

Did evangelicalism predate the eighteenth century?

An examination of David Bebbington's thesis

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KEY WORDS: evangelicalism; revival.

1. The long reign of evangelical successionism

If you or I had asked this question in evangelical company prior to 1989, we would certainly have drawn very blank looks.¹ For until that year, it was taken as an elementary truth that not only the evangelical Christianity we associate with the century of the Wesley brothers, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards but also – for that matter with the next century of George Müller, D.L. Moody and J.C. Ryle, and the century just past – the Billy Graham era stood in an unbroken succession of vital Christianity extending backwards to at least the Reformation of the sixteenth century and perhaps beyond.

Senior evangelical theologian J.I. Packer was only giving expression to this view of evangelical history which could be called *gospel successionism* when he spoke of it approvingly in 1978 as:

the Christianity, both convictional and behavioural, which we inherit from the New Testament via the Reformers, the Puritans, and the revival and missionary leaders of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries... The reason why I call myself an evangelical and mean to go on doing so is my belief that as this historic evangelicalism has never sought to be anything other than New Testament Christianity, so in essentials it has succeeded in its aim.²

Packer had not invented this conception; he had merely inherited it and taken it up with gusto. The same conception of evangelical Christianity as a

1 I am grateful to Dr. Donald Tinder (Amsterdam) and Professor David Bebbington (Stirling) for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 James Packer, 'The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ: Some Evangelical Reflections', *Churchman*, 92 (1978), 102. The Packer essay had been delivered as an address the year previous in the annual Islington, London, Church of England pastoral conference. The writer heard Packer espousing identical statements to those quoted here in his paper, 'A Personal Retrospective on the Conversation Between Evangelicals and Catholics' delivered April 11, 2002, at the Wheaton College (Illinois) Theology Conference.

hardy perennial, cropping up in every century with loyalty to Christ, Bible and gospel could be found in the twentieth century in the conception of E.J. Poole-Connor and John Stott.³

Centuries earlier, Melancthon conceived Luther to have been part of such a gospel succession when he eulogized him at his death as follows:

After the apostles comes a long line, inferior, indeed, but distinguished by the divine attestations: Polycarp, Irenaeus, Gregory of Neocaesarea, Basil, Augustin, Prosper, Maximus, Hugo, Bernard, Tauler and others. And though these later times have been less fruitful, yet God has always preserved a remnant; and that a more splendid light of the gospel has been kindled by the voice of Luther cannot be denied.⁴

Under this understanding, evangelical Christianity was biblical, doctrinal and experiential Christianity in its most vital and hardy form – i.e. the faith once delivered to the saints'. Often submerged in centuries gone by, it had inevitably resurfaced again – as it could not help but do – since it was, after all, the cause of God. This then, is the way that evangelicals regularly thought about the preservation of a gospel succession across preceding centuries until they were called up short in 1989.

The Modern Challenge to Evangelical Successionism

Yet, in 1989 there appeared a challenge to this way of thinking in the form of David Bebbington's *Evangelicalism In Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*.⁵ This massively-researched volume allowed that there had been documented use of the term *evangelical* in English extending back to the polemical writings of Thomas More in 1531 and other early movements such as the Continental Reformation which had been typified as evangelical in the sense 'of the gospel'.⁶ Nevertheless, Bebbington insisted that the term *evangelical* ought to be reserved for movements of much more recent times. The reader of this fascinating volume is told that: 'Evangelical religion is a popular Protestant movement that has existed in Britain since the 1730s'; that 'The Evangelical Revival represents a sharp discontinuity in the Protestant tradition;

3 One can find the conception readily in Poole-Connor's *Evangelicalism in England* (London, Henry Walter, 1966); see especially chap. 8. It is explicitly present in John Stott's 'A Plea for Evangelical Christianity' in *Christ the Controversialist* (Downers Grove, 1972), 27-46. Stott was still sounding this note in his *Evangelical Essentials* (Downers Grove, 2000).

4 Philip Melancthon, 'Funeral Oration Over Luther' (1546) reprinted in Lewis W. Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation: Major Documents* (St. Louis, 1997), 70.

5 (London, 1989). An American edition was produced by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, in 1992.

6 Thomas More used the term to designate supporters of the Reformation. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism* 1. This was a usage earlier identified by John Stott in his *Christ the Controversialist* 31.

it was formed by a cultural shift in the English-speaking world, the transition from the Baroque to the Enlightenment' and that 'The Evangelical version of Protestantism was created by the Enlightenment'.⁷ Though it would be possible to understand Bebbington as arguing for such a story of evangelical origins *only* with reference to Britain (this was, after all, the subject underlying his book) a careful reading of his work does not sustain this narrow interpretation. This theme of an evangelicalism 'de novo' has been argued out by him not only with reference to the regions of Britain but also with reference to near-contemporary continental movements such as Moravianism.⁸ Importantly, his reconstruction of this period and its significance has now come to be so widely accepted that the May-June 2001 cover story of *Books and Culture* proclaimed to a predominantly North American readership that Evangelicalism was 'An eighteenth century British movement (which) crossed the Atlantic, took new forms, and spread around the world'.⁹ The recent important revisionist biography of J.H. Newman, *Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion*, following the Bebbington thesis, took it as a foundational premise that the evangelicalism against which Newman reacted was of mere eighteenth century origin.¹⁰

I do not wish to oppose this view from some hoary traditionalist stance – for this, it can be argued, is not the authentic evangelical way. I do not wish either to contend that the mere recurring use of the term 'evangelical' over a series of centuries ensures a constancy of meaning for the term. Yet I do oppose it on the ground of necessary caution. To the extent that Evangelicalism accepts this reconstruction of its own lineage, it also accepts its own extensive disconnectedness from seminal events and persons in earlier Christian history – as a phase associated with one particular era. We ought not to accept that this is so without the most compelling evidence, and – as I hope to demonstrate – the evidence for this view is other than compelling. Let us proceed to survey the main features of Bebbington's view, to enumerate the serious objections that can be raised against it, and to provide a modest proposal for the synthesis of the view of Bebbington with older opinions.

2. The Bebbington thesis in broad outline

David Bebbington has not asked us to cashier venerable notions of a perennial evangelical Christianity without reason; he provides five. We will identify and briefly comment on these before proceeding to present the substantial evidences for evangelicalism's longer existence. The five are:

7 Bebbington, 1, 74.

8 Bebbington, 37.

9 *Books and Culture*, May-June 2001, cover story.

10 Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven, 2002), chap. 1.

- I. The eighteenth century witnessed the coalescing of several already-existing Christian convictions into the matrix we now associate with evangelicalism. The pre-existent traits were *conversionism*, *biblicism*, and *crucicentrism*.¹¹ Another trait, *activism*, emerged in the aftermath of the launch of awakening in the 1730s.

The present author endorses David Bebbington's assertion that these have comprised the traits of evangelical Christianity in its various manifestations. But he seriously questions the claim that these convictions, while existing earlier – were not associated with one another.¹² If it is only intended to argue that the existence of such convictions prior to the 1730s did not create a pan-denominational evangelical movement among those persons who held them, we might agree; but more than this seems suggested. We will pursue the question of the late dawn of activism below.¹³

- II. Leaders of the eighteenth century revival, notably John Wesley, were especially influenced by the High Church (i.e. non Puritanical) theological tradition in the Church of England. Evidence of strong continuity with the preceding century's Puritan tradition, while real, is incapable of explaining the rise of the Evangelical movement.¹⁴

This is an interesting and important point made forcefully as long ago as 1966 by John Walsh of Oxford University. In his essay 'The Origins of the Evangelical Revival' Walsh argued that there was inadequate evidence to support any theory supposing that Methodism was a resurgence of Puritanism.¹⁵ The eighteenth century evangelical dependency on Puritan and Reformation theology was real and substantial once the renewal movement was on its way but quite inconsequential as to the *origin* of the movement itself. Bebbington then, on this matter, is following a scholarly trend of longer standing than his 1989 book. Yet it will be our purpose to demonstrate at least some evidence of a contrary kind.¹⁶

- III. The Evangelicalism of the eighteenth century openly assimilated influences from continental Protestantism. The Scriptural commentaries of Luther and the theological emphases of the Moravians were especially significant.¹⁷

This particular assertion seems, in the judgment of this observer, to do as

11 Bebbington, 5-17.

12 Bebbington, 34-35.

13 We will pursue the suggestion that evangelical activism was a late arrival in section 4 (below)

14 Bebbington, 36.

15 The important essay by Walsh was published in G.V. Bennett and J.D. Walsh, editors, *Essays in Modern Church History in Memory of Norman Sykes* (London, 1966), 132-162.

16 See sections 3.II & III below.

17 Bebbington, 38-39.

much harm as help to the Bebbington thesis. These are the very borrowings and indebtednesses that go far to strengthen the argument of those (cited above) who contend for evangelical successionism. That one Wesley was moved by hearing Luther's exposition of Galatians read while his brother similarly profited by use of the Reformer's Romans commentary¹⁸ is hardly an indication of discontinuity. There were other indebtednesses to continental Christianity by the eighteenth century English – among them being those owed to the Moravians led by Count Zinzendorf. Indeed, Bebbington can go so far as to admit that in the decades preceding the Wesley era 'German Pietism had already achieved in Lutheranism what these men (i.e. Whitefield and the Wesleys) were to undertake in the English-speaking world'.¹⁹ Yet Bebbington's objective here is primarily to argue that eighteenth century Evangelicalism in England did not merely continue *native* principles or approaches, and thus he is unrestrained in admitting foreign influence. But inasmuch as evangelical successionism has argued *not* for nativism, but simple continuity with various preceding movements, the admission of such influences as those just mentioned tells more in favor of continuity than discontinuity.

IV. The new activism of eighteenth century Evangelicalism was nowhere better exemplified than in the rise of the missions movement in the time of William Carey (circa 1792).²⁰

Bebbington is quite correct to indicate that earlier English-speaking Protestantism on both sides of the Atlantic had been quite remiss in their neglect of world mission. Noting that Richard Baxter had been an exception to this pattern,²¹ he also shows an awareness of the Puritan missionary work among American Indians. But the extent of this is not acknowledged.²² It has emerged in other investigations that support for such missions to Indians extended into the eighteenth century and also contemplated expansion into the Caribbean and Guiana.²³ It is therefore not entirely satisfactory that the Bebbington thesis reiterates a long-standing view that the mission of Carey to India in 1792 and other initiatives which followed illustrate a 'birth' of foreign mission arising from the period of awakening. The simple point is that the Evangelical Revival

18 Bebbington himself alludes to these events at page 38.

19 Bebbington, 39.

20 Bebbington, 41.

21 Bebbington, 40.

22 *Ibid.*, 40, 41.

23 James De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810* (Kampen, 1970), 44-49. Nonconformist minister Isaac Watts promoted the cause of these missions in his London pastorate; cf. Arthur Paul Davis, *Isaac Watts* (London, 1943), 49. In an as-of-yet unpublished paper, *Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719): Fictional Missionary*, I have argued that this Puritan and Nonconformist missionary activity supplies the background for Crusoe's evangelization of his man, Friday.

did *not* originate this missionary impulse but was able to follow a pre-existent pattern.²⁴

V. There was 'a shift in the received doctrine of assurance (of faith) with all that it entailed'. 'The novel assurance...discovered in Evangelicalism was greeted with relief'²⁵ 'Received Puritan practice would have been to encourage them to wrestle through their own doubts and fears over a protracted period'.²⁶

Here, to this writer's mind, Bebbington has raised the single most fascinating item demonstrating a new direction taken by the spiritual movements of the eighteenth century. I have genuinely benefited by pondering his description of the interplay of Enlightenment thought and Christian experience. In consequence, I have little doubt that assurance of salvation was enjoyed more widely and thought less presumptuous in those who claimed to possess it than in previous ages. But in fairness, the issue is highly complex. The Reformed theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) had emphasized with John Calvin that the Christian believer should enjoy assurance of salvation by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit with the Word. Yet in the pastoral situation created by the implementation of Tridentine teaching (the Council of Trent had warned that an insistence that the believer was granted assurance of inclusion among the predestined was presumption²⁷) and the long campaign to evangelize the still nominally-Protestant Britain, the Westminster divines had tried to allow that assurance of salvation was not necessarily the automatic consequence of faith, nor so constant in the believer that no fluctuation of confidence would be experienced. It has not been shown that the eighteenth century teaching on the assurance of salvation was different *in kind* from that of previous Protestantism; it may, however, have differed in the degree of emphasis given to it.²⁸

24 The eighteenth century schemes of mission which did not materialize (Wesley's 1738 desire to evangelize American Indians, and similar schemes associated with the Countess of Huntingdon) acknowledged by Bebbington p.42 are most meaningful when understood as follow-ups to earlier Puritan efforts in the same hemisphere rather than as anticipations of what Carey would attempt after drawing inspiration from Captain Cook's nautical writings. In addition, the eighteenth century missionary initiatives of the Moravians were well known in the North Atlantic evangelical world.

25 Bebbington, 42.

26 Bebbington, 47.

27 See the 'Decree on Justification' item 15 as printed in Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, editors, *Documents of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1999), 277.

28 The Westminster Confession teaching on Christian assurance is found in chapter xviii. Calvin's strong emphasis on the witness of the Spirit within the believer is evident in his *Institutes* III.ii. 39. Since the composition of this essay, two works have been drawn to my attention which augment my concern about the treatment of assurance in the Bebbington thesis. The essay of Garry Williams, 'Was Evangelicalism Created by the Enlightenment?' appears in *Tyndale Bulletin* 53:2 (2002), 283-312. An exhaustive treatment of the doctrine of assurance (but without specific reference to the Bebbington thesis) is provided by Joel Beeke's *The Quest for Full Assurance: The Legacy of Calvin and His Successors* (Edinburgh, 1999).

Other writers in support of Bebbington's approach

We have noted above several indications that the Bebbington thesis is coming to be taken as axiomatic. There are also writers who seem to have extended the thesis further, and two deserve special mention.²⁹ A first is Richard Turnbull, author of a 1993 essay 'The Emergence of the Protestant Evangelical Tradition'. The author maintained, without making any explicit reference to Bebbington or his book, that what today passes for the Anglican evangelical tradition was largely forged in the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth.³⁰

The second author worthy of mention is Robert Letham, who wrote fully cognizant of the Bebbington hypothesis, and essentially endorsed it – though in pursuit of an entirely distinct objective. The article was the more remarkable when one considers that the writer is himself a conservative and confessional Presbyterian. His 1995 essay posed the issue in stark terms: 'Is Evangelicalism Christian?'³¹ Whereas Bebbington had aimed primarily to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the developments in eighteenth century Christianity, Letham went beyond discussing this distinctiveness to contend that Evangelicalism was a movement extensively frivolous in tendency. In contrast to the great consensus building story of Christian theology from Patristic to Reformation times,

Evangelicalism is essentially man-centred. Human spiritual experience, in regeneration and sanctification, is dominant. In short, soteriology is in centre-stage. Because personal individual salvation is at the heart of evangelicalism, it follows that evangelism and world mission share the centre of attention....God and the holy trinity is not a dominant focus any more.³²

Further...

Evangelicalism as such is based on the individual and his or her spiritual experience and is decidedly not a churchly phenomenon. The sacraments are, if anything, even lower on evangelicalism's scale of values.³³

29 We have already drawn attention, above, to the substantial continuity between the seminal 1966 essay of John Walsh and the Bebbington argument for Evangelicalism's novelty.

30 Richard Turnbull, 'The Emergence of the Protestant Evangelical Tradition', *Churchman* 107 (1993), 339-50. If the matter were to be decided strictly on the lexical basis of the usage of the term 'evangelicalism' and its cognates, Turnbull's case would be quite strong. We have noted below that the lexical basis for claiming that evangelicalism began in 1730 is very weak.

31 The essay was published in *The Evangelical Quarterly* 67 (1995) and was followed by a rejoinder from Scottish evangelical theologian Donald MacLeod. The same readiness to lay blame at the feet of eighteenth century Evangelicalism for the introduction of unwholesome tendencies into western Christianity is exhibited in the more recent volume by D.G. Hart, *Recovering Mother Kirk: The Case for Liturgy in the Reformed Tradition* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 2003), chap. 1.

32 Letham, 'Is Evangelicalism Christian?' 12

33 *Ibid.*

Latham's essay was largely an indictment of Evangelicalism in its contemporary American dress, replete with its heavy emphasis upon parachurch organizations. Yet it was very telling that he found the roots of these unsavory contemporary emphases in the very period which Bebbington had marked out as discontinuous with seventeenth century.

3. Unacknowledged weaknesses of Bebbington's thesis

Here it will be our purpose to draw attention to *six* lines of evidence which strongly suggest that the argument for discontinuity between the evangelical Christianity of the eighteenth century and that which preceded has been overlaid.

I. Bebbington has argued that Evangelicalism arose in response to a combination of factors unique to the eighteenth century. An older view is that evangelical Christianity arose in light of recurring perennial factors.

We should give fresh consideration to the issue raised by R.A. Knox in his half-century old work, *Enthusiasm*.³⁴ It is that of recurrence of *pattern* in church history, a pattern which Knox – no friend to Evangelicalism, termed 'ultrasupernaturalism'.³⁵ Few evangelicals will take delight in the kinds of assorted company amongst which he depicts our tradition. His aim may have been derogatory in binding together Montanists and Donatists, Quakers and Jansenists, Moravians and Methodists; yet we are nevertheless left to grapple with the recurrence of similar tendencies of Christian thought and action in multiple centuries and geographic locations. This line of analysis, when separated from Knox's polemical intent, does much to make the idea of evangelical continuities, at least from the Reformation forward, more likely rather than less so. Recently, this line of thought was revived by missiologist, Andrew Walls, when he maintained that the evangelical 'pattern' in the European stream of Christianity

assumes Christendom, the territorial conception of the Christian faith that brought about the integration of throne and altar, that began with the conversion of the barbarians of the North and West. Perhaps we have not fully faced the extent to which all subsequent Western Christianity was shaped by the circumstances under which the people of northern Europe came into the Christian faith.³⁶

34 The full title was, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion With Special Reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford, University Press 1950).

35 *Ibid.* 2,4.

36 Andrew Walls, 'The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa', in Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond, 1700-1990* (New York, 1994), 311.

On this understanding, recurring evangelical movements in Western Europe have been rooted in the recurring difficulty found in nurturing vital scriptural Christianity in settings where the union of throne and altar submerged real Christianity under nominal.

The Puritanism of late Tudor and early Stuart England was just such an evangelical movement aiming at the overcoming of nominal Christianity with real. J.I. Packer, whose sentiments about the perennial pedigree of evangelicalism we noted at the opening of this paper, has contended effectively that English Puritanism in both its Tudor and Stuart phases was essentially a movement set on national evangelization and personal revival. He writes that by mid-eighteenth century, 'a work of grace was in progress in England every whit as potent and deep as its counterpart a century later'.³⁷ Within the framework provided by Walls, why would the Evangelicalism of the eighteenth century be viewed as *other* than corresponding to the movement of the preceding century? As the grievance which had given rise to Puritanism – an inadequately Christianized England – still existed in the eighteenth century, why would not the lingering of this state of affairs provoke recurring attempts to resolve it?

II. Evangelical writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries asserted continuity rather than the reverse

Erasmus Middleton (1739-1805) was one of six Oxford undergraduates expelled from that University in 1767 on account of their suspected Methodist sympathies.³⁸ Middleton was ultimately able to gain Anglican ordination after further studies at Cambridge in spite of this debacle in the other university.

He is best remembered today as a translator of Luther's *Commentary on Galatians* and as author of an interesting historical work, *Biographica Evangelica*, published in four volumes (1769-1786).³⁹ It is the latter that concerns us here as it is a clear example of evangelical successionist understanding.

Middleton's gallery of past evangelical heroes extended into his own century: George Whitefield (b.1714) is included; John Wesley – because still active as Middleton wrote, is not. Nonconformists such as Philip Doddridge (b.1702), Isaac Watts (b. 1674) and Matthew Henry (b. 1662) are described, as are such Scots as Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine (b.1680 and 1685), Thomas Boston (b. 1676) and Thomas Halyburton (b. 1674). America is represented in David Brainerd (b.1718), Jonathan Edwards (b. 1703), and Cotton Mather (b.1663). But all these are Middleton's near contemporaries! Here we will also find John Bunyan

37 James Packer, 'Puritanism as a Movement of Revival', in *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, 1990), 46: The essay had first been printed under the same name in the *Evangelical Quarterly* 52 (1980), 2-16.

38 s.v. 'Middleton, Erasmus' in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Oxford, 1996), II, 769.

39 I have utilized the 1816 edition of Middleton's work in 4 volumes; (London, W. Baynes).

(b.1628), Puritans John Flavel, John Howe (b. 1630), and John Owen (b.1616). Episcopal bishops are here as well: William Beveridge of St. Asaph's (b. 1638), Robert Leighton of Glasgow (b.1611), Joseph Hall of Norwich (b.1574), John Davenant of Salisbury (b. 1570) and George Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury (b.1562) with his predecessor John Whitgift (b. 1530).

Foreign Protestants both modern (James Saurin of France, Herman Witsius of Holland, the German Spener, and John Jacob Ulrich of Switzerland) and ancient (Zanchius, Piscator, Musculus, Farel, Calvin, Beza, Melancthon and Luther) are all in this gallery. So are the Marian martyrs Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley and those of the era of Mary's father, Henry VIII: Frith, Tyndale and Bilney. But Middleton is not done: his gallery contains pre-Reformers Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome of Prague. The reader who is reminded of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563) will have sized up the matter rightly – for Middleton has had that Elizabethan work clearly in mind as he has done his own sketch work.⁴⁰

It may be well argued that Middleton, like his near-contemporary chronicler Augustus Toplady,⁴¹ wrote ecclesiastical history as a combatant, attempting to give legitimacy to the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century against church officials who derided the movement as 'enthusiast'. Very well. It can be granted also that such writing does not meet the standards of critical history writing. But what is under discussion here is really only the line of vision pursued by such writers. They were evangelical successionists.

A similar verdict would seem justified when the autobiographical writing of Thomas Scott (1747-1821) is examined in relation to our question. Scott was certainly not a Christian in any Trinitarian sense of the word when he commenced his ministry in the Church of England in 1772. His initial belligerence toward his evangelical clerical neighbor, John Newton (1725-1807), ensured that he resisted the theological views and literature endorsed by his neighbor. But when Scott found searching descriptions of the office and work of the minister in the volume *Pastoral Care* of late Bishop Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715) and the archetypal evangelical doctrine of justification clearly taught in the writings of the Elizabethan Anglican divine, Thomas Hooker (1554-1600), he was disarmed. In sum, he concluded 'that the very doctrine which I had hitherto despised as Methodistical, was indisputably the standard doctrine of the Established Church'. For Scott, shortly thereafter a convert of the Evangelical Revival, the movement which had engulfed him was accomplishing a restoration of earlier biblical teaching which had been swept aside.⁴²

The same may be said of the historical writing of Victorian bishop, John

40 Middleton, *Biographica Evangelica* I, iii.

41 Toplady's contribution to polemical history, *Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England* (1774) was written primarily to discredit the doctrinal emphasis of the Wesleyan movement. It covered much of the same Anglican terrain as had the more irenic Middleton.

42 Thomas Scott, *The Force of Truth* (1779) (Edinburgh, 1984), 43-62, note especially 61, 62.

Charles Ryle. What was he meaning when in his *Christian Leaders of the Last Century*⁴³ he termed Whitefield and the Wesleys 'the reformers of the last century' and the movement they led the 'great English Reformation of the eighteenth century'? When we observe that Ryle wrote polemically, aiming to discredit the burgeoning Tractarian movement by associating its formalism with the torpor which the awakening of the preceding century had needed to overcome, we have not altered the fact that he viewed evangelical history as a successionist.⁴⁴

III. The argument for discontinuity rests upon an unjustified fixation upon Anglicanism as though it summed up the whole of English Protestantism.

There is no disguising the fact that the Puritan evangelical heritage had been largely eradicated from within the Church of England after the Act of Uniformity of 1662. The Puritan heritage and the Nonconformist tradition which thereafter perpetuated it could not easily distance itself from a perceived connection with the execution of King Charles in 1649 – and this, even though Puritan forces had been of two minds about the king at that time.⁴⁵ It is now accepted that Puritan theologizing in the Church of England had ended with John Edwards (1637-1716) of St. John's College, Cambridge.⁴⁶ Anglican clergy of such an outlook were all but non-existent by 1730 and there were plainly no colleges training Anglican clergy to embrace these viewpoints.⁴⁷

But with this admitted, it is far from necessary to conclude that this influence had no living exponents within England. Native and foreign Protestant theologians of the preceding century were still weighty authorities in the various Nonconformist academies on which Presbyterian and Independent congregations depended for the education of their ministers.⁴⁸ One such Nonconformist minister, Philip Pugh, of Cardiganshire, Wales owned a copy of the *Body of Divinity* by the late

43 (London, 1885), 21, 22.

44 We may also fairly typify as successionist the ecclesiastical history of Isaac Milner, *History of the Church of Christ* (London, 1827). But it did not extend forward beyond the age of Luther. In fairness, we must admit that John Stoughton, the 19th century Nonconformist historian, viewed these events differently. Rather like such eighteenth century Nonconformists as Isaac Watts who watched the Awakening from a polite distance, Stoughton took note of the 'manifest defects' of the eighteenth century evangelicals. See John Stoughton, *History of Religion in England from the Long Parliament to 1850* (London, 1881), VII, 112.

45 The stigma attached to the Puritan heritage in the eighteenth century is helpfully described in Raphael Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism, 1820-1914: A Preliminary Sketch' in Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew, editors, *Revival and Religion Since 1700: Essays for John Walsh* (London, The Hambledon Press, 1993).

46 s.v. 'Edwards, John' in the J.D. Douglas, ed. *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, 1974).

47 There is a candid discussion of this period in Bebbington, 36.

48 The eighteenth century academies are helpfully described in Gordon Rupp's *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford, 1984), 172-79 and the older work of H. McLachlan, *English Education Under The Test Act* (Manchester, 1931).

Archbishop James Ussher (d.1658); he apparently obtained the work in 1724 and loaned it to the young Anglican evangelical Daniel Rowlands in 1740.⁴⁹ The connection is significant, for Pugh was a living continuator of a fervent Puritan evangelicalism such that a Rowland could imbibe this influence afresh. The camaraderie of a Pugh and a Rowland in central Wales would be matched by a similar relationship between a veteran Nonconformist minister of Gloucester, Thomas Cole, and the young George Whitefield.⁵⁰ Such exemplars, termed by historian Geoffrey Nuttall as 'Evangelicals before the revival'⁵¹ are not scarce. The fervent evangelical and itinerant ministry of other Nonconformists in this period – Risdon Darracott and Philip Doddridge among them, goes far to qualify the general impression that what is now called 'Old Dissent' looked on the dawn of the Evangelical Revival from a detached distance.⁵² In just this way, an Anglican evangelical of the next generation, John Newton, would be nurtured by the Nonconformist evangelical London ministry of Samuel Brewer (1723-96), whose congregation was the largest Dissenting body in the city.⁵³ Continuing evangelical Nonconformity therefore had not only a body of literature (a part of which was Anglican) to offer Anglican evangelicals once these were stirred by the Revival, but models of pulpit and pastoral ministry waiting to be emulated. There is good reason, then, to see the spread of Evangelicalism among Anglicans as their becoming re-connected to a pre-existing tradition.⁵⁴

IV. The argument for discontinuity is based on England's situation (just described) as normative when the religious situations of Wales, Scotland and America were not directly parallel.

While it would be possible to center an argument about Evangelicalism's origin

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- 49 Eifion Evans, *Daniel Rowland and the Great Awakening in Wales* (Edinburgh, 1985) 38. This *Body of Divinity* was in all likelihood Ussher's *Principles of the Christian Religion* (1564), identified among the publications of the late Archbishop by the biographer, R. Buick Knox, in his *James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh* (Cardiff, 1967) 195. See also, A. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze* (London, 1960), 46.
- 50 The information about Whitefield is contained in Geoffrey Nuttall's 'George Whitefield's Curate: Gloucester Dissent and the Revival', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27: 2 (1977).
- 51 Geoffrey Nuttall, 'Methodism and the Older Dissent: Some Perspectives', *Journal of the United Reformed Church Historical Society* 2:8, 261
- 52 On Risdon Darracott s.v. the *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, I (Oxford, 1996) and John Stoughton, *Religion in England* VI, 99. The links of Philip Doddridge with the Evangelical Revival are documented among other places in Geoffrey Nuttall ed. *Philip Doddridge 1702-51* (London, 1951), chap. 2, and Alan C. Clifford, 'The Christian Mind of Philip Doddridge (1702-1751): The Gospel according to an Evangelical Congregationalist', *Evangelical Quarterly* 56:4 (1984), 227-42.
- 53 Bruce Hindmarsh, *John Newton and the English Evangelical Tradition* (Oxford, 1996), 69.
- 54 I would draw attention here, afresh, to the way in which Thomas Scott vividly illustrates this phenomena of re-connection to earlier Anglican theological tradition. Cf. note 42, supra.

upon England by virtue of that country's eighteenth century superiority of population and political power in the English-speaking world, such an approach (the one followed by Bebbington) has a definite built-in disadvantage. Starting with England will suppose that generally, England was the agent by which Evangelicalism was transmitted to other regions in her orbit. But there is in fact a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that the other regions and territories were the active agents by which Evangelicalism was transmitted to England.

In Wales, the episcopally-ordained Griffith Jones was preaching as an itinerant evangelist, across parish boundaries, by 1710. Great crowds were being powerfully affected by his preaching by 1713. Historian of the period, Skevington Wood, states the matter bluntly; 'he proclaimed the new birth and saw its gracious fruits long before the onset of the Awakening proper.'⁵⁵ The three great leaders of the awakening in Wales which followed, Daniel Rowland, Howell Harris, and Pryce Davies all looked to Griffiths Jones as a father-figure. It was as a veteran of these labors that he advised the young George Whitefield at Bath in 1739.⁵⁶

In the American colonies, there had been a decay of vital Christianity observed as the seventeenth century gave way to the eighteenth. Yet Jonathan Edwards' grandfather, the minister Solomon Stoddard, was instrumental in five periods of spiritual awakening at Northampton, Massachusetts in the years 1679, 1683, 1696, 1712, and 1718.⁵⁷ Similar awakenings were documented at Taunton, Massachusetts in 1705 and in New Jersey by 1726 – this latter in connection with the notable ministry of Theodore Freylinghausen.⁵⁸ Other awakenings were noted in Windham, Connecticut in 1721 and Freehold, New Jersey in 1730-32 – both prior to the notable awakening with which Jonathan Edwards would be connected at Northampton in 1734 and 1735. As Wood has significantly noted, 'chronologically speaking, it was the precursor of the Evangelical Awakening in our land (i.e. the United Kingdom).'⁵⁹ It was the communication of these American tidings which raised expectancy in England that such visitations might appear there.⁶⁰

55 A. Skevington Wood, *The Inextinguishable Blaze: Spiritual Renewal and Advance in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1960) 45. The verdict of Wood had been anticipated by the statement of John S. Simon in his *The Revival of Religion in the Eighteenth Century* (London n.d.), 135 'The sunrise which came upon the nation after Wesley's conversion was preceded by a beautiful dawn in America and Wales'.

56 Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Edinburgh, 1970), I, 261.

57 In drawing attention to the continuity between Stoddard and his grandson, Edwards, Mark Noll has chosen to speak of the latter as the 'heir in spirit' to the former. Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, 1992), 87.

58 Wood, *Inextinguishable Blaze*, 56, 57

59 Ibid. 59.

60 Edwards' *Narrative of Surprising Conversions* was printed at London in 1737.

As for Scotland, we must take note of the assertions of two historians. Writing in *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism* (1989), Leigh Eric Schmidt has described the way in which early seventeenth century Presbyterians such as John Livingstone utilized seasonal celebrations of the Lord's Supper as means for open-air gospel preaching. The spectacular response to the preaching of Livingstone at Shotts in 1630 had been anticipated by similar occasions – dating back to the 1580s, when preachers of similar outlooks such as Robert Bruce, John Welsh, and Robert Rollock had preached at large with similar urgency. Schmidt unhesitatingly uses the term 'evangelical' to describe the ministry and activity of such individuals.⁶¹ An earlier writer, John MacInnes, had written that a 'militant Presbyterian evangelicalism' was a force for an extending of the Gospel into the Highlands from 1688 onward – the year of the Revolution which swept away Stuart rule.⁶² Awakenings were noted as early as 1724 in Easter Ross. The parish of Nigg witnessed an awakening which commenced in 1730 and climaxed in 1739.

This sturdy seventeenth century style of Evangelicalism *had* persisted in the eighteenth century Church of Scotland. Though it was far from numerically dominant, it was capable of both generating the secession movements which we associate with the names of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine and sustaining the 'popular' party of the Establishment which we associate with the names of John Willson and John McLaurin. Skevington Wood pointedly reminds us that 'these initial stirrings took place before the Revival had really got under way in England and prior to the arrival of George Whitefield in Scotland. He is usually regarded as the harbinger...but the Spirit had already been at work.'⁶³ There had also been a remarkable movement of the Spirit at Herrnhut, Saxony among the Moravians on August 13, 1727.⁶⁴

And, in very short order, various extensions of these other movements in the outlying portions of the United Kingdom, in the American colonies and in Saxony were operative in significant ways within England. We have already noted the influence of the veteran Welsh evangelist, Griffiths Jones, upon the young George Whitefield in 1739. We may now note the signal influence of Scottish evangelical schoolmaster, George Conon upon the Anglican minister of Cornwall, Samuel Walker beginning in 1747. Conon had held his educational post in Truro since 1728; he had apparently brought his evangelical convictions with him from his alma mater, the University of Aberdeen. Walker, the first evangelical Anglican clergyman of influence in his region designated this schoolmaster 'the father of the revival in these parts.'⁶⁵ The influence of Moravian missionaries upon

61 Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism* (Princeton 1989), 21-32.

62 John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland 1688-1800* (Aberdeen, 1951), chap. 2.

63 Wood, 118.

64 *Ibid.*

65 In G.C.B. Davies, *The Early Cornish Evangelicals* (London, 1951), 218.

the Georgia-bound John Wesley and of the Moravian Fetter Lane Society upon him at his return to London are widely known.⁶⁶ Less well known is the fact that John Wesley went promptly thereafter to visit Herrnhut, Saxony, center of the Moravian efforts.⁶⁷ Whitefield, already an Evangelical preacher when he reached Scotland in 1739, came to be influenced theologically by his contact with Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine. That the evangelist would not consent to confine his ministry to their secession churches did not prevent his being deeply influenced thereafter by Ralph Erskine's published sermons and his contemporary, Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*.⁶⁸

The Bebbington thesis, while acknowledging (as did Skevington Wood) the *temporal* priority of movements of awakening in Wales, Scotland and America⁶⁹ and the prior activity of the leading personalities used in the leadership of such movements still insists on a birth of Evangelicalism in the 1730s – a period which postdates them.

V. It is this unbroken Evangelical continuity in the eighteenth century in English Nonconformity, in Wales, Scotland and America which alone can explain the well-documented Anglican evangelical receptivity to the Puritan classics, Matthew Henry, and eighteenth century Nonconformist Theology.

When we read that George Whitefield relied deeply on Nonconformist Matthew Henry's *Commentary* and the devotional classic of the Scot, Henry Scougal – *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, that Samuel Walker of Cornwall gave Thomas Boston's *Fourfold State* to the young convert, Thomas Haweis, that Yorkshire Evangelical William Grimshaw came to find great help in reading the Puritan, John Owen's *Justification by Faith* we easily form the impression that the formative literature of this movement was international and pan-denominational.⁷⁰ The dependency of Anglican Evangelical clergy on this kind of literature was no chimera; at the end of the century the theologian on whom they most often depended was the late Nonconformist, Philip Doddridge, whose *Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics, and Theology* had been published posthumously in 1763.⁷¹ In fairness, the traffic in books was not unidirectional. English Nonconformists were themselves immensely assisted in this period by the writings of the American, Jonathan Edwards.⁷² One would certainly be

66 V.H.H. Green, *John Wesley* (London, 1964), 63ff.

67 See Geoffrey Nuttall, 'Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain', in J. Van Den Berg and J.P. Van Dooren, eds. *Pietismus und Reveil* (Leiden, 1978).

68 Dallimore, *Whitefield*, Vol. I. p. 405. The disagreement with the Erskine brothers over ecclesiology is helpfully reviewed in Allan P. F. Sell, 'The Message of the Erskines for Today' in *Evangelical Quarterly* 60:4 (1988), 299-315.

69 The acknowledgement of temporal priority is given in Bebbington at page 47.

70 Ibid. See also Skevington Wood, *Thomas Haweis* (London, 1957), 36. Frank Baker, *William Grimshaw* (London, 1963), 44.

71 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 87.

72 On this subject see Geoffrey Nuttall, 'Northamptonshire and the Modern Question', *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 n.s. (1965).

justified in drawing the conclusion that in theological literature, the Evangelical Revival was a movement in continuity with spiritual movements of preceding generations.

VI. The terminology of 'evangelical' had clearly been attached to persons and movements of earlier centuries.

It has been important to leave this consideration until the last place. Had it been reviewed earlier, we would have begged the question of what kind of movements had used the terminology; the mere or bare use of such terms would have been thought to have some decisive import. But this is not what we maintain. What we do maintain is that when a sixteenth century Reformer, a seventeenth century Puritan-Pietist, or early eighteenth century Nonconformist used or had applied to him the language of 'evangelical', it did refer to conversionist, Christocentric, biblicistic and activistic emphases remarkably like (though not identical in every respect to) the subsequent spiritual movements of the eighteenth century.

This linguistic point is, admittedly, a difficult one to clinch. But the linguistic difficulty exists as much for those who favor the Bebbington thesis as for those who oppose it. Can it be insisted *on* linguistic grounds that evangelicalism began in the 1730s? Not according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*;⁷³ the earliest citation given for 'evangelicalism' is a dismissive aside about the movement from the *Edinburgh Review* in 1831. In that era the term is used with reference to an emerging party within the Church of England known for its strident adherence to the Gospel. The Bebbington contention that Evangelicalism commenced around 1730 draws no particular support from the history of the use of the term; in 1730 the term had yet to be coined. The contention regarding Evangelicalism's emergence is in fact based on inferences about the convergence of certain beliefs, emphases, and practices in that first third of the eighteenth century.

Some inferences of a different kind may just as well be drawn from the recurrence of the terminology 'evangelical' and its cognates in the two hundred years *prior* to 1730. We have noted that Bebbington himself acknowledges polemical use of the term 'evangelical' in England as early as 1531 (by Thomas More of William Tyndale).⁷⁴ The O.E.D. lends considerable support to those who would insist that there is more to this pre-1730 usage of 'evangelical' and its cognates than a generic meaning of 'of or pertaining to the gospel'. As early as 1583, the cognate 'evangelic' is in use as 'the designation of a sect or party as evangelical'. On the other hand, this term could be used in the seventeenth century as a generic term for European Protestants. Of the term 'evangelical', the O.E.D. indicates that it is a term which 'since the Reformation has been adopted as designation of certain theological parties who have claimed that the doctrines on which they lay especial stress constitute the gospel'. By 1619 the term can be used in combination with others, such as 'the Reformed evangelical religion'. In the eighteenth century, the term was 'applied to that school of Protestants which

73 I have referred to the 1971 edition.

74 Bebbington, 1.

maintains that the essence of the gospel consists in the doctrine of salvation by faith in the atoning death of Christ'.

With such linguistic antecedents, we can proceed to examine the validity of the use of these terms by modern writers with reference to the period *prior* to 1730. The major modern biographer of the reform-minded archbishop, Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Diarmaid MacCulloch, has used the terminology 'evangelical' freely to describe the theological outlook of his subject.⁷⁵ The same author has used the terms 'evangelical' and 'evangelicalism' to describe Christian leaders of the same outlook in his subsequent volume on the era of the boy king, Edward VI.⁷⁶ In the same vein, David Daniell, author of *William Tyndale: A Biography*, has used the terminology 'evangelical' to describe the readers of that Reformer's *New Testament* and *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* as well as a circle of Tyndale followers which included John Frith.⁷⁷ Kenneth Hylson-Smith has similarly written of that circle which made Cambridge's White Horse Inn their meeting place; he documents how – already in the 1520s two of this number, Thomas Arthur and Thomas Bilney, undertook a preaching tour through East Anglia on which they engaged in clearly evangelistic preaching. This author has been prepared to speak of a 'piecemeal but effective Tudor evangelical tradition'.⁷⁸ The modern editors of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* have used the term 'evangelical' to describe those French Protestants he defended against the slanders and persecutions of King Francis.⁷⁹ The same term is used by the Hungarian Calvin scholar, Alexandre Ganoczy, to describe the young Calvin and his associates at the stage of his career when the chief influences upon him were the Reformation writings of Luther.⁸⁰ We have also noted the free use of the evangelical terminology with reference to fervent seventeenth century evangelization efforts in Scotland and elsewhere.⁸¹ Are these usages simply conjectural or anachronistic? Even when it is allowed that we are in certain cases dealing with texts in translation, we are still warranted in concluding that there is a proper use of the terminology 'evangelical' and

75 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: a Life* (New Haven, 1996). See, for instance pages 2-3, 59-60. MacCulloch goes so far (p.2) as to insist that in the 1520-30 era 'evangelicalism... is a conveniently vague catch-all term which can be applied across the board, except to the very small minority of English religious rebels who proceeded further to Continental radicalism (i.e. Anabaptism). In the nineteenth century the word was appropriated in the English-speaking world to describe a party within Protestantism and within the Church of England, but it can be liberated once more to perform a useful task for the religious history of Tudor England.'

76 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (New York, 1999), 2,3,8,14 etc.

77 David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (Yale, 1994), 171, 217.

78 Kenneth Hylson-Smith, *Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Reformation: III 1384-1558* (London, 2001), 156-159.

79 'Preface to King Francis' in *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* Vol. 1 John T. McNeill, ed. (Philadelphia, 1960), 11.

80 Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin*, (Edinburgh, 1988) 89-92.

81 See notes 61 and 62 supra.

'evangelicalism' prior to 1730, with reference to strident Protestant gospel advocates. On a linguistic basis alone, little distinction can be drawn between evangelical movements prior to and after 1730.

4. Towards resolution of the discord about evangelicalism's longevity

In preparation of this paper, I was struck again and again at how often vital pieces of information embedded in David Bebbington's footnotes have also been accessible to otherwise-minded interpreters before him and since. For instance, he is able to incorporate the contentions of Geoffrey Nuttall about the survival of an evangelical emphasis in early eighteenth century Nonconformity – an emphasis including itinerant evangelism and field preaching – without turning aside from his overall thesis of Evangelicalism's being something new.⁸² The inference I would draw from this fact is not that we are confronting selective handling of evidence or tendentious argument, but that we have in Bebbington an example of history writing being pursued according to a striking model of explanation. So convinced is Bebbington that eighteenth century Evangelicalism is a movement demonstrating a clear attempt to embrace emphases and ideas supplied by the Enlightenment, that he has chosen to *subject to* this impressive insight a whole range of evidence which could tend to undermine it.

I do not advocate that we return to a sclerotic insistence that Evangelicalism is not subject to change (a claim as objectionable in Evangelical as it is in Roman Christianity). I do advocate that we be more prepared than formerly to speak about Evangelicalisms i.e. varying expressions or manifestations of the evangelical faith in different centuries or eras as well as in diverse cultures. Is not Bebbington's concern to highlight striking developments and departures in the eighteenth century as well served if we agree to speak of 'the Evangelicalism of the eighteenth century' as compared to 'the Evangelicalism of the Puritan period' or 'the Romantic era'? I believe that it is, and suggest that he himself has pointed in this direction by describing just such striking developments *after* the eighteenth century had run its course.⁸³ I simply think him inconsistent in being unwilling to apply this developmental perspective to the periods prior to the Evangelical Revival as he is to those that followed it.

As for the eighteenth century, we are certainly entitled to say that pre-existing disparate regional and denominational evangelical movements in Saxony, Scotland, Wales, America, and segments of English Nonconformity were joined by an ever-widening circle of awakening in the Church of England. Pre-existing common commitments to Christ, Bible, conversion – and at least domestic activism, were strengthened in the collaboration and inter-communication which characterized the period after 1730. From this period are planted seeds

82 See footnote 51 supra.

83 Bebbington, chap. 3 'A Troubling of the Water'. Note especially 80-81, 'The Influence of Romanticism'.

of future pan-evangelical collaboration. At first it is shocking to some when a Whitefield preaches for Scottish Presbyterians, or when the Independent, Doddridge, appears in Whitefield's Moorfields Tabernacle. But by century's end, such seeds of pan-evangelicalism will have grown to make possible an interdenominational London Missionary Society and a Religious Tract Society of similar breadth.⁸⁴ There is no quibbling over the fact that the pre-existent doctrine of conversion underwent modification in the eighteenth century; the expectation that the process would be protracted faded.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, in North America at least, the two most recently published treatments of Evangelicalism's lineal descent do not endorse the bold assertions made by *Books and Culture* in early 2001 that Evangelicalism was 'An eighteenth century British movement (which) crossed the Atlantic'. No, instead there is in Randall Balmer and Mark Noll the frank admission that Evangelicalism in America (at least) is a hybridization of pre-existent Puritan and Pietist streams. This view, I believe is close to the mark for Britain as well as America.⁸⁶

Abstract

Dr. David Bebbington's remarkable volume, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, was recognized from its 1989 publication as a work of massive research and winsome presentation. On both sides of the Atlantic, it has justly established its author as a primary interpreter of the Evangelical past. But the volume, in the process of chronicling Evangelical developments across 250 years, has circulated ideas which give pause. Chief among these is the viewpoint, repeatedly urged, that Evangelicalism only *began* to exist after the pivotal events of the 1730s which we recognize to have marked the onset of an extended period of awakening. While the book certainly allowed that there were movements and individuals inside and outside Britain which served as precursors to Evangelicalism's emergence, it denies that Evangelicalism itself has a pedigree older than the early eighteenth century. The author of the article has observed the rapid dissemination of this thesis since 1989 and some of the uses to which it is being put. He cautions that we should not concede – as something incontestable – that Evangelicalism had no existence before 1730. If we concede this without more compelling reasons than are put forward in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* we will have prematurely consented to the view that Evangelicalism is merely the child of one era or epoch.

84 These later developments are helpfully described in Roger Martin's *Evangelicals United: Ecumenical Stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain: 1795-1830* (London, 1983).

85 Modification in the understanding of conversion is helpfully dealt with by David Bebbington in an article, 'Evangelical Conversion, c. 1740-1850', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 18:2 (2000). J. I. Packer's earlier reflections on the subject are printed in 'The Means of Conversion', *Crux* 25:4 (1989).

86 Randall Balmer, *Blessed Assurance: A History of Evangelicalism in America* (Boston, 1999), 14. Mark Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2001), 9.

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