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Understanding Evangelicalism

In October 1757, Thomas Haweis, a young Cornishman, was ordained to the curacy of St Mary Magdalen church in Oxford. His ministry rapidly stirred strong reactions. According to Charles Wesley, a co-founder of Methodism, Haweis preached 'Christ crucified, with amazing success' and drew large crowds both from the university and the city. On the other hand, students jeered Haweis in the street, shouting 'There goes the saver of souls!' Stones were thrown through the church windows while he was preaching, and 'This is the back way to Hell' was chalked on the church doors. More orderly, but ultimately more effective, critics eventually forced Haweis to leave Oxford in 1762.[1] Not to be repressed, Haweis subsequently published a selection of the sermons he had delivered in Oxford under the overall title of *Evangelical Principles and Practice*. It was one of the earliest attempts systematically to set out the theological outlook of the developing evangelical movement and its implications for Christian devotion and practice. Haweis's starting point was 'The Divinity of the SON and SPIRIT, co-eternal and co-equal with the FATHER'. He affirmed 'the inability of man in his fallen state to do any thing but evil' and the impossibility of human compliance with God's Law. Hence, 'the one great glorious and all-sufficient oblation of the SON of GOD for the sins of the world, as a true and real sacrifice, atonement and propitiation is pleaded for; its necessity and influence proved; and the various blessings obtained for sinners thereby, set forth.'

Justification and acceptance with God came, Haweis believed, through faith alone, but 'works of piety and virtue' were a necessary outcome of faith.[2] True holiness lay in becoming a new creation through faith in Jesus Christ, leading a life empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[3] The believer should seek to grow in holiness through study and meditation on the Scriptures, through self-examination and prayer and through converse with other believers and devout attendance at Holy Communion.[4]

The historical background to Haweis's preaching will be more fully explored later, but for the present let us fast-forward to August 1846. More than nine

[1] J.S. Reynolds, *The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735–1871*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1953, pp. 25–33.
[2] Thomas Haweis, *Evangelical Principles and Practice*, London: Oliver, 1762, pp. iv–v.
[3] Ibid., pp. 215–60.
[4] Ibid., pp. 283–300.

hundred delegates from the British Isles, continental Europe and North America were gathered at Freemasons Hall in London for the founding conference of the Evangelical Alliance. The participants were conscious of being part of an even wider network, as numerous messages of support came from as far away as India, South Africa and Tasmania. The meeting opened amidst a sense of euphoria, that evangelicalism was not merely gaining worldwide presence and influence, but that its striking advance foreshadowed the dawn of the millennium and the eventual second advent of Christ.[5]

Almost immediately, however, the conference was brought down to earth by the more prosaic, but essential, task of setting up the new organisation and defining what it stood for. It was thus a seminal moment in the articulation of evangelical identity. The meeting quickly endorsed the name 'Evangelical Alliance', but in so doing it was rejecting weighty advice from Thomas Chalmers, leader of the Free Church of Scotland, who feared the word 'Evangelical' would prove divisive and difficult to define. 'It is a truly possible, nay frequent thing,' Chalmers wrote, 'for men to think alike and to feel alike yet when brought to verbal explanations not to explain alike.' He would have preferred the title 'Protestant Alliance' on the grounds that this would have obviated the need for 'any other test than a declaration that the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants'.[6] A rousing speech by a German delegate drew an analogy between the military triumph of the allies over Napoleon at 'La Belle Alliance' (Waterloo) and the Evangelical Alliance as a spiritual standard under which Christians would rally against their enemies.[7] However, as French- and German-speaking participants struggled to communicate effectively with the overwhelming majority of English-speakers, it was apparent that the very word 'Evangelical' had different resonances in different linguistic and national contexts.

The basis of faith subsequently discussed by the conference covered similar ground to Haweis's sermons nearly a century before, but with interesting differences of emphasis. For example, the Evangelical Alliance began by affirming 'The Divine Inspiration, Authority, and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures', with 'The Unity of the Godhead, and the Trinity of Persons therein' following as the second article. Subsequent clauses upheld utter human depravity, Christ's incarnation and atonement (but not 'sacrifice' and 'propitiation'), justification by faith, the work of the Holy Spirit and the 'right and duty of private judgement in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures'. These matters were in general uncontentious, but

[5] John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney*, Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2006, pp. 231–2.
[6] Evangelical Alliance, *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference, held at Freemasons' Hall, London from August 19th to September 2nd 1846*; London: Partridge and Oakey, 1847, pp. 67–8; Thomas Chalmers, *On the Evangelical Alliance*, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1846, pp. 23–8.
[7] Evangelical Alliance, *Report of Proceedings*, p. 72.

there was some debate over forms of words, and it was reported that a meeting of continental delegates 'regretted the admission of certain Articles, and perhaps also the omission of others'.[8] Then the conference found itself more sharply divided over the last two clauses. One of these affirmed the 'Divine institution of the Christian Ministry, and the authority and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper'. Despite concerns that it tended to a Roman Catholic view of priesthood and would exclude Quakers, the clause gained general support when 'authority' was changed to 'obligation'.[9] The final clause was a late addition to the draft and proved particularly problematic, not in general because delegates did not believe it themselves, but because they feared it would prove too exclusive: 'The Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Body, the Judgement of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Eternal Blessedness of the Righteous, and the Eternal Punishment of the Wicked'. It was eventually agreed to, but only when a rider was added to the whole statement to make it clear that it was not 'a Creed or Confession' but merely 'an indication of the class of persons whom it is desirable to embrace within the Alliance'.[10] The endeavour to embrace a wide range of beliefs and practices within the Alliance almost required that it *not* have a creed or confession. Defining the theological boundaries of evangelicalism was thus no easy matter. Nor were practical implications any more straightforward. In the end, the most serious and lasting split in the Alliance proved to be not over theology at all, but over the question of whether American slaveholders should be excluded from membership.

Eighty years later, events across the Atlantic in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee, reflected more rigid and combative understandings of the boundaries of acceptable evangelical belief, boundaries which became part of popular religious culture. In Dayton, according to the journalist H.L. Mencken, 'people . . . not only accept the Bible as an infallible handbook of history, geology, biology and celestial physics, but . . . also practice its moral precepts – at all events, up the limit of human capacity.'[11] When in 1925 the Tennessee state legislature passed a law prohibiting teaching of the theory of evolution in schools, this was accordingly a natural location in which to launch a test prosecution against a young biology teacher, John Scopes. The trial opened in Dayton on 10 July 1925 amidst enormous publicity and a high-profile clash between a former presidential candidate, the prosecutor William Jennings Bryan, and the celebrated defence lawyer, Clarence Darrow. The event was a symbolic moment in the development of fundamentalism as a variant of evangelicalism. This movement can be traced back to the publication between 1910 and 1915 of a series of booklets, collectively entitled *The Fundamentals*, which had crystallized a theological reaction not only against modernism but against

[8] Ibid., pp. 122–9, 148.
[9] Ibid., pp. 129–52.
[10] Ibid., pp. 160–93.
[11] H.L. Mencken, *A Religious Orgy in Tennessee*, Hoboken: Melville, 2006, pp. 46–7.

liberalizing tendencies within evangelicalism. Amidst the sense of religious and moral crisis which accompanied and followed the First World War, fundamentalism acquired sharper focus and a broad popular base.[12] In a speech drafted for the trial, but never in fact delivered, Bryan employed characteristic fundamentalist high-stakes rhetoric, in which the specific controversy over human origins was widened into a confrontation over the status of the Bible and the truth of Christianity itself:

> [T]he question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" must be answered. A bloody, brutal doctrine – evolution – demands, as the rabble did nineteen hundred years ago, that He be crucified. That cannot be the answer of this jury representing a Christian state and sworn to uphold the laws of Tennessee. Your answer will be heard throughout the world; it is eagerly awaited by a praying multitude. If the law is nullified, there will be rejoicing wherever God is repudiated, the Saviour scoffed at and the Bible ridiculed. Every unbeliever of every kind and degree will be happy. If, on the other hand, the law is upheld and the religion of the school children protected, millions of Christians will call you blessed . . .[13]

Scopes was convicted and fined. Militant fundamentalism was seeking to reshape evangelicalism, dogmatically highlighting supernaturalist convictions as a means to offer determined counter-cultural resistance to contemporary secularism.

In 1986, in the dying years of the Soviet Union, a Nigerian student, Sunday Adelaja, won a scholarship to study journalism at the Belarus State University in Minsk. Shortly before leaving Nigeria, he had been converted by a televangelist, William F. Kumuyi. As a student he led an African Christian students' fellowship, and in 1989, after graduating, he remained in the country and founded the Word of Faith Church. He subsequently moved to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, where in 1994 he founded a church that subsequently became known as the Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations. Within a decade it had grown from a house fellowship with seven members to a mega-church with more than 20,000 members in Kiev alone, and was developing an extensive network of associated churches in Eastern Europe and beyond. Pastor Sunday, as he is known, has also pursued an extensive itinerant, print and media ministry, with an explicit agenda for world evangelization. The church demonstrates strong social engagement and claims to have helped in the reclamation of more than 5,000 drug addicts and alcoholics. Belief and preaching are centred on the proclamation of Jesus Christ as 'the only way to God', with an emphasis on the contemporary reality of the Holy Spirit in worship and the lives of believers. The authority of the 'Word of God' is paramount, and so a core activity is biblical education for Christians in order to equip them for mission. Multimedia and Internet strategies have developed as

[12] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992, pp. 282–3.
[13] Leslie H. Allen, ed., *Bryan and Darrow at Dayton*, New York: Russell, 1925, pp. 196–7.

an extension of its face-to-face ministry, reaching a potential worldwide audience. Pastor Sunday's apparently remarkable success in cross-cultural mission from Africa to Eastern Europe, employing American methodologies, epitomises the continuing dynamism and expanding global linkages of evangelicalism at the turn of the twenty-first century.[14]

This rapid journey from mid-eighteenth-century Oxford to early-twenty-first-century Kiev serves at the outset of this book both to illustrate some of the consistent characteristics of evangelicalism over the course of the last three centuries and to indicate the changing dynamics of the movement. There is something paradoxical about a religious category which is very extensively used both by scholars and practitioners, but which is much less easily defined and described. Indeed, one recent analyst has argued that the very concept distorts historical reality. According to D.G. Hart, 'evangelicalism, as the term is used, is a construct developed over the last half of the twentieth century. Prior to 1950 the word had not been used in the way religious leaders and academics now use it, and even then it was not a coherent set of convictions or practices.'[15]

Another leading historian, Nathan Hatch, has stated even more baldly that '[i]n truth, there is no such thing as evangelicalism'.[16] In addition, there are the issues arising from the use of the cognate terms in non-English-speaking settings where evangelical Christianity took root. For instance, in Germany, where many of the theological distinguishing features of evangelicalism were born, 'evangelisch' emerged out of the Reformation to indicate the recovery of the 'gospel', and hence came to mean 'gospel-like', 'Protestant', or even merely 'non-Catholic' – a far broader sense than the standard post-eighteenth-century usage of 'evangelical' in English. Hence since the 1960s, Germans have increasingly used the word 'evangelikal/e' specifically to distinguish movements comparable to Anglo-American evangelicalism.[17] The word 'evangelicalism' does indeed have a significantly shorter history than the movements to which it is has been applied by historians (although the word 'evangelical' has a much longer history, as both a noun and an adjective). The earliest usage of 'evangelicalism' recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* was in 1831, in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* by William Empson, but this was predated by a reference in 1820 by a writer in the *Christian Remembrancer* to 'what may be called Evangelicalism'.[18] Whatever the precise date at which people began to write and talk about 'evangelical*ism*' as a concept or movement, rather than about

[14] www.godembassy.com, accessed 8 August 2011; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Spirit, Migration and Mission in an African-led Mega-Size Church in Eastern Europe', *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 34 (2010), 71–8.
[15] D.G. Hart, *Deconstructing Evangelicalism*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004, p. 19.
[16] Nathan O. Hatch, Response to Carl F.H. Henry, in Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F.H. Henry, eds, *Evangelical Affirmations*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990, p. 97.
[17] Eric Geldbach, "'Evangelisch', 'Evangelikal' & Pietism", in M. Hutchinson and O. Kalu, eds, *A Global Faith*, Sydney: CSAC, 1998, pp. 155–6.
[18] *Christian Remembrancer*, 2 (1820), 577.

'evangelicals' as individuals or 'evangelical' as a descriptor of theology or religious style, it is likely to have been the better part of a century after the start date of David Bebbington's influential survey, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Nevertheless, although the lack of contemporary use of the word is certainly suggestive, there is an analogy to be drawn with the emergence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of other now familiar '-isms' such as nationalism (whose first usage recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* was in 1798), liberalism (1819), socialism (1833) and imperialism (1858). In all these cases, there are good historical grounds for arguing that the word was invented to designate a reality that already existed. These analogies have further value in typifying the nature of evangelicalism as a similarly broad and multifaceted movement. It must therefore be distinguished from '-isms' focused on adherence to a specific theology or ideology originating with a particular individual – such as Calvinism or Marxism – or one defining adherence to a particular organisational structure – such as Methodism or Presbyterianism. The task of understanding evangelicalism needs to start from the recognition that it is a phenomenon that defies precise definition, partly because it was 'held' by its practitioners in ways different from those used by its categorizers.

It is helpful to frame an initial understanding of evangelicalism by reference to nineteenth-century usage of the word, from the period when it first came into current usage. Early use of the word tended to be disparaging or polemical. Thus the 1820 *Christian Remembrancer* article portrayed evangelicalism as a rudimentary form of Calvinism, unwittingly promoted by those who disavowed fully developed Calvinist convictions.[19] In his 1831 *Edinburgh Review* article, Empson thought that 'the worst things about Evangelicalism were its exclusiveness – which led to narrow views of God and the divine government – and its misrepresentation of, and consequent want of sympathy with, human nature.'[20] An 1851 pamphlet characterised 'Evangelicalism (so called)' as 'a disparagement of Grace' and saw it as defined by opposition to belief in the sacramental character of baptism.[21]

In the 1850s, more nuanced and objective analyses of evangelicalism began to appear, notably from W.J. Conybeare in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1853, and from George Eliot (the pen name of Marian Evans) in her novella 'Janet's Repentance', published as part of *Scenes of Clerical Life* in 1858. Writing specifically about evangelicals in the Church of England in the late eighteenth century, Conybeare offered a concise summary of their distinctive theological emphases:

> Of the tenets that then became, and have since continued, the watchwords of the Evangelical camp, the most conspicuous were the two following; first, '*the universal*

[19] *Christian Remembrancer*, 2 (1820), 578.
[20] *Edinburgh Review*, 53 (1831), 305.
[21] 'A Liverpool Layman', *A Letter to . . . H. MacNeile containing strictures on his recent letter to the . . . Bishop of Exeter*, Liverpool: Deighton and Laughton, 1851.

> *necessity of conversion*,' and secondly '*justification by faith*.' A third was added, to which subsequent controversy gave more than its original prominence, namely, '*the sole authority of Scripture as the rule of faith*.'[22]

Conybeare thus corroborated the impression that arises from comparing Haweis's sermons with the Evangelical Alliance basis of faith. Between the mid-eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century, the authority of the Bible became more prominent as an evangelical tenet. His article was also helpful in making a distinction between those who treated these doctrines as 'a living principle of action' and those who used them rather as 'the cornerstone of a technical system'. The latter, he suggested, were apt to produce rigid and exaggerated forms of evangelicalism.[23]

George Eliot had a complex love-hate relationship with evangelicalism. In her youth she held evangelical beliefs, but as a young woman in the 1840s, she moved to a freethinking position and rejected orthodox Christianity. In 1855, she published a savage attack on 'Evangelical Preaching' as personified by Dr John Cumming, a prominent London Presbyterian.[24] Thereafter her attitude to her erstwhile adolescent faith became more mellow and balanced. 'Janet's Repentance' recounts the impact of evangelicalism, mediated through the ministry of the Anglican curate Mr Tryan, in transforming the lives of both Janet, the abused wife of Robert Dempster, and the town of Milby (modelled on Eliot's native Nuneaton) in which she lives. As Tryan counsels the despairing Janet, Eliot puts into his mouth her understanding of the spiritual dynamics of evangelical conversion:

> You are weary and heavy laden; well, it is you Christ invites to come to Him and find rest. He asks you to cling to Him; to lean on Him; . . . He neither condemns nor reproaches you for the past, He only bids you come to Him that you may have life: . . . That is what is meant by faith. Your evil habits, you feel, are too strong for you; you are unable to wrestle with them . . . But when once we feel our helplessness . . . and go to Christ, desiring to be freed from the power as well as the punishment of sin, we are no longer left to our own strength.[25]

Tryan's version of evangelical theology has softer edges than more formal statements such as Haweis's sermons and the Evangelical Alliance's basis of faith, reflecting the mature Eliot's distaste for doctrines such as absolute human depravity and subsitutionary atonement. However, it is also a plausible representation of what evangelicalism could sound like in face-to-face pastoral practice. Like Conybeare, Eliot was well aware that a common source of spiritual inspiration was being refracted, for better or worse, through the prism of the behaviour and experience of diverse and fallible human beings. Thus she wrote of the effect of evangelicalism

[22] W.J. Conybeare (ed. Arthur Burns), 'Church Parties', in Stephen Taylor, ed., *From Cranmer to Davidson*, Woodbridge: Boydell/Church of England Record Society, 1999, p. 262. Emphases are in the original.
[23] Ibid., p. 262.
[24] Reprinted in T. Pinney, ed., *Essays of George Eliot*, London: Routledge, 1963, pp. 158–89.
[25] George Eliot (ed. Thomas A. Noble), *Scenes of Clerical Life*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 260.

on 'Milby' as a whole: 'Religious ideas have the fate of melodies, which, once set afloat in the world, are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them woefully coarse, feeble or out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable.'[26] Nevertheless, for Eliot, the movement had had positive social and moral consequences by bringing 'into palpable existence and operation in Milby society [the] idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self.'

As the movement became more diversified in the late nineteenth century, growing ambiguity about evangelical identity led to significant restatements. In 1867, the leading evangelical Anglican and future bishop, J.C. Ryle, published his summary of 'Evangelical Religion: What it is, and what it is not'. He identified five 'leading features' of evangelicalism, as follows:

(a) ... the absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture, as the alone rule of faith and practice, the alone test of truth, the alone judge of controversy.
(b) ... the depth and prominence it assigns to the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption.
(c) ... the paramount importance it attaches to the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the nature of the salvation which He has wrought out for man.
(d) ... the high place which it assigns to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man.
(e) ... the importance which it attaches to the outward and visible work of the Holy Ghost in the life of man.

Ryle did not see these beliefs as unique to evangelicalism, but he argued that non-evangelicals 'do not give them the prominence, position, rank, degree, priority, dignity and precedence which we do'.[27] His formulation, however, drew a riposte from a critic who found it insufficiently rigorous, especially in its implicit discounting of explicitly Calvinist doctrines as essential to evangelicalism.[28]

In significant contrast to their British counterparts, nineteenth-century American evangelicals seemed to feel little need to offer theological definition of evangelicalism. Robert Baird's *Religion in the United States of America* (1844),[29] which was subtitled *An Account of the Origin of the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States, with Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations*, identified evangelicals primarily on a denominational basis. In his view, the evangelical denominations comprised much the greater part of American organised religion, with only Roman Catholics, Universalists, 'Christians', Jews, Mormons, and other small radical groups excluded, although he acknowledged that there

[26] Ibid., p. 227.
[27] In *Truths for the Times*, London: William Hunt, n.d. (BL acquisition 1867), pp. 138–44.
[28] T.H. Gregg, *Evangelical-ism! Or "Evangelical Religion: What it is"*, London: Marlborough, n.d. (BL acquisition 1869).
[29] Glasgow: Blackie.

were 'unevangelical' minorities in the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Society of Friends.[30] Baird's theological understanding of evangelicalism initially emerges somewhat in passing, particularly in explaining why he classified certain groups as 'unevangelical'. Thus he explained that what Roman Catholics and Unitarians have in common was that they were not churches 'whose religion is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible'.[31] He offered the following sketch of the preaching of 'unevangelical' Episcopalians: 'Their sermons are of too negative a character; neither are the sinner's sin and danger as fully and earnestly set forth as they should be, neither is the glorious sufficiency of Christ unfolded, and salvation by faith alone fully and clearly presented.'[32] In his view, evangelicals were united in opposing 'the errors of Rome, and . . . the heresy that denies the proper divinity and atonement of Christ', and 'on no point are all these churches more completely united, or more firmly established, than on the doctrine of the supremacy of Christ in his church, and the unlawfulness of any interference with its doctrine, discipline, and government, on the part of the civil magistrate.'[33]

Baird thus affirmed those who had recently seceded from the Church of Scotland in the Disruption of 1843, and his perspective suggested a significant point of divergence from evangelicals in the British state churches. Only towards the end of his book did Baird attempt any systematic analysis of 'the extent of doctrinal agreement and diversity in and among the communions classed together as evangelical'.[34] Similarly, W.F.P. Noble, in his 1876 survey of the growth of 'evangelical religion' in the United States in the century since independence, adopted an institutional approach, equating his subject with the history of that majority of denominations he classified as 'evangelical'.[35]

In 1889, the prominent English Congregationalist R.W. Dale offered his assessment of *The Old Evangelicalism and the New*.[36] Dale saw the evangelicalism of the eighteenth-century revivals as characterised by interdenominationalism and disregard for ecclesiastical structures. It was marked by a tendency to individualism, urging personal commitment to 'a devout and godly life' but having 'very little to say about the relations of the individual Christian to the general order of human society'. Above all, Dale conceived of the early evangelicals as motivated by zeal for the salvation of the lost, who, they wholeheartedly believed, would be condemned to eternal fire if they did not repent and turn to Christ in this life. He summed up 'the characteristic doctrines of the Revival' as 'the Death of Christ for the sins of men which they maintained was the ground of the Divine forgiveness, and the only hope of a sinful race; Justification by Faith; the reality and necessity of the

[30] Baird, *Religion in America*, pp. 506, 598, 612–64.
[31] Ibid., p. 613.
[32] Ibid., p. 506.
[33] Ibid., p. 499.
[34] Ibid., p. 658.
[35] W.F.P. Noble, *1776–1876: A Century of Gospel-Work*, Philadelphia: Watts, 1876.
[36] R.W. Dale, *The Old Evangelicalism and the New*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889.

supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration; and the Eternal Suffering to which they believed that those are destined who have heard the Christian Gospel in this life and rejected it.'[37]

Dale judged that among his own evangelical contemporaries, a zeal for the salvation of souls had given way to a rather self-indulgent preoccupation with 'truth', that there was no longer any consensus about the eternal fate of the unregenerate, that belief in human corruption had become attenuated, that there was less emphasis on the necessity of a definite conversion experience, and that a growing emphasis on the incarnation of Christ was obscuring more specific emphasis on atonement and justification.[38] The broader understanding of evangelicalism developing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was further reflected in 1912 in a short book by R.C. Gillie. This summed up evangelicalism as a recognition of 'Man's desperate need' and 'the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice' leading to emphasis on conversion and real repentance. Gillie attacked any tendency to impose rigorous doctrinal tests of evangelical identity: 'Our bond is a common experience, not a unanimous interpretation of that experience; a common devotion to our Lord, not an exact statement concerning His mysterious yet all-sufficient work.' In his view, it was possible for people, for example, not to believe in eternal punishment or in the verbal infallibility of the Bible and still be friends of 'Evangelical Truth'.[39] Fundamentalism, as evident at Dayton in 1925, was a reaction to this kind of thinking.

Some stocktaking will be helpful before turning to consider some more recent and contemporary approaches to the definition and understanding of evangelicalism. We have seen that there was considerable variation within significant theological common ground. In addition to doctrines common to all orthodox Christians, particularly the Trinity and the divinity and incarnation of Christ, evangelicals particularly emphasised

- the inherent sinfulness of unredeemed human beings (but disagreed about the eternal punishment of the unregenerate);
- justification by faith alone (but disagreed over whether this entailed a distinctively Calvinist belief in predestination and election);
- the work of Christ as the means for the salvation of humankind (but disagreed over the degree of emphasis to be placed on substitutionary atonement and over the language used to describe it);
- the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (but disagreed as to whether specific datable experiences of conversion and 'baptism in the spirit' were essential);

[37] Dale, *Old Evangelicalism*, pp. 16–22, 37–8.
[38] Ibid., pp. 23–8, 38–58.
[39] R.C. Gillie, *Evangelicalism: Has it a Future?*, London: Cassell, 1912, pp. 11–24.