interval. I know, my friends, how great and glorious that end will be; but while I find so many persons looking to no end, and others rejoicing in that great end, and thinking nothing about the interval. I confess that my own sympathies and fears dwell much with what must take place before that great consummation.¹¹³

He stressed the opportunities of the present in a speech to the RSU in 1864. The word "now" was an important one in eschatology.

We never lived in such a period before. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of our salvation." I am sure that if we avail ourselves of our present opportunities, the whole mass of the enemy will give way before us.¹¹⁴

This was an important and distinctive theological principle which distinguished between a concern for prophecy and the millennium, which emphasised only the future or eternal state, and Shaftesbury's adaption of the prophetic and millennial tradition in terms of the future breaking into and transforming the present. This understanding goes a long way towards explaining Shaftesbury's commitment to both evangelistic and social reforming aspects of mission. Shaftesbury's anticipatory eschatology was clearly stated when he commented on the custom of Jewish children singing before the London Society's annual meeting.

It seemed to realize the time when they shall return to Zion with songs, and with everlasting joy upon their heads.¹¹⁵

In temporal and social terms all this was summed up in another eschatological theme, that of light and darkness, good and evil. In a speech at the Mansion House in 1884, accepting the freedom of the City of London, Shaftesbury illustrated his belief in the providential intervention of God in these categories of light and darkness. Speaking of the beginning of the Evangelical missionary societies some fifty years before, he claimed that in the social and domestic condition of the people at that time there 'was not light enough even to make darkness visible.'¹¹⁶ These societies represented a movement of God and a breaking in of light into the darkness. Shaftesbury was quite able to apply this basic eschatological concept to the social condition of the people.

Darkness was upon the face of the deep; but when it pleased God to move upon the face of the waters, then came the germs of many movements which have produced so much benefit and comfort to the poorer population.¹¹⁷

The idea of an interventionist God made it easier for Evangelicals to believe in the propriety of state intervention. This is a theological link rarely recognised and was an important part of Shaftesbury's thought.¹¹⁸ Shaftesbury's eschatology was carefully worked out in his relationships to the various missionary societies. It was the dynamism of this position, the tension between present and future, heaven and earth, that explains the importance of eschatology for his own creative combination in his life work of evangelistic and social mission. It allowed Shaftesbury to avoid the tendency to shun the world often characteristic of the premillennial tradition, and yet provided the crucial impulse to action, due to impending judgement, one aspect of which would be faithful discipleship in social welfare work.

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- 118 See the article by J. Douglas Holladay, '19th Century Evangelical Activism: From Private Charity to State Intervention, 1830-50', Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 51, 1982, pp53-79. Holladay recognises this principle in a very helpful review of Evangelical activism but does not pursue the issue of eschatology.

13 Contraction and decline

Essential to understanding Shaftesbury's theology of missionary endeavour and social reform has been careful analysis of the Evangelical tradition. The development of such a coherent Evangelical view of mission cannot be separated from the history of Evangelicalism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The decline of Evangelical belief needs to be understood and the theology of mission represented by Shaftesbury placed within this context.

The perceived weakening of Evangelical conviction is accepted by scholars, both specifically by writers on Evangelicalism and generally by historians of the period. However, the precise turning point, and the reasons for it, are not so clearly spelt out or shared. The decline is affirmed by Bebbington,¹ Hylson-Smith² and Hennell,³ and more generally by Kent.⁴ Kent describes this as a conscious withdrawal from politics by Anglican Evangelicalism during the course of the 1870s.⁵ Hennell refers to ritualism, rationalism and romanism as having turned a positive movement into a negative one.⁶ Bebbington traces the beginnings to the early 1860s, but 'the contraction of Evangelical influence was more marked from the 1870s.'⁷ Bradley reviews those who abandoned Evangelicalism in mid-century, including reference to the son of the Claphamite Sir James Stephen, who remarked in 1845 that there was now no Clapham Sect.⁸ Hennell is adamant that this loss of vigour came in the seventies, rather than in the forties or fifties.⁹

The reasons usually advanced in explanation of this withering of Evangelicalism include the impact of rationalism and ritualism, changing social patterns, the decline of paternalism and the rise of the holiness theology within Evangelical thought. The consequence was a further narrowing of Evangelical belief, a failure to engage with the modern world, intellectually and socially, and, particularly in relation to ritualism, a turning inward rather than a focusing outward. Kent points out that by 1870 it had become quite possible to explain the rise of Christianity in historical terms alongside Islam and Buddhism and apart from the supernatural and that world mission had

largely failed. He quotes E.J. Hobsbawm, who asserted that the spirit of the age was increasingly secular rather than religious, making Christianity irrelevant.¹⁰ Kent then makes an interesting point which rather exposes his analysis.

This was not the whole truth. The American revolution was followed by a revival of Protestant evangelicalism which continued for most of the nineteenth century...¹¹

So Kent does not maintain a simple, linear decline. Rather, he asserts that the Protestant revival after 1870 was from within the revivalist tradition. This was the part of Evangelicalism from which Moody and Sankey were drawn, and was closely connected to premillennialist belief. Kent here demonstrates his own attachment to the traditional implications of premillennialism for political involvement, an attitude which 'reduced political action to police action.'¹²

The books of addresses which Moody published in England were reticent on the subject, but they were all tinged with social pessimism: if you become converted, you would not really care what happened to stocks and bonds, to employment, to the future of society in general.¹³

This explains Kent's assertion about withdrawal from politics. Kent has correctly observed Evangelical contraction, has isolated in premillennialism a possible explanation, but has failed to recognise the complexities of both Evangelicalism and millennialism. It is not the case that there was a withdrawal from politics after 1870. Shaftesbury stands in testimony to that. Factory legislation, employment protection, housing, health and sanitation were all matters of political action by Shaftesbury after this date. Kent's point about Moody's reticence in his English publications on the question of the Second Advent and its consequences is telling. Moody visited England four times in the second half of the nineteenth century and on each occasion the consequence was to sweep hundreds of volunteers, especially women, into volunteer social work as well as missionary activity.¹⁴ Heasman also notes the connection of revivalism and social work as exemplified by Charles Finney.¹⁵ These connections were referred to in chapter 9.1. Perhaps this explains Heasman's comment that the number of Evangelical voluntary societies continued to increase after 1870.¹⁶ In any

event the outcome was not that suggested by Kent. This illustrates well the need for more incisive analysis when considering millennialism and the beliefs associated with that tradition.

So although Evangelicalism faded, this weakening cannot simply be explained by a renewed revivalism. The reality was more complex. Bebbington is more perceptive here. The revivalism of Moody and Sankey was to be distinguished from the wider holiness tradition, although it prepared the way for it. It was the development of this tradition that contributed to Evangelical withdrawal. Certainly it reflected the revivalist emphasis on the Spirit and on divine means, but unlike Moody and Sankey, the effect of this teaching was withdrawal from the world (to Keswick perhaps) rather than a sending out into the world.¹⁷ The first Keswick convention was not held until 1875. It may have been the lack of certainty and confidence within Evangelicalism, reinforced by the challenges of rationalism and ritualism, that encouraged Evangelicals to seek solace in holiness teaching. This then may have led to an escape from reality and from the world,¹⁸ an aspect of belief to which premillennial or adventist thought could certainly be reconciled. Nevertheless, this was not the case in that strand of Evangelicalism represented by Shaftesbury.

No doubt Evangelical confidence was shaken by modern intellectual developments and its internal composure ruptured by the reaction to ritualism. A turning inward can only lead to loss of direction and purpose. In broad terms these are valid reasons for the explanation of Evangelical decline. Bebbington refers to the Victorian crisis of faith and the challenge of scientific progress and discovery, as represented by Darwinism.¹⁹ Kent suggests, with some force, that the optimism of the period led to a rejection of the conservative emphasis on sin, and hence a shift from a concern with the function of Jesus to the person of Jesus.²⁰ Kent maintains that the failure of both Anglo-Catholicism and Anglican Evangelicalism resulted from being 'unable to restate the supernatural argument convincingly.'²¹ The failure of Evangelicals to engage with the development of biblical scholarship,²² illustrated by the virulence of the opposition which involved Shaftesbury, to the proposed revision of the Authorised Version, can

only have reinforced the increasing cultural isolation of the movement. In the aftermath of Shaftesbury's influence on the episcopal appointments of Palmerston, there were only six Evangelical appointments between 1865 and 1900.²³ Hennell refers to the increased Protestant dogmatism with the closure of the Christian Observer and the launching of the ultra-Protestant The Rock.²⁴

Protestant Evangelical reaction to rationalism and the similar response to the tide of ritualism fed off each other. Evangelicals had long opposed the Tractarian movement; indeed some of the most potent Evangelical theology of the century had been written in response to the challenge from Newman, Keble and Pusey. The ritualist practices that increasingly marked out the Oxford Movement's successors were vehemently repudiated by Evangelicals, a position which was all the more aggressive, and at the same time ineffectual, because of the Evangelical movement's own crisis of confidence. The disastrous Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874, promoted by Shaftesbury, and the resulting prosecutions initiated by the Church Association diverted Evangelical attention. The Act did not provide for penalties; refusal to comply with directions concerning ornaments or vesture was interpreted as contempt of court and it was this which led to Anglo-Catholic clergy being jailed. The insistence, however, that candles on the communion table should be punishable by imprisonment was a sign of a movement in serious crisis with its own identity and its own future. The prosecution of Bishop Edward King of Lincoln in 1888 led to the collapse of this strategy.

However, to understand the place of social concern within this decline more attention needs to be given to the role of secularisation and increasing government control over social services. Neither Kent nor Hennell puts any emphasis on this element of the explanation for the shrinking of Evangelical belief and influence. Bebbington, in a brief, but cogent and helpful analysis, alludes to this aspect of the question but does not develop its implications.²⁵ The key date of 1870 is noted by Bebbington as the year of the introduction of state education. This was an important landmark. It had two aspects. First, it emphasised the increasing process of secularisation. Second, it marked

the specific advance of institutional state power. It was not sudden collapse after 1870 but rather that these two nineteenth-century developments made significant and irreversible progress that led to the increasing decline of Evangelical social reform. The impact on the Ragged School movement was most marked and illustrated the situation. The Ragged Schools declined in number after W.E. Forster's Education Act of 1870. Shaftesbury had vigorously opposed this Act. The Board schools still adhered to teaching from the Bible, but the die was cast; Evangelical control over schools and the content of the curriculum was largely ended. This was only to be reinforced over time as society moved more towards secular premises as the basis for action and education rather than the religion. The 1870 Education Act also significantly impaired the partnership of the legislature and voluntary sector. The dominant partner was now the state. Shaftesbury, in his combination of legislative action and voluntary commitment, had demonstrated the ideal of partnership. If this was no longer to form part of the national approach to social welfare, then the role of Evangelical voluntary societies could only be reduced. But it was because these influences were gradual, albeit increasing, that the tailing away in this area of Evangelical work was also gradual.

Decline and contraction did occur, but not extinction. There remained much Evangelical influence after 1870, through Bishops like Ryle and Handley Moule, through voluntary societies for social welfare, many of which demonstrated their capacity for adaption to meet changed circumstances, including the Ragged School Union, and through the continued development of Evangelical theological colleges. Nevertheless, Evangelicalism was not the force it had been, either in the Church of England or in the national arena. It did not produce figures of the influence, prominence or stature of Wilberforce, Simeon, or Shaftesbury. The giants of rationalism and ritualism represented two important global reasons which contributed to the weakening of the Evangelical movement. Essentially, the movement was forced into negative definition against two growing and developing phenomena. No sub-strata of Evangelicalism could resist such forces. It was, however, the impact of

secularisation and the ending of the state-voluntary partnership in the area of social reform and social welfare which caused contraction of the involvement of Evangelicals in those causes. As those forces gradually became dominant, so Evangelical concern was slowly reduced. Under the influence of the wider decline, the dynamic harnessing of revivalist and eschatological theological belief gave way to the more negative pietistic elements of millennialism, which were expressed increasingly fully in the holiness movement.

¹ Bebbington, p141f.

² Hylson-Smith, p227.

³ M. Hennell, *Sons of the Prophets*, (1979), p123.

⁴ J.H.S. Kent, *Holding the Fort*, (1978), p358.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Hennell, loc. cit.

⁷ Bebbington, p141.

⁸ Bradley, pp194-95.

⁹ Hennell, p123.

¹⁰ J.H.S. Kent, *The End of the Line?*, (1978), p31.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Kent, *Fort*, p359.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, pp21, 27, 40, 95, 97, 122-125, 179, 253, 287 charts the extensive connections and evidence.

¹⁵ Heasman, 'The Influence of the Evangelicals upon the Origins and Development of Voluntary Charitable Institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century,' (London University PhD, 1960), p34.

¹⁶ Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action*, p8.

¹⁷ Bebbington, pp151-180.

¹⁸ Ibid., p152.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp141-142.

²⁰ Kent, *End*, p32.

²¹ Ibid., p48.

²² Hennell, p123 notes the lack of Evangelical scholarship after William Goode.

²³ Bebbington, p146.

²⁴ Hennell, p123.

²⁵ Bebbington, pp141-143.

14 Conclusion

This thesis opened with some extracts from the assessment of The Times of the life and work of Shaftesbury. Although positive, that appraisal left various questions unanswered, or even not asked. Its inadequacy was reinforced by consideration of the biographies of Shaftesbury. The issue of motivation, indeed, specifically of the theological foundation of his beliefs and activities, as part of the significant force that drove his life work, was barely touched upon. The increase in scholarly interest in Evangelicalism has also contributed to a realisation of the weakness of much of the analysis of Shaftesbury. His work, which was certainly a Victorian work, can only be properly understood in the context of the various influences operating in that challenging and changing era. Shaftesbury's life was a purposeful one that linked the concern for evangelism with social reform and social action; it was a concern that linked commitment to legislative intervention with practical activity in voluntary societies.

The impact of Shaftesbury upon his century can be seen not just in the national context of an obituary notice in The Times, but also in the more specific setting of the missionary societies to which he was so committed. All of the six societies which have been considered here recorded memorial minutes. Whilst allowing for clouded judgement at such times of mourning, some of these minutes do give insight into the significant and extensive influence that Shaftesbury had, not only on Evangelicalism, but also on the nation as a whole. They also illustrate some of the themes that have run throughout this thesis in terms of the factors, theological and social, which guided his life. So, the CPAS, that society so devoted to the spiritual task of the salvation of souls, but which nonetheless recognised the relevance of the temporal and social to the eternal, said this:

Hence the Committee deem it a specially happy circumstance that the Society should have been honoured during the first half century of its existence, by the presidency of one who was not only conspicuous by his efforts for the spiritual good of his fellow countrymen, but had during his long life borne an unparalleled share in more general philanthropic enterprises.¹

Even more incisive was the CMS minute:

They would render their unfeigned thanksgivings to Almighty God for His grace vouchsafed to His servant the lamented Earl which enabled him to refuse not only the paths of pleasure and self-interest but also those of honourable public duty in order to devote himself body, soul and spirit to the more immediate service of his Divine Master. They praise God also for the grace that strengthened him through so many years for the Christian and philanthropic labours which have made his memory a precious inheritance to the whole nation, and united men of every class and party and opinion in rendering honour to his name; and also for his faithfulness through evil report and good report to Evangelical truth.....The Committee earnestly pray God that many others in high places may be led by Lord Shaftesbury's example to give themselves wholly to a life of self-sacrifice for the material, moral and spiritual good of their fellow creatures.²

Evangelicalism was a diverse movement, containing many elements and emphases. At the centre stood the core features of authority, doctrine, spirituality and commitment. The demands on an Evangelical were always specific and never general. Nevertheless, there was significant diversity of belief and practice over much of the content of belief. Doctrinal concerns also changed over time, especially so with the greater weight that came to be given within Evangelicalism to special providence, a development or change in the way in which God's relationship to the world was to be understood. Shaftesbury, who adopted Evangelical beliefs around 1826, entered the scene in the midst of these developments. Hence he reflected the Calvinist core of Evangelical belief but, unlike Wilberforce, placed more stress on God's intervention than on God's general providential activity through natural law and process. This is essential for understanding Shaftesbury's distinctive position in relation to both evangelism and social reform, and also state intervention and voluntary action. It also paved the way through a relationship with Edward Bickersteth for a more developed millennialism to be adopted. There was also a further important aspect of Evangelical opinion, that represented by national Protestantism. Shaftesbury was a link between

the early missionary-orientated Evangelicalism, and the later party, Protestant Evangelicalism, rigorously applying Evangelical principle to the doctrine of the church.

All this is shown in the analysis of Evangelical attitudes to economics and, more specifically, it is explained by the particulars of Shaftesbury's understanding of mission and the millennium. The thought forms of the Enlightenment undoubtedly influenced one dimension of Evangelical opinion, such that this strand came to operate within an understanding of natural law. When this view came to be applied to economics, it was seen that the invisible hand of classical economics could be associated with the superintending providence of God. This was reinforced by the emphasis in economics on the concept of equilibrium, the self-regulating mechanism guaranteed to achieve the greatest good. In policy terms this led to policies of non-intervention; hence Evangelicals who adopted this view supported the reform of the Poor Laws, the repeal of the Corn Laws and generally resisted socio-economic intervention by government. But the core Evangelical view saw more of an interaction between general and particular providence. The problem with the stress on natural theology and political economy was to underestimate the power of sin.

Shaftesbury picked up this emphasis on the corrupting nature of sin. He placed his understanding of God's natural order, not in economic law, but in the ordering of society. Hence, Shaftesbury's aristocratic paternalism came to interact with his Evangelical faith. The breakdown of the order of society was a reflection of sin, but so were the specific evils of the factory system and industrialisation. Thus the lack of economic equilibrium proved that the invisible hand could not be identified with the hand of God. So, also, Shaftesbury was able more easily to defend and support government intervention in socio-economic affairs as the necessary means of restraining sin and removing evil. The concern with sin also gave Shaftesbury a distinctive place within the tradition of paternalism itself. Neglect of duty by the aristocracy was seen by Shaftesbury as a sin in the same way as moral failings by the lower classes.

The theology of mission, the relationship between evangelism and social reform, and the understanding of the millennium are closely linked. The breadth of the millennial tradition has not been recognized, a problem heightened by the static categories of premillennial and postmillennial. This has clouded the relationship between that tradition and the theology of mission and social action within Evangelicalism. Similarly, Shaftesbury's own place within millennialism has not previously been analysed. This examination has brought out a number of important elements. It was first shown how the basic interventionist principle of the premillennial tradition could be applied to society. This was so both in economic theory and in specific practical circumstances such as the economic crisis of 1825-1826 and the various visitations of cholera. Hence divine intervention and judgement also came to be understood as relevant to this world. Secondly, it involved a reworking of the traditional categories of the millennial tradition in order to appreciate more fully the creative dynamism represented in the mainstream of the Evangelical tradition by Shaftesbury and others. Hence, a tension was maintained between judgement and mercy. In doing this it can be seen that Shaftesbury mirrored an eschatological view that emphasised the Second Advent, judgement and mercy, stewardship, the reunion of body and soul, and the redemption of creation, but in the manner of these future events breaking into, and being anticipated within the current dispensation. It was this Evangelical eschatology which enabled Shaftesbury to maintain his commitment to both evangelistic missionary endeavour and to social reform and social action. Indeed, in his eyes, the two could not be separated.

To understand fully how this theological position was worked out in Shaftesbury's life and work, it has been necessary to survey wider developments in the Evangelical tradition. The impact of the Evangelical quest for purity of the 1820s on the later development of the missionary societies should not be underestimated. This affected both the foundation of the second generation of missionary societies, after 1830, and also the older, more long established societies. This influence could be clearly seen in the theological principles which governed or came to govern the range of missionary

societies. Theologically, it was, again, eschatology that was especially prominent. The millennialist critique of the church establishment made some effective and powerful points. So, within the wide spectrum of missionary societies, there developed a mature eschatological thought that emphasised divine dependence, divine intervention, judgement and advent, but in the setting of an activist faith on earth, a breaking-in rather than a total realisation of the future state and without the pitfalls of date-setting for the Second Advent. This Evangelical eschatology was crucial in ensuring in many voluntary missionary societies an emphasis and concern for social and temporal welfare alongside the spiritual which has not hitherto been recognised. This was especially so with the CPAS. There was also a growing theological stress on the unity of body and soul.

This was the background against which Shaftesbury worked. These theological ideas fitted well with his own views, albeit not perfectly. It explains how he was able to maintain his own extensive commitment to both social welfare and evangelistic aspects of Christian mission, and to a wide range of missionary societies. The tension of the two aspects was probably most clearly shown in the LCM. However, the reaction of many of the missionaries was exactly in accord with Shaftesbury's own views and his contacts with the LCM were largely through the individual missionaries. Hence we have a broader understanding of the development of Evangelical theological thought and of Shaftesbury's place within it. We also have a clearer appreciation of his motivations and activities in both social legislation and his dedication to an extensive and diverse group of missionary societies, themselves concerned with both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people whom they, and Lord Shaftesbury, sought to serve.

¹ CPAS, Minutes of the Special General Committee, 7 October, 1885.

² CMS, Minutes of the General Committee, 12 October, 1885.

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