

Topic 1: The Origins of the Revival

The immediate pre-history of the Evangelical Revival in England and Wales extends back to the restoration of the monarchy following the English Civil Wars, and perhaps even prior to that. As well as providing relief at the cessation of religious hostilities, the new regime of 1660 re-established an older stability which united the king, the established church and the people within a single Christian realm. Despite the disappointingly harsh stipulations of the Act of Uniformity of 1662 which required all clergy to assent wholeheartedly to the Book of Common Prayer or else resign their livings (thus creating modern Dissent), Charles II was sufficiently realistic to realize that an element of toleration would be essential in order to preserve the peace of the kingdom. Notwithstanding the revulsion which memories of the Interregnum still engendered, it was clear that disparate versions of spirituality would, in some measure, have to be allowed. While the stability of the realm remained paramount, the sensibilities of those otherwise loyal subjects who had tasted spiritual freedom during the Cromwellian period, would have now to be accommodated. In fact alternative pieties, though kept in check, could never again be wholly suppressed, while the post-Restoration Church would not have a monopoly on the religious convictions of the people. Both Roman Catholicism and Protestant Dissent, though discriminated against, received official recognition and, indeed, toleration: a nascent pluralism would, in fact, arise. In Britain, its American colonies, and, following the Peace of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years War (1618-48), in continental Europe as well, new strains of religion, experiential, individualistic, non-speculative, the so called 'religion of the heart', were coming to the fore. Within Catholicism this trend was represented by Jansenism, exemplified so effectively by the brilliant Frenchman Blaise Pascal (1623-62); within German Lutheranism by the Pietist movement; while in England and Wales the Methodist movement would grow from its soil. Although essentially orthodox in theology and never despising discipline and form, this interiorized spirituality nevertheless privileged spontaneity over order, experience over doctrine, feeling over intellect, and encouraged the active participation of the laity. It was voluntary rather than coercive. With the advent of the so-called Great Awakening, heart religion in its revivalist guise would extend to the American colonies. In England and Wales (as well as Scotland and Ireland), it would be known as the Evangelical Revival.

Following the upheaval of the Commonwealth period and its undoubted spiritual zeal, Restoration culture, in reaction to Puritan strictness, became a byword for unrestrained

immorality and licence. Though secure in its established status, the Church of England, its episcopal and diocesan structures duly restored, had yet to meet the challenge of religious effectiveness. Having survived the otherwise grievous loss of 2000 of its most dedicated ministers to Dissent, it still retained a core of equally dedicated clergy many of whom were conscientious, indubitably royalist, High Churchmen, though there were many others who retained the Calvinist outlook of the pre-Laudian English Church. The problems which the establishment faced were immense. Pluralism, where individual incumbents were allowed to amass multiple livings, became commonplace, giving rise to non-residency. Although pluralist clergy, many of whom became diocesan dignitaries such as archdeacons, cathedral canons and the like, sometimes appointed curates to take pastoral care of their parishes in their absence, these men were often ill-equipped, badly paid and frequently had to find their own lodgings among their parishioners. Sometimes curates were not appointed at all. Although the twenty seven bishops of the Church of England included men of substance and integrity, their expected attendance in the House of Lords during parliamentary sessions, often prevented them giving of their best to the care of their dioceses. An even more worrying trend, which would reach a pitch during the Hanoverian era (1714 onwards), was to appoint bishops for political rather than spiritual reasons; the religious and theological convictions of some of these men would be minimal at best. It was at parish level, however, that the Church needed to show its effectiveness most, and it was here, alas, that its weaknesses were sometimes most glaring:

The satirical writers [of the post-Restoration period] may have caricatured, but they did not invent the less pleasant clerical types which abounded. There are too many ugly and precise examples almost accidentally portrayed in the pages of John Wesley's *Journal* for us to doubt that immoral, drunken and bigoted clergy were to be found in numbers which perhaps passed the danger level. More obvious, and perhaps contributing to the Church's lethargy, were the good, easy men who conformed too much to the ways and wisdom of a materialistic age' (Gordon Rupp, 'Introductory Essay', *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. 1, p. xxiii).

If the Church was having trouble meeting its pastoral responsibilities, it was also being sorely challenged by the intellectual trends of the day. Scepticism had become rife; the comment of the apologist Joseph Butler (1692-1752), bishop of Bristol and thereafter bishop of Durham, in the preface to his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (1736), encapsulates the tenor of the time: 'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of enquiry, but that it is now at length to be discovered as fictitious'. An earlier generation of Anglican apologists, the so-called 'latitude men' or 'latitudinarians', though ostensibly orthodox, had ceded so much to their intellectual

opponents as to make acceptable a much cooler, cerebral creed which veered, in many people's opinion, towards rationalism. Fearing 'enthusiasm', tainted as it was with the excesses of the Great Rebellion, they veered towards the opposite extreme of frigid intellectualist detachment. John Tillotson (1630-94), dean of Canterbury and latterly its archbishop, and Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99), dean of St Paul and then bishop of Worcester, the two most revered Anglican leaders of the late seventeenth century, epitomized this trend. Moderate, open-minded, non-dogmatic and liberal in outlook, disparaging High Churchmanship and Calvinism to equal degrees, even their defence of orthodoxy (as in Stillingfleet's otherwise excellent *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (1697)) gave the impression that morality and human duty were of greater import than sound doctrine and experiential faith. In 1704, Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), rector of the fashionable church of St James, Piccadilly, claimed in his *Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God*, that the fashionable creed of the day was 'Deism', namely a belief in a Supreme Being, worthy of worship who would reward individuals for their virtues in the afterlife, though knowledge of Him was 'discoverable by the light of nature alone, without believing any divine revelation'. (Like Stillingfleet and Tillotson, Clarke was said to have conceded too much to his opponents; his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712), though aimed at defending traditional Christian truth, swung towards Arianism or the belief that Christ was less than fully divine). Deism would set the pace for theological opinion for a generation, with works like *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (1696) by the Irishman John Toland (1670-1722), *A Discourse on Freethinking* (1713) by the London based layman Anthony Collins (1676-1729), and especially *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730), the so-called 'Bible of Deism' by the Oxford academic Matthew Tindal (1657-1733), holding to an omnipotent Creator, ontologically detached from creation, who rules through immutable laws which can be discovered by all rationally enlightened people. For these thinkers the essence of religion was morality; realities such as awe, mystery and the supernatural were tantamount to superstition. The Person of Christ held scant importance in their scheme, while for them, original sin, atonement and the Holy Spirit remained wholly alien concepts. If 'by the 1740s Deist writings were no longer sensational, and the cause seems to have withered about the middle of the century' (Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688-1791*, p. 276), for well over a generation their views had created a consensus in which unbelief had burgeoned. Whereas the successors of the Puritan Richard Baxter and the descendants of the Caroline (or High Church) divines still held doggedly to 'the doctrine of the cross', the Church's faith 'seemed to have been overlaid by the end of the [seventeenth] century by a religion of duty, in which the practice of virtue rather than the vision of God became the true end of man' (ibid., p. 257).

Protestant Dissent, for its part, became a formalized movement with the new regime's insistence that the one church of the realm would be hierarchically organized, episcopally governed, sacerdotal in its doctrine, and worshipping according to the minutiae of the Book of Common Prayer. Whereas small groups of separatists had established themselves outside the jurisdiction of both the established church and the law as early as the 1580s, it was not until the 1630s that the Independents and Baptists had become popular movements with a presence beyond London and the south-east, while mainstream Puritans, emboldened by the political developments of the 1640s, had envisioned that in the future the national church would be reformed according to the Word of God and run on Presbyterian lines. For them Cromwell's Protectorate (1653-8) had been a disappointment. Although the Prayer Book had been banned and the diocesan and Episcopalian structure of the national church been abolished, the dream of a Presbyterian established church never came to fruition. The more radical factions, however, Independents, Baptists and Quakers, had been allowed to prosper. Following Charles II's coming to power in 1660, the mainstream Puritans and Presbyterians had hoped for a comprehensive establishment, wide enough to encompass those whom the new king had initially referred to as 'tender consciences'. This, however, would not be the view of the king's 'Cavalier Parliament', whose members were intent on revenge following what they regarded as the outrage of the Commonwealth and Interregnum (to say nothing of the execution of the monarch's father, Charles I). Even before the Act of Uniformity of 1662 requiring all clergy to conform wholly to the stipulations of the Book of Common Prayer or else forfeit their livings, the Corporation Act of 1661 had required all laymen who enjoyed official status as JPs, aldermen, mayors etc., to swear their loyalty to the regime by partaking of the Eucharist in their parish church. Conscientious Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists in public roles, were thus deprived of their status or else forced to conform. The first Conventicle Act of 1664 prohibited any group of more than five persons from gathering together for public worship outside their parish church thus outlawing all non-Anglican congregations, while the Five Mile Act of 1665 prevented any non-episcopal clergyman from returning to within five miles of where he had ministered during the Commonwealth period. (A second Conventicle Act was instituted in 1669 after the first act had expired). Any contravention of these statutes was dealt with punitively through fines or else imprisonment: 'Dissenters were confronted by a dispirited array of penal laws whose avowed aim was adamantly clear: to inflict upon them untold pain, suffering and humiliation' (Geraint Jenkins, *Protestant Dissenters in Wales, 1639-89*, p. 46). It was during these years that John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the Quaker leader George Fox,

and the radical Welsh Puritan Vavasor Powell, suffered for their conscience by persecution and imprisonment.

The persecution of Dissent ceased in 1688 with the accession to the throne of Mary, sister of James II, and her Dutch consort, William III. Following this 'Glorious Revolution', the Toleration Act was passed allowing Protestant Dissenters restricted civic legitimacy and the protection of the law. The condition was that they swore an oath of allegiance to the crown and registered their meeting houses with the authorities. This toleration was, however, limited; it did not extend to Roman Catholics or those who rejected the Trinitarian faith. The Church of England remained the single established church of the realm; other churches were tolerated rather than afforded full equality. All key civic and municipal positions and those within the judiciary were still restricted to communicant members of the established church; the universities of Oxford and Cambridge would not be opened to Dissenters until the mid-nineteenth century. Dissenters would still have to pay their tithes and church rates towards the upkeep of an established church to which they did not belong. Nevertheless it was a huge relief for them, despite the fact that 'the Revolution of 1688 marked the end of the heroic age of Dissent' (Michael Watts, *The Dissenters*, p. 261).

After being allowed freedom of worship, Dissenters consolidated their strength which had been fortified rather than dissipated during the persecution. By 1715 there were a total of 662 Presbyterian congregations in England and Wales, 229 Independent congregations, 220 Particular or Calvinist Baptist churches, 122 General or Arminian Baptist congregations, and as many as 696 Quaker meetings. In a total population of 5,750,000, there were 356,000 Protestant Dissenters or some six per cent of the whole: 'Over the next twenty years, meeting-houses sprang up in most of the towns and villages of England and Wales, visible and permanent reminders of the failure of the established church to extinguish or comprehend Dissent' (Watts, *The Dissenters*, p. 304). This modestly auspicious picture, however, belied the weaknesses which had beset Dissent by the early eighteenth century. A tendency to become complacent and introverted with an emphasis on retaining present members, began to eclipse the evangelistic zeal which had characterized the successes of the more radical Puritans and the sects a half-century earlier. In fact Dissent was a much quieter, more decorous movement than radical Puritanism had ever been. This restraint and decorum would even affect the Quakers. The movement could still boast leaders of immense quality and influence: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), minister at the Pinner's Hall church in London, tutor to the family of Sir Thomas Abney at Stoke Newington and best known as a hymnist (author of 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross') and Philip Doddridge (1702-51), minister at Northampton and principal of

the Dissenting academy at Daventry, both of whom were Independents, are cases in point. There were also fiery evangelists, like the Independent Richard Davis (1648-1715) of Rothwell, Northants, while the Baptist Academy at Bristol, led by Bernard Foskett (1685-1756), trained men who were committed to an outward-looking, expansive, evangelical Calvinism. Yet the overall trend was towards a diminution of spiritual zeal, in some occasions due to an overemphasis on doctrinal punctiliousness as evidenced by the High Calvinism of strict Baptists like the Southwark minister John Gill (1697-1771), but more often due to capitulation to rationalist theologies and scepticism. When, in 1719 at Salter's Hall, London, a hundred or so Independent, Baptist and Presbyterian ministers debated the virtues or otherwise of subscribing to an orthodox creed, the bulk of the Presbyterians and General (or Arminian) Baptists, refused to be bound by traditional formulations of Christianity and soon succumbed to Arianism and a deistically tinged Unitarianism. The doubt and theological minimalism which was wracking Anglican theology was now registering forcefully within Dissent. Titles such as Strickland Gough's *The Decay of the Dissenting Interest* (1730), Doddridge's *Free Thoughts on the ... Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest* (1730) and Watts' *An Humble Attempt towards the Reviving of Practical Religion among Christians* (1731) bewailed the spiritual torpor which had blighted Dissenting life, and challenged the worldliness, materialism and rationalism which was sapping the strength of a formerly vigorous movement. An ailing Dissent would not provide the breeding ground for the revival of populist evangelical faith.

How, therefore, did the Evangelical Revival begin? The origins of the Revival have been the subject of much consideration by historians, first since the work of the French scholar Elie Halévy in 1906 (See John Walsh, 'Elie Halévy and the birth of Methodism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (1975)) but more especially with the publication of a key essay by John Walsh in 1966 ('Origins of the Evangelical Revival' in G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh, *Essays in Modern Church History*, pp. 132-61). For Walsh the three taproots of the revival were an enthusiasm born (somewhat incongruously) from the stern ascetic spirituality of High Church Anglicanism; a recrudescence of latent seventeenth century Puritanism; and a reaction against the rationalism of Deism and fashionable religious scepticism. In 1968 the left wing social historian E. P. Thompson wrote of 'the chiasm of despair', with the Revival as a heavenly compensation for the economic disappointment of a disenfranchised working class (*The Making of the English Working Class*) while in 1976 A. D. Gilbert saw revivalism as a response to *anomie* or the social and psychological dislocation of the working class uprooted by rapid industrial change (*Religion and Society in Industrial England, 1740-1914*). Whereas

few would dispute the significance of the economic, political and social context, the problem with these reductionist explanations was their partial nature: ‘Somehow none of these “explanations”, singly or collectively, seems to explain enough ... [These] factors ... may therefore be seen as a necessary part of an explanation, but hardly as sufficient’, Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, p. 174). Returning to the field of religious analysis *per se*, in 1978 and 1981 Geoffrey F. Nuttall, the historian of Puritanism, contributed two highly perceptive essays, the first placing the Revival in a much wider context that was usual at the time by emphasising its links with European Pietism (‘Continental Pietism and the Evangelical Movement in Britain’, in J. van den Berg and J. P. van Dooren (eds), *Pietismus und Réveil*), and the second tracing elements of continuity between the Older Dissent, Independency especially, and the newer evangelicalism (‘Methodism and the Older Dissent: Some Perspectives’, *Journal of the United Reformed Church Historical Society*, 2 (1981); both essays were reissued in idem, *Studies in English Dissent* (2002)). In 1989, D. Bebbington, in his widely influential study of evangelicalism, interpreted the Revival as a product of modernity in which Enlightenment norms were applied to orthodox Protestantism thus creating a powerful, pragmatic, experientially grounded, popular religious movement (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*), while between 1992 and 2006, in a series of exhaustive studies, W. R. Ward explored the Revival’s links with continental Pietism on the one hand and its international scope on the other (*The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (1992), *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789* (1999) and *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (2006)). Within this rich body of scholarship, which is still developing, it may be useful to underscore three particular themes: the influence of High Church spirituality; the continuing effect of seventeenth century Puritanism; the enduring stimulus of continental Pietism.

i. High Church spirituality:

High Churchmanship refers to that strand of post-Restoration Anglicanism, derived from the predilections of Archbishop Laud a generation earlier, which was politically royalist, wholly establishmentarian, and had been totally eclipsed during the Commonwealth and Interregnum by Reformed Calvinism on the one hand and Cromwellian sectarianism on the other. High Churchmen ‘stressed the apostolic order, continuity and discipline of the visible Church, the necessity of the apostolic succession for the constitution of true priesthood, the role of baptism in bringing the Christian within the covenant of grace and of the Eucharist in sustaining him

therein, [and] the value of a strict attachment to the ordinances, liturgy and festivals of the Church' (Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', p. 138). On the right wing of the High Church party were the Non-jurors, those clergymen (mostly) who had refused to accept the legitimacy of William III choosing to stay firm to their oath of loyalty to Charles II and his successor, the deposed James II, who, they believed, remained king by divine right. (John Wesley's mother, Susannah, was of this view). After 1689, the bulk of the High Churchmen (including Samuel, John Wesley's father) reconciled themselves to the authority of William and Mary, but remained implacably opposed to the pliancy of the politically motivated bishops and despised the doctrinal liberalism of the latitudinarians. Their orthodoxy was impeccable. The spirituality of the High Churchmen was rigorous. The regeneration of the soul occurred through baptism – the term 'regeneration' did not possess the same meaning in High Church parlance as it would in evangelicalism; although bestowed in baptism, spiritual life needed to be nurtured through self-discipline and costly obedience and could, in fact, be forfeited - ; it was developed through a regular regime of prayer, fasting and partaking of the Lord's Supper, while deference to the clergy, the bishops in particular, was strictly enjoined. The movement was highly clerical and hierarchical in nature. Although strict, High Church piety reflected the ideals of so-called 'Primitive Christianity', namely an idealized interpretation of the life of the early church between the apostolic era and the fifth century AD.

High Church hierarchialism was in no way inimical to 'heart religion' or experiential piety. Despite the later evangelical criticism of 'formalism' or 'works righteousness', High Churchmen saw themselves as orthodox Protestants for whom saving faith entailed a lively partaking of the divine life infused as well as imparted by the Holy Spirit on the basis of the unique sacrifice of Christ. Open to the insights of such mystical writings of the medieval Johann Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica*, Thomas á Kempis's *Imitatio Christi* as well as later Catholic devotional writers including the Carmelite Brother Lawrence (c.1605-91), author of the simple but powerful *Practice of the Presence of God*, and the French Quietist Mme Guyon (1648-1717), High Church piety tended towards the ascetic and rigorous, its aim being the inculcation of practical holiness in the Christian believer. Among the works prized most highly were those of Jeremy Taylor (1613-67), bishop of Down and Connor, especially *Holy Living* (1650) and *Holy Dying* (1651), while the Non-juror William Law (1686-1761) was the most revered living representative of the tradition. His *Christian Perfection* (1726) and *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728) were widely read, though the bracing spirituality which he promulgated was not for the faint-hearted.

Along with providing pious literature for individuals, High Churchmen appreciated the need for developing communal Christian life in which mutual support could be shared. The leader in this sphere was the German-born Anthony Horneck (1641-97), minister of the Savoy Chapel in London, who established a society mostly of young artisans at St Giles, Cripplegate during the 1670s, aimed at deepening the spiritual life. These 'intelligent and articulate Christian laymen, dissatisfied for whatever reason with their spiritual condition, and now given an instrument for their own discipline and enabled to make their own contribution in an active way to the life of the Church' (Rupp, *Religion in England, 1688-1791*, p. 292). Wholly loyal to the Established Church and deferential to instituted authority, they embarked upon a consecrated, holy and serious life while never neglecting their secular calling. Tasked with praying seven times a day and giving to the poor, members were to be fully obedient to the liturgy, forms and Eucharistic practice of their parish churches. By 1694, there were sixteen such religious societies in London, while Samuel Wesley's establishment of such a gathering in rural Epworth, Lincolnshire, shows how the ideal spread further afield. The publication of Josiah Woodward's *Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies* (1701) publicized their labours even more widely. John and Charles Wesley's 'Holy Club' in Oxford, between 1729 and 1736, was in this mode.

High Church piety in both its individual and communal forms, also gave rise to the Society for the Reformation of Manners in the 1690s, Thomas Bray's publishing house, The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1698, and the overseas missionary society, The Society for the Propagation for the Gospel (SPG) in 1701. As part of their social mission, High Churchmen were behind the so-called Charity Schools Movement, providing free elementary education for the urban poor. By 1704 there were 54 such schools in London, and ten years later some thousand schools had been established throughout the realm.

Of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival, the Wesley brothers, and to a lesser degree Howell Harris, were most indebted to the High Church tradition. The Wesleys' parents, Samuel and Susannah, had broken with their Dissenting heritage in their youth to embrace post-Restoration Anglicanism at its most uncompromising. The sacramentalist values of High Anglicanism, its weighty deference to episcopal authority, its liturgical obedience to the Book of Common Prayer and its unbending royalism, were formative influences on all of the Wesley children, and would continue so long after John and Charles had embraced the evangelical

faith. The Oxford ‘Holy Club’ was a High Church affair, while the pastoral discipline which the brothers enforced during their time in the American colony of Georgia between 1736 and 1737 (which would be their only experience of parish oversight), was in the same vein. Paradoxically, the great contribution of ascetic obedience to the Revival was to drive men of tender conscience to seek release in the *experience* of individual salvation, the assurance of sins personally forgiven not through their own costly obedience but through Christ’s sacrifice on their behalf.

The transition from the stern, ascetical High Church piety of Law’s *Serious Call* to the spirituality of evangelicalism entailed a movement – as some evangelicals put it in a heartfelt pun – from Law to Gospel ... Those who followed the way of Law’s *Serious Call* sometimes discovered that for all its magnetic appeal, it proffered a regimen that was unrelenting in its sternness, too concerned with the negative qualities of self-denial. By contrast early Methodism and Moravianism seemed fresh, optimistic and outgoing, offering immediate conversion, joy, instantaneous relief from the burden of guilt, and a personal, experiential knowledge of acceptance (John Walsh, ‘The Cambridge Methodists’, in P. Brooks (ed), *Christian Spirituality*, p. 255).

Yet it was in this milieu that the evangelicalism of the Wesleys was born. Although their subsequent piety would be markedly different in emphasis, they never forsook the values or (sometimes) the practices of their formation.

The same was true of Howell Harris. Although not born to a clerical family, the piety of the Talgarth parish church, and the practice of Pryce Davies, Harris’ vicar, was decidedly High Church. It was on being charged by Davies to attend Easter communion in 1735 that Harris was convicted of his sins. Between conviction on Easter Sunday and conversion on Whit Sunday following, Harris was immersed in the holiness literature of the High Church divines, Brian Duppa’s *Holy Rules and Helps to Devotion* (1674) and Jeremy Taylor’s *Golden Grove* (1655), while his conversion was sealed by partaking of Holy Communion. His subsequent evangelicalism was deeply imbued with these Eucharistic qualities: ‘In usages he was a High Churchman. A frequent communicant ... he was also given to fasting three days a week ... [while] at Trevecka he encouraged “the Family” in “turning in church when repeating the Creed and shewing reverence at the name of Jesus”’ (Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Howel Harris: the Last Enthusiast*, p. 43). For all the differences between evangelicalism and the spirituality of High Church Anglicanism, the one was deeply indebted to the other.

ii. The Puritan tradition:

Writing to George Whitefield in April 1739, Thomas Jones, vicar of the parish of Cwm-iou in Monmouthshire, stated: ‘Yours is the good old Puritan doctrine that to my great concern I thought had quite forsaken the land, till about 14 months ago I met with some of your sermons’ (quoted in Eifion Evans, *Howel Harris Evangelist*, p. 3.). Puritans, or ‘the hotter sort of Protestants’, were those who pressed for a more thorough renewal of the established church according to the norms of the Protestant Reformation, initially during the Elizabethan era (1553-1603) and then under her successors, James I and Charles I. Theologically they were at one with the archbishops Cranmer, Parker, Grindal, Whitgift, Bancroft and Abbott, all of whom doctrinally were Calvinists, but they were impatient with the slow pace of practical reform and what they saw as a tendency among the church leaders towards temporizing and institutionalization. Only during the Commonwealth and Interregnum did the latent division between the work of renewing the structures of the national church and the possibility of pursuing active godliness outside of its bounds, become stark. Although triumphant during the 1640s and ’50s, mainstream Puritanism – represented by the Presbyterian party mostly, though there remained many who supported a pastorally sensitive concept of episcopacy as being in accord with scriptural authority – was in danger of being eclipsed by the Independents, Baptists, Quakers and others, sects which had a radically different concept of the link between church and state. Previously the Puritans had been almost universally staunch churchmen holding tenaciously to the concept of a national religious establishment.

The Cavalier Parliament and the post-Restoration reaction following Cromwellian excesses, as mentioned above, put paid to Puritan influence within the establishment. When, during the 1670s, the hope of comprehension into a biblically reformed national church finally dissipated, the bulk of the 2000 ministers who had been ejected from their livings in 1662, reconciled themselves to the present realities and accepted their lot as Dissenters. Thereafter the Presbyterians as well as the Independents, Baptists and Quakers, would constitute ‘the Dissenting interest’. Calvinism, however, did not wholly disappear from the Established Church. During the immediate post-Restoration years, Reformed clerics of the stature of William Nicholson (1591-1672), bishop of Lincoln, Edward Reynolds (1599-1676), bishop of Norwich, and Thomas Marshall (1621-85) dean of Gloucester, wielded influence in their dioceses, as, later in the period, would such churchmen as John Hall (1633-1710), bishop of Bristol, and Robert South (1633-1716), prebendary of Westminster and canon of Christ Church, Oxford. Yet it was not through theologians and preachers that Puritan convictions would have their most telling impact on the populace during the late seventeenth and early

eighteenth centuries, but through books. Works such as Richard Baxter's *Saints Everlasting Rest* (1650) went through numerous imprints during these decades, as did the Presbyterian Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted* (1672) and his *Sure Guide to Heaven* (1688) which were read well beyond the Dissenting community, while the Baptist John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666) and even more-so *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), immediately established themselves as classics of literature as well as Puritan spirituality. By the 1730s Puritan influence still perpetuated itself through the printed word:

Much of the genius of Puritanism had gone into the production of literature, which survived, if dusty and mildewed, on the shelves of college and parish libraries, or round the walls of isolated rectories, ready to be taken down by some inquisitive or distressed soul. Time and again, in the case histories of conversions, one comes across 'old books', sometimes a close-knit theological treatise, sometimes an awakening tract like Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, or, above all, Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, which was still brooded over in many humble cottages (Walsh, 'Origins of the Evangelical Revival', p. 159).

Notwithstanding his High Church preferences, Howell Harris saw himself increasingly as being indebted to the Calvinist tradition of the mainstream Puritans. Writing to the Scot James Erskine in 1745, he stated: 'I think we all agree with the good old orthodox Reformers and Puritans; I have their works in high esteem' (quoted in Eifion Evans, *Howell Harris Evangelist*, p. 18.). Puritanism, consequently, remained a vital confluence which fed into the incipient Evangelical Revival.

iii. Continental Pietism:

'Pietism', according to W. R. Ward, 'was an answer to the problems of religious establishments in the doldrums', ('Evangelical awakenings in the North Atlantic world', in S.J. Brown and T. Ticketts (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution, 1660-1815*, p. 329). Just as the Established Church in England and Wales was failing in its mission to minister successfully to all its adherents, state Lutheranism in the German regions had become morally flabby and spiritually effete. Recent scholarship has emphasised the extent of British interconnectedness with the European continent throughout the seventeenth century, while religious historians have explored afresh the links between Protestant faith communities on both sides of the North Sea. Pietism was a renewal movement within Lutheranism which emphasised the need for individual conversion ('the New Birth') rather than a notional dependence on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, formally proclaimed. Its most celebrated proponent in the latter part of the seventeenth century was

Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), a native of Alsace, whose networking among Europe's aristocracy helped establish Pietism as a powerful religious force. A philosopher and biblical scholar with an encyclopaedic knowledge of Luther's theology, he was appointed court chaplain at Frankfort in 1666, from where he organized devotional gatherings (which were frowned upon by the ecclesiastical authorities) in order to nurture personal religion among the faithful. These *collegia pietatis* (sing. *collegium pietatis*) or 'class meetings' would come to characterize not only continental Pietism but English and Welsh Methodism, both Wesleyan and Calvinistic, during the succeeding century. 'For him the meetings realised one of his most precious themes, the general spiritual priesthood. If every Christian exercised his spiritual obligations to warn and comfort his fellow believers, instead of leaving everything to the clergy, church renewal would begin in earnest' (W. R. Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789*, p. 75). Spener's blueprint for renewal, the *Pia Desideria* (1675), urged spiritual rejuvenation among indolent clergy no less than apathetic laity, and expected all Christians to show forth in their lives signs of real and active godliness. Piety should be rooted firmly within family life, while meetings for Bible study and the nurturing of spirituality should complement the regular round of Sunday worship services. A loyal Lutheran throughout, he challenged notional orthodoxy on the one hand and sectarian radicalism on the other, and strove to renew the Church from within. From Frankfort Spener was called to Dresden in 1686, as senior court chaplain to the Elector of Saxony, a particularly prestigious post within the Lutheran hierarchy, and thence to Berlin in Brandenburg in 1691, as court preacher and rector of St Nicholas parish.

By then tensions between the Pietists and the orthodox party within Lutheranism, who saw Pietism as indulging in 'enthusiasm' and compromising the ideal of justification by faith alone, had come to a head, especially in Leipzig. August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), who would become Spener's foremost disciple, had forfeited academic and ecclesiastical posts in both Leipzig and Dresden due to his uncompromising advocacy of Pietist ideals and practices. In 1694 however, through Spener's good offices, the new university of Halle appointed Francke as its first professor of Greek, a post which he combined with pastoral responsibility in the city. Transferring to the chair of theology in 1697, Franke's influence within the university was such that it soon became a bastion of Pietist influence not only in Brandenburg-Prussia but far beyond. By the early eighteenth century the city of Halle had become renowned for Pietist inspired charitable institutions which had grown exponentially to include a thriving free school system, a large orphan house, a teacher training institution, an extensive medicine dispensary

and a press producing inexpensive Bibles and religious literature in half a dozen languages. This by now vast commercial enterprise, wholly geared to the cause of vital religion, had been inspired and overseen by August Francke. He had also forged links with the London-based Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) whose High Church piety was seen as being in accord with the ecclesiastical traditions of classical Lutheranism. Another of Halle's projects was the Protestant mission to India's Tranquebar. (The Welsh proto-revivalist Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, who volunteered for missionary work in Tranquebar, would be deeply involved in the work of the SPCK and oversaw a charity schools system heavily influenced by the Halle model).

The spread of Francke's influence was remarkable; through the chaplaincies into the army, through education everywhere, through Spener's circle of pious counts ... whom he turned into a sort of advisory cabinet for the management of the Halle enterprise, through clergy and civil servants trained at Halle. When Francke set out on a nine-month journey across Europe in 1717-18, he found friends and invitations to preach in imperial cities everywhere (Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789*, p. 81).

By the time of his death, aged 64, in 1727, Pietism has put down roots throughout Protestant Europe.

The final name to be included in this section is that of Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-60). Unlike Spener and Francke, he was not initially a clergyman but an aristocrat, and although often described as a Pietist his spirituality diverged from that of Pietism, while the movement to which he is connected, the Moravian Church, would make its own unique contribution to the history of the Evangelical Revival.

Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf und Pottendorf was born in Dresden in 1700, the grandson of an expatriate Austrian nobleman who had settled in Saxony, and the son of a privy councillor. Following his death when Nikolaus was only a few months old, his mother, baroness Charlotte Justine von Gersdorf, married a Prussian general leaving the boy to be brought up by his grandmother, baroness Henrietta Katherina, at her home estate in Upper Lusatia, on the border between Saxony and the kingdoms of Bohemia and Moravia (in what is now the Czech Republic). Both she and her daughter were Pietists: Nikolaus's godfather was Philipp Jakob Spener while the two baronesses were heavily involved in August Hermann Francke's multifarious ventures in Halle. Although Nikolaus affirmed the Pietists' warm, experiential piety, his education first at Halle then at staunchly orthodox Wittenberg gave him an appreciation for alternative versions of the Lutheran faith, while visits to Calvinist Holland

and Catholic Paris, where he was impressed by the virile piety of the Jansenists, engendered in him eclectic sympathies: 'His journey convinced him that God had his true believers in every confession and that he should never adopt a party standpoint' (W. R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, p. 121). His marriage to Erdmuthe Dorothea, countess of Ebersdorf, in 1722, reinforced both his aristocratic connections as well as his links with the Pietist network in the courts of the Holy Roman Empire. Rejecting a career in politics, he settled as a property owner at Berthelsdorf, on lands purchased from the estates of his grandmother, Henrietta Katherina. It was here where he would establish a religious community which, although being officially Lutheran, was open to pious members of other confessions as well. Berthelsdorf soon became a magnet for revivalistic Protestants seeking freedom to worship according to their own vision rather than conforming to what they viewed as the dreary norms of the ecclesiastical establishment.

Among the first to settle was a company of Moravians led by a charismatic carpenter called Christian David who, in 1722, made the village of Herrnhut their home. This group was descended from the Unitas Fratrum or Church of the Bohemian Brethren, a body which was founded by followers of Jan Huss of Prague in the fifteenth century, but thereafter had been suppressed and all but obliterated during the Thirty Years War. Although the many other groups of spiritually disgruntled Moravians, Bohemians, Silesians and Hungarians who were pouring into the area threatened to destabilize the community, Zinzendorf (along with Richard Rothe, Berthelsdorf's parish minister) was intent on preserving its Lutheran ethos, while David's people were resolved to use the opportunity to reconnect with their pre-Reformation ecclesiastical roots. Realising the potentially volatile nature of the situation, Zinzendorf (and Rothe) instituted a disciplined regime including 'bands' or fellowship meetings, while the parish church remained the religious focus of the community. What occurred next, somewhat unexpectedly, was 'one of the most remarkable of all religious revivals' (Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening*, p. 127). On 13 August 1727, when the whole community was gathered in the parish church for Holy Communion, an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit created a new and unique sense of unity and purpose. Thereafter Zinzendorf, the Lutheran, welded the community together on the basis of the recently rediscovered constitution of the Bohemian Brethren and so established 'the Moravian Church'. Its orders of ministry, including bishops, was restored – Zinzendorf, though still doctrinally Lutheran, would be consecrated bishop in 1737 – and between 1732 and 1770 the church would spread to Greenland, Denmark, the North American colony of Georgia (where it had a profound effect on the brothers John and Charles

Wesley), England and Wales (it was in a gathering of the Moravian's Fetter Lane society in London in 1738 that John Wesley's heart would be 'strangely warmed'), South America, South Africa and Labrador: 'Its melding of the young Moravians exiles' adventurous zeal with the aristocratic Pietism of the equally youthful Zinzendorf was to produce a religious explosion which would soon reverberate throughout the world' (Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England, 1728-60*, p. 6). In doctrinal terms the Moravians were more communally minded than the individualistic Pietists, less prescriptive in the way they judged the reality of 'the New Birth', more festive and celebratory in the tenor of their faith, while their devotion to 'the blood and wounds of Christ' (to which Howell Harris would be strongly drawn) had an affective and emotional quality which sometimes bordered on the mawkish. Along with the Methodist movement both Calvinistic and Wesleyan, the Countess of Huntington's Connexion and some other smaller sects, the Moravians would make a signal contribution to the development of the Evangelical Revival in England and Wales. Their rootedness in an earlier tradition of experiential 'heart religion' underscores the contribution which continental Pietism made to the Revival's pre-history and origin.

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