CHAPTER V: EVANGELICALISM OF THE 19TH CENTURY ENGLAND AND BRETHRENISM

As observed in Chapter Three, the Evangelical movement was a product of the Church of England, mainly powered by the middleclass bourgeoisie. The leadership of this movement was highly influenced by politics. As high-ranking members of the Whig party, they played a crucial role in both, policies making in the government and establishing the party’s power base.

Anglican Evangelical understood service to the world- not just to the people of England. The agenda for action included varied aspects of philanthropy, public campaigns against slavery, long hours of labour, factory conditions, and for education, public health, Chartism and trade unions. All qualities, influences and manifestations of this dynamic Evangelicalism are critically examined, and as a conclusion, I state how the...

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1 David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1780s to the 1980s*, Baker Book House, 1992, p.4. Evangelicalism was the strongest ideological influence very much present in the Victorian age. The term had been applied to the Low Church wing of Anglicanism, which stressed biblical preaching and adopted to hold the deity of Lord Jesus Christ, as opposed to sacramentalism and belief in the authority of church tradition. It shaped public opinion, dictated morals and values and created social divisions.


Brethren movement as an early faith mission was unique and influential in its historical path to progress⁴.

Although Evangelicalism was customarily a 19th century phenomenon, the evangelical spirit had manifested itself throughout church history. The Evangelical faith, therefore, was not a 19th century phenomenon as John Stott observed, Evangelical Christianity was Apostolic and pushed New Testament Christianity. The Evangelical revivalist John Wesley also affirmed ‘It is the plain old Christianity, which I teach.’ The commitment, discipline and missionary zeal that distinguish Evangelicalism were features of the early apostolic church, the Fathers, the early Monasticism, the Medieval Reform movements (Franciscan and Dominicans), the Waldensians and the Reformation precursors Wycliffe, Hus, and William Tyndale. George Marsden, a prominent Evangelical, interpreted Evangelicalism in its minimal character, as a dynamic movement, with common heritages, common tendencies, an identity, and an organic character.⁵ Thus evangelicalism denotes a style as much as a set of beliefs and established discernible common themes. However Philip Schaff, a 19th century church historian, in his book ‘The Creeds of Christendom’ (1977) affirmed that the Evangelicals were not a single group with an agreed creed or unifying structure. Any attempt to understand the nature of Evangelicalism has to recognize both the coherence that enables Evangelicalism to accommodate these very diverse groups. Second, defining Evangelicalism is no easy task, as the multiplicity of attempts to do so indicate. Attempts

⁴ Roger Steer, Church on Fire: The Story of Anglican Evangelicals, Grand Rapids, Baker House, 1999, p.9. It is out of this zealous spiritualism that modern missionary movements were born in England by the end of 18th century. M.D. David, Missions: Cross Cultural Encounter And Change In Western India’ ISPCK, 2001, p.35.
to define the core that holds these varieties of Evangelicalism together vary greatly. Perhaps the most fitting and concise attempt to define the core of Evangelicalism is that of John Stott: evangelicals are ‘Bible people and Gospel people.’ In the early 19th century Brethrenism stood for this ecclesiastical fulfillment and represented by distinguished personalities as Lord Shaftsbury, William E. Gladstone and John Henry Newman (after the demise of Wilberforce) of Anglican Church, the Non-Conformist groups like the Baptists with their aggressive preacher Charles Hudson Spurgeon and the Plymouth Brethren (of the Brethren Movement) with their fundamentalist and dispensationalist voices like John Nelson Darby, George Muller and Anthony Norris Groves. Other individuals of British Evangelical vitality were Catherine and William Booth of Salvation Army. They all laid strong emphasis on Biblical authority, divine sovereignty, human responsibility, personal conversion, sanctification, missionary endeavour, prophecy and social action. It had waged war on all manner of vice, profaneness and immorality.

Frances Trollope’s book ‘The Vicar of Wrexhill’, which was written during Victoria’s accession, was a true portrayal of Evangelical convictions and emotions, as a young clergyman in the novel possessed those highly valued qualities. Every individual of the Victorian era, at every turn, was controlled by an obligation to the Evangelical discipline. Evangelicalism imposed on society, even classes which were

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9 Prof. Harold Perkin testifies the effect of Evangelicalism as he writes on the period in his book, ‘between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical’. Harold Perkin, The origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880, London, 1969,p.280.
indifferent to its religious basis and unaffected by its economic appeal, its code of Sabbath observance, responsibility, and philanthropy; of discipline in the home, regularity in affairs, became basis for Victorian morality and Victorian private and public values.10

David Bebbington in his book ‘Evangelicalism in Modern Britain’ (1992) earmarked four noble qualities of Evangelical religion11 as the first being ‘Biblicism’. The Evangelicals placed great emphasis on the authority and study of the Bible wherein 'the rule of faith' provided the framework for reading the Bible.12 The 16th century Reformation put the people in touch with the Bible in a new and powerful way, and the Bible then exerted and continues to exert an immensely powerful influence in the English speaking culture.13

The Protestant and Wesleyan traditions following Wesley, made the Methodist view of the Bible as an infallible moral guide.14 Wesleyan congregation was mostly drawn from occupational groups and the Bible was central to most of the creeds.15 All the major Protestant denominations devoted a great deal of time and effort to teaching the individual believer how to read the scriptures. Hurrel Froude, one of the leaders of the Oxford movement commented that ‘the Bible and the Bible only is the religion of

10 Pat Jalland, Death in the Victorian Family, OUP, Oxford, 1999, p.19
Evangelical parents taught their children to read the scriptures, memorize their catechism and summarize the sermons they heard. Fundamentalists took the Bible literally and prided themselves on the ignorance of every book except the Bible. This type of fundamentalism labeled as hard-line Biblicism was the order, typically found among the sects like Primitive Methodists and the Plymouth Brethren of the later day. Even though a kind of faith crisis swept the 19th century England, the influence of the Plymouth Brethrenism or the Brethren movement had been widespread. Almost everyone was a biblicist in early 19th century England despite a few who were troubled by the situation. The biblicism of the Evangelical age has also influenced many lands and many cultures traveling beyond the shores of the British isles. All missionaries coming to India adopted widespread preaching of the Bible and translated and distributed the Bible in the various languages of the Indian people.

The second major Christian orthodoxy that Bebbington suggested was ‘Crucicentrism’ or the central role of the cross. Bible prophetic references to the atoning blood by Christ, the Messiah, had prominent place in the devotions even from the old testament days. The Evangelical theology that relates to this impulse is insightful. Crucicentrism or Christ crucified on cross- has been a dominant and most emphasized

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19 Dr. Fredk. A. Tatford, That The World May Know: The Challenge Of India, Vol. 3, Echoes of Service, Bath, London, 1983, p.75. William Carey and his colleagues had been responsible for the translation or publication of the scriptures into 40 languages or dialects in India.
Christian tradition since the early days of Christian era. Dozens of Hymns and Gospel songs as well as evangelical sermons bear witness to this.

The Crucicentrism of Protestant tradition was strongly advocated by Wesley and Whitefield of Methodism in the 18th century. Before Wesley this theological content of sermons as rare and people seldom knew of salvation by remission of sins through the Blood of Christ. Even during the Wesleyan revival the working class groups were altogether deaf to the doctrine of atonement. Therefore this characteristic crucicentrism was not fully exposed to the working class as was maintained by historians. This is not to affirm that working class Evangelicals altogether did not believe in atonement.

However the hearers from the general populace of the Methodists believed in atoning and saving power of Jesus Christ. Therefore it was said that Methodism was a religion of the heart. They concentrated more on the subjective effects of the cross than the objective work of it. They preached passionately about the Christian following Christ to the cross daily, which means the true church of Christ always bears the mark of the cross - not of the Popish (Pope’s religion) sign of a material cross in stone or marble. Therefore, the early Methodists were understood to have reverence for Good Friday or the Crucifixion Day of Christ rather than for festive Easter.

The third mark of Christian orthodoxy denotes the complexities of sin and conversion. Conversionism is a belief in Jesus, which makes the believer aware of sin. An immediate conversion lifts the burden of sin; this is a supernatural event, as there is

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22 Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness*, p.16 and p.41.
no human route out of evil. The meaning and definition of conversionism was beautifully narrated by a late Victorian journalist G.W.E Russell out of his evangelical childhood experience - ‘that all mankind were utterly sinful, and therefore in danger of Hell; that God had provided deliverance in the atoning death of Christ; and that, if only we would accept the offer of salvation so made, we were forgiven, reconciled and safe. That acceptance was conversion’.

So, this was the view and conviction of the Evangelicals of the total depravity of man and his immediate need for salvation in view of the fear of death and Hell. The Novelist, Charles Kingsley recalled his childhood days saying ‘I was a child of Hell, and a lost and miserable sinner, I used to have access of terror, and fancy that I should surely wake next morning in everlasting flames’. Preachers urgently called the sinners to escape the wrath of God. Methodist preacher Wesley urged his hearers to escape damnation by accepting the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. Fear of death was not an evangelical creation but the Evangelicals envisaged a hope of Heaven through death. Early Methodist songs mostly composed with promised heavenly crowns, robes, rewards and heavenly abode of gold and precious stones.

Death was a primary concern of Evangelical theology. Pious Evangelicals were curious to achieve a good death. For those who professed to have been saved through conversion, the manner of their dying could provide the final proof of salvation. For the devout Evangelical who feared that he had missed the experience of conversion, the hour

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26 Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness*, p. 188.
of death was the last opportunity that allowed the dying a death into a triumph. Diseases like Cholera and disasters in the industrial circles often led the working classes to conversions. Evangelical conversions were intense and dramatic. Conversions often followed serious illness or the sudden death of a loved one in Victorian families. These experiences were not only limited to fresh converts and the backsliders also could be brought back to the Evangelical fold. Methodism had a big following among the workers. Thus, Evangelicalism worked out an individual improvement and gave an egalitarian and collective twist to the middle and working classes.

The working class had different kinds of organizations related to work and its own definitions of leisure, particularly on Sundays. Churches formed outreaches into the working class, which largely failed due to their leisure activities such as drinking, fighting, smoking, engaging in lowly entertainment like cock-fighting, wrestling, cards, swearing and Sabbath breaking. Bready narrated how 18th century England sunk in deep savagery, which was characterized by ‘the wanton torture of animals for sport, the bestial drunkenness of the populace, the inhuman traffic in African Negroes, the kidnapping of fellow country men for exportation and sale as slaves, the mortality of parish children, the universal obsession with gambling, the savagery of the prison system and the penal code, the welter of immorality, the prostitution of the theatre, the growing prevalence of lawlessness, superstition and lewdness; the political bribery and corruption, the ecclesiastical arrogance and truculence, the shallow pretensions of Deism, the

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28 Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, OUP, Oxford, 1999, p.p. 36-37. ‘Smile of death’ in the face of Little Nell was ecstatically described by Charles Dickens in his novel ‘Old Curiosity Shop’
insincerity and debasement rampant in church and state – such manifestations suggest that the British people then perhaps were as deeply degraded and debauched, as any people in Christendom’. Groups like Salvation Army took on the popular music of the time - brass bands – and populist militarism by wearing uniforms, but only produced a tiny working class sub culture, rather than mass conversion. In such circumstances, the only successful point of contact, devised by the Evangelicals to convert, with the working class was the Sunday school movement. The most striking and visible sign of Evangelical Godliness was the ‘Sabbatarianism’ i.e. the observance of Sabbath on Sundays. One of the Ten Commandments was ‘Six days thou shalt labour, the seventh day is the day of rest’. Therefore, no form of work or entertainment should be taken up. The only leisure day for working class was Sunday and saw industrial towns filled with playing children and the working classes spilling into the streets. To engage them in religious devotion and secular education, the Sunday schools were established.

There were camp meetings, revival meetings, prayer meetings, tea meetings, love feasts, large conventions and conferences, processions, hymns, banners etc., to woo the public and admonish them on religious lines. Evangelical conversionism dismissed the ‘profane’ recreations as sinful and replaced them with the above alternative evangelical

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‘Everything was bolted and barred that could by possibility furnish relief to an Overworked people. No pictures, no natural or artificial wonders of the ancient World-all taboo…Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe But streets, streets, streets…Nothing for the spent toiler to do but to compare the Monotony of his last six days with the monotony of his seventh’.

The pressures towards discipline and order, extended from the factory on one hand, the Sunday school on the other into every aspect of life: leisure, personal relationships, speech, manners etc., was thoroughly explained in E.P. Thompson, The Making of English Working Class, Harmondsworth, 1968, p.p.442-3.
vocations. The conversion zeal of Evangelicalism hatched a notion that Britain had a
christianizing and colonizing mission to the heathens of the world, and India was no
exception. This ideology powerfully operated in the hearts of most English men and
women of the 19th century, and many of them became missionaries. Throughout the
history of imperial expansion in India missionary conversionism offered the British
public a model of civilized expansionism and colonial community management. Thus
theology of conversionism left extensive influence and far reaching consequences on the
entire world through the missions and had England exalted among nations.35

Finally, the most influential Christian orthodoxy of Evangelicalism with a wide
range of scope was activism.36

Evangelical preaching or evangelism was one facet of activism: it stressed the
way of salvation through Jesus. The main aim was to convert the people to a new way of
life; to strengthen the converts so that they might shun old bad habits and old bad friends
and whatever evil was there to distinguish them from the unsaved. This separatedness
should be exhibited not only through evangelism but also in adaptation of a puritanical
code of behaviour. Methodists felt the reformation of manners as important to the
working class, so was it to middle class evangelicals. Methodism was hostile to open
immorality and enforced strict discipline to the followers. Wesley developed a doctrine of
entire sanctification. The reformation doctrine of the justification was subordinated by

Wesleyan sanctification. Therefore this Evangelical activism or the Methodist perfection was one of the underlining theologies of the 18th and 19th centuries.\(^{37}\)

Evangelical activism possessed a transformation device: it stressed the importance of lay helpers and did not focus only on the pastor and of the shifting from the parish churches to cottage prayer meetings. According to Bourne, these meetings made an amazing change, hymns were sung at almost every house. These prayer meetings helped to strengthen the sense of community and social solidarity, as people met and prayed in each other’s homes; it also allowed humble people to participate in a relaxed atmosphere. Women, who were in seclusion at home, were the beneficiaries from this. The preachers even went to the extent of preaching and holding offices in churches. The participation of the youth in the evangelism was also encouraged. Shouting, singing and loud prayers were also witnessed commonly in the Methodist itinerancy and prayer meetings, believed to have held under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.\(^{38}\)

There was also the belief, common to working class evangelicals and seculars alike, that through intellectual and moral development and regeneration, the poor could improve their lives. A method to enlightenment adopted by secularists was education. Since education was the privilege of the rich, the poor had mixed feelings about it. Working class evangelicals dismissed reading the books other than the Bible, much against the persuasion of the middle classes.\(^{39}\) As this was an age of evangelical activism there were a lot of societies and missions and thus men were needed for active


Tholfsen observes that early 19th century radicalism embodied a militant activism, derived from enlightenment liberalism imbibed with plebeian energy and egalitarianism. In consequence early Methodists were prone to political movements and trade unions from the beginning. Even Evangelicalism among the working classes itself was a declaration of liberty and equality, and can be seen as part of the growing egalitarian movement of the time. Kent has compared Methodist chapels of the time to citadels from which attacks on the social and economic evils were spearheaded.

By the 1820s, a shift had occurred in evangelical activism: laymen preachers and activists were replaced by the enlightened itinerants of social status and academic qualifications. Itinerancy meant respectable preachers traveling from town chapel to town chapel. Membership became increasingly middle class when compared to the growth rate of working classes. David Bebbington affirms that it was activism, stemming from enlightenment optimism and the doctrine of assurance, which created evangelicalism out of the old dissenting traditions.

This is an ever-asked question whether the Evangelical activism only limited to evangelism by its heterogeneous ways or are there any social responsibilities to fulfill by its widest scope. The example shown by Jesus in his earthly days was ‘went about…teaching…and preaching (Matt.4: 23) and went about doing good and healing’ (Acts10: 38). Accordingly, throughout history, the church trod in the footsteps of its Saviour and has been accomplishing evangelism and philanthropy respectively. Therefore, philanthropy or social concern is another facet of Evangelical activism.

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40 Ibid, p.65.
The Evangelicals of the century were instrumental in founding worldwide missions to spread the Gospel. Wilberforce, the high priest of Evangelicalism,\(^4^4\) Hannah More, the ‘high priestess’ were politically and socially highly active. Here was a member of the Society for effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade, composed important Slavery Poems of the abolition period.\(^4^5\) Her poem ‘The Sorrows of Yamba’ or ‘The Negro Woman’s Lamentation’, which appeared in 1795, advocated missionary activity as a benign replacement for the incursions of slave traders, moved the hearts of the people, and thus paved the way for passing of Anti-Slavery bill in 1807.\(^4^6\) During the second half of 19\(^{th}\) century, Theodore Weld, a disciple of American evangelist Charles Finney and an American equivalent and archetype of Wilberforce, gave his whole life to the anti-slavery struggle.\(^4^7\) Another evangelical M.P Shaftsbury worked vigorously to bring legislation against the plight of lunatics, employment of children as climbing boys, chimney sweeps, women and children in the coalmines. Charles Kingsley, an evangelical clergyman and a novelist narrated the plight of children in his work ‘The Water Babies’.\(^4^8\) Shaftsbury was a professional philanthropist and had an asylum of 30,000 homeless children and more than a million children without schooling.

Missionaries of 19\(^{th}\) century led practical programmes of relief and development. They founded schools, hospitals and refuges to outcastes and they cared for the blind and the deaf, the orphaned and the widowed, the sick and the dying. This voluntary work was

\(^{45}\) Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness*, p.19.
felt to be obligatory and a matter of obedience to the Divine call to serve the poor, the needy and the suffering\(^{49}\)

In the early decades of 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century the social programmes of activism shifted to a more theoretical plane. This shift was termed by an American historian Timothy L. Smith as the ‘great reversal’. This change from a social agenda to a theological debate was due to their fighting the growing influences of theological liberalism within the church circles. In consequence, a series of books on fundamentalism (1910-15) appeared for the first time, ignoring the utility of social activism and emphasizing theological activism. The theological liberals made use of this opportunity in popularizing the social gospel in place of authentic gospel. Walter Rauschenbusch, a popular spokesman of the theological liberals published books titled ‘Christianity and the Social Crisis’ (1907), the ‘Theology for the Social Gospel’ (1917). Here he formulated a kind of communism or Christian socialism, envisaging the kingdom of god on earth with a reconstruction of society on Christian lines. His liberalist and misconceived theology was itself a betrayal of the authentic gospel. His social gospel was ahead of the saving grace of Christ. This great reversal was a phenomenon of the contemporary pressures and world wars. During 1960’s the evangelicals rebelled against the materialism and reversed the great reversal by safeguarding the evangelical consistency to its social responsibility. In 1974 an international congress on world evangelization was held at Lausanne to discuss about the issues of evangelism and social responsibilities. The Lausanne declaration identified evangelism and social, political involvements as part of Christian duty and of the two, evangelism was primary. In 1982, consultation on the relationship between evangelism

and social responsibility (CRESR) was the subject discussed in Grand Rapids. Members reiterated that the social action was an aid to evangelism. Evangelical activism changes the people and the changed people can change society.  

Evangelical activism of the 19th century also did encounter various cultures of the world. The gospel, which changed the people, also brought change in their cultural contacts within non-western societies. A country’s laws, institutions and customs take centuries to develop; the ancient traditional societies like the one in India, resisted Christianity of the West. One missionary points that it is an uphill task to evangelize a culture endowed with written sacred books. For example Indian culture possesses vast treasury of ancient religious books like Bhagavat Gita etc. Such cultures have built-in resistance to Christianity. Hence, the European indologists and the British orientalists took the translation work of the sacred books of the east to make known the supremacy of the Christian religion.

It is often supposed among the Christian theologians that gospel is a good thing and culture is bad. Evangelicals believe that culture is that force, which debases the gospel when the two come into contact. However, theologians have argued that there is no need to see gospel and culture as antagonistic to each other. Richard Niebuhr in his book ‘Christ and Culture’ identifies five approaches to the relationship between Christianity and culture.

1. Christ against culture: - where it is denoted that the convert requires a retreat from his culture. This is the Christianity of monastery.

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2. The Christ of culture: - where it is expounded that Christ is reduced to a merely cultural head of one’s own culture with an embodiment of all its values.

3. Christ above culture: - where it is affirmed that Christ is above culture, because the cultural institutions are seen to be founded in limited natural law, while Christ’s supernatural law operates in a seeker to attain salvation.

4. Christ as the transformer of culture: - where it is viewed that the world and culture are in a fallen perverted condition and Christ converts people within their culture and societies so as people turning from self and the other gods with an understanding of Christian obedience to include cultural action.

5. Christ and culture in paradox: - where it is said that a paradoxical relationship exists between Christ and culture; and the seeker uses culture as a positive force toward true life, within the preserving grace of Christ.53

Therefore contextuality is the ability to respond in a meaningful way to the gospel within a set of cultural circumstances of a seeker or convert, without falling into a cultural syncretism, where non Christian beliefs and practices overshadow the authentic Christian faith. Still cultures resistant to Christianity, needed the Christian doctrines in an indigenous mould, something the Evangelicals were not good at.

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The Charter Act of 1833 provided for the establishment of Bishoprics in metropolitan cities of India. The company took over financial liability of the Anglican Church in India, drawn from the profits of Indian trade.54 As historians observed, it was a

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period of unbounded Evangelical optimism about the likely effects of English Christianizing, civilizing and colonizing mission. The Evangelicals advocated measures for uplifting the downtrodden and the depraved in India and which necessitated the consolidation and extension of British rule in India.\textsuperscript{55} Many cultured Hindus, facing a religio-cultural crisis, found a solution in religious reform, not in conversion.\textsuperscript{56} This was also probably due to the development of nationalism\textsuperscript{57}. Thus, various reformers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Viresalingam, Dayananda Saraswathi, and Vivekananda purged Hinduism of its flaws. Thus they organized the counter attack on the Evangelical ideology of Christian missionaries, who could not change their ideology to appeal to educated Indians. Secondly, most of the Socio- Religious reformers assimilated or synchronized many Christian principles into Hindu philosophy and practice and curtailed the onslaught of English Evangelicalism.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite the avowed continued adherence to the Evangelical formula, there was a great change in missionary mentality in the last quarter of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Almost immediately, the mission executives and field missionaries took the view that the native converts were of inferior quality and could not provide ministerial leadership, which, therefore would be consequently furnished by Europeans. They despised native Christian intellectuals, but not native economic support. They aimed at the creation of national churches, but until their full development had been reached the churches were kept in

\textsuperscript{55} Ian Bradley, \textit{The Call to Seriousness}, p.p.87-93.
\textsuperscript{57} Educated Indians thought they were ruled by God-fearing ruling class. They thought the language of faith and god akin to their own culture. They had no intention of turning Christians. The sceptical Hindus had the Brahma samaj. Sen was exulting in the symbolic meaning of Jesus.
bondage to the missionaries. This imperialist viewpoint was an ecclesiastical variant of the growing devotion to the theory of the white man’s burden and it reduced the native church to a colony of the ‘imperial’ church. Mission paternalism hindered the self-development of the national church. Thus all missions were paternalistic, colonialist, and racist at the turn of the century. The rejection of colonialism by Asian Christians included rejecting western missionary paternalism, with its Eurocentrism and moral superiority.

However, by the beginning of the 20th century the role of traditional missionary and his legacies of Evangelicalism were brought to alteration by the Indian Christians following a growing sense of nationalism. They had unbounded Christianity of its western form and made it clear that Christianity was not an imported, alien, foreign religion but indigenous to Indian needs. The Brethren missionaries were representative voices of this development in India.

Evangelical activism, therefore, needs to be understood not only in terms of evangelism but also as a movement with cultural identity and contextualization. In the mid 20th century, liberation theology, a new way of doing theology, has come up as a solution to the socio-political and economic miseries of mankind. About 1960 the Latin American theologians first advanced this as a redress to the centuries’ upheavals of the people since the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492. Very soon this movement spread all over the world as oppression of mankind prevails everywhere and in every continent in one form or other. So the aim of the liberationists was to liberate the oppressed both spiritually and physically. Gustav Gutierrez in his book ‘A Theology of

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Liberation’ speaks about salvation in terms of building the new society. He combined the socio-political sense of liberation with a biblical-theological meaning. Therefore, the liberation concept of salvation is not individual but a salvation of many or the church community.61

The liberation theologians do not overlook the personal sin, but they believe that the sins of individuals are the result of oppressive political and social systems. The prevailing poverty, widespread illiteracy, and increasing malnutrition and other constraints of injustice, inequity, insecurity etc., are the realities to be challenged and the overthrow of the oppressive structures and building the new society are the primary goals of the liberation theology. The corporate strength of the church community and their liberation from various kinds of oppression are often described in terms of political mission of the church.62 The 20th century theology of liberation is a real shadow and culmination of evangelical activism of the 18th and 19th centuries and very much affected the trends in Dalit liberation theology of India. The church in her liberative mission among Dalits becomes more relevant and efficacious.63

Bebbington ignored to include one more character of Evangelicalism or the fifth mark i.e. inclusivism. Inclusivism is as often neglected Christian impulse of Evangelicalism. Though Evangelicals, the Dissenters, Methodists or Anglicans may disagree on many doctrinal issues, yet they were united on common characters.

61 Gustav Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation, Trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis, 1973), p.88. Dr. Earnest W. Lefever, a church of the Brethren minister, is critical of the term ‘theology of liberation’ as though it is not a Biblical term, but he believes the term is Marxist in concept and practice.
Historians often mistook Evangelicals with varied sense. F.K. Brown contends the historians’ identification of Evangelicals with liberals or with Methodists and drew his conclusion that they were the conservative members of the Church of England. In fact Evangelicalism embraced individuals from all denominations despite their doctrinal differences and called them together as Evangelicals. Of course, Evangelicalism as often said tended largely towards Calvinist teaching.

II

The Rational And the Voice of Reason

19th century British Protestantism was marked by several achievements; its trade and commerce, industrial revolution, its universities like Oxford and Cambridge, scientific discoveries, political and philosophical thought. However, the significant challenges such as Higher criticism and Darwinism promised grim future for British Protestantism. The failure of Anglican Church hierarchy to repudiate Scientific and Enlightenment thought and the radical free thinkers, thus the higher criticism on Christianity scandalized the Evangelicals. Higher criticism took the form of biblical criticism in the 19th century. Further and more rapid arguments took place on these lines. Eduard Reuss (1834) invented a theory that the books of the Law (The Old Testament) were written after those of the Prophets, and the Psalms later still. This supposition gave rise to much speculation and confusion. New methods of applying historical study to the Bible were a new intellectual German approach spread to England caused embarrassing scandals within the church. In 1861 Benjamin Jowett and other liberal churchmen

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published a volume entitled ‘Essays and Reviews’, in which they expressed alarming notions. Jowett alone remarked, ‘scripture must be interpreted like any other book’.66 The tone of heresy was rampant among the clerics of the Church of England. Bishop John William Colenso expressed that only a small portion of Pentateuch was written in the time of Moses, and rejected the universal deluge during Noah and held that Joshua was a purely mythical character. These type of scandals resulted in denouncements, demands to recant, deposed officials and even led to judicial hearings. Many High Church officials clung to the infallibility of the Bible, but the catastrophe did not easily cease. Henry Sedgwick, a fellow of Trinity College at Cambridge publicly defended these clerical free thinkers and he and his associates tended towards agnosticism or hesitant Deism. Skepticism based on science crept into among younger Oxbridge men. By 1870 intellectual skepticism reached a stage ‘if any scholarly under graduate at oxford was a Christian or proposed going into the ministry, he was regarded as a freak’.67 Geological findings were also an added misery to some Evangelicals. As with so many Victorians, Geology did much to weaken the faith of an English prose writer John Ruskin, who was brought up in the strict evangelical discipline. Ruskin’s rejected belief continued to exercise domination over his life, influencing his thoughts and actions.68 It seemed to conservative Christians quite appalling that at a time when the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture was being undermined by Darwin and his allies, a group of those whose sacred duty should have been to shore it up again had conspired to hammer their wedges not under it but into it.

The novel ‘North and South’ written by Elizabeth Gaskell, was a primary witness to the so-called religious doubt that had swept the English society from clergy to laity. Chapter IV of the novel depicts Mr. Hale’s desertion of vocation as clergy in the Church of England. Mr. Hale informs his daughter of his decision as follows ‘I must no longer be a minister in the Church of England…I can meet the consequences of my painful, miserable doubts; but it is an effort beyond me to speak of what has caused me so much suffering’. His daughter exclaimed ‘doubts, pap! doubts as to religion’. Father said, ‘I suffer for conscience’ sake my child…I must do what my conscience bids…’ In this way clerics in both Catholicism and Protestantism engulfed in doubts, gave up their inherited faith and yielded to new knowledge. Many evangelical homes turned cold in religious faith.69

The theories of Darwin influenced the centers of learning in a big way. The church at first did not have any answers to Darwin and, as a result, retreated into a false spiritualism and Darwinism was thought a proposed scientific fact. The creation theory had no effect. It was not until the early 1950s that a movement called creationism actually emerged, with scientists who said that evolution is mere theory and there is evidence of design (which is also an irrational belief with a pseudo-scientific basis). Many so belligerently criticized the Christian theory of creation as superstition, speculated about the non-existence of God. Conversely, there was always a strong religious element, which vehemently reacted against Pro-Darwinists. Cardinal Manning of the Catholic Church denounced Darwin’s theory of evolution as a brutal philosophy and said ‘there is no God, and the ape is our Adam’. Bishop Wilberforce ridiculed T.H. Huxley ‘whether it

was through his grand father or his grand mother that he claimed descent from a venerable ape’. The controversy mounted up between Anti and Pro-Darwinists and David Strauss, a biblical critic commented as follows:

‘Vainly did we philosophers…decree the extermination of miracles…
Darwin has demonstrated this force, this process of nature; he has opened
The door by which a happier coming race will cast out miracles, never to return.’

The English novelist George Elliot, who was an Evangelical in her early age, was carried away by the writings of David Strauss from Christian faith to atheism. She found substitutes for religion in serving the society. Many Victorians maintained balance between science and religion into harmonious entente. Although the myth of the conflict of science and religion was by now well established, it should also be noted that plenty of individuals continued to have a Christian faith and to participate in the sciences. An Evangelical Christian poet William Cowper suffered from periods of severe depression, which caused him frequently to doubt his fervent evangelical Christianity, the source of his much-loved hymns. The sudden death of Hallam, his friend, was a shock to poet Tennyson. He began to question death as the final end. He was unconvinced that this stage of life was indeed all but there would be life to exist in a Christian context and later wrote the poem ‘In Memoriam’. He observed the moral sublimity of the doctrines of Christ, besides scientific truths. Thus the poet’s testimony to a faith that was strong

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enough to wither the onslaughts of religious doubt and death itself. There are nearly three hundred references to the Bible in the poems of Tennyson giving scriptural instructions. He recited a poem ‘Timbuctoo’ in Cambridge in 1829. The page has this footnote ‘be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect’. His favourite theme was the story of Adam and Eve, and occurs again and again in ‘The Day Dream’, ‘Maud’, and ‘In Memoriam’. The century Magazine observed, as quoted in Indian Evangelical Review (1890) that ‘Malaria is no less fatal than pestilence. The chief peril, which threatens the permanence of Christian faith and morals, is none other than the malaria of modern letters – an atmosphere of dull, heavy, faithless materialism. Into this narcotic air, the poetry of Tennyson blows like a pure wind from a loftier and serener height’. Tennyson’s own statement was that the wonders of science should draw some men to God.

The new knowledge of science and religion were not always at conflict but could co-exist. Mathew Arnold, another Victorian poet and son of Thomas Arnold, a distinguished Head Master of Rugby school, wandered between two realms of science and religion, and expressed his dilemma as follows:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,

The other powerless to be born

With no where yet to rest my head

Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.

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He regretted the waning of the beliefs he had held in his boyhood.\textsuperscript{75} To him, however, religion was all that mattered. His short poem ‘Dover Beach’ testifies the crisis of faith in the mid-Victorian world, and ended on a note of prophetic imagery. Even though he could not hold to orthodoxy, he wished England to remain religious and hoped that Christianity would be rethought in terms of the new knowledge of science.\textsuperscript{76} Darwinism’s impact made even Pietism gain a strong hold and deep root in Evangelicalism.

In the year 1882 a group of young dons from Trinity College, Cambridge, Henry Sedgwick, Frederick Myers, and Gerald Balfour were also turning to psychic research as a substitute for their lost Evangelical faith and founded the society for the Psychical Research. Committees were organized to examine telepathy, hypnotism, mesmeric trance etc.\textsuperscript{77} With the founding of this society in England, the publications of its investigators relating to the unconscious mind emerged. Sigmund Freud concluded that behaviour can be caused by unconscious ideas, and that these ideas can be brought into consciousness under the right circumstances. This led to Jung’s later conception of a collective unconscious. Freudianism also had an impact, especially after World War I. Freud asserted that God is merely a figment of our human imagination. Freud’s ideas were very influential and his and Jung’s psychoanalytic interpretations of religion remained popular in many circles. The Church was again taken by surprise and retreated even further.\textsuperscript{78}

Frank Podmore established a research and debating group named Fabian Society, which was joined by young fallen away Evangelicals. Fabian executive committee was

comprised of Pease, Podmore, Annie Besant, George Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb etc. The Fabians soon attracted the intellectuals of different walks of life. Bernard Shaw and Sydney Webb proposed a kind of socialism without giving up moral credit. Thus the Christian Socialist union was created in 1889 as a vehicle by which socialist doctrine would permeate the Anglican Church. It was said that the first Fabians were the drop out Anglicans from Evangelical homes and the union soon attracted about two thousand clergymen. Socialism was their new Evangelicalism. The Fabian Society’s London School of Economics and Political Science had in its fold philosophers like Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells. Annie Besant, who too was brought up in an evangelical home, married the young clergyman, Frank Besant of Clapham, a suburb of London. Dissatisfied by the simplicity and nonritualist Evangelicalism, she fell away from the fold of Church of England, became an unbeliever and antagonist to Christianity and consequently was an active advocate of atheism in the National Secular Society in London. When she joined the Fabian Society, she was easily the most renowned member of the society. Her enthusiasm and energies were diverted to the cult of Theosophy of Madame Blavatsky, whom she succeeded as president of Theosophical Society in 1891 with headquarters at Adayar, India. Very soon she became an ardent follower of Hinduism.

Another Fabian who lapsed from the Evangelical fold was George Bernard Shaw, even though there was some sort of Christian fringe in his socialist ideas. Socialism was his Evangelicalism. Once the American economist Henry George delivered a lecture in

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London in 1884, which converted Shaw to socialism and at once Shaw joined newly founded Fabian Society. Shaw generally would not call himself a Christian and was very critical of Christianity. As a theater critic, he used all his wit in his writings to dispel the artificialities and hypocrisies of the Victorians, in particular the evangelicals. Most of his plays postulate a charming satire and sarcasm of Christianity. One of his plays ‘Major Barbara’ is a good example for this. Shaw dealt with true and false side of religious life in ‘Androcles and the Lion’ in a philosophical sense about early Christianity. The summary of the play is that one must have something worth dying for in order to make life worth living, suggested in the light of martyrdom of early Christians in the arena.

The fundamental theme of Christianity lay in the supernatural mission of Jesus as written in the Gospels. Shaw maintained in the preface to ‘Methuselah’ (1921) that ‘all the sweetness of religion is conveyed to the world by the hands of story tellers and image makers’. Thus his rationalized mind disabled him accepting supernatural element in a religion. Shaw disbelieved the atonement of sins by Jesus, which he defined as crossianity. Shaw interpreted the very central doctrines of Christianity as beyond the hope of reason and as myths produced by human imagination. Thus a kind of pluralist trend and biblical disagreement was spread among the skeptical critics with the introduction of new scientific and rational advancements and they directed assaults on

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83 George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara*, Preface (1906). Shaw has his heroine a major in the Salvation Army, a mission founded by William Booth as an Evangelical body of Christian commanders and soldiers to advocate evangelism and social action. A character Undershift, an armaments manufacturer, argues with his daughter Major Barbara about the effects of their differing views upon the poor. Undershift, although a dealer of ammunitions, his views look like religious in the highest sense, when compared to those hypocrisies of salvationist Evangelicals. Shaw condemns them as bureaucrats, who will be no better than the bishops of the Church of England.
established religion.\textsuperscript{85} Evangelicalism struggled to keep up with the wave of such criticisms that questioned the authority of scriptures. It became increasingly difficult among religious circles to present a consistent and unified position on controversial issues in religion.

The circle of leading anti-Victorian intellectuals and creators in London’s Bloomsbury group included people like Lytton Strachy, Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard Woolf who were highly critical of their predecessors, the Clapham Evangelicals. These young intellectuals, both male and female, revolted against the evangelical and missionary culturism of their ancestors. Lytton Strachy in his book, which was ironically titled ‘The Eminent Victorians’ (1918), mounted a sustained assault on his Evangelical predecessors by firing shots in the opening pages of the book. Virginia Woolf’s essays on Victorian writers in ‘The Common Reader’ series of 1920s and 30s were written in a dismissive tone. Atheism became rampant among intellectual circles.\textsuperscript{86}

IV

Thus, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw an intellectual and rational new cast of mind. Contrary to this, the evangelicals appealed to faith and emotions. There was, indeed, a strong measure of anti-intellectualism about it. Their motto appeared to have been ‘God cares little for man’s intellect’.\textsuperscript{87} Mark Noll, the author of the book ‘The Scandal of Evangelical Mind’ was highly skeptical towards the way the Evangelicals dealt with the national apostasy raised during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century in the form of Biblical criticism, Darwinism, Freudianism, Marxism, Modernism etc and the Evangelical failure

\textsuperscript{85} George Bernard Shaw, A.C. Ward, ed., Preface to Androcles And the Lion, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972.
to tackle it. He discovered their addiction to anti-intellectualism\textsuperscript{88} and their hyper spirituality, which had no answers to keep up with the wave. Noll held that the fundamentalist mentality of the Evangelicals and the meager Evangelical intellectual life led to the religious crisis. The entire Evangelical community of modern generations, since the advent of German Pietism had neglected any serious attention to intellectual mind, social environments, the arts and all spheres of life created by modern societies in the West. There has been no public philosophy followed by the Evangelicals on par with the spirituality they attained. This, too, was limited as true spirituality covers the totality of life and totality of reality.\textsuperscript{89}

Timothy Larsen, an associate professor of Theology, Wheaton College wrote ‘\textit{The Power of Books}’ differing from Mark Noll’s position. He held that the intellectualism and heavy reading of the Victorians was the doorway to crisis of faith. Thus even devout Christians were forced to abandon their faith, intellectual maturity and intellectual honesty. A typical example of such retreat was the case of James Stephen, a prominent member in Clapham sect, but whose son Leslie Stephen, an ordained clergyman eventually lost his faith. It further led to the atheism of his daughter Virginia Wolf.\textsuperscript{90}

Francis Newman, the younger brother of John Henry Newman of Oxford movement, also was converted from Evangelicalism to agnosticism. There was high

\textsuperscript{88} Hofstadter says ‘anti-intellectualism’ does not necessarily mean ‘unintelligent’, but it is ‘a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life. At the same time he meant ‘intellectualism’ as wisdom of intuition, which is deemed to be natural or God given but over rationality is a cultivated and artificial one. Therefore in these senses Mark Noll referred these terms to Evangelicals. Richard Hofstadter, 	extit{Anti-intellectualism in American Life}, Alfred A. Knoff, New York, 1970, p.p. 7, 48.


\textsuperscript{90} Timothy Larsen, \textit{The Power of Book.}, p.14.
number of Victorians who were good readers of books. Victorians often came to faith by reading and retreated from faith through reading. The cause for distracting them from dogma of Evangelicalism was often their accumulated knowledge either to become atheists or agnostics. Although they rejected Evangelicalism of Christianity, they clung eventually to its morality and its ethical assumptions.\footnote{Chadwick Owen, \textit{Victorian Church.}, p. 120-150. Chadwick observes that by 1900 most people believed that miracles do not happen, and they began to know that Jesus was a man. People were honoured for sincerity rather than chided for lack of faith. In this sense Evangelicalism by this time became less a vital religion.} A general change in the moral climate was Victorian churchgoers believed that the churches were important for societal morality, morality was impossible without religion and religion would disappear without churches. Religion is requisite for moral obligation. Chadwick Owen regretted the attitudes of Victorians caused by this process as it affected the country in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Evangelicalism of second half of 19\textsuperscript{th} century was different from the first half, the belief and faith in Christianity was more in 1830s but that was declining after 1860. Lord Lawrence, Governor of Punjab, once said, ‘but for 20 years the old Clapham Evangelicalism has been discredited and latterly almost a different tradition’.\footnote{Rev. K.S. Macdonald, ed., \textit{Indian Evangelical Review}, Vol. LVIII, Oct. 1888, p. 190.} The new code of good conduct was a new religion of humanism, derived from Christian ethics, and relevant for grounding morality within a primarily religious universe. God remained as a ethical deity.\footnote{Gerald Studdert-Kennedy, \textit{British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj}, OUP, New Delhi, 1991. p.62. Sir Malcolm Darling, the future civil servant of the Government of British India, a son of English clergyman lost his faith in the all questioning atmosphere of King’s college, Cambridge, but was sustained in faith through the efforts of Bishop Creighton. After the 1860s a decline in the missionary enterprise in the overseas was also a fact.} According to Scholar Edward Bailey, people do not primarily believe in God, Jesus or the church but in Christianity. This national cultural religion has a theology of its own, based around the self and more like that of Hinduism where Christ is the cultural figure similar to Krishna. Hinduism, pure and popular, is far more integrated
and socially spread where as official Christianity is not some healthy functioning central
tradition of which the populace has a variant in constant dialogue. Indeed, a dominant
intellectual trend of thought is pluralistic and humanistic, and against this background of
the popular situation, a kind of dispersed superstition, some science, some humanism, and
a sort of nationalism all are being absorbed into an image based culture.\footnote{Edward Bailey, \textit{The Sacred Faith of the People}, in T. Moss, ed., \textit{In Search of Christianity}, Firethorn, London, 1986, p. 187.} As Bacon said
of the last period of ancient civilization that moral philosophy took the place of religion,

According to Jeffrey Cox, such shrinkage in spiritual matters was in common
with all denominations in England till 1910 and many people believed that Christianity
was irrelevant even if the churches had been thriving. In England, Cox further says that a
strange argument enticed the people that religion is something, which belong to another
age.\footnote{Jeffery Cox, \textit{The English Churches in a Secular Society}, OUP, London, 1982, p.276.} Cox again observes ‘I am not disputing the fact that our view of the world, our
cosmology, has been transformed by scientific advances since the Reformation, a fact,
which poses new and unique problems for Christian thinkers. Nor am I asserting the
advent of heavy industry, the polarization of society along class lines, the growth of
cities, and geographical and social mobility do not, other things being equal, cause new
problems for the churches, which can, and often do, contribute to a decline of religious
practice. What I object to is the air of inevitability, which results from wrapping up all of
this changes into a package called the: process of secularization; and using the package as
an explanation of social change in the modern world’.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, p.226.} Thus, Evangelicalism suffered
reversals very constantly in the process of secularization of religion. The most serious Christians of 19th century and early 20th centuries were all plagued by radical secularization, which was a result of their tending to natural religion. Religion was gradually regarded as a private matter, which concerned with the conscience of the individual, where as public life was essentially business life and a man’s moral and religious duties were best fulfilled by the punctual and industrious performance of his professional activities.98

The church’s answer to this intellectual awakening was to curb reading! Joel Hawes in his lecture to young men, on the ‘Formation of Character’ (1829) warned them that ‘books contain a deadly and secret poison. Many a young man has been destroyed by reading a single volume’99. This answer seems even today, the answer of unthinking fundamentalist position of all religions under threat. The late 18th and 19th centuries, as we saw, were a time of vigorous scientific, philosophical and theological debate. It was a time of enormous intellectual vitality and even reorientation of thought. It was the age of Reason, when Reason began to prevail over Revelation, naturalism over supernaturalism and the scientist over the theologian. Mankind began to put itself over God and to go center stage. Humans declared an ever-increasing autonomy from traditional authorities, and from previous faith convictions grew out of notions from the past. God, the Bible, Jesus, the resurrection, miracles and faith all began to be profoundly questioned in the name of newly omni-competent reason and newly enthroned scientific enterprise. Against this background, the Protestant Dissent has to be located, religious groups, which had

99 Ibid.
long rejected the authority of the Church of England for its spiritual emptiness\(^\text{100}\). They had been joined in the late 18\(^\text{th}\) century by a number of fast growing denominations, including the Baptists. Methodism arose at a time when the leading ‘Church of England’ had already succumbed to Rationalism and Deism.\(^\text{101}\) The ‘New Dissent’, had become so prevalent a reaction against rationalism and ritualism of the Church of England by the early 19\(^\text{th}\) century that according to an 1811 House of Lords’ report, the Church of England was on its way to becoming a minority religious establishment. A number of Anglicans became concerned, both about the spread of Dissenting churches and their effect on the official church. Evangelicals within the Church of England were beginning to adopt some dissenting views. Free will was an almost universal dogma of this Enlightenment Religion.\(^\text{102}\) So unpopular did spiritual Lords became, that it was proposed in the House of Commons that they should be relieved of ‘their legislative and judicial duties’. The sitting of the Bishops in Parliament tended to alienate the affections of the people from the established church. The clergy committed themselves to a thoroughly false political position. They neglected spiritual duties. Some English clergymen were good at secular skills. Sydney Smith, the editor of Edinburgh Review sarcastically wrote ‘Hunt not, fish not, shoot not, fiddle not, flute not…’ tells the vocations of the clergy. Evangelical clergy, he evidently felt, were compromised. Nor did Nonconformity as represented by Congregationalism fare any better, being embarrassed by the monarchical form of its ministerial office. The exaltation of one man could become an excuse for inactivity among the members. The laity were marginalized, not emancipated.

Perhaps just as alarming to church officials was the fact that over five million people who were not too old, not too young, not too sick, and physically capable of attending church did not participate in any church services at all. There was also a kind of discrimination adopted by the church itself. The donors and the high churchmen were provided with reserved pews for their families in the cathedrals and those pews became their property for generations. The church reduced the lower classes to standing or floor sitting. Savage inequalities destroyed all activities of church life.103 Thus the Church of England fell into a state of lethargic stupor. Many high church clerics clung to the infallibility of the scripture. Rationalism pushed it into erroneous theories. Therefore, Rationalism, which laid hold of the ministerial and theological mind, also conquered the theological colleges and clerical training institutions.104 A large proportion of the clergy of the Church of England, a majority of the pastors of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, of the ministers of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist churches, the whole of the Society of Friends, with a small exception, and not a few Baptist pastors, are either wholly or in part teachers of the rationalistic form of unbelief.105 All these denominations already absorbed unscriptural traditions into their fold and even modified scriptures and religious traditions. They did it in the spirit that something better might be attained even supplanted by traditions.

Marsden, a prominent evangelical of the 20th century, elucidates as to how the established church (Church of England) upon its invitation to modernism and liberalism was ruined, and therefore the Brethren doctrine of dispensationalism, as a form of premillennialism, provided an explanation to the Christian dogmatics by opposing the secular spirit the enlightenment spawned in it, and encouraged the fundamentalist approach in religious orders as well as in mission work. The fundamentalist Brethren movement of the early 19th century could be alone a bulwark against the onslaughts of enlightenment theories of modernism and liberalism in religious establishments and theological circles to retain Christian Faith.

It was also definitely out of renewed Evangelicalism or the zealous spiritualism of the 19th century, with implied Biblicism, Conversionalism, Crucicentrism and Activism that the Brethren movement was born in England, which also created extreme interest in Calvinism and which was a label for the ideal of an early Apostolic Christianity. The upsurge in lay activity as a resultant of Methodism was an important part of the 19th century evangelicalism, which Brethrenism practiced amidst tensions between clerical establishments and laypeople became a significant cause of accessions to the new movement. Thus, the Brethren movement was in part the product of increased participation by laypeople in nineteenth-century evangelicalism and therefore the movement came forward between the years 1820 and 1830 and slowly made its way into

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106 David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p.159.
English national life, amidst sharp criticism on the part of existing denominations.\textsuperscript{107} In an age of doubt and the loss of religious faith, the stalwarts of Brethren movement demonstrated masculinity of Christianity through the dispensational prophetic fundamentalism of John Nelson Darby, pioneering modern Faith missions of Anthony Norris Groves and the theory of Faith ministry of the Devine George Muller of Bristol and Muller was celebrated throughout all of Evangelicalism for the orphanages he founded in Bristol\textsuperscript{108}. This work was widely reported because of the novel way that it was undertaken and managed.

The founding fathers of Brethrenism were collectively a dominant flavour of Evangelicalism in England and America until and after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{109} The doctrinal issues of the Plymouth Brethren, the prophetic spirit, Futurist or Pre-Millenarian view, Faith Missions under the total providential care and Faith Alone ministry, and how these contributed to change the face of Evangelicalism into fundamentalism was the doctrinal theme of Brethren movement that even influenced the evangelical activism of most of the Church Missionary Society, London Missionary Society, Baptist Missionary Society missionaries, who came over India as missionaries since 1830.\textsuperscript{110} The Brethrenism, which in the thirties and forties rapidly became a power, had captivated not a few but most of the spiritual minded members of different denominations at home and Church Missionary Society missionaries in India. The redefined Evangelicalism with fundamentalist innovative such as dispensational and pre-millenarian teachings of the Brethren attracted Church Missionary Society missionaries

\textsuperscript{109} E.H. Broadbent, \textit{The Pilgrim Church.}, pp. 334-368.
\textsuperscript{110} David Bruce, \textit{Decommissioning the Heart: Reflections from a Prayer Walk, Lion & Lamb Journal, Autumn 1997, ECONI, Ireland, p. 17-18.}
(See Appendix IV) like Rhenius of Tinnevelly, Mrs. Wilson of Bengal,111 Dr. Kitto, Rev. C. H. Bomwetsch112 and others. It began with that longing after perfect church envisaged in the prophecy of New Testament, which always has been so attractive a conception among the simple minded Christian brethren. Its influence grew in consequence of its thorough devotion to the study, verse by verse, and line by line of the Bible; not merely the critical study of Hebrew verbs and Greek prepositions, though this was not omitted by the more scholarly of the Brethren, but the study of the inmost meaning of the narratives, precepts and prophecies as a revelation from God to men and it developed in latter days in the well marked ‘Futurist views of unfulfilled prophecy’, which have since been widely adopted, and have led at sometimes, to much controversy.113 The Brethren, therefore formed a bulwark against disbelief, which was either in the form of Rationalism or in the form of Agnosticism and what else, provided a refuge for believing souls of the century where they may act in obedience to the sacred scripture and carry fellowship with those like-minded. These conservative Christians launched a crusade against Darwinism and laid the foundations for a Christian fundamentalism114. J.N. Darby, one of the very few early ideologues of the Brethren, and the Father of Dispensationalism, at times when the phenomenon of Higher Criticism was storming the churches of England and when the apostate clergy of the Church of England were openly attacking the inspiration and the authority of the Bible, had turned the masses towards the Futurist Bible Prophecy, the soul food people needed, during the aftermath of Napoleonic wars. One prophetic sage of

111 Mrs. Wilson's joining Plymouth Brethren 1841: CMS Archive/B/OMS/C 11 O8/ Acc.4, Document No.27, University of Birmingham Library (Overseas Missions series).
112 CMS Minutes (20 Feb, 1827) no. 9, p. 30; CMS Minutes (3 June 1828) no.10, p.563, University of Birmingham Library Archive (Overseas Missions series); The Hindu Patriot (1878) states relating to Mr. Bomwetsch's departure from Anglican liturgy was out of Plymouth Brethren tendencies.
114 The Hindu, August 2, 2006, p.11.
the period, A.C. Gaebelein esteemed J.N. Darby and his co-ideologue A.N. Groves as next to early Apostles\textsuperscript{115} and the Brethren spirituality had expounded extreme Calvinism in its most uncompromising and aggressive form, in other words evident as wider Evangelicalism in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Thereafter as John Kent described the evangelicalism which emerged from 1830 until 1850 as being lay in spirit, urban in concern, disaffected from the ministry, indifferent to denominational frontiers, expressing its distrust of traditional religious institutions by the formation of new ones, which were kept out of the control of the clergy as much as possible. The Brethren reflected these fundamental patterns and their influence upon the spiritual life of the whole century as immediate, profound and permanent, which was to become an ideology of the missionaries in India despite their denominational background. The Brethren movement is wide enough to absorb in its fold all that is good in Evangelicalism. No sooner the movement born in England than it laid the ever first footing in Andhra. A.N. Groves, the founding father of the movement and his retinue of missionaries pioneered it in the districts of Andhra at the invitation of its first adherent in the region, Sir Arthur Cotton, the most celebrated engineer architect of Dowleswaram anicut (See Advancement of Godavary District in Appendix I, Statement ii). A survey of the movement is dealt in detail in the following chapter.