Chapter III: COMPELLING FORCE BEHIND COMMITMENT, PASSION AND VISION OF THE MISSIONARIES:

PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

The name ‘Protestantism’, in the strict sense of the word, first appeared at the Diet of Speyer in 1529, when Charles the V, The Holy Roman Emperor rescinded the provision of the Diet of Speyer in 1526 that had allowed each ruler to choose whether to administer the Edict of Worms. On April 19, 1529, a protest against this decision was read on behalf of fourteen free cities of Germany and a group of Lutheran Princes declared their freedom to choose Protestantism or Lutheranism as their national Church. Thus the Protestant Movement began in Northern Europe in the 16th century as a reaction to Medieval Roman Catholic doctrines and practices under the influence of Martin Luther, founder of Lutheran Churches, and John Calvin, founder of the Calvinist Movement. A third major branch of the Reformation which encountered conflict with both the Catholics and other Protestants was also called the Radical Reformation or Anabaptists, who followed Zwingli. Thus, Protestantism spread eventually throughout

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1 Formulating a definition of Protestantism that would include all its forms has long been a puzzle before the Protestant historians and theologians, for there is a greater diversity within Protestantism. For example, a high-church Anglicans and Lutherans has some forms in common with Catholicism. Only the Zwinglianists and the Calvinists took radical positions in Protestantism. The Encyclopedia Of Protestantism defines the term in a wider sense, as all non-catholic is Protestantism. The Authority of Scripture is all making sense in Protestantism. The Scripture and Tradition are in effective harmony in Catholicism. On this contrast the definition is formulated. Hans J. Hillerbrand, (ed), Encyclopedia of Protestantism, (4.Vol) Routledge, New York, 2003, p.xxviii. Protestant Theologian H. Niebuhr called Protestantism, the Radical Monotheism and Christ Centered Protestantism mainly based on its quintessential beliefs. Mircea Eliade, (ed), The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. 12, Macmillan, London, 1987, p.27.

2 John Calvin (1509-64) was the most influential leader of Reformation. He instituted the system of Christian theology called Calvinism or Reformed Theology. He interpreted Christianity more strictly than Martin Luther.
Europe. The Anglican Church regarded itself as derived not from Reformation influences, but from the renunciation by King Henry VIII in 1534.\textsuperscript{3}

Before delving upon different Protestant movements one should probe into the signs that betrayed the religious crisis. These were: 1) Exaltation of Church dignitaries was a visible sign of apostasy. 2) Huge Church buildings with an outward show of exquisite architecture and ecclesiastical vestments, betrayed the inward emptiness. 3) In the name of celibacy, the practice of concubinary was prevalent in the Clergy. One Bishop of St. Asaph of his day was earning 400 Marks from the licenses from concubinage that he sold to his priests. 4) The Clergy and the Laity were together shut in blind faiths and superstitious traditions that were quite contrary to the Holy Scriptures. This was due to the fact that very few could read Scriptures and books were scarce. 5) Another common apostasy was praying to the dead and worshipping images. Invoking the martyred saints, visitation to their graves and idolizing their images 6) Doctrine of Indulgences for forgiveness of sins and penance gained general acceptance. From 13\textsuperscript{th} century onwards sins were ransomed by money. Pope Sixtus IV extended notional effect of indulgences to the remission of pains in Purgatory. 7) During 1348-1350 Europe was under the grip of Black Death and Plague and one third of the population perished. In view of these deaths, the observance of Mass for the dead in Purgatory became widespread. The Rich summoned the Clerics to offer mass everyday to them and to the dead for fear of death and judgement. 8) Decline in the moralities of Pope, the clergy and the Monasticism.\textsuperscript{4}

Against this background of apostasy in the church order, a revival of old Greek and Roman art and literature, translations of the Arabic, rendition of the Greco-Roman knowledge systems into Greek and Latin, a spirit of adventure through Geographical Discoveries, Scientific Discoveries, all characterized the beginning of the new era of Renaissance. Classicism and Humanism were driving forces behind this new learning. The devotees of new learning in most cases were Humanists, who were Christian in outlook and stressed the importance of religious instruction and education. Some great Christian Humanists and Proto-Reformers were John Wycliffe (1324-1384) of England, John Huss (1369-1415) of Bohemia, Jerome Savonarola (1452 – 1498) of Italy, John Colet (1466-1519) of England, Erasmus (1467-1536) of Rotterdam and these were the forerunners of the reformation. Erasmus best exemplified Christian humanism, and Luther was deeply influenced by it, reading Erasmus Greek Edition of the New Testament when he discovered justification by faith. Hence, the contemporary theologians attributed to Erasmus the egg that Luther hatched. Erasmus answered that what he laid was a Hen, whereas Luther hatched a Gamecock.5

Protestants generally trace their separation from the Roman Catholic Church to 1517, which is sometimes called Magisterial Reformation because it initially proposed numerous radical revisions of the doctrinal standards of the Roman Catholic Church (called the Magisterium).6 The Protestant suddenly erupted in many places at once with distinctive national characteristics in the various regions in which it arose. It was Calvin

6 The heritage of the Classical Reformers and Conservative Reformers was sometimes called the Magisterial i.e. established or who were often reluctant to push ahead. They engaged in prolonged efforts to make their early efforts known to Rome and seemed genuinely reluctant to spawn separate movements in their own names. They were (Luther, Zwingly and Calvin) Magisterial Reformers. The emphasis on ‘Magisterial’ reflects the political or civil interrelation of theologians and secular state, with the later protecting and enabling the theological ideas. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, London, 1981, p.99.
who opened the way for more radical forms of Protestantism. It became the great fighting creed of the Reformation theology. The Puritans, the Methodists and the most of the Dissenters of various established Churches were keen followers of the Calvinist theology. In England Anglicanism differed from all its continental analogues, as it was more political than it was religious. The attitude of Henry VIII was to keep the Catholic orthodoxy, except the authority of the Pope. However he attempted a compromise by publishing the X Articles and thus not closing the door to Protestant doctrines. In 1559, Queen Elizabeth I established a moderate form of Protestantism that became known as Anglicanism. Later the Puritans brought the ‘purifications’ to the Church doctrines of England on Calvinistic lines.

The basic theological Tenets were four Latin nuggets of Christian faith of the Protestant Reformation, which express the common principle theological concerns of the most of the Protestant Churches. They are:

1) Solus Christus (Jesus Christ alone): Jesus is the only reference for adoration and worship. This theology is against the Catholic reverence of the Saints and their worship of Virgin Mary.

2) Sola Scriptura (The Scripture alone): Against the Catholic view which decided orthodoxy by interpretation of writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, through the decisions of councils and the declarations of the Bishops of Rome, the Protestants

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Calvin’s thought, most completely expressed in his Institutions of Christian Religion (1536) and other significant documents like the Canons of Dort (1619), the Westminster Confession (1646) etc., were Calvinist Theology. Calvinist Theology is the doctrine of the Presbytarian and the Reformed Churches and is part of the heritage of Baptists, the Congregationalists and certain other Christian Groups. Calvinism ranks as the most influential theology in Non-Lutheran Protestantism. *New Standard Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, London, 1987, p.42.
argued that the Bible alone is the word of God, self interpreting, and the foundation and the test of authority for the Church.

3) Sola Fide (The Faith alone): This is the famous doctrine of Justification by Faith. In contrast to the Roman Catholic system of meritorious works of penance and indulgences, masses for the dead, the treasury of the merits of Saints and Martyrs, a ministering Priesthood, and Purgatory, the Protestants argued that every believer is a priest, called to be Saint and obtained reconciliation with God, through faith in Jesus Christ, alone.8

4) Sola Gratia (The Grace alone): Against the Roman Catholic view that faith and works are necessary to preserve the state of grace freely given by God, the Reformers pointed that salvation is a gift from God dispensed through Jesus Christ, regardless of merit, for no one deserves salvation.9

Apart from these four basic tenets, another contentious debate around the Eucharist (The Lord’s Supper) arose. From the beginning, the Protestants were in agreement against the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the substance of the bread and wine used in the sacrificial rite of the Mass, is exchanged for the substance of Christ’s body and blood. Though all the Reformers repudiated the sacrifice of the Mass, they were deeply divided about the nature of the divine presence. The Lutherans held to a theory called consubstantiation. (Affirming the substantial presence of Christ in or under the bread). The reformed, according to Zwingli, see the Lord’s Supper as a memorial ceremony, denying the substantial presence of Christ, but affirming that Christ is limited to the believer through faith. The Calvinists affirm the real presence of Christ in a manner different from Lutheran, saying that the Church has a new

identity from him in a manner analogous to naming the bread ‘my body’, effecting a
spiritual union with the Church, symbolized and given by means of the bread, by the
Holy Spirit, through faith, but without changing the bread into himself. In Scotland the
Reformation was associated with the name of John Knox, who declared that one
celebration of the Mass is worse than a cup of poison. Therefore, Knox defied the Pope
and Mary, Queen of Scots, on matters of existing religion and widely spread Calvinist
theology in Scotland.\textsuperscript{10} In England, the Anglicans were close to the Catholics in practice.
Therefore the Puritans fought on the reformed Calvinist lines for the purification of the
Church of England. As they could not reform the church from within, so they separated
from it and were called Separatists or Congregationalists because of their belief in the
rights of local congregations.\textsuperscript{11}

In an overall assessment of the unity among the Protestants the drawn and
underlining principles were: 1) The worship of Christ 2) The primacy, supremacy and all
sufficiency of the Bible 3) Justification by faith 4) The priesthood of all believers. The
Reformers did not always agree among themselves on each and every issue. The
Reformed Church did not all at once abandon every error of Dark Ages. The
distinctiveness of these denominations relates mainly to the following theological areas;
the doctrines of grace, church government, the administration of sacraments, the
charismatic gifts and eschatology (Prophecy). We cannot minimize the importance of

\textsuperscript{10} Will Durant, \textit{The Reformation: A History of European Civilization From Wyclif To Calvin: 1300-1564},
\textsuperscript{11} Calvinism opened the way for more radical forms of Protestantism and became popular as worldwide
churches. The Puritans of England were the staunch followers of Calvinist theology. They were called
Congregationalists, as they believed each local congregation is an independent Church in itself. In the 17\textsuperscript{th}
century, the English Puritans and the Dutch Theologians added one tenet called Covenant Theology to
Calvinism. This covenant was a contractual relationship between the Christian and God. This tenet, which
became central to Puritanism, softened the doctrine of predestination by giving recognition to human
cooperation in attaining salvation. These theological tenets were imbibed in the Brethren Movement of the
19\textsuperscript{th} century. \textit{New Standard Encyclopedia}, op-cit., p. 42.
these doctrines, for there are significant practical and spiritual implications. These implications were not properly interpreted or observed by the so-called Reformed Churches. Even though there was unity in ‘essentials’ there were all the mutual anathemas among ‘Reformers’ too, such as Luther calling Zwingli ‘damned’ and Calvin called Luther ‘half-papist’ and an ‘idolater’. The Calvinists pride themselves as the true reformation Protestants, while the rest of them are second class Protestants.\textsuperscript{12} As a consequence of it, many dissenting church groups rose up upon these doctrinal issues and lapses on the part of Reformed churches. The chief dissenters were the Moravians, the Puritans or Congregationalists, the Quakers, the Shakers, the Baptists, the Methodists and the Brethren (from which the Brethren Movement sprang). But however the final result was that the Calvinistic type of doctrine alone prevailed in these Dissent groups, including the Swiss variant.

On the unsolved subject of church government, upon the lines of doctrines, the sectarian or denominationalism appeared in its worst form. Denominationalism, as understood by Richard Neibuhr (Lutheran), represented the accommodation of Christianity to the hierarchical structure of human society.\textsuperscript{13} Sometimes the cultural, geographical, political, and religious differences caused them to develop independently in varying degrees. Christian theologists ascribed the failure of Christianity to spread to every individual in the world due to this sectarian fragmentation. ‘By failing to transcend their isolation and independency, evangelical Christians have virtually forfeited a golden

opportunity to shape the religious outlook of the 20th century'.

Still, Protestant churches of almost all denominations had missionary activities in India. Each church remained independent and autonomous. Most of the early missionaries, i.e., Baptists, Anglicans, Scottish-American Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists, failed to identify themselves with the local people and their culture. Many of them were individualists. And they considered themselves to be superior to the natives upon their superior Christian beliefs and racial differences. Therefore the majority of Protestant Christians in India were the product of Christian Mass movements. Orthodox Protestants differ largely over secondary issues, not primary doctrines. Protestants seem to do about as well as Catholics on unanimity of essential doctrines. The Brethren missionaries, the subject of the present thesis, left behind them such legacies as ‘one of the fundamental principles of their ministry was the recognition of unity of all believers. They were very often pleased to demonstrate their fellowship with all who belonged to Christ and paid no regard to denominationalism.

Anthony Norris Groves, the early Brethren missionary clearly stated that one of his purposes in going to India was “to become united more truly in heart with the entire missionary band there, and to show that, not withstanding all differences, we are one in Christ”.

Despite many differences, Protestantism has ongoing positive significance for the history and theology of Christianity. It had strongly influenced the cultural, political, and social history of several countries. The Protestants brought into force the practices of

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15 A Church Historian, Winthrop S. Hudson argues that denominationalism is the opposite of Sectarianism. Denominationalists have in their minds the common roots. All denominations recognize their responsibility for the whole of society and they expect to cooperate in freedom and mutual respect with other denominations in discharging that responsibility. Ironically, Plymouth Brethren or the Brethren Movement began as movement intended to end denominationalism. Winthrop S. Hudson, "Denominationalism as a Basis for Ecumenicity: A Seventeenth Century Conception," *Church History*, 24 (1955) p.p. 32-48.
early Christians of the 1st century. Reformation was seen as the recovery, within a Trinitarian framework of Christocentric focus for faith and piety. One of the first changes that this revival brought about was the translation of the Bible from Latin into the vernacular or the language of the people. The first translation of the Bible into English vernacular was by John Wycliffe. This and other translations made Christian teaching more easily available to large communities and led to a desire to return to the simplicity and doctrinal values of the early church. The very principles of Reformation stood on the separation of Church and state and it did speak on social issues, as it was a public and political attempt to apply Christianity more effectively to social institutions. The Protestant Reformers advocated important changes that are still in vogue: the sacramental apparatus was reduced to its minimal, the miracles of the mass disappeared altogether, and Protestantism ceased praying for the dead, and diverted itself so far from the three powerful concomitants – mystery, miracle, and magic. Protestantism also advocated the right of private judgement, the necessity of public consent and ceremony, the rejection of compulsory clerical celibacy and facilitated the allowance of divorce under certain conditions. The Reformation is often evaluated as having advanced modern themes like ecumenism, social and gender equality, rationalism, individulism and representative government.

Thus the roots of modernity itself were nourished by the Reformation theology. Various sociologists, political philosophers etc., conceded this influence in their writings. Max Weber, one of the founders of modern Sociology, famously argued that the spirit of capitalist accumulation was the outcome of Europe’s rationalization of the understanding

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17 *The Encyclopedia of Religion, op-cit, p.27.*
of the Calvinist doctrine of Predestination. The Puritan rationality and piety formed the necessary ground for the rise of capitalist economy; this further led to iron cage modernity of bureaucratic rationality. The question, why modern capitalism emerged in Western Europe rather than in other civilizations, was thereby answered. His subsequent findings of the value systems of India and China verified capitalism’s uniqueness in the European cultural context. Chares Taylor, an influential political theorist, characterized the modernity produced by Reformation as the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’. With the Reformation, he says, we find a modern, Christian-inspired sense of good and god-fearing life. Eventually, the new modernity, which included Christian principles of goodness and morality, ceased, and modernity and religious values occupied different spheres after the post religious wars of Reformation.

Immanuel Kant fragmented the modernity and morality as different schools and knowledge was separated from faith, and science, arts from ethics. This separation was given a theoretical shape by Hegel. Hegel and Max Weber influenced by Kant, furthered this separation between the secular and the sacred.

Some historians maintained that Protestantism also served as a historically decisive prelude to secularization. The emancipating glory of the great religious awakenings had conceived Christian liberty; Christian equality and Christian fraternity, drove the nations to secular liberty, equality and fraternity. Particularly the century of religious strife that followed the Reformation further prepared ground for the

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22 These Christian values are the foundations to the Brethren Assemblies of their church democracy. None of the church denominations in the entire church history so far fulfilled these values in their system except for the Brethren Movement.
secularization of European culture. Thereafter, religion was regarded as a private matter, which concerned the conscience of the individual only.\textsuperscript{23} Scholars say that the chief cause of the secularization of western culture was the result of lack of Christian unity. The secular cultural values that resulted in the divisive forces engineered by religious differences thus substituted the religious values. There was much Christian moralizing over this secularization. \textsuperscript{23} Luke Tyreman, in the Vol.I. of his \textit{‘Life of Wesley’} wrote that ‘England had become a hive of drunkards and criminals’ and ‘for little money a man could drink himself into a stupor and then sleep it off on a bed of hay before going home’. Protestantism became a cultural force that engaged with this new worldliness and corruption of every day behaviour. This can be seen especially in the Methodist movement of Wesley and Whitefield in 17\textsuperscript{th} century England, which had vast positive religious and social consequences especially in North America and on the 19th century Evangelicalism in England.\textsuperscript{24}

No writer of ecclesiastical history would dare ignore the Methodist surge in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. There were undoubtedly many forces at work to effect the transformation of society, but all are agreed that one of the most potent factors in the revival of the churches, and in the reformation of manners, was the church movements, initiated and controlled by Wesley, Whitefield and their co-workers.\textsuperscript{25} Eighteenth century was not complete without setting forth the powerful influence of Methodism on the customs,


habits and morals of the English people. Historians such as Macaulay and Lecky, Froude and Green, have written in eloquent language of the marvelous change that was effected in the social and religious conditions of England between the reign of Queen Anne and the later days of George III.

The Methodism of John Wesley has literally knitted the world with its agencies and activities from Japan in the east to Mexico and California in the west. It numbers more adherents than any other Protestant church in Christendom. In the British Isles, with its three or four million adherents, its stated services, its home mission activities, and its philanthropic enterprises, it wields an influence on all classes, second only to the established church of England. And such far-reaching results have been secured in the face of bitter opposition, and on occasion, even persecution and hatred. 26

The Early Methodists:

Going back about 275 years in the history of England, we are introduced to a little band of young men, students of Oxford University, some of them tutors, others undergraduates, all of them loyal to the Church of England. The most prominent of that band was John Wesley, the practical organizer and the director, George Whitefield was the eloquent preacher, Charles Wesley was the sweet singer, and William Morgan was the fervent worker. The central figure, of course was John Wesley, who in turn, was deeply impressed by the European variant of Calvinism. 27 This efficient and productive mission was organized into bands, meeting together to discuss their spiritual growth, and

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to reprove and encourage each other. This religious sect practiced ‘Piety’ or effective spirituality, which came to be known as ‘Pietism’ during the late 1600’s. In Germany Pietism arose, as a reaction against the hypocrisy of professedly orthodox Lutheran church, just like Methodism was a reaction to the Anglican Church. Methodism developed largely from this Pietism, and Pietism stressed the importance of personal devotion and morality as the most profound expressions of faith. The great Pietists like Zizenbalg, Swartz and Benjamin Shultz were successively laboured in the Tranquebar mission in South India.\(^{28}\) These were also known as the Moravians, and though small in number, their influence was enormous on Wesley. Wesley pursued his travels and preaching and attacked the formalism of the Church of England. Moreover there was a growing working class untouched by the indifferent Church. Wesley’s effect on the whole national life of England, especially on the working class was strong: he stabilized their revolutionary propensities, and played an important role in keeping them subservient to authority. In the Pre-Industrial period, the relations between aristocracy and working class were to some extent based on a certain degree of reciprocal support. But consequent to the Industrial Revolution, social relations and values changed in the English society. Crowded cities, the dismal conditions of the life and work of the labour classes, the dominance of money, market and profit, all combined to create much cultural, psychological and moral depression among the working class. It was among the depressed classes that the Methodist Movement found its great adherents.\(^{29}\) The movement was in a way the by-product of advancing industrialism and of the emergence of a new ethic for a new society. Wesley supported fair prices, a living wage, and honest


and healthy employment for all. Methodism was especially strong among workers in extractive vocation such as mining and fishing, where success depended a great deal on their labour. The basic concept of Revivalism was to generate the spread of new enthusiasm and intense moral earnestness coupled with a deep concern for the unsaved, and a large number of charitable activities like establishing schools and hospitals. In social terms the movement was chiefly middle class in character and it spread widely among the trading and professional class. Wesley stressed upon the doctrine of ‘Sanctification’ known also as the ‘Second blessing’ or ‘the Methodist Perfection’ which followed after the first blessing of Luther’s Justification by Faith. He itinerated until his 88th year and then “the weary wheels of life stood still at last”. In his 53 years of radical itinerancy he had preached 42,400 sermons or at the rate of 15 a week. The stories of these early Methodist preachers were the chief inspiration for Evangelicalism and the modern missions. It is worthy of record that his last letter was written to Wilberforce, the father of Evangelicalism in the 19th century to encourage him in his work against slavery in the West Indies and for other philanthropic works.

The origins of Evangelicalism lay in this religious revival of Wesley and Whitefield, which occurred in Great Britain in the middle of the 18th century. Two men dominated the world of Evangelicalism during the period from 1800-1860. From 1800 until around 1830 the acknowledged leader of the Evangelicals in England was William Wilberforce, the Yorkshire M.P., who was the central figure in that celebrated group of

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31 *Ibid*, p.435
Evangelicals, known as ‘the Clapham Sect’. After Wilberforce’ death in 1833, the mantle of Evangelicalism fell on the lot of Anthony Ashley Cooper, Seventh Earl of Shaftsbury, a champion for the cause of factory workers and a great philanthropist of his times in England. Historians unanimously agreed that Evangelicalism as one of the chief forces at work in moulding the character of the Victorians in general and evangelical missionaries in particular. G.M. Young featured the men of the age, in his book ‘Victorian England – Portrait of An Age’ as ‘whichever way his temperament led him, he found himself at every turn controlled and animated by the imponderable pressure of the Evangelical discipline’. Next to it is the influence of the English Utilitarianism.

The Reformation and the Religious Revival of the mid-eighteenth century were two landmark events that had a huge impact on the organization and the advent of the Christian missions to India and the world. The Evangelicals did not confine their religious fervour to themselves or to their country but their zeal extended to the entire world through overseas missions. The profound conviction that Jesus Christ alone could save the world was one potent reason leading the missionaries to dedicate their valuable lives to those countries, which still dwelt in supposedly spiritual darkness. Many Evangelical homes of the Victorian era had fervently prayed for their sons to grow up to be missionaries in some heathen land. Likewise the strongest single feature of the Evangelicals in this early part of the era was their earnest missionary zeal. Most men and women of this era identified with the Gospel of Christ and forsook all comfort and secure

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home environments to reach the people of distant lands. Arising out of the religious traditions of Pietism, Puritanism and Methodism, Evangelicalism was a cross-denominational movement that united Christians who share common characteristics. This mysterious phenomenon of Europe was known in America as the Great Awakening, as if presented a curious uniformity, as though each person had been searching for the same thing, and suddenly, in the hey day of the Enlightenment, found it.

St. John Rivers in ‘Jane Eyre’ of Charlotte Bronte was a good example of such highest ambition of missionary to India. His passion was an archetype of every Evangelical’s passion in Victorian England.

‘A missionary I resolved to be …

And I leave Europe for the East’. The heroic resolution for the highest place, which embodied in St. John Rivers, echoes the Evangelical propaganda carried on in England during the mid-19th century. Orientalist representations of a debauched and superstitious East played no small part in this Christian vision of heathens converting to Christianity. The countless missionary sermons were preached, printed and circulated from the dawn of 19th century, in which Christian self-immolation appears predominantly the ultimate fulfillment of that passion.

‘Relinquish! What! My vocation? My great work? My foundation laid on earth for a mansion in heaven? My hopes of being numbered in the band who have

merged all ambitions in the glorious one of bettering their race- of carrying
knowledge in to the realms of ignorance- of substituting peace for war- freedom
for bondage- religion for superstition- the hope of heaven for the fear of hell?
must I relinquish that? It is dearer to me than the blood in my veins. It is what
I have to look forward to and to live for’.36

Charlotte Bronte’s depiction of the missionary in the novel, Rivers died a Christian
soldier’s death, an example of heroic masculinity, admired in early 19th century. Many
aspiring missionaries saw themselves as conquering warrior-heroes asking, indeed,
sometimes, to be sent to places of intense danger. The Scottish Missionary Society taught
its missionary candidates: ‘let a holy ambition animate your breasts, be not content with a
low seat in heaven, aim after one of the highest… this is the path to one of the brightest
crowns’.37 Likewise, most missionaries of the overseas, hopeful of such promises of rich
dividends or returns in the world to come in mind, have sacrificed their talents and their
time on the alter of Missions. Some scholars identified St. John Rivers with the life and
labours of Henry Martyn, the missionary chaplain in the East India Company serving at
Dinapore and Cawnpore. He was well known to Charlotte Bronte’s father in St. John’s
College, Cambridge and had written in his diary: ‘let me burn out for God’ and who died
a martyr death at the age of 31 in a distant land. He too wished for marriage with Lydia
Grenfell, who would not in the end come out to India with him as a missionary’s wife, as

36 Ibid.
was the case with Jane Eyre, who was unwilling to come over India as a missionary wife with St. John Rivers.  

It must be acknowledged that a spirit of self-righteousness, or of a sense of false heroism, may work itself up to an astonishing pitch of self-denial to the extremities of martyr’s sacrifices. But it still remains true that he who spends his life and makes his grave, as a missionary among the heathen gives the highest evidence of an exalted Christian character. There were a large number of women connected with the various missions. These women who in their earlier days had known the comforts of a quiet and respectable home, and had been brought up in affluence, voluntarily faced physical hardships with missionary zeal. These men and women had made up their minds to a life of difficulty and peril and served among people who had scarcely any sympathies in common with themselves. Even then, they rarely gave way to a spirit of complaint or despondency. They remained true to their vocation till they made it to their graves, as missionaries among those people. The missionary was sometimes pictured as gentleman in a frock coat under a palm tree, preaching the Gospel to eastern savages, who declined to assimilate it. Charlotte Bronte solemnly depicted that solitary figure under the palm tree, still endeavoring in a distant land in the mid-Victorian novel ‘Villette’. This novel features the particular interest of the then Church Missionary Society, printing picture

39 Heroes And Martyrs: Modern Missionary Enterprise-A Record Of Their Lives And Labours, Hartford P. Brockett & Co. 1852, p. 15.
painting books on missionary subjects to instill missionary spirit in the young.  

The figure has been so caricaturized that many failed to realize that there was an immense change in world consciousness, world politics and world commerce because of that presence. Biographies of such quiet zeal are necessary to preserve for posterity the memory of these missionaries who were moved by the ideology of faith. This was especially true in the 18th and 19th centuries at the height of British imperialism in Victorian England.

The clergy of the Church Missionary Society in England often stirred the congregations of their Parishes with the missionary stories and picture books. Particularly they admonished the Christian mothers to bring up the children in the knowledge of missionary themes, until their young hearts because fired with religious fervour: ‘shall not we also be missionaries of Jesus Christ’. A circuit Evangelical clergy went round the country on ushering the adults to opt for a missionary career. Year by year the number of applicants to Church Missionary Society for such a higher duty was doubled. To quench their missionary fervor, such people constantly were supporters of the cause of foreign missions. One such example of typical philanthropist, who had busy schemes of relief for Africa, is seen in the character of Mrs. Jellyby, satirically sketched by Charles Dickens in his novel ‘Bleak House’ thus:

“You find me, my dears”, as usual, very busy; but that you will excuse. The African

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40 Charlotte Bronte, *Villette*, Collins, London, 1853, p.40. A Palm tree is grown in tropical countries like India, Ceylon and Africa for its durable wood and its leaves for thatching houses. The solitary figure, a missionary, preaching to people under Palm tree was really associated with the South Indian people. The Nadars and the Telugu people of Coastal Andhra are interested to know for their familiarity with the Palm trees.


project at present employs my whole time. It involves me in correspondence with public bodies, and with private individuals anxious for the welfare of their species all over the country. I am happy to say it is advancing. We hope by this time next year to have from one hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borriboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger.\footnote{Charles Dickens, \textit{Bleak House}, Collins, London (1 ed., 1853), 1953, p.47. Charles Dickens uses humour. Jellyby is more interested and philanthropic to reform the far away Africa while total defiant to the development of her own family and children.}

The Victorian Evangelicals, if assessed from a secular retrospective, could be viewed in an illiberal and intolerant light. Pluralism and the wonderful variety in human cultures, across the world, seemed ‘devilish’. ‘Homogeneity’, especially religious homogeneity, killing all cultural variations, was celebrated. However, the resilience of other cultures turned Christianity into another richly textured realm within the Indian sub-continent, and this is the theme that my thesis explores.

II

Germany And England: Passion, Vision and Commitment of Missionaries

One of the most distinguished representatives of Pietism was August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), a university professor in Halle, Germany. He was also a professor of Oriental languages. In this capacity he was one of the founders of the ‘Collegium Orientale’ in (1702). Francke thought the study of the Bible in different languages was a prerequisite for effective Evangelism. Such an open mind towards language study and the translation of the Bible was a special feature of most missionaries.
from Halle. One such missionary was Rev. Christian Frederick Swartz, a product from University of Halle who arrived at Tranquebar, India in 1750. The way he was infuriated by missionary zeal was interesting. While in the University of Halle, he aided in the examination of the proofs of a version of the scriptures in Tamil. As he was occasionally checking proofs, he gained some knowledge of Tamil. This suggested to him the possibility of a missionary life among Tamils.44

From England, the stimulus for the English missionary enterprise is usually identified with the founding of the Baptist missionary society in 1792 and with Carey’s missionary journey to India.45 With Carey, Missions became a crusade that stirred tremendous enthusiasm and zeal among the men and women of the west. John Chamberlain was another missionary, born in Northampton shire in England. It was during the formation of the London Missionary Society in 1796 that John Chamberlain heard discourses on the subject of missions. The sermons particularly kindled an ardent flame in his breast, ‘I then felt’ he says, ‘a burning zeal for the welfare of the heathen. Some times I thought I could die in the cause, and triumph in the tortures of a fire. My hopes were directed to India, though I saw no way how they could be fulfilled.’ Finding in the ‘Baptist Register’, a Bengali hymn, set to familiar tune, he spent three hours singing in Bengali, further rousing, his heart towards the mission in India.

45 Heroes And Martyrs: Modern Missionary Enterprise-A Record Of Their Lives And Labours, op-cit., p.p. 61-81. Carey and his colleagues formed Calvinist (Reformed) Baptist Society for the propagation of the Gospel to the heathen, which marked the entrance of Great Britain into world missions. All the founders and missionaries of the 19th century missions were Reformed (Calvinists). The great Revival (Methodist) out of which the 19th century missionary movement was launched was Calvinist. What inspired the pervasive determination in the 19th century protestant churches to firmly plant the Gospel everywhere was Calvinism. K.S. Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, London (1945).
He arrived at Calcutta in 1802 along with his wife. The voyage was not a very pleasant one. The couple met with severe trials, as a child was born to them in mid ocean, only to lose the infant. However, their love for India survived. In 1804 his second son aged 6 months also died. Later in 1804, he lost his wife as well, and John Chamberlain was left with a surviving, motherless child. He continued his labour for the people of Cutwa. Some times he was designated to new stations at Agra, Monghyr and Berhampore. While he was leaving for England, he died near the island of Ceylon in a ship. His remains were committed to the deep sea. He rode hundreds of miles in India while alive, preached every day and often several times a day.46

The Rev. Claudius Buchanan left a legacy of tremendous influence upon those who opted for missionary vocation. He was a Vice-Provost of the Fort William College. During his twelve years of stay in India his spirit was stirred in him when he beheld the sad spectacle of humans flinging themselves under the chariot wheels of Puri Jagannath. Buchanan felt that the then British were not governing India, as they should.47 Buchanan saw among the European rulers and Indians gross immorality. Most of the individuals employed by the East India Company indulged in duels, deism, debauchery, drunkenness and debts.48 Therefore, in his book ‘Christian Researches in Asia’ (New York, 1812) he appealed to a new creed of young Englishmen to come to India as missionary administrators and to live and to give their lives in her service. This appeal had a receptive audience in the graduates of Cambridge, who also shared the vision of civilizing India. The Punjab school of officers came from this variety of muscular

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Christianity who believed in combining good governance and high personal morality. Henry and John Lawrence, Herbert Edwardes, Robert Montgomery and Frank Brayne and others were good examples of the new breed of administrators, thanks to their religious and evangelical convictions.\textsuperscript{49} Clive Dewey writes, ‘their faith gave them the courage to cow warlike tribes and suppress the predators – landlords, officials, moneylenders, traders, lawyers – who preyed on hapless peasants. They were the \textit{mabhaps}, the mothers and fathers of their people. They spent all day and nearly all night riding round their districts: punishing crimes, remitting revenue, resolving disputes, relieving scarcity, digging canals. They had no families to distract them, no belongings to slow them down, and no weaknesses of any kind: heat, sun, and rain were matters of indifference to them.’\textsuperscript{50} It is said that the evangelical spirit Claudius Buchanan imparted to the young Englishmen was bigger than the missionary movement itself.

The missionary spirit was shared by the young men and women of the American universities. The formation of mission prayer band in the Williams College campus in Massachusetts, America in 1812 also started the missionary movement in America. This was followed by the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions under the banner of the Congregationalist Denominations.\textsuperscript{51} Gordon Hall was one of these pioneers to reach to India in 1812. His zeal to proclaim the Gospel in India was such that he defied the order of deportation given by the East India Company as soon as he disembarked in India, as missionaries were not allowed in India before 1813. He decided ‘I must not settle in any parish in Christendom. Others will be left

\textsuperscript{50} Clive Dewey, \textit{The Mind of the Indian Civil Service}, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996.
whose health or pre-engagements require them to stay at home; but I can sleep on the
ground, can endure hunger and hardships; God calls me to the heathen; woe to me, if I
preach not the Gospel to heathen.' He protested to the Governor of Bombay- ‘your
Excellency finally disregarded the considerations we have presented, should we be
compelled to leave this land. We can only say, Adieu, till we meet you once face to face,
at God’s tribunal.’ However charter bill of 1813 was passed permitting the missionaries
into India. The Governor of Bombay was forced to relent. Gordon Hall travelled
extensively to the remotest and ruined corners of India to liberate people physically and
spiritually at the cost of himself and his family. Mr. Hall toured Nasik where Cholera was
raging. He laboured among them till his medicines were exhausted. Soon he was affected
by Cholera and died with the afflicted Indians. He was buried uncoffined with great
difficulty. His missionary zeal was immortalized in his book ‘The Conversion of the
World or The Claims of Six hundred Millions’.52

Influenced by the writings of Claudius Buchanan, the missionaries of America,
Mr. & Mrs. Adoniram Judson and the youthful pair of Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Newell, with
overwhelming zeal, set forth on their uncertain way to India in 1812.53 On their arrival to
Serampore, the Judsons secured a passage to Burma. But the Newells were compelled to
take a ship to Mauritius. Their voyage from Serampore to Mauritius was a tedious and
dangerous one as they were tossed about for a month in the Bay of Bengal. Mrs. Newell
became a mother on the shipboard itself. The young mother, still in her teens lost her

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infant daughter and then her own life two weeks later and had to be buried on an Isle. Mrs. Judson wrote a letter to her family in America, ‘Harriet is dead…Her body lies solitary and alone in yonder marshy ground. No monument is erected to speak her worth, no grave stone to tell the passing stranger, here lies the remains of one, who, for the love of Christ and immortal souls, left home and friends and found an early grave in a strange land’. And closed her letter with a plea, ‘O will not someone of you come to take up dear Harriet’s work?’

The painful event was announced by Mr. Newell to her mother in a letter ‘I Would tell you how God has disappointed our favourite schemes and blasted our hopes of preaching Christ in India, and has sent us all away from that extensive field of usefulness with an intimation that he has nothing for us to do there. I would tell you how he has visited us all with sickness, by taking away the dear babe, which he gave us, the child of our prayers, of our hopes, of our tears… Come, then let us mingle our grief, and weep together, for she was dear to us both. Yes, Harriet, your lovely daughter is gone and you will see her face no more! My own dear Harriet, the wife of my youth and the desire of my eyes has left me to moan and weep… I wiped the cold sweat of death from her pale emaciated face, while we traveled together, down to the entrance of the dark valley. There she took her upward flight and ascended to the mansions of the blessed!’ Mr. Newell had alone came to India from the Isle, when conditions favoured missionaries after 1813 charter. He too fell a victim to Cholera and died.

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54 Heroes And Martyrs: Modern Missionary Enterprise-A Record Of Their Lives And Labours, p.149.
56 Heroes And Martyrs: Modern Missionary Enterprise-A Record Of Their Lives And Labours, op-cit., p.150.
By the mid eighteenth century Scotland had become a noted nation for its achievements in the varied fields of learning and culture. The Scots built an effective system of public instruction. Scottish Christianity has for long been intellectually grounded. This cultural background helps understand the Scottish educational missionaries of 19th century India like Alexander Duff, who came over India in 1829 after being shipwrecked twice on his way to Calcutta. He emphasized the role of the English language in educating the Indian elite. He thought this would make the Indian elite accept Christianity more readily.\textsuperscript{57} Duff was deeply convinced about his missionary purpose and spared no pains to introduce a schooling system.

Dr. Armauer Hansen discovered the Bacillus, which caused Leprosy in 1873. Wellesley Bailey, a missionary, first encountered people affected by Leprosy in the same year. Also in 1873 Joseph de Veuster sailed to Molokai, and became known as Father Damien. The founding of the Leprosy Mission (TLM) started in 1874 in America. Mary Reed, The Leprosy Mission’s first missionary was sent to India in 1884, and became the superintendent of Chandag Leprosy Hospital. Her enormous `zeal made Mary dedicate her entire time to the lepers. In 1891, after a brief illness, the young woman suddenly realized she had contracted leprosy. She was sent to the Himalayas to recover at a leper colony. In the same year she returned to America on furlough as her leprosy was confirmed. This did not make her despair, but instead imbued her with the desire to continue with her mission.\textsuperscript{58} Her faith sustained her in work until she died in 1943 after she had completed 52 years of ministry among the lepers of India.

\textsuperscript{58} Daniel Johnson Fleming, \textit{Building With India, Missionary Education Movement Publication}, New York, 1922, p.120.
John E. Davis was a missionary among the Telugus of Ramachandrapuram of W. Godavary Dt. in Andhra Pradesh about 1905, where there was a Leper Asylum. He himself was shocked to learn that he had contracted tropical Leprosy. Initially he contemplated suicide out of despair, but the love of God sustained him and he spent the last 5 years of his life in a hospital in England and continued to support the Leprosy Asylum in India.59

Very distinct in nature and unique in their principles and practices the Brethren missionaries were zealous representatives of the ecclesiastical order of Protestantism. They inaugurated an era of ‘Faith Missions’ in the 19th century.60 Mr. Beer and Mr. Bowden, two young men aged 23 years, were the early Brethren missionaries to the Telugu country (Coastal Andhra). They were accompanied by Anthony Norris Groves, a pioneer Brethren missionary at Chittoor (South Andhra) in 1836. Mr. Beer and Bowden were members of Bornstaple chapel in England. Mr. Beer was an intelligent shoemaker and Mr. Bowden was a stonemason. Though they were of humble origin, the laity movement of Brethrenism in Great Britain, inspired ordinary people to empower themselves. This was known as the laymen’s revival. The young men read missionary annals and were inspired by the accounts of the life and labours of Adoniram Judson, a missionary to the east, with an added propaganda of Mr. Clulow a British retired Judge from Machilipatnam about the spiritual plight of Telugu people.61 Their missionary task

60 Andrew Porter, Religion Versus Empire, Manchester University Press, 2004, p.193
was completely a self-supporting service among the Telugu people, carried uninterrupted.\textsuperscript{62}

The hardships—of climate and living conditions—were great. Most of the missionaries of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, particularly the wives, died young. Generally the graveyards of the missionaries were outside the churches that they had established. In Africa, a church had been built literally upon the bones of countless missionaries and martyrs. The passion to take the Gospel further, inspired by the love for Jesus, motivated the missionaries on these missions. When Melville Cox, Methodist first foreign missionary, was about to leave for Liberia in early 1830, a friend challenged him ‘if you go to Africa you will die there’. Cox replied ‘if I die you write my epitaph’. But what would I write? Friend questioned. The answer was ‘Though a thousand (missionaries) fall, let not Africa be lost.’ The same is inscribed on his monument in Monrovia, Liberia.\textsuperscript{63} The scriptures provided the inspiring words to these men and women, ‘Christ’s love compels us’ (II Cor. 5:14). Jesus commanded his children ‘to go into all world and make men his disciples.’

Thus to conclude this section, the Christian theology played a unique role in shaping and mobilizing the Christian missions of 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, but most particularly, the ‘Faith missions’. The Calvinism of the Reformed churches provided much of what was written for the missionary whose motto was ‘service.’\textsuperscript{64} During the

\textsuperscript{62} Y.Vittal Rao, \textit{Education And Learning in Andhra Under the East India Company}, Bhimavaram, p.239.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Good News Magazine}, An Article by Dick Mc Clain, July-August Issue, 1993, published by the United Church of God, an International Association, USA.
great 18th century Revivals, many Puritan books of Calvinist theology were reprinted65. Thus, revitalized Protestantism refreshed with Calvinistic writings and preaching, rose to the challenge of world evangelization with a zeal and boldness never before seen in history. Calvinism was further strengthened by the millenarian view. Thus the theological impetus of Calvinism (and of the Puritan writings) and the optimistic millenarian66 view of the future were two sources from which the Brethren Movement of early 19th century had its genesis and progress and launched its own Faith missions to India. D.M. Panton claimed that, ‘the movement of the Brethren and its significance is far greater than the movement of the Reformation, both in quality and quantity. The Reformation was brought about with sword and spear, while the Brethren movement brought about preaching of the word of God. For the cause of the Reformation, which was political in nature many lost their lives in the religious wars in Europe67. Brethrenism, on the other hand, was not related to the organized world or psychological world nor to the actual world of colonialist Christianity, which represented imperial power.

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65 The writings of John Owen, John Banyan, John Milton, Hooker, Shepherd, Donald Guthrie, Mathew Henry etc., Of all the books, Pilgrims Progress was the most distinguished spiritual autobiography of a Christian believer. Moreover, no book in English has more determined the character of personal religion. It has still a profound influence on the Christian world.

66 Millenarianism was a belief widespread in Christianity until the 4th century, that Christ’s second coming will bring a thousand years of peace on earth. The Anabaptists and the Moravians revived it during the later years of Reformation. The founders of the Brethren Movement such as John Nelson Darby and Anthony Norris Groves were gifted exposures and prophets of Millenarian view in the entire church history after the Reformation. Steve Luck, ed., Philip’s Millennium Encyclopedia, Octopus, London, 1999, p.447.

67 Watchman Nee, The Orthodoxy of the Church, California, 1970