

‘Eighteenth Century Britain: Politics, Society, Religion, and the Enlightenment’

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INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the religious and political landscape of Britain in the eighteenth century has undergone a remarkable change in the forty years since 1980. The prevailing interpretation up to the 1960s and 1970s, drawing on much older views of Victorian historians, was that religion in general (and the Church of England in particular) was slumbering and in decline. The view was that strength of piety and religious devotion dimmed, and opened the way for two, opposing, trends: the secularising tendency of the Enlightenment; and the turn away from the Church in the form of the Evangelical Revival and Awakening.

The high water mark of the Secularisation thesis has perhaps passed, and scholars are less inclined to the view that the eighteenth century opened the way to infidelity and apathy in religion –at least in the case of Britain [Gibson & Nash]. When scrutinised carefully, the Secularisation thesis has become hard to sustain. Besides questions about the measurement of piety and religious principles, there is also a preponderance of evidence that the vast majority of people in the eighteenth century were men and women of faith. The most recent advances in our understanding of the Enlightenment have also emphasised continuity and the presence of God and faith in the eighteenth century [Bulman & Ingram]. Modern scholarship is beginning to accommodate the persistence of ideas of revelation, miracles and the supernatural, which were as strong in the heyday of the Enlightenment as previously. Moreover, scholars have claimed that the Romantic and Neo-Gothic movements are inexplicable in an ‘Enlightened’ world in which science and reason were thought to predominate.

The idea of the evangelical movement in the eighteenth century –as defined by a ‘revival’ or ‘awakening’ has also become less credible. This has been especially clearly demonstrated in

the case of Wales [Gibson (2015b); Harding.] There have also been challenges to the nature of the ‘Great Awakening’ in Colonial North America [Butler]. While the evangelical movement that gave birth to Methodism began in the 1730s, driven by the Wesleys and George Whitefield, yet it is clear that religious revivals and religious societies were well established in the Church of England from the late seventeenth century [Sirota, Bullock, Bulman & Portus]. Another problem with the revival or awakening model of the evangelical movement is that it flies in the face of an overwhelming body of evidence that suggests that the Church of England was remarkably vibrant and energetic in this period [Jacob; Gibson (2001); Ingram; Clark; Gregory (2000); Gregory (2017); Snape]. So the evangelical movement did not spring from the mulch of a rotting Church, it rose from the religious and theological fertility of religion in the eighteenth century. From church building to sermon culture and the religious observance in the Church, the old idea of an institution that was asleep is unsustainable from the evidence [Friedman; Francis & Gibson; Jacob (1996)]. Scholars looking back on the eighteenth century have to shed preconceptions that have grown from a misunderstanding of the period; those who search for religious sloth and apathy, and the conquest of reason by rationalism will find themselves frustrated.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

John Wesley was born into a nation still bitterly divided by religion and politics. It was a period in which faith could be taken as the default position of the vast majority of the population. But faith, like politics, was a source of deep division. Only fifteen years before Wesley’s birth, James II had been ejected from the throne because of his tyrannical Catholicising policies, and the wounds of that change were only slowly healing. The Revolution of 1688 had been preceded by the ‘Great Ejection’ of 1662, in which Protestant clergy who could not accept the religious settlement at the Restoration of Charles II were forced to leave the Church [Appleby].

It was a departure that many hoped would not be permanent. The Great Ejection and the Revolution of 1688 created a tense religious and political environment. The two political groupings of Whigs and Tories were born in this period and owed their origins to deep religious convictions. The Whigs were inclined to resist what they saw as royal tyranny and to regard sovereignty as rising from parliament and the people, rather than coming from God through the monarch. The Tories took the view that the Bible taught passive obedience to the divinely appointed monarch and that God legitimised the rule of the civil government. The paradox was that the Tory institutions which were most committed to a view of hereditary and divine monarchy, among them the University of Oxford and the Anglican episcopate, were in the vanguard of those which resisted James II's reign [Pincus; Gibson (2007)]. The Tories who most strongly resisted the King did so because he threatened the institution which they held in higher esteem than the monarchy: the Church. The effect was that in 1688 most people, including Tories, sought to be rid of King James, and Parliament invited his daughter and son in law to become joint monarchs. However, when the waters closed over the crisis of 1688-9, many Tories reverted to their previous views. Those bishops most inclined to Toryism and High Churchmanship left the Church of England to become Non-Jurors, who refused to abandon their oaths to James II and to accept William and Mary as his replacements. Non-jurors were small in number, fewer than four hundred, but they were active in advancing their views, and punched above their weight in theological debates. For almost the next century, the aftershocks of 1688 shaped the politics and religious settlement in England. Jacobites contested the legitimacy of the settlement of 1689 and on two occasions raised large-scale rebellions to over-turn the Protestant monarchy which it had established.

These divisions lay at the heart of the family in which John Wesley was raised. His grandfather, whose name was spelled 'John Westley', had died in 1678, physically broken by years of imprisonment and persecution for leaving the Church in 1662 and refusing to abandon his

dissenting ministry. Samuel Wesley, John's father, had left Dissent and had conformed to the Church of England in 1684-5. He subsequently benefitted from an education at Exeter College, Oxford and was appointed as an Anglican parson at Epworth, Lincolnshire. In 1689, though Samuel had been a firm supporter of James, when he was ordained priest, he swore the oaths to William and Mary and endorsed the settlement which would ensure that the crown remained on a Protestant head [Gibson, 2021]. However this was not something that Susanna, his wife, accepted and politics became a source of deep division between them during their marriage. Samuel was a Protestant loyalist who accepted the settlement of the throne in 1701; whereas Susanna seems to have been a committed Jacobite who wanted the return of the Stuart dynasty [Wallace, 12, 35, 84]. Although John was clearly influenced by his mother in many ways, he consciously identified as a Tory and ascribed this to his father's influence [Telford, *vii*, 305; Clark, 285-95; Gibson (2018), Black (2017), 1-17].

The first decade of John Wesley's life witnessed what is sometimes called 'the rage of party' in which Tories and Whigs drew further apart and became more fractious in their attitudes to one another. Historians have tended to see this 'rage' through a secular lens, but religious concerns lay at the heart of it –and many clergy felt that their opponents in politics were endangering personal and national salvation. The Toleration Act of 1689, which granted Protestant Dissenters the right to worship separately from the Church of England, was central to the divisions. Tory High Churchmen thought the Act made the 'schism' of 1662 permanent and divided the body of Christ; Whigs saw religious toleration as part of the settlement of 1689, which buttressed the Protestant nation against the threat of a return of the Stuarts. That many Protestant Dissenters voted for the Whigs added a potent electoral dimension to the disharmony [Aston & Bankhurst; Stevens]. The presence of Dissent and the idea of separation from the Church was clearly an issue with which Wesley and the Methodists in the eighteenth century grappled.

The zenith of Tory power was reached in 1710-14, in the wake of a landslide election victory. The victory was brought about in part by the trial for sedition of Henry Sacheverell, a Tory High Churchman, which provoked extreme views of both sides [Holmes, Cowan]. Samuel Wesley was an active supporter of Sacheverell, and John Wesley claimed that his father wrote the defence speech that Sacheverell spoke at his impeachment [Gibson (2021), 140-6]. The Tories used their strength in both Parliament and Convocation to outlaw occasional conformity (the practice whereby, under the terms of the 1673 Test Act, Dissenters took communion in the Church of England annually to qualify them for public office) and ban all Dissenters' academies. But the Tory triumph turned to despair in 1714 when Queen Anne died, aged just forty nine, and George of Hanover succeeded to the throne. As a Lutheran, George was exactly the sort of Dissenter who the Tories resented, though he conformed to the Church of England. He was also inclined to the Whigs, who embodied his views of monarchy as well as religion. For the next forty years, the Whigs dominated the political scene while the Tories tried to shake off the association with Jacobites and their fellow travellers [Colley; Clark; Dickinson; Cruickshanks; Chamberlain].

As a result, the ecclesiastical and political context within which Wesley was raised, educated and entered the Church was complex and contested. Slowly the Whig governments, which dominated politics after 1714, pacified the religious scene. This was achieved by the twin policies of rewarding Whigs for calming political tensions in the Church and by demonstrating that the clergy had little to fear from Whig governments. Both were long-term policies which did not bear fruit immediately and there remained concerns and anxieties between Tories and Whigs and Low and High Church factions for some years. But the repeated Tory High Church cry of 'the Church in Danger', which had been so potent in the final quarter of the seventeenth century and had rallied popular support to the Church in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, was less convincing than previously. Whigs and Low Churchmen could be as pious

and sincere as Tories and were no longer seen as opening the door to accommodation with Dissent. As power slipped away from the Tories on the national stage, they were less able to sustain Toryism among the clergy and the parishes. In addition, the government used patronage judiciously to advance Whig bishops who in turn effected a change in the religious sentiments of their dioceses [Chamberlain]. One by one, the dioceses dominated by Tories and High Churchmen fell into the hands of Whigs; this was especially so in the northern sees such as York, Chester and in Lincoln where Bishops Lancelot Blackburne, Samuel Peploe and Richard Reynolds were able to turn Tory strongholds into Whig inclined dioceses in thirty years [Reed]. In some places, however, Toryism remained strong. One of these was the University of Oxford, where John and Charles Wesley were undergraduates in the 1720s and in which they both taught in the 1730s. Oxford was regarded as a Tory stronghold, and even a haven for Jacobitism –there were regular expressions of support for the exiled Stuarts in the eighteenth century. Although he was by no means a Jacobite (in fact, his loyalty to the Hanoverian succession was unwavering), some mistook Wesley's Toryism for Jacobitism. On 11 June 1734, John Wesley preached a sermon before the University, which his brother Charles called his 'Jacobite sermon'. No copy had survived, but it is known that Wesley had taken the precaution of submitting it in advance to the Vice-Chancellor, and was given permission to preach it. Charles Wesley wrote that John had been 'much mauled and threatened' for the sermon. Moreover, John Wesley did not worry about associating with known Jacobites such as James Oglethorpe [Newport & Lloyd, 40, 60]. One scholar has suggested that Wesley attracted financial support because he was thought to be a Jacobite [North, 4]. Moreover, Wesley experimented with Non-juring liturgies during his period as a missionary in Georgia between 1735-8 [Hammond]. In other words, John Wesley was not a Jacobite, but he shared some of the political and theological instincts that fuelled Jacobitism.

The Tory instincts that Wesley absorbed at home in Epworth and at Oxford and experimented with in Georgia, remained with him for life. His claim to be a Tory High Churchman came in the 1770s and was reflected in his swift reversal in response to the emerging crisis in North America. Before 1776, Wesley had sympathised with the colonists, and even endorsed their claims to freedom from taxation; but once the Revolution broke out he condemned it as unacceptable because it challenged the divine sanction of civil government [Holland; Raymond; Wesley (1775)].

The same Tory instincts made Wesley wary of alterations to the institutional structure of Church and State. Wesley was not a radical and few of the proposals to change the basis of religious establishment attracted his support. Consequently, the campaigns for relief for Catholics and Protestant Dissenters in the 1770s and 1780s were not matters to which Wesley paid much attention. Equally, the campaign within the Church of England to relieve clergy from the requirement to subscribe to each of the Thirty Nine Articles was not an issue with which Wesley engaged. Nevertheless, Wesley was a committed abolitionist; he supported Thomas Clarkson's abolitionist campaigns and added an important moral and theological validity to the anti-slavery movement. While Wesley was suspicious that 'the devil makes work for idle hands', and had suffered at the hands of the mob [Walsh (1971) 213-27], he was also keen to emphasise that the Church had a particular mission to the poor, and perhaps especially to the urban poor who had been affected by industrialisation [Walsh (1985), 18-30].

THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

The religious character of Britain in 1700 was overwhelmingly Protestant and dominated by two established churches: the Anglican Church in England, Wales and Ireland and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Scotland. The Protestant character of the country was underscored by the events of 1688 and 1714, on both occasions the country chose their religion

over the idea of a direct hereditary monarchy. Since the Act of Settlement of 1701, and the Act of Union in 1707, the succession to the throne excluded Catholics. The Catholic population of Britain was small; perhaps only 4% of the population, but it fell over the century to about 1% in 1800. Nevertheless, Catholics remained subject to severe penal laws. They could not own property, and were often arrested and their houses searched in times of political tension. Catholic schooling was forbidden, and some devout Catholics sent their children to France to be educated. Popular antagonism towards Catholics, which had been powerfully stoked in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, was often seen in support for wars against the Catholic powers of France and Spain. It also burst forth on occasions such as the Gordon Riots of June 1780, which followed an attempt to relieve Catholics of some penal laws. Catholic embassy chapels in London were burnt, and the army had to be called out to restore order. Altogether about 400 people were killed in the three days of riots and 450 rioters were arrested [Heywood & Seed]. Such episodes demonstrated both the degree to which anti-Catholicism had become institutionalised and the widespread desire to protect the Protestant religion.

After the 1689 Toleration Act, the Protestant Dissenters (Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Independents) were permitted to worship freely –as long as they were Trinitarian. But they were still subject to the Test Act and excluded from public office unless they took Communion in the Church of England once a year. Some Dissenters agreed to take Communion –‘occasional conformity’- which was controversial; but from the 1720s there were regular indemnity acts that permitted them to hold public office without penalty. Protestant Dissenters represented about 5% of the population of England; but they declined during the century. This was partly due to internal divisions over issues such as Trinitarianism and the growth of ‘rational dissent’ –which emphasised the right of conscience and challenged such traditional teaching as original sin and predestination. Dissenters were also discriminated against by some High Church clergy who regarded them as schismatics and therefore sinful. In

Epworth, where John Wesley grew up, his father, Samuel regarded Dissenters as sinful and insisted that they had to marry in Church and denied that their own baptism was valid. He often prosecuted Dissenters in church courts for failure to maintain the moral teachings of the Church of England. Dissenters were keen, however, to emphasise that they were not the descendants of the Puritans fanatics of the seventeenth century or that they represented a danger to the state, and in time they eroded this reputation.

Among Protestant Dissenters, some of the most troubling were the Quakers, or the Society of Friends. This was in part because Quaker rejected so many of the traditional forms of social and religious practice: they denied the idea of an individual priesthood, refused to swear oaths, rejected marriage outside their own communities or according to the law, and refused to pay taxes or tithes. Moreover, Quaker worship seemed to move between the poles of ecstatic and frenzied behaviour to the quiet and introspective spirituality of eighteenth century meetings. Neither of these seemed to be familiar to a society that modelled worship on the Book of Common Prayer. The imprisonment of Quakers was largely ended after 1689, though they remained outside the law when they refused to pay taxes or swear oaths.

One of the smallest religious groups in Britain was the Jews. Permitted to return to Britain under Cromwell, Jews remained an object of divided responses [Crome]. On one hand, they were seen as an alien group which largely lived apart, and was sometimes subject to anti-Semitic attacks. On the other, there was a strong strain of philosemitism in Britain which valued Jews as another Abrahamic religion that drew on Biblical prophecies about the return of Jews to Israel as a sign of the impending Apocalypse. This philosemitism was present at the top of society: Queen Anne even donated the roof beams for building of the Bevis Marks Synagogue in 1708. Attracted by relative tolerance, European Jews migrated to Britain in the eighteenth century enlarging the Jewish community. Many Jews felt a strong commitment to Britain and in 1745 Samson Gideon used his fortune to guarantee the Bank of England during

the financial instability caused by the Jacobite Rising that year. In 1753, the government proposed the Jewish Naturalisation Act that permitted Jews to become British subjects. Although the law passed in 1753, it was repealed in 1754 after widespread expressions of antisemitism. Nevertheless, in the second half of the century, the development of Judaism in Britain was not impaired and Jews were active in freemasonry and in some of the London livery companies. By the end of the century, philosemitism grew significantly.

In Scotland, the Church of Scotland was presbyterian and the episcopalians were outside the established system, the reverse of the case in England. In 1689, there was an ejection of episcopalian ministers from their livings as had happened (in reverse) in 1662 in England. From 1711, 'Qualified chapels' were permitted to hold episcopalian worship, but the episcopalians suffered from association with Jacobitism. The Church of Scotland was prey to divisions between neonomians and antinomians and between evangelicals and moderates; in this respect, it reflected the situation in the Church of England where High and Low parties disagreed on aspects of theology. However, in Scotland the divisions led to secessions: in 1740 led by Ebenezer Erskine and in 1752 by Thomas Gillespie. In some respects, the divisions in Scotland meant that it was ripe for revivalism and evangelicalism, which led to the Cambuslang Wark, or revival, in 1742. This revivalism owed a good deal to the activity of George Whitefield and was especially effective in building transatlantic links with New England [Crawford].

In Wales, the Church of England was severely hampered by the very low incomes of the parishes, many of which could not support a resident parson. Nevertheless, the religious societies and evangelical movements began early; and from the first two decades of the eighteenth century clergy, like Griffith Jones in Carmarthenshire and Daniel Rowland in Cardiganshire, led an active evangelical movement that supported a literacy initiative in the circulating schools and a broad revivalism culture. It was this movement that Methodism was grafted onto later in the period.

PHILANTHROPY

A key aspect of the eighteenth century emphasis on improvement was charity and philanthropy. Almost all of the century's philanthropic ventures were religious in origin. The earliest were the societies for the reformation of manners which sought moral reform through the prosecution of offenders and which between 1700 and 1740 routinely prosecuted men and women for swearing, blasphemy, prostitution, sodomy, Sabbath-breaking and other moral offences. More positive was the charity school movement, which sought to educate pauper children. Many of these were parish schools and funds were raised from local supporters as well as philanthropists. Equally important, but often overlooked, was the foundation of hospitals and infirmaries. In Winchester, for example, the Rev Alured Clarke was the founder of the Winchester County Hospital in 1736, the first hospital outside London. Religious zeal led James Oglethorpe to pioneer calls for prison reform in the 1720s and the Dissenter John Howard to do so in the second half of the century.

The character of eighteenth century philanthropy is morally complex. The 'foundling hospital', formed by Captain Thomas Coram in 1739 became noted for its role in saving children who might otherwise have been abandoned and died in infancy. But the idea of aristocratic women choosing which children to 'save' and the lottery for admission of a child to the hospital sounds alien to the modern ear. So too does the case of Edward Colston, a devout High Church Anglican, who supported almshouses, hospitals, buildings, schools and sanitation projects from the money he had earned from the slave trade [Morgan]. Moreover, charity in the eighteenth century was part of a wider social feature of deference, which implied gratitude to social superiors for their condescension in helping the poor and disadvantaged. Nevertheless, social and moral improvement was an important feature of Britain in the eighteenth century. Wesley's

involvement in promoting medical care and in abolitionism therefore fitted into a wider environment of religious improvement.

The eighteenth century was also a period in which this conscious emphasis on 'improvement' spread from the field of religion and morality into other aspects of society. Organisations such as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, founded in 1754, used subscriptions to make premiums available as incentives for the improvement of agriculture, science, manufacturing and commerce. Sometimes these premiums were paid as rewards for developments in the field, on other occasions the Society held competitions to develop the best solutions to specific problems. By 1766, they were issuing over £16,000 in premiums for ventures as diverse as cobalt production, improvement of forestry, chemical inventions, art, and the education of children.

The idea of personal improvement became a feature of many organisations and societies. Book clubs, subscription libraries, philosophical societies, benevolent societies, womens' circles and even freemasonry can be seen as part of a broad network of organisations which aimed at the improvement of their members and of wider society. The idea of joining a society that was such a strong feature of Methodism in the eighteenth century, was therefore adapting an existing practice for religious purposes.

A GROWING ECONOMY

British society in the eighteenth century was marked by a number of features, which influenced the development of both John Wesley's ideas and the formation of Methodism as a society within the Church of England. The first of these was the growth of a potent and vibrant print culture. The lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 meant that pre-print censorship was largely abandoned; this resulted in a growth not merely of publications but also of printing presses. Theological and devotional works formed a majority of these publications until the end of the

century. Many of these were sermons, which were sometimes produced in large quantities: Sacheverell's seditious 1709 sermon sold more than 40,000 copies and reached market saturation, especially as each copy was read by perhaps five or ten people. A reasonable estimate is that 58,000 individual sermons were published in the eighteenth century [Francis & Gibson, 6, 8]. In addition, many tens of thousands of discourses, tracts and books on religious subjects poured from the growing presses in provincial towns and cities. Consequently, the eighteenth century was a period in which religious faith could be experienced in written form as well as more traditional forms of private prayer and public worship. The growth of the publication of sermons and religious literature undoubtedly had an effect on popular literacy; it was both a cause and a consequence of growing literacy [Whyman]. In turn, the consumption and reception of sermons became an increasingly important feature of the religious landscape. Churches were often built in an auditory form to promote the hearing of sermons, and the liturgy of the Church of England was flexed to accommodate preaching as a central part of religious observance. Preaching came to encompass a number of roles: exhortation of people to faith, explanation of the scriptures, reproof of sin, and the inspiration of people to greater faith. Consequently, the preparation and delivery of sermons became of considerable importance to clergy. Bishop Gilbert Burnet of Salisbury (1643-1715) published the leading guide to clergy training, *The Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, in 1692 which treated preaching and sermons as an obligation as important as the other parochial and pastoral roles of parsons [Cornwall, ch. 9].

As the century progressed, the style and talents of preachers became a significant feature of religious experience; the celebrity preacher was born, and many attracted large followings. John Wesley and George Whitefield were among the prominent preachers of their age, along with other evangelicals such as Daniel Rowland and Griffith Jones in Wales and Martin Madan, James Fordyce, and William Romaine in London. By the end of the century, sermons attracted

such large congregations that speculative builders erected Anglican churches and chapels, which would be paid for from the sales of sermon tickets [Gibson (2015a), 302-10]. This emphasis on the sermon was a distinctive element in the eighteenth century, which framed popular expectations of religion and religious leaders.

Another important aspect of eighteenth century print culture was the growth of periodical literature. Publications such as the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Lady's Mercury* built a readership from the first decade of the eighteenth century. As the century progressed, this periodical market became differentiated and specialised. By the 1730s, William Webster's *Weekly Miscellany* and Samuel Chandler's *Old Whig* filled a gap for Anglicans and Dissenters respectively who wanted to read about the contemporary religious issues and controversies. In the following decade, journals such as *The Christian's Amusement*, *The Weekly History*, *The Glasgow Weekly History* and the *Christian Monthly* developed a large market for readers of religious periodicals. By 1755, the London weekly publication *Man* began to publish essays on Christian themes, as well as containing numerous advertisements for religious products and publications [Black (2001), 87]. It was this situation that was a fertile environment for the publication of Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*, starting in 1778.

The country also underwent rapid economic changes in agriculture, industrialisation and in transport. These changes had the potential to expand the supply of food, and reduce the incidences of famines; and they increased production of goods, which in turn contributed to a market economy in which consumption was a key element. More people had disposable income and could save or spend on things such as books and membership of societies. The changes in transport also made travel easier and, in time, cheaper. Without the turnpike roads, which made former trackways passable in all weathers, John Wesley would not have been able to travel the estimated 250,000 miles in Britain and Ireland over his lifetime.

By the time of Wesley's death in 1791, the economy was unrecognisable compared to that in which he was born in 1703. However, these changes did not come without problems and social consequences. Agricultural communities were sometimes broken up, and new urban, often poorly planned, communities were formed in industrial areas. The pastoral and pre-industrial economy, about which it is important not to be romantic or idealistic, was replaced by one in which the labour of adults and children often became brutally exploited commodities. The Whig interpretation of history -which assumed that Britain moved inexorably from an undemocratic feudal system to a democratic market economy, and did so to the benefit of its people- is as much a myth in the economic aspects of society as it is in the political. In these circumstances, the Church of England and within it Methodism, strove to maintain services, worship and piety. The growth of churches and Methodist meeting houses was remarkable and idea of the industrial landscape as one in which adherence to the Church, and to religion more widely, failed is one of the enduring myths of the eighteenth century [Currie, Gilbert & Horsley].

Economic historians used to write about the 'take off' of the industrial revolution in Britain, and of the economic and social conditions which made industrialisation first possible [Deane & Habakkuk, 63-82]. The same idea could be applied to the political, religious and social environment which made evangelicalism and Methodism possible in the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly the political context and religious environment were critical factors, so were the growth of a market economy, the rise of a philanthropic society, the idea of improvement, the development of a popular religious print culture, and the thirst for sermons and preaching. But, as with the inventions which fuelled the economic revolutions of the period, in religious developments human agency was a vital element without which no movement could have been successful.

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