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**The Recovery of Puritanism, 1825–1880**

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**Doctoral Thesis  
University of Edinburgh  
2014**

## **Abstract**

Between 1825 and 1880, the reputation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English Puritanism underwent dramatic changes. From the Restoration of 1660 through to the 1820s, Puritanism was vilified or ignored by most ‘respected’ commentators. However, there was then a significant change in attitudes, and by 1874, the historian Samuel Rawson Gardiner was providing a highly positive view of the Puritans’ role in English history. This thesis considers the questions of how and why historical writers contributed to a ‘recovery’ of Puritanism during this period.

In addressing these questions, this thesis undertakes a detailed analysis of what a number of leading Victorian men of letters wrote about the Puritans and Puritanism. Thomas Babington Macaulay and Thomas Carlyle in particular were instrumental in the new, more positive interpretation of Puritanism, and they in turn were influential upon diverse writers, including John Charles Ryle, John Stoughton, James Anthony Froude, and Charles Kingsley – who all presented Puritanism positively in their historical writing, but who often had strikingly different agendas.

The thesis argues that this ‘recovery’ of Puritanism was very broad and was reflected in different intellectual frameworks and ideas. These included, but were not restricted to, the Whig political reforms of the second quarter of the century; the idealisation of hero-worship; the justification and celebration of Imperial Britain; the Evangelical movement, both Dissenting and within the Church of England; social conservatism regarding the role of women; the support of literary censorship and ‘plain’ fashion; and discussions of appropriate and effective literary and rhetorical styles. Our writers presented their interpretations through a range of media, from overtly teleological pamphlets and public lectures, to novels and dramatic presentations of events, to more source-based, objective and analytical writing that would be recognized as ‘serious history’ today.

Through investigating these different angles, the thesis shows how the discipline of history was developing during the second two quarters of the nineteenth century, and considers how the new historical methodologies and approaches influenced both ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ historical writers.

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## **Introduction**

*Puritanism is subject to startling reversals...*<sup>1</sup>

*As there is no country where statesmen have been so much under the influence of the past, so there is no country where historians have been so much under the influence of the present.*<sup>2</sup>

### **I. The recovery of Puritanism**

While historians have long been aware of the Victorian fascination with medievalism, less attention has been given to other aspects of nineteenth-century Britain's understanding of its history. One important aspect of this understanding related to the revival of interest in the seventeenth-century English Puritan movement.

During the long eighteenth century, most British writers of history had portrayed Puritanism in a negative light. The English Puritan movement, in these portrayals, had begun with those extremists who were dissatisfied with the Reformation, and the movement found support among extreme Calvinists who refused to conform to the Elizabethan Settlement, rejected royal rule, caused the English Civil War, martyred King Charles and spent the next decade attempting to eradicate English culture and literature. By the mid-eighteenth century, the term 'Puritan' was hardly even used: it was deemed by many an irrelevance, or a past episode of religious fanaticism, and best forgotten. To be sure, Puritanism had some eighteenth-century supporters: religious dissenters whose denominations had taken shape when the Act of Uniformity (1662) had expelled nonconformists from the Church of England. These dissenters saw the Puritans as their religious ancestors, and took pride in this heritage. But Dissenters were a minority in mid-eighteenth-century Britain, representing no more than ten per cent of the British population.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century, all this was to change. Influential historians, including Macaulay and Carlyle, would rehabilitate Puritanism's reputation in

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<sup>1</sup> Raphael Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism, 1820–1914: A Preliminary Sketch', in *Revival and Religion since 1700: Essays for John Walsh*, ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 201.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1913; first published 1848–1859), Vol. 1, 21–22.

<sup>3</sup> See Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 203–205. See also Chapter One, section 1.2.1.

England. Puritans would become seen as powerful religious reformers and nation-builders; indeed, by the end of the century, a statue of a triumphant Cromwell would be erected outside the Houses of Parliament in Westminster.<sup>4</sup> Puritanism would always continue to have its opponents, but it was to become an acceptable, even mainstream movement in English history, credited with enabling England to achieve its status as a great power, leading the way in political reforms and social improvements at home, and in the acquisition of an empire that covered a quarter of the globe. Puritanism would be seen by many as the root of public morality and authentically English culture, and a stronghold of Protestant faith that had shown profound strength in the face of considerable adversity.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse these changes in the British perception of Puritanism. Through looking at the contributions of various historians, we will explore the recovery of interest in Puritanism, and how new interpretations of Puritanism developed during the middle two quarters of the nineteenth century. We will also consider how this new view of Puritanism was communicated to the larger public and how the historians often aimed to promote Puritan beliefs and practices in Victorian society.

The revival of interest in Puritanism occurred within the context of changing approaches to the discipline of history. Seventeenth century texts and manuscripts were being edited and published, and were becoming accessible for the first time to a significant reading public. Historical writing was becoming profitable, and a growing number of authors responded to the popular demand for historical works. Moreover, as the century developed, history was also becoming a profession, with established conventions on the use of evidence, the employment of balanced, critical analysis, and the writing of narrative. Universities were forming new departments of modern history and appointing professors. New peer-reviewed journals were appearing, and historical books and articles were subject to critical review. The generalist men of letters from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were being replaced by trained professional historians, whose work was evaluated by other professional historians. The philosophical and theoretical foundations of history-writing were also changing, with new conceptions such as ‘scientific history’, with claims to transcend all subjectivity, gaining respect among the educated public. In the case studies of this

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<sup>4</sup> This statue was erected in 1895. The debate about this had been ongoing for half a century: a similar statue had been proposed and rejected in 1845. See Chapter One, section 1.2.3.

thesis, we will observe how the revival of interest in Puritanism was influenced by the changes occurring within nineteenth-century history-writing.

## II. This thesis

In this thesis, I focus on the works of several nineteenth-century writers whose works helped to revive interest in Puritanism. I analyse closely how they defined Puritanism, how they placed it within the larger context of English history, and how they described both its impact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and its influence on their own time. These writers include Thomas Babington Macaulay, Thomas Carlyle, James Anthony Froude, Charles Kingsley, John Charles Ryle, John Stoughton, John Buxton Marsden, and James Anderson. The main methodology of this study is close textual analysis. I have provided a careful critical reading of my selected writers' historical works concerning Puritanism, and I have positioned the authors within their broader intellectual and theological contexts. While some of the historians I am studying, including Marsden, Stoughton, Anderson and Gardiner, wrote multi-volume historical works on Puritanism or on seventeenth-century English history,<sup>5</sup> for others, including Macaulay and Froude, Puritanism featured in the introductions or conclusions of their main *Histories*, or was explored in lesser-known essays.<sup>6</sup> However, even when it did not constitute the central theme of a major work, the historians' conceptions of Puritanism played an important background role in their understanding of the narrative of English history. I have

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance John Buxton Marsden, *The History of the Early Puritans: From the Reformation to the Opening of the Civil War in 1642* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1850); *The History of the Later Puritans: From the Opening of the Civil War in 1642, to the Ejection of the Non-Conforming Clergy in 1662* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1852); John Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (London: 1848), *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (London: Jackson, Walford and Hodder, 1862); James Anderson, *Memorable Women of the Puritan Times*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son, 1862); S. R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603–42*, 10 vols. (London, Longmans, Green, 1883–4; first published 1863–82); *History of the Great Civil War, 1642–9*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1893; first published 1886–91); *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649–1660*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1903; first published 1894–1901).

<sup>6</sup> See for instance T. B. Macaulay, 'A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone, by John Milton', *Edinburgh Review*, 42 (Aug 1825), 304–346; 'The Constitutional History of England, from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II, by Henry Hallam' *Edinburgh Review*, 48 (Sep 1828), 96–169; 'Some Memorials of John Hampden, his party, and his times, by Lord Nugent', *Edinburgh Review*, 54 (Dec 1831), 505–550; *History of England* (1848–1859); J. A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, 12 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1875; first published 1856–1870); 'Calvinism' (1871) in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1890), Vol. 2, 1–59; *Bunyan* (London: Macmillan, 1880, 1909).

observed and identified this role, both within major works and lesser-known texts. I have also investigated key definitions and repeating themes, and identified comparisons and contrasts between the different authors' writing and attitudes. I have attempted to outline both the way that the revived interest in Puritanism changed during the middle two quarters of the nineteenth century and how Puritanism often represented different things to different people.

This study does not attempt to advance large new historiographical, philosophical or theological interpretations, but it does contribute to our developing understanding of nineteenth-century historiography, and it presents new portrayals of some well-known and lesser-known historians and their social roles. In so doing, it attempts to move beyond a stereotyped analysis of what Puritanism did or did not mean to certain groups, such as Anglican evangelicals, Non-conformists or political liberals, and instead to consider how a revived Puritanism had a varied, and often surprising, impact on the broader Victorian culture.

### **III. The secondary literature**

Chapters One and Two of this thesis include more detailed analysis of the secondary literature relevant to this thesis. For now, it is crucial to mention Gooch's *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (1913), Butterfield's *Whig Interpretation of History* (1931) and T. P. Peardon's *Transition in English Historical Writing* (1933), which were all seminal studies of Victorian historiography and set the tone for much of the ongoing understanding of nineteenth-century history throughout the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> While T. W. Heyck's *Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (1982) and Frank Turner's *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (1993)<sup>8</sup> both explored the wider intellectual life of Britain, they also demonstrated that the changing role of history was an important aspect of the transformation of intellectual life in the nineteenth century.

Ian Hesketh's *Science of History in Victorian Britain* (2011)<sup>9</sup> is a significant recent addition to this field, and it has been influential on my own arguments,

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<sup>7</sup> G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1952; first published 1913); Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell, 1931); T. P. Peardon, *The Transition in English Historical Writing* (New York: AMS Press, 1966; first published 1933); J. R. Hale, *The Evolution of British Historiography* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> T. W. Heyck, *Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Ian Hesketh, *Science of History in Victorian Britain* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011).

focusing on the way that certain historians such as Freeman and Stubbs saw themselves as holding other history writers to account with their new framework of ‘scientific history’ (strongly influenced by the discipline of natural science and attempting to objectivise the discipline of history) and also as setting the critical standards for a new generation of historians. By considering Froude and Kingsley together as examples of unusual historians, Hesketh also demonstrated the value of the comparative approach.

Likewise, Theodore Koditschek’s *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination* (2011) provides another discussion of the changing intellectual climate of nineteenth-century history writing, exploring the powerful political and intellectual currents that shaped the writing of individual historians, including both Macaulay and Froude.<sup>10</sup>

*Past and Present*’s ‘Nineteenth Century Cromwell Project’ (1968–69) brought together a large, interdisciplinary group of scholars and aimed to produce a body of research on the changing reputation of Puritanism in general and Cromwell in particular. The project never led to a significant publication and its various working papers and documents were eventually deposited by Brian Harrison in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Harrison’s introduction to the project very helpfully summarises many of its findings and has been an invaluable source for this study.<sup>11</sup> Many of the historians who had been involved in the project also ended up including some of their observations and insights in their later publications. Peter Karsten’s *Patriot-Heroes in England and America* (1978)<sup>12</sup> and Raphael Samuel’s ‘The Discovery of Puritanism’ (1993) are among the most pertinent of these publications to our study. While Karsten argued that Cromwell became seen as paving the way for the British Empire, Samuel’s arguments focused on popular understandings of history, and credibly examined how the term ‘Puritanism’ was rescued and brought into common use in the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> This has in turn raised interest in how the word ‘Puritan’ was one of the main characters in its own recovery, functioning as a blanket term to represent a broad range of people and opinions.

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<sup>10</sup> Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth Century Visions of a Greater Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> *Contributions to an unpublished work on the reputation of Oliver Cromwell in the 19th century, photocopied typescript, c.1968–9* (Given by Brian Harrison to Bodleian Library, 2000, MS. Eng., c. 6759).

<sup>12</sup> Peter Karsten, *Patriot-Heroes in England and America* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

<sup>13</sup> Samuel, ‘The Discovery of Puritanism’ (1993), 206.

R. C. Richardson's *Debate on the English Revolution* (1977) and his edited *Images of Oliver Cromwell* (1993) helped to clarify the key figures of Macaulay and Carlyle in the recovery of Puritanism, and presented Gardiner's work as a great achievement of history-writing in the latter part of the century. These foci that Richardson developed have also been very important in shaping this study. More recently, the changing understanding of seventeenth-century history in the nineteenth century has also been explored in Timothy Lang's *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995) and Blair Worden's *Roundhead Reputations* (2001).<sup>14</sup> Lang's study helpfully explores the changing reputation of different aspects of seventeenth-century history, and includes discussion of Puritanism. This work possibly places too great an emphasis on aligning Puritanism's recovery with the growing acceptance of religious nonconformity, and tends to over-simplify certain issues, such as the supposed dichotomy between Anglicanism and Puritanism. Worden's investigation of our topic has been the most thorough to date. He explored the trends of 'anti-Cromwellianism' in the eighteenth century and the developing 'pro-Cromwellianism' of the nineteenth century. He also recognised that Puritanism's recovery was more than simply a historical justification for religious Nonconformity. His research attempted to come to terms both with the chronology of the recovery of Puritanism and its connection to popular culture.

The historians in our selection have been subject to varying degrees of attention, much of it in the last few years, as their significance has gradually been realised. The works on Macaulay by Owen Dudley Edwards and Catherine Hall have been the two most important recent contributions to our understanding of this great historian.<sup>15</sup> Carlyle's historical writing has been the focus of several of his biographies, and his letters have recently been the subject of a massive research and publication project.<sup>16</sup> This is also an exciting time in studies of James Anthony Froude. Ciaran Brady's superb recent intellectual biography has portrayed this fascinating character in an incisive and empathetic manner, exploring the many influences on him and attempting to analyse this not always sympathetic character in

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<sup>14</sup> Timothy Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage: Interpretations of a Discordant Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> Owen Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988); Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (London: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> L. M. Young, *Carlyle and the Art of History* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939); John D. Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Ian Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle (Thomas Carlyle)* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1975, 1993, 2011).

a balanced manner.<sup>17</sup> Another recent biography by Julia Markus, while focusing on Froude's life and personality from more of an emotional viewpoint, is also helpful.<sup>18</sup> Kingsley has been given chapters in several monographs in past decades, and some more recent papers have observed his interest in history more specifically.<sup>19</sup> Ryle's historical works have also been the subject of various papers and articles, while Marsden, Stoughton and Anderson have received comparatively much less attention.<sup>20</sup> Samuel Rawson Gardiner, a giant of history-writing, has recently been the subject of his first monograph, an excellent intellectual biography by Nixon, and another very important contribution to this field.<sup>21</sup>

#### IV. Thesis outline

Chapter One will introduce the historian Gardiner, who was seen by Firth, as well as by many recent historians, as representing the zenith of historical endeavour in the 1870s, but who has been avoided by others because of the intimidating length and detail of his works. Through an exploration of a little-known essay of his on Wentworth, we will observe Gardiner's interpretation of how Britain perceived its history.<sup>22</sup> The chapter will proceed to explore the way that historians in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen the developments in the study of history from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, and the role that the changing conceptions of Puritanism played in these developments.

Chapter Two will discuss the historians that we have selected for analysis in the thesis. The first of these historians, Thomas Babington Macaulay, changed the

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<sup>17</sup> Ciaran Brady, *James Anthony Froude: An intellectual biography of a Victorian Prophet*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Julia Markus, *J. Anthony Froude: A Biography* (New York: Scribner, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk: A Life of Charles Kingsley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974); D. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Norman Vance, *Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); K. L. Morris, 'John Bull and the Scarlet Woman: Charles Kingsley and Anti-Catholicism in Victorian Literature', *Recusant History*, 23, 2 (1996–7), 190–218; Jonathan Conlin, 'An Illiberal Descent: Natural and National History in the Work of Charles Kingsley', *History*, 96 (April 2011), 167–187; Louise Lee, 'Voicing, de-voicing and self-silencing: Charles Kingsley's stuttering Christian manliness', *Journal of Victorian Culture* (March 2008).

<sup>20</sup> See for instance Marcus L. Loane, *John Charles Ryle, 1816–1900* (London, 1953); See David Bebbington, 'John Charles Ryle' in *The Heart of Faith: Following Christ in the Church of England*, ed. Andrew Atherstone (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Nixon, Mark, *Samuel Rawson Gardiner and the idea of history* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> S. R. Gardiner, 'The Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth (Lord Strafford)' or 'Shorthand Notes taken in the House of Commons by Edward Nicholas in the First Session of the Third Parliament of Charles I'. *MS. State Papers. Domestic, Charles I. Vol. 97, Quarterly Review*, 136:272, (Apr 1874), 434–452.

landscape of history-writing from the 1820s onwards, bringing to it a distinctive dramatic sense and an overall narrative that was infused with a sense of Britain's progress to world pre-eminence. The twentieth-century historian, Herbert Butterfield, famously termed Macaulay's account a Whig history, by which he meant that it was an account of an inexorable movement towards representative institutions, religious toleration and liberty under law, all of which underpinned Britain's status as a great power. Macaulay's early essays on Milton (1825), History (1828), Hallam's *Constitutional History* (1828) and Hampden (1831) will be of key interest in this chapter as it was in these essays that he first laid out the theoretical background to his historical narrative, in which the Puritans played a key role. The second of our historians, Thomas Carlyle, produced an edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845) that was hugely influential. Carlyle's book enabled Cromwell to speak for himself to readers in nineteenth-century England. Carlyle's preface to this work was an important early expression of his interpretation of the role of the 'great man' in shaping history.

The chapter will go on to consider the four historians analysed in this thesis who were both Evangelicals and ordained ministers. They included the Church of England ministers John Charles Ryle and John Buxton Marsden, the Congregational minister John Stoughton, and the Scottish Presbyterian James Anderson, who had retired from the ministry in a Secession Church in Kirriemuir in his early 30s and focused his attention on writing historical books. Each of these historians contributed books, papers and lectures regarding Puritanism, with Marsden and Stoughton in particular writing several volumes of history specifically about the Puritans and their times, and Anderson writing a two-volume collection of prosopography on women of the Puritan times. Puritanism had a special place for these Evangelicals, who each felt a personal and religious identification with the Puritans.

Finally our selection includes the polymath Church of England minister and man of letters, Charles Kingsley, and the well-known historian, James Anthony Froude. While neither of these authors produced major works that were focused on Puritanism, Puritanism none the less represented an important theme in the writings of both of them. Like Carlyle, Froude presented a very positive view of the Puritans' faith and sincerity, while he also saw them as avowed patriots and model English subjects. Kingsley, too, saw the Puritans as English patriots within the context of their times, and he portrayed them as pre-cursors of all that he saw as best about nineteenth-century England.

Chapter Three explores the recovery of Puritanism in more detail, with a particular focus on its political impact. It considers how our nineteenth-century writers presented the Puritans as bringing great change: for example, through Cromwell's inspirational leadership; through the introduction of political liberties and toleration that would lead to later democratic reforms; through its international perspective and sense of connection with the Protestant world beyond England; and through their patriotism and sense of national mission. Our historians viewed these contributions of Puritanism as pre-cursors to the greatness of nineteenth-century Britain.

However, there were also many features of the Puritans' political outlook that were difficult for the historians to reconcile with their own nineteenth-century ideologies. The second half of the chapter examines some issues arising from these difficulties. First, while some of the Puritans were patriots, many were known for having left England to establish a godly society in the New World. Second, although some of our historians sought to present the Puritans as introducing political reforms, coupled with religious toleration, which would lead to civil liberties and a fairer nation, the Puritans were also undeniably known to have been intolerant towards Catholics, Arminians, and others who did not share their strict religious beliefs. Third, the historians showed that there was an ambiguous relationship between the Puritans and the Church of England. While some of this resulted from the difficulty of defining Puritanism, it was clear that there was a problem in seeking to define the Puritans, people who had tried to destroy the episcopal Church of England, and who were expelled from it, as having loved and saved the Church of England.

The final part of Chapter Three focuses on the historians' presentation of the relationship between Puritanism and Roman Catholicism. All of our historians agreed that Puritanism was opposed, often violently, to Roman Catholicism: for some, it was this opposition that defined it. At times, the ideals of freedom and liberty that the Puritans espoused were presented as representing freedom *from* Roman Catholicism. Our historians saw the Puritans as attempting to forge a new national identity for England that was based upon Protestantism. The historians themselves clearly had very mixed opinions about Roman Catholicism: some actually used the recovery of Puritanism as a channel for their own nineteenth-century anti-Catholic polemic, whereas others obviously felt unsettled by the bitterness and hatred which they found in their historical research on the Puritans.

In Chapter Four, we explore how the process of reviving interest in Puritanism turned a corner in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. As a result of the work of Macaulay and Carlyle, many people now generally accepted that the Puritans, including Cromwell, had made some lasting and often valuable political contributions. But several of our historians wanted to take this further and show that the Puritans had also defined religious and social practices which, they thought, remained close to the heart of British life.

This chapter thus considers how Puritans were portrayed as models of piety and morality, holding forth a faith and a practice of piety that could still in part be applied in the nineteenth century. The Puritan women of James Anderson's works, for instance, were examples of how to live as a committed Protestant woman, both in the context of adversity and in the everyday domestic scene. The chapter then goes on to explore the connection between Puritanism and Evangelicalism: as the recovery of Puritanism proceeded, many Evangelicals were keen to draw parallels between it and their own religious movement. On the other hand, Carlyle and Froude insisted that, despite their theological similarities, Puritanism and Evangelicalism were far removed from one another. Chapter Four concludes with an exploration of the changing intellectual background of history-writing during the nineteenth century, with the growing emphasis on professional standards and the declining intellectual credibility of the amateur historians and generalist men of letters. The revived interest in Puritanism as a religious, political and social movement and the intellectual debates surrounding Puritanism in the nineteenth century were important contributors to this process of professionalization in historical writing. The debates over Puritanism and the hopes that Puritan beliefs and practices might be applied in the nineteenth century showed the importance of studying historical movements within their own historical context. As history developed as a professional discipline, the understanding of this changing historical context was growing in sophistication and sensitivity.

## **Chapter 1: Gardiner and the recovery of Puritanism**

### **1.1 Samuel Rawson Gardiner (1829–1902) in 1874**

#### 1.1.1 An introduction to Gardiner

Given his high volume of historical output, and the renown in which it is still held, Samuel Rawson Gardiner has received little attention from historians. His works have been summarised and described in chapters in multiple books, and in various articles, and one monograph about him, Mark Nixon's *Samuel Rawson Gardiner and the Idea of History*, has recently been published.<sup>23</sup>

Gardiner was a private man. He was brought up in the Catholic Apostolic Church, and married one of Edward Irving's daughters. As a result of his religious Nonconformity, he did not receive a university degree.<sup>24</sup> In the early 1860s, he quietly moved into the establishment, becoming a Church of England communicant. He was introverted and eccentric. He was committed to his craft, learning several European languages simply for the purposes of archival research. In his research for his colossal magnum opus *History of England*,<sup>25</sup> he proceeded through his primary sources year by year, never apparently taking an overarching view, but presenting the facts as he found them. He was also known for tricycling around Civil War battlefields in order to gain a better impression of battle logistics. He was politically liberal, and a warm supporter of William Gladstone. Little is known about the influences of his personal life on his historical attitudes and writing, but Nixon's work has recently uncovered more of his intellectual and philosophical influences and background.

During his lifetime, Gardiner's work was generally acknowledged as learned and well researched, but his style was much disparaged by all but his closest followers. In his review of the second volume of Gardiner's *History of England: Commonwealth and Protectorate*, William O'Connor Morris acknowledged the work's 'sterling and lasting value', but stated:

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<sup>23</sup> Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011).

<sup>24</sup> He could have taken a degree from the University of London after 1828, or from a Scottish University, but did not.

<sup>25</sup> Gardiner, *History of England*, 10 vols (1863–82); *History of the Great Civil War*, 4 vols (1886–91); *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 4 vols (1894–1901).

This volume has not the animating charm of genius; it shows little descriptive and dramatic power; it often fails to make the sequence of events and their relations stand out in clear relief; it does not form a striking, even a well-ordered, narrative. It is sometimes overburdened with petty details, which weary and do not impress the reader; and it is deficient in the historical art, which combines masses of facts in their just proportions, and arranges them in their true perspective. Occasionally, too, Mr. Gardiner's views and judgments seem to us not well founded [...].<sup>26</sup>

For many years, this view of Gardiner – as a great compiler of facts but not a talented historian, and lacking the ‘animated charm of genius’ that had infused the works of Thomas Babington Macaulay and James Anthony Froude earlier in the century – was widespread. In 1915, R. G. Usher's essay ‘A critical study of the historical method of Gardiner’ underlined the historian's abilities and successes, but also emphasised certain inconsistencies in the development of Gardiner's narrative.<sup>27</sup> In *The History Men* (1983, 1993), J. P. Kenyon described Gardiner as at root anti-social: refusing to acknowledge the value of works by other historians in his field, and avoiding London society even when he was famous. He described Gardiner's work as ‘dull stuff indeed’ to a generation whose tastes had been set by the writing prowess of Macaulay and Froude.<sup>28</sup>

But Gardiner also had his advocates, and other critics who placed more emphasis upon his successes. In 1913, C. H. Firth described his ‘only rival’<sup>29</sup> as having reached the pinnacle of the study of seventeenth century history. He described Gardiner's work as ‘scientific history’, the first historical writing that effectively succeeded in presenting the political view of Whigs and Tories alongside each other.<sup>30</sup>

In the same year, Gooch wrote a critically aware but positive assessment of Gardiner in his *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*. While he described Gardiner as ‘less brilliant’ than Froude, he was ‘far more trustworthy’.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>William O'Connor Morris, ‘Gardiner's Commonwealth and Protectorate’, *Scottish Review*, 31 (April 1898), 267–298, 268.

<sup>27</sup>R. G. Usher, ‘A Critical Study of the Historical Method of Gardiner’, *Washington University Studies*, Vol. 3, part 2 (Oct 1915).

<sup>28</sup>J. P. Kenyon, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983, 1993), 226.

<sup>29</sup>Gooch, *History and Historians* (1913), 240.

<sup>30</sup>C. H. Firth, ‘The Development of the Study of Seventeenth Century History’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3rd ser, Vol. 7 (1913), 25–48.

<sup>31</sup>Gooch, *History and Historians* (1913), 335.

Gooch saw Gardiner's achievement as a monumental success of historical endeavour, stating: 'It is Gardiner's glory to have narrated the most critical and controversial period of our history for the first time with complete knowledge and tranquil judgment'.<sup>32</sup> He also observed that 'To compare the footnotes of a chapter of Gardiner with those of any previous work is to realise the advance. The judge had at last all the facts before him, and he knew what use to make of them'.<sup>33</sup> For Gooch, Gardiner was a truly exceptional historian: what he lacked in verbal brilliance, he more than made up for in perseverance, hard work, and achievement. Rather than dwelling simply on the quantity of historical material that Gardiner produced, Gooch introduced a helpful account of what Gardiner contributed theoretically to the historical arena:

His originality lay not in his judgment of the result of the great struggle, but in his delineation of the leading actors and in his estimate of the relation of the rival policies to the practice and tradition of the past. "In this world of mingled motives", he remarks quietly, "the correctness of a political or religious creed does not form a test by which to distinguish the noble from the ignoble man". If it be one of the chief duties of an historian to render the actors in his drama intelligible, Gardiner was one of the greatest. His complete knowledge and equable temper enabled him to understand men who could not understand one another. He saw the grandeur of the ideals of Bacon as clearly as Spedding, and respected the courage of Coke and Pym as much as Macaulay. His readers are never allowed to forget how much each side contributed to the making of England.<sup>34</sup>

Gooch described Gardiner as determined to present both sides in the Civil War fairly, while at the same time being deeply influenced by the Whig legacy in the later nineteenth century. This balanced account remained largely ignored until Richardson's *Debate on the English Revolution* (1977, 1998).

J. R. Hale's *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967) was also very positive about Gardiner's achievement: guarding himself 'against contemporary partisanship by basing his work on primary sources, state papers and the like, wherever possible, and using pamphlets and memoirs sparingly and with the utmost caution'.<sup>35</sup> Hale saw Gardiner's scrupulous methodical scheme as a successful defence against the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 335–6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>35</sup> Hale, *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967), 60.

temptation to be biased. For Hale, Gardiner succeeded in creating more than just a 'set of annals, a reference book', and his 'constant linking of cause and effect' resulted in a coherent and credible history by a master of his subject.<sup>36</sup>

These readers of Gardiner may have differed in their views of his abilities as a historian, but all noted his attempt at historical objectivity, and his value as a 'scientific historian'. In 1988, Hugh Tulloch offered a new interpretation, seeing him with Carlyle, Froude and Firth 'hovering like moths round the flame of the powerful historical force embodied in a Cromwell or a Frederick the Great'.<sup>37</sup> This argument for Gardiner as a hero-worshipper has not been taken up by other historians. Gardiner was very keen to present sympathetic characters, and placed a high value on the presentation of character, as will shortly be observed, but accusations of hero-worship seem a little far-fetched.

Another innovative approach to Gardiner's history-work was by J. S. A. Adamson in his article: 'Eminent Victorians: S. R. Gardiner and the Liberal as Hero' (1990).<sup>38</sup> He argued that Gardiner's agenda was politically liberal, and that he wrote as an advocate and vindicator of Gladstonian liberalism. This charge, too, has largely gone unanswered.

Timothy Lang's *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995) featured Gardiner as a significant character, and included helpful analysis of several unpublished manuscripts relating to him. Lang's reading of Gardiner's published material, however, seems to be mainly based in his later work (he calls it 'mature') and his *History of England*. Lang saw Gardiner's work, along with Macaulay's *History of England*, as defining 'the contours of the Stuart Past for generations to come' and emphasising 'the equal contribution that both Anglicans and Puritans had made to the building of modern England'.<sup>39</sup> Lang was at pains to emphasise Gardiner's own burden for impartiality: 'where they [previous historians on this subject] had engaged in polemics, he was accumulating facts with the detachment of a naturalist'.<sup>40</sup> He described Gardiner's work as offering a via media of English history, a 'grand synthesis which demonstrated that both parties in the Civil War had contributed in a

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>37</sup> Hugh Tulloch, *Acton* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988).

<sup>38</sup> J. S. A. Adamson, 'Eminent Victorians: S. R. Gardiner and the Liberal as Hero', *The Historical Journal* 33 (1990), 641–57.

<sup>39</sup> Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 166.

constructive way to the making of modern England'.<sup>41</sup> In Lang's view, Gardiner saw himself as bringing together two opposing parties and providing the nineteenth century with a coherent interpretation of Britain's history. However, as Adamson had asserted, this in itself could well have been politically motivated: it was certainly in the interests of Gladstonian liberalism to teach British people that old Tories and Whigs in their country could be united.

While Adamson's and Lang's accounts are both valuable in their own way, one of the most balanced recent studies on Gardiner can be found in Richardson's *Debate on the English Revolution*. Richardson, like Gooch, saw Gardiner's work as not contributing a new attitude towards the seventeenth century, but rather a revolution in historical technique. He stated: 'The main novelty in historical scholarship in the later nineteenth century lay not in any total break with the complacent, present-based Whig interpretation of the English past, but in the emergence of the historian's profession and the refinements of methodology'.<sup>42</sup> He described Gardiner as a typical representative of the new professional historian. He went on: 'The main difference between Macaulay and Gardiner was that the first historian openly and proudly approached the seventeenth-century crisis from a nineteenth century Whig standpoint, while the second did something similar despite himself'.<sup>43</sup> Yet this assessment of Macaulay as 'openly and proudly' working from a Whig standpoint might not be entirely fair. Macaulay, too, had stated a desire for a balanced, non-party history.<sup>44</sup>

In his *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), Blair Worden saw Gardiner as doing something altogether new. Worden argued that Gardiner's professional historical approach combined with his imbibing of the positive social attitudes towards Puritanism that had been developing during the middle part of his century. Gardiner, Worden tells us, became the first real exponent of 'consensual' Puritanism, arguing for its importance to all parties in English political history. This view saw Puritanism as 'the most precious possession of the nation': a historical force behind which England could be united.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>42</sup> R. C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977, 1988, 1998), 6.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>44</sup> See T. B. Macaulay, 'The Romance of History, by Henry Neele', *Edinburgh Review* 47 (May 1828), 331–367, 331. See also Peardon, *Transition in English Historical Writing* (1933), 160, arguing that party history and Nationalist history merged in the nineteenth century.

<sup>45</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 254–255.

Our textual study that follows suggests that, far from eschewing other historians' work as Kenyon suggested, or, as Worden argued, presenting an altogether new view of the seventeenth century, Gardiner was not as concerned about a single 'correct' understanding of English history. In contrast, he saw his role as filling in the gaps in our understanding through careful research and allowing his sources to guide his narrative. This pattern in Gardiner's historical approach is an important theme in Nixon's work. His book recognises Gardiner as a true revolutionary in terms of the historical method, unswervingly holding to the standard of an 'imaginative' dramatic narrative that is derived solely from an understanding of primary sources.<sup>46</sup>

Taking apart Lang's argument that Gardiner somehow lacked self-awareness as a historian, Nixon criticised it as representative of a widespread lack of patience in attempting to understand nineteenth-century English history. Nixon's monograph also expresses frustration at attempts to categorise any historical figure without fully understanding them or undertaking detailed analysis of their works.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, Nixon has presented Gardiner as a historian who was deeply aware of the philosophical outlook of his own history-writing, and was, rather like Macaulay, consciously attempting to use it to promote his own view of what history ought to be. For Gardiner, this involved a wealth of philosophical understanding derived from German Idealism, through the route of Ranke, Hegel and Fichte.

In terms of his understanding of seventeenth century history, Nixon argued, Gardiner adopted a Hegelian or Fichtean dialectic:

Thus can be read into Gardiner's work the thesis and antithesis of the puritan and the catholic producing a synthetic (and statist) Anglican Church as a solution to the contradictions inherent in 1640s England; the thesis and antithesis of ultra-parliamentarianism and divine-right monarchy finding a synthetic solution in the modern English state; Oliver Cromwell's 'union of apparently contradictory forces'; and, crucially for an understanding of Gardiner's historical philosophy, the thesis and antithesis of a Whig and Tory historiography culminating in a synthetic truth in the unity of history.<sup>48</sup>

Rather than problematising the tensions in seventeenth-century England as his predecessors had, Nixon argued, Gardiner was able to see them in terms of thesis and

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<sup>46</sup> Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011), 30–31.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 162–3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

antithesis, working together to make England the way it had become. This was not a compromise born out of mediocrity, but an attempt at a higher philosophical understanding of the machinations of history. Nixon's argument and detailed explorations of Gardiner's corpus have effectively re-opened the question of Gardiner's critical detachment. Was he merely a product of his time, or was he developing something new in history, or both? Likewise, was Gardiner finally managing to move beyond the teleological outlook that had governed history from times immemorial, or was he merely articulating an unachievable dialectic ideal?

### **1.1.2 Gardiner's 'Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth'**

By 1874, Gardiner had been a well-established historian for fourteen years. He had published the initial volumes of his magnum opus *History of England* eleven years earlier, and had been lecturing at King's College London for two years (he was to receive the Chair of modern history there three years later). He still had a quarter of a century of historical writing ahead of him.

His essay on the 'Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth' (Lord Strafford) first appeared in the Tory *Quarterly Review* of January 1874. It was Gardiner's only published article in the *Quarterly Review*: later he preferred to write for the liberal *Edinburgh Review* and the *English Historical Review*.<sup>49</sup> This article may have been deemed more acceptable for a Tory readership as it favourably portrayed a figure of particular hate for political Whigs, Lord Strafford. The opening passage reveals several important things, and deserves investigating more closely:<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> See W. A. Shaw, *Bibliographies* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1903), 27–39.

<sup>50</sup> Gardiner, 'The Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth (Lord Strafford)' (1874), 434.

The minute historical investigations of the present day will hardly alter, to any very considerable extent, the popular judgment on the great events of history. There will be no reversal of our general satisfaction with the course taken at the Reformation. The Civil War and the Revolution will still be looked back to as laying the foundations of our liberties, and Elizabeth, with all her faults, will still be regarded as the great queen who steered the vessel of State safely into port.

The real effect of the work which is being done by so many hands will, if we mistake not, be chiefly found in the more charitable view which we are enabled to take of the actors on the stage. As we know more about them, as we trace their lives from day to day, we learn to see them as they really were, and without turning away our eyes from their faults or errors, to take account of their difficulties: – difficulties arising from outward circumstances, and difficulties arising from inward character. We learn, too, to understand their motives, and to find out that conduct which appeared not so very unreasonable after all. There will be fewer gibbetings in history; perhaps, too, fewer canonizations. We shall be able to look with sympathy upon those who strove, according to the measure of their power and knowledge, for their country's good, before we proceed to inquire whether the means which they adopted were the best fitted to reach the object which they had in view.

Gardiner described the historical writing of his day as consisting of 'minute historical investigations' [line 1]. He recognised a shift in historical writing from the vague to the precise, and towards the close and 'minute' study of sources, as the discipline of history gained academic credibility and as documentary sources became increasingly available. By the 1870s, the publication of the *Calendars of State Papers* was well underway,<sup>51</sup> a number of historical societies were being formed, and many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works were being republished.<sup>52</sup> Universities were creating and sustaining Chairs in modern history. History was, in every sense, being made as an academic discipline. But while a revolution in historical method was occurring, this did not necessarily mean that our understanding of the events of history would be turned on its head.

Gardiner asserted that there was a well-established 'popular judgment on the great events of history' in England [2]. He described this judgment as including the following three attitudes: (a) Looking with general satisfaction upon the events of the Reformation [lines 3–4]; (b) Seeing the seventeenth-century Civil War and

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<sup>51</sup> The publication of the *Calendars of State Papers* began in 1856.

<sup>52</sup> Raphael Samuel interestingly noted that this re-publishing of sixteenth and seventeenth-century works began with literature, especially the Lake poets and Southey's edition of *Pilgrim's Progress* (see Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 207).

Revolution as laying the foundation of ‘our’ liberties [lines 4–5]; (c) Seeing Queen Elizabeth as the great queen who ‘steered the vessel of state safely into port’ [lines 5–6]. This body of opinion, he argued, represented the mind of the educated public: it was pro-Reformation, positive about the effects of the Civil War and Revolution, and saw Queen Elizabeth as the monarch who stabilised England. It is easy to see from this description why some commentators have presented Gardiner as pursuing a Liberal agenda in his history-writing, but here, of course, he was writing in a Tory periodical.

Even from the reviews of his work, we can see that this ‘popular judgment’ was not really universal. One reviewer in 1889 saw England’s seventeenth-century history from quite a different angle:

In a case like that of the Great Civil War (we used to call it the Great Rebellion), where the judgment of posterity has been delayed by political and religious feelings – for we are still divided into Cavaliers and Roundheads – it is becoming clearer by degrees that the old estimates of causes and character are not altogether ill drawn, that Laud had in his nature something of the martyr, and Cromwell something of the ambitious intriguer.<sup>53</sup>

Gardiner may have considered popular opinion already to be moulded, but at least some Tory thinkers disagreed with him. Yet even though Gardiner may not have been the best judge of general consensus, the meta-view he outlined definitely represented a widespread popular understanding of English history in the mid 1870s.

In the third sentence of his introduction [line 7], Gardiner described the effect he hoped that his own ‘minute historical investigations’ would have: to enable people to take a ‘more charitable view’ towards historical characters, ‘the actors on the stage’ [line 10]. Although Gardiner had already decided upon an emphatically narrative approach to history,<sup>54</sup> the attention given to individuals from the past could make them seem more human, enabling people to see them ‘as they really were’ [line 11], ‘difficulties’ [line 13] and all. ‘As they really were’ echoes Matthew Arnold’s object ‘as in itself it really is’ quip from his celebrated ‘Function of Criticism’ (1864).<sup>55</sup> This aligned Gardiner not necessarily with Arnold’s critical school, but with the later Victorian passion that Arnold articulated of finding the reality of an

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<sup>53</sup> ‘History of the Great Civil War, 1642–1649’, *Quarterly Review*, 169: 338 (Oct 1889), 492–527, 493.

<sup>54</sup> See Oxford DNB article on S. R. Gardiner by Ivan Roots.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew Arnold, ‘The Function of Criticism’ in *Essays in Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1864).

object of criticism. This passion in turn was shaped both by Romanticism and German Idealism and the concept of a literary or historical *Wissenschaft* or scientific understanding.<sup>56</sup>

Gardiner's introduction to this article on Wentworth certainly suggested that he thought biography and prosopography would play an increasingly important role in historical writing. Previously ignored and maligned characters in history would be re-viewed and recovered. These investigations and recoveries were important, he stated, to 'enable us to be more charitable and understand their [historical actors'] motives; there will be fewer gibbetings in history; perhaps, too, fewer canonizations'. This desire to make historical characters seem more human was one aspect of another important nineteenth-century focus. Influenced in part by Walter Scott at the beginning of the century, a focus on the individual as a sympathetic and interesting character, and the search for a hero, will be a significant feature of this thesis.<sup>57</sup>

We have already seen a tension starting to emerge here. If a new methodology, rather self-deprecatingly described as based on investigative minutiae, was emerging, why was the 'popular judgment' still relevant? Likewise, why was a historian famous for his national history apparently expounding on the future of prosopography? Nixon's explanation can help us here. He explains that, despite the criticism Gardiner received for presenting undigested historical information, his source-focused method always directly preceded the development of a coherent narrative, and was always presented in terms of 'historical understanding', without which objective information would in itself be meaningless.<sup>58</sup> For Gardiner, this historical understanding was broadly in agreement with what he calls the 'popular judgment', while he would tweak many finer details of it in his exploration of the 1640s and 50s. His understanding was also proudly nationalistic, as we can see from his assertion that 'we' need to look with sympathy at those who strove 'for their country's good', before we enquire whether they used 'the best means' [17–20]. The patriotism of the characters under consideration is put forward as a motivation for attempts at recovering them and sympathising with them. Just that they were trying

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<sup>56</sup> See Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy 1760–1830: the legacy of idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Nixon, *Gardiner*, 31; Angus Nicholls, 'Scientific Literary Criticism in the Work of Matthew Arnold and William Dilthey', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 8: 1 (2011), 7–31, 15.

<sup>57</sup> See Walter Scott, *Old Mortality*, ed. Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; first published 1816); *The Fortunes of Nigel*, ed. Frank Jordan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004; first published 1822). See also Hale's *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967), which contains extracts from Scott, Macaulay, Froude and Gardiner.

<sup>58</sup> Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011), 31.

to work for their country's good is hallmark of greatness enough, he suggested, for the historian to want to understand them. This increasingly popular idea of being able to sympathise with characters and view them as human, popularised in part by the Romantic movement and also by mid-nineteenth-century notions of hero-worship, is another feature of this thesis. It can be seen in the writings of the main historians in this selection as they attempted to present the Puritans as characters with whom they could have sympathy. For the more teleologically-minded historians, this also extended into calling their readers to emulate aspects of the previously-ridiculed Puritans' attitudes and lives.

Both the narrative and the 'understanding' in Gardiner's historical work were also set in the context of the intellectual idea of the dialectic, in which both sides of an argument could be allowed to counterbalance each other without the narrator interfering or worrying about being charged with inconsistency. This played well into Gardiner's emphasis on humanity and personal sympathy: he wanted to understand people from the past, and show that they lived reasonable, recognisable, lives. This dialectic also enabled him, despite Liberal political sympathies, to write a positive article on Wentworth for a Tory periodical. This attitude helps us to see Gardiner as someone with a standpoint of genuine historical enquiry – history for its own sake – as would be promoted by Butterfield and others decades later.<sup>59</sup> When his works are read open-mindedly, they open up storehouses of facts and thoughts, but also a coherent dramatic narrative, a great deal of personal sympathy, and a profoundly sensitive attempt to humanise historical figures.<sup>60</sup>

### **1.1.3 Looking back from Gardiner**

These observations on Gardiner, and his introduction to 'The Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth', reveal several things about the historian that help us better to understand his time. He was clearly a singular historian with a highly developed and meticulous research method. However, he was not as detached and inhuman as some have suggested: rather, he was profoundly interested in humanising individual characters from the past in order to promote better empathy with them. As we have seen from Nixon, Gardiner's philosophical background and his ideas of a dialectic

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<sup>59</sup> See Butterfield, *Whig Interpretation of History* (1931), 96. See also R. M. B. Blaas, *Continuity and Anachronism: Parliamentary and Constitutional Development in Whig Historiography and in the Anti-Whig Reaction between 1890 and 1930* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

<sup>60</sup> Adamson also noted this and linked it to the great character project popularised by Carlyle and powerful throughout the nineteenth century (see 'Eminent Victorians' (1990)).

approach to history enabled the development of a narrative that was based on source and detail without needing political pre-conceptions to cloud or bias presentation. Paring down history to individual characters was a convenient way of processing this task, but trying to implement it on the scale of a broader national history led to more difficulties in gaining public interest and approval. Even so, Gardiner's approach represented a viable Idealist alternative to the scientific histories of his contemporaries, such as Freeman and Stubbs, whose version of history as a science was so heavily influenced by the developing natural sciences that they were apparently trying to force it into objectivity.<sup>61</sup>

Viewing Gardiner's attitudes provides a helpful perspective for the beginning of this project: we can see that the recovery of Puritanism was part of a much wider shift in views in society. It also helps us to see that this shift had, to some extent, consolidated by the final quarter of the nineteenth century. By considering the recovery of Puritanism alongside developing attitudes to later sixteenth and seventeenth century British history, we will be able to see the issues more clearly. Instead of seeing reasons for the development of a new type of historical writing as a conclusion or end-point, we recognise these from the beginning as a background to the work observed in this thesis. This will afford us more scope to consider *what* the particular recoveries of Puritanism by these historians entailed, and how the historians reached their conclusions, some apparently discontinuous with the theoretical background from which they emerged.

So before we move to considering the other historians in this thesis and their individual recoveries of Puritanism, let us observe and comment upon more of the theoretical and historiographical background to the changes in approach that had occurred by Gardiner's time. These were well observed by twentieth-century historians, although no one specific paradigm has been accepted as normative.

As we have seen, Gardiner assumed that the Reformation and Civil Wars were seen in his day as broadly positive, and often described the Puritans positively.<sup>62</sup> This demonstrates a deep infiltration of a historical perspective that was later known as 'Whig history'. These views, which Gardiner saw as commonplace in 1874, would have been very unusual a century earlier and daring fifty years earlier. These tenets, and the development of this so-called 'Whig' history during the nineteenth century

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<sup>61</sup> See Nixon's argument on Gardiner's Fichtean understanding of *Wissenschaft*, *Gardiner* (2011), 31. See Chapter Four, section 4.3.2.

<sup>62</sup> See for instance Gardiner's *History of England*, Vol. 1, 22, 125–6; Vol. 2, 241; 3, 171.

into something that was so widespread and accepted by Gardiner's time, are a crucial background to this thesis. As has been seen, this project is particularly focused on nineteenth-century historians' views of Puritanism. It was only in the context of positive views about the Reformation, Elizabeth's achievements and the Civil War that Puritanism, and the Puritans themselves, could begin to be retrieved by historians.

## **1.2 A time of change**

The view of seventeenth-century history that Gardiner described as the 'popular judgment' in 1874 had not always been commonplace. This section will briefly observe views of the seventeenth century, particularly Puritanism, in the eighteenth century. Then, through the medium of previous scholarly work in this field, it will look at the changes in historical approaches that occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and thus situate this project within a broader historical perspective.

### **1.2.1 Puritanism viewed in the eighteenth century**

Between the 1750s and the 1870s, widespread acceptance of Hume's regaling of the Parliamentarians, the Commonwealth, and the Protectorate, had been replaced by a historical view encompassing the threefold judgment that Gardiner described. Characters such as Cromwell were increasingly being read with a nuanced sympathy and humanity, replacing bold colours of 'gibbeting' or 'canonization'. Something significant had clearly happened in historiography: something that transformed the way that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century characters and events were read.

In the eighteenth century, popular and received views about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British history were very far from Gardiner's assumptions in the late nineteenth century, and even further from being positive about Puritanism. In fact, English Puritanism and those associated with it: the Parliamentarians of the Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate Era, the most zealous among the reformed Protestants, and others, had a very bad reputation. Since their inception in the sixteenth century, 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' had been, to some extent at least, terms of disaffection. Some measure of their application has always remained pejorative. By the eighteenth century, presentations of those called the Puritans by respected historians were almost invariably negative.

As well as playing an important role in the Scottish Enlightenment, David Hume was one of the most highly regarded eighteenth-century historians of Britain. As Richardson has noted, his influence survived well into the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> He did acknowledge that the political manoeuvrings of the mid-seventeenth century had contributed to the progress of British political liberty, but refused to see their perpetrators in a positive light, arguing that the Parliamentarians had been after their own gain. He portrayed the Puritans, including their leader, Oliver Cromwell, as hypocrites of the first order. The few among them who were religiously sincere were mad or fearfully misguided, and they were, he insisted, hated by most of the populous.<sup>64</sup>

Hume's importance as a historian in the eighteenth century is not questioned. When Firth considered 'The Development of the Study of Seventeenth Century History', he gave Hume's influential anti-Whiggism special mention.<sup>65</sup> Lang's *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* has a helpful section on Hume's *History* and its residing importance. Lang was careful not to present Hume as a Tory historian who Whig historians were later to oppose, but rather as a *via media* of sorts. Hume's middle way, however, was fundamentally different from Gardiner's or Macaulay's. As Lang stated: 'When [Hume] attacked the theories, fashionable among Whigs and Tories respectively, of an original contract and passive obedience, he was in fact demolishing the ideological props of both parties'.<sup>66</sup> Lang saw Hume as against both of the political parties' ideologies, instead promoting Enlightenment views of reason and rationality, detached from zealous religious observance of any sort. Lang continued to describe Hume's position: 'That the rise of Puritanism as a political force had led to the anarchy of the Civil War and Cromwell's usurpation was no accident. Hume's *History* thus confirmed the maxim that fanaticism in politics, if not restrained, must always culminate in despotism'.<sup>67</sup> For Lang, Hume was polemically directing his work against political and religious extremism, in order to promote moderation. Lang saw Hume's lack of effort to understand Cromwell and the

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<sup>63</sup> Richardson, *Debate on the English Revolution* (1977, 1998), 74. Whig histories, in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were, Richardson argued, written as an antithesis to Hume's work.

<sup>64</sup> Hume, David, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, 8 vols. (Edinburgh: W. Cooke, 1792; first published as *History of Great Britain, 1754–1762*), Vol. 5, 178, 225, 244.

<sup>65</sup> Firth, 'Study of Seventeenth Century History' (1913).

<sup>66</sup> Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995), 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Puritans as his weakness: ‘failing to appreciate the sincerity of Cromwell’s piety, Hume lacked the insight which the Victorians would use to make sense out of Cromwell’s otherwise inexplicable career’.<sup>68</sup>

Lang’s examination of Hume well illustrates the latter’s dislike of the Parliamentarians, and what are now seen as his historical biases under the guise of rationalism. However, Lang used terminology, including ‘Puritanism’, that Hume did not.<sup>69</sup>

This is significant. The linguistic issue of Puritanism in the eighteenth century has been perceptively noted by Raphael Samuel. Samuel pointed out: ‘nor does Puritanism seem to have entered eighteenth-century literary discourse’.<sup>70</sup> Historians such as Hume discarded Puritanism as a term, because the Puritans themselves were disregarded and considered irrelevant. Furthermore, Samuel stated, ‘Before the nineteenth century, Puritanism was given little more than a walk-on part in histories of the Civil War’.<sup>71</sup> So in the eighteenth century, Puritanism’s role in the events in Britain in the mid-seventeenth century, later to be considered central, was effectively ignored. When this thesis discusses the recovery of Puritanism by nineteenth-century historians, the recovery in question is from *obscurity* as much as from bad reputation.

Hume may be said in some senses to exemplify an eighteenth-century historical perspective. The attitude he exhibited towards the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth and Protectorate eras, and the silence he left on Puritanism and its significance, were dominant both when he wrote and for decades afterwards.

But, as has been seen, all of this had changed by the time that Gardiner wrote his ‘Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth’. The next section will consider in more detail various existing descriptions of the nature of these changes, and explanations for them. While there is no general consensus about what exactly happened and why, helpful explanations can be taken in part from each of these commentators.

### **1.2.2 The changes and their reasons**

Gooch saw the primary reason for change in historical approach as the rapidly widening scope of historical study in the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> His *History and*

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>69</sup> The passing references to Puritans in footnote 36 are some of Hume’s only uses of this terminology in his work.

<sup>70</sup> Samuel, ‘The Discovery of Puritanism’ (1993), 203.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>72</sup> Gooch, *History and Historians* (1913), 5.

*Historians in the Nineteenth Century* focused particularly on the development of new historical and philosophical views on the European Continent in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They included German Idealism and philosophical and technical moves towards what would later be called ‘scientific history’, as exemplified by Gardiner. These developments were later to transition into the English language, through Carlyle and others.

Firth saw the ‘great war with France’ at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the turning-point after which the balance shifted from Tory to Whig history (that is, from history generally on the side of the Royalists in the Civil Wars to history generally on the side of the Parliamentarians).<sup>73</sup> He saw Brodie and Hallam at the beginning of the nineteenth century as early representatives of the new wave of historical writing.

Peardon attributed the changes in historical approaches to gradual changes in mood and influence. His *The Transition in English Historical Writing 1760–1830* (1933) remains a classic account of what happened between the times of Hume and Gardiner. Peardon’s start-date for this transition, 1760, was while Hume’s *History of Great Britain* was still being written. Peardon described the primary historical approach as shifting from an essentially Tory to an essentially Whig emphasis. He saw movements in the later eighteenth century as pre-figuring the Romanticism of the beginning of the nineteenth century. His end-date for the transformation he described is also relatively early, but he explained: ‘By 1830 the basic elements in the nineteenth-century conception of history – romantic enthusiasm for the study of the past, Nationalist zeal in portraying it, and the use of scientific methods in ascertaining the facts about it – had already found considerable expression among historians. Moreover, shortly after this date at least, the public records, fundamental sources of historical study in the last hundred years, were adequately cared for and their importance properly realized’.<sup>74</sup> Peardon saw Rationalist history in the eighteenth century as fading into Romantic history in the nineteenth. He identified the French Revolution as the catalyst for a new English Nationalism that was also reflected in nineteenth-century historical writing.<sup>75</sup> He saw the distinctive Whig and

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<sup>73</sup> Firth, ‘Study of Seventeenth Century History’ (1913), 39.

<sup>74</sup> Peardon, *Transition in English Historical Writing* (1933), 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

Tory party histories of the eighteenth century as merging in the nineteenth into Nationalist history.<sup>76</sup>

Hale's *Evolution of British Historiography* is chiefly a book of extracts, demonstrating changes in historical approaches over the centuries. While not focusing in any detail on Puritanism, it provides another helpful perspective on the changes that occurred in historical writing. His helpful seventy-page introduction has a study of historical writing in the early nineteenth century. In it, he particularly emphasised the significance of the Romantic movement. His comparison between Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) and Thomas Babington Macaulay stated that, between the two, Romanticism had entered historical discourse: 'not the romanticism that responded to the exotic – Gibbon thrilled to that – but the romanticism that brought with it an emotional sympathy with people in the past in terms of the ages in which they lived [...]'.<sup>77</sup> The main change that he saw in the historical writing of the nineteenth century was this enablement of emotional sympathy. This meant that, along Peardon's lines, detached Rationalist history was out and replaced by a new, more excitingly personalised history, full of life and character.

Hale saw this new historical approach as chiefly brought into vogue by the great Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott.<sup>78</sup> Scott provided the voice of history, a penetrating and imaginative glimpse into how people thought and spoke in past times. The historians' developing role became to combine historical fact with a sympathy for character and a desire for such an authentic, intelligible voice.

Richardson's *The Debate on the English Revolution* provides a particularly helpful perspective on different historians involved in approaching the seventeenth century, and the changes that can be seen from historian to historian. His considerations of Catherine Macaulay (1731–1791) and William Godwin (1756–1836) are particularly pertinent: they were in some ways 'Whig' historians moving away from Hume's dominant account, but they did not arrive at Macaulay's conclusions, and they continued to reject the Puritans as hypocrites. Richardson also considered the influence of the French Revolutions on English historical thought in some detail, asserting that 'there is no doubt the French Revolution stimulated the growth of English Radicalism',<sup>79</sup> but concluding that 'In the long run French

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>77</sup> Hale, *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967), 22.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>79</sup> Richardson, *Debate on the English Revolution* (1977, 1998), 65.

revolutions reinforced existing convictions and prejudices rather than changed Englishmen's minds about their own history'.<sup>80</sup>

Samuel too described and offered several reasons for the change in historical approaches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His focus in 'The Discovery of Puritanism' was, unsurprisingly, on the aspect of historiographical change that saw Puritanism, for so long ignored, being uncovered and coming to play an important role in nineteenth-century culture. Samuel provided an original take on the situation, arguing that: 'In Britain the discovery of Puritanism was prepared by a much more widespread revolt against the politeness and polish of eighteenth-century literature, a positive appetite for the unruly, the spontaneous, and the stressful'.<sup>81</sup> In literature, the *Pamelas* and the *Clarissas*, long tomes of novels full of rationality and decorum, were no longer acceptable to nineteenth-century taste.<sup>82</sup> Puritanism, while representing piety and stricture in some senses, also brought with it a zealous excitement and urgency that inspired nineteenth-century readers. Samuel went on to describe the recovery of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* through various new editions, and described 1820 to 1920 as 'Bunyan's century'.<sup>83</sup> The earthy analogy of Bunyan, with all of its morality, was crudely swashbuckling and adventurous for a hungry nineteenth-century public. But Samuel did not only focus on the literary roots of Puritanism's recovery: 'Historiographically, the rehabilitation of Puritanism may be said to have begun with the Whig revival in post-1809 Scotland, when after the long night of Tory hegemony, Radicals began to put their heads above the parapet'.<sup>84</sup> In nineteenth-century Scotland, 'Whig' was used synonymously with religious Radical or Covenanter. For the Whigs to put their heads above the parapet meant a revival in religious extremism, as well as the beginnings of political and social change. Samuel's comment regarding Scottish uses of 'Whig' also showed his awareness of the problematic nature of 'Whig' history as a term. As those who connected themselves with Puritanism gained more public voice, so too did the historical movement with which they connected themselves gain credibility.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>81</sup> Samuel, 'Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 208.

<sup>82</sup> Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2001; first published 1741); *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady*, ed. Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985; first published 1748). Both were long and involved novels about virtuous ladies attempting to avoid falling into sin.

<sup>83</sup> Samuel, 'Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 209.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Lang went further than this, arguing that the recovery of Puritanism was only made possible as the ‘character of the state changed’,<sup>85</sup> with the ‘foundations of the Anglican constitution’ beginning to ‘collapse after the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts’ (in 1828). At this point, Lang continued, the Dissenters began to use ‘the Puritan past to legitimate religious reform, interpreting it as the culmination of the liberal tendencies inherent in England’s Protestant Heritage’.<sup>86</sup> For Lang, the French Revolutions and all else preceding the changes in the relationship between Church and State in England had only worked to Puritanism’s detriment.<sup>87</sup> Thus, a main strand of his argument in *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* was that historians grew in their support for Puritanism as Whig politics gained ascendancy, and as Dissenting ecclesiology became increasingly acceptable and respected in nineteenth-century England.<sup>88</sup> He saw the growth of the Whig party as requiring a new defence and vindication of the Glorious Revolution and the Civil War, which it found in historians such as Macaulay. He saw Robert Vaughan as the new historical voice of religious Dissent, promoting and vindicating the Puritans as ancestors of the nineteenth-century Nonconformists. He also presented Thomas Carlyle as hugely influential, promoting the sincerity and the greatness of the Puritans, and viewing Cromwell in particular as a hero.

Lang described Macaulay’s liberal outlook as a major turning point in the presentation of seventeenth-century history. But before he even reached Macaulay in his chronological narrative, he had described several other historians who did not see eye to eye with Hume’s interpretation. In a very helpful section, Lang, as Richardson had done before him, described the work of Catherine Macaulay, Godwin, Henry Hallam (1777–1859), and others, all in their own way moving towards a new historical approach as they steadily reviewed the events of the seventeenth-century, but none seeing Puritanism in a popular light. Even so, perhaps they, too, helped pave the way for Macaulay and others.

As he progressed in his narrative into the mid-nineteenth century, although Lang considered the nineteenth-century ‘recovery’ of Puritanism in some detail, he saw it as a phenomenon fuelled by Dissenters and enabled by ‘liberal’ historians such as Macaulay. He saw Carlyle’s voice as alone in appreciating Puritans primarily

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<sup>85</sup> Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage*, 20.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 155.

for their sincerity, and although supporting Puritans, being ‘alarmed by the course of liberal reform’.<sup>89</sup> Lang also saw the entire recovery movement of Puritanism as helping to undercut the significance of the Church of England at a time when it was weakening.<sup>90</sup> As we will see, this thesis will challenge that argument, and show how many people within the Church of England were instrumental in the recovery of Puritanism and used it to promote their own churchmanship.

### 1.2.3 Change and Oliver Cromwell

It is indisputable that Oliver Cromwell has been seen by many as a key representative of Puritanism, and his recovery, likewise, ran parallel to and often overlapped with that of Puritanism. While later seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century commentators were generally derisive about Cromwell, his reputation underwent a dramatic revival in the second two quarters of the nineteenth century: so much so that, in 1895, his statue, victorious, was erected in a prominent place immediately outside the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, where it still stands today.

Several twentieth- and early twenty-first-century commentators have greatly aided our understanding of the changing views of Oliver Cromwell in the nineteenth century. Various different theories and explanations of his ascendancy have been put forward, and in this context we will only provide a summary of the most pertinent.

In the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, Wilbur Cortez Abbott was the most prolific historian of Cromwell.<sup>91</sup> He compiled an extensive bibliography of sources regarding the Protector, which notably included over a hundred octave pages on the nineteenth century: a striking testament to his subject’s popularity in our period of study.<sup>92</sup> In 1935, another book of Abbott’s, *Adventures in Reputation*, was published. In this, Abbott set a precedent in seventeenth-century historiography for having a chapter on ‘The Historic Cromwell’, which has since been followed by, amongst others, Christopher Hill, Peter Karsten, Timothy Lang and Blair Worden.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>91</sup> Abbott edited the long-considered ‘authoritative’ edition of Cromwell’s writings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937–1947). John Morrill’s article, ‘Textualising and Contextualising Cromwell’, *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 629–39, celebrated fifty years since its publication and interestingly compared Abbott’s to Carlyle’s and Lomas’ editions.

<sup>92</sup> Wilbur Cortez Abbott, ed., *A Bibliography of Oliver Cromwell: A List of Printed Materials Relating to Oliver Cromwell, Together with a List of Portraits and Caricatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929).

Abbott traced Cromwell's increasing popularity in the nineteenth century to a generally waxing fascination with seventeenth-century England in the aftermath of the French Revolutions. As the Republics of seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century France demanded comparison, so too did the characters and work of Cromwell and Napoleon. Abbott argued that French Revolutions and their aftermaths meant that Cromwell's becoming a favourite topic for historians was almost inevitable.<sup>93</sup> While Abbott recognised the impact of Thomas Carlyle, of whom we will hear significantly more in Chapter Two, on Cromwell's historical reputation, he was quick to indicate that the sources Carlyle produced concerning Cromwell were, in the most part, already available.<sup>94</sup> While Abbott's consideration of Cromwell was formative and important, much work remained to be undertaken on the subject.

### ***The Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project***

The most significant progression of historical understanding regarding Cromwell's nineteenth-century reputation has been the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project. This was initiated by the periodical *Past and Present* in 1968, and continued into 1969. An initial paper in July 1968 outlined a proposal for the project, and described a colloquium that had taken place in late June of that year.<sup>95</sup> In the article, T. W. Mason described how the theme of 'recurrent popular interest during the nineteenth century in the history of the Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate' had thus far been much noted but little researched. Mason stated that, since popular sources were multifarious and widespread, any progress on investigating the figure of a nineteenth-century Cromwell would require a 'large number of historians' to conduct a collaborative effort. He described preliminary research already begun by Brian Harrison and Raphael Samuel (who proceeded to lead the project) as revealing several public lecturers of the mid-nineteenth century, including Thomas Cooper and Henry Vincent, as protagonists in Cromwell's popularisation. More important in Harrison's and Samuel's findings than these particular characters, though, was the fact that 'Cromwell [...] encompassed in his person most of the major issues *within* radical working-class and socialist politics in the nineteenth century'.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Abbott, W. C., *Adventures in Reputation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 110.

<sup>94</sup> Abbott, *Adventures in Reputation* (1935), 112.

<sup>95</sup> See T. W. Mason, 'Nineteenth-Century Cromwell', *Past and Present*, 40 (Jul 1968), 187–191.

<sup>96</sup> Mason, 'Nineteenth-Century Cromwell' (1968), 188, 189.

Mason outlined several possible avenues of research about Cromwell, urged all *Past and Present* readers to contribute any evidence relating to Cromwell's nineteenth-century reputation that they found, and announced plans for a second colloquium in March 1969, at which results would be presented. He also named twenty-six contributors to the project.

In November 1968, Brian Harrison spoke at the Social History group at the University of Oxford, and announced that a new degree of organisation was required if the project were to proceed. He outlined considerable progress that had been made in the research, including a day-conference in which a group of Oxford scholars had focused on the critical reaction to the publication of Carlyle's *Cromwell*, and the first public argument, in 1845, about whether a Cromwell statue should be erected with those of the monarchs at the new Houses of Parliament. A further letter in December 1968 from Mason to potential contributors to the project listed several more avenues of research that had been agreed upon.

In the May 1969 edition of *Past and Present*, a postponement notice was issued for the annual 'Sense of the Past and History' conference for July that year, which was to have presented the project's results. It was never rescheduled.<sup>97</sup> The Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project was doomed never to overcome its organisational difficulties. No monograph or full presentation of results followed. The project had become too broad and lacked enough definition of scope to make it manageable, even with a collaborative effort. And yet it had not been a complete failure. It had attracted the contributions of at least seventeen scholars beyond those listed amongst T.W. Mason's initial collaborators, and a large amount of information, with many potential leads, had been gathered.

The resulting notes, which come to 260 folio pages, were collected by Brian Harrison and deposited in the Bodleian library in 2000, where they remain accessible to readers. Brian Harrison's introduction, although written before the last of the material had been assembled,<sup>98</sup> provides a very helpful summary of the project's findings, and guidance for future research.

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<sup>97</sup> See 'Notes and Comments', *Past and Present*, 43 (May 1969), 170; *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 152.

<sup>98</sup> Two papers: K. R. N. Short, 'The Nineteenth-Century Dream of a Republic, Rome and Regicides' (220–242) and R. C. G. Matthew, 'Oliver Cromwell's Statue, Lord Rosebery and Imperialism' (243–260), were yet to be added. The accompanying letter from T. W. Mason has no date, but refers to a conference in which these two, plus Harrison's introductory paper, were to be presented, to be held on 24 January 1970. This was to mark the conclusion of the project.

Harrison's introduction began by outlining the importance of the seventeenth century to nineteenth-century politics, and its role as a prominent feature in nineteenth-century political debate. Harrison argued that this emphasis on the seventeenth century as a reference point was not only present among liberals or an elite, but was widespread across British society.

He moved on to discuss, from the results of the project, what it was that the nineteenth century seemed to admire about Cromwell. He categorised this into two sections: Cromwell as a man of principle, and Cromwell as a man of action. Harrison noted that the nineteenth-century working and middle classes were able to see Cromwell as a figurehead, or man of principle, because he achieved greatness from unostentatious beginnings. He became a symbol of what could be gained in England through the career 'open to talent', just as the French in the nineteenth century 'worked up the Napoleonic legend'. Moreover, Cromwell was seen as embodying the integrity and independence of mind that were so admired in the nineteenth century. Although many in the nineteenth century saw his faith as quaint, they admired it nonetheless for being robust, from the soul, and carried into practice in his political life. This sincerity contrasted strongly with the perceived political corruption and hypocrisy that were pervasive in the 1840s. Harrison noted that, in this context, Cromwell's example appealed particularly to the 'politically immature classes' of the early to mid nineteenth century, 'who think that everything wrong can be attributed to corruption among those in power'.<sup>99</sup> During the course of the century, however, Cromwell's strong principles were to become the stuff of legend.

Secondly, then, Cromwell as a man of action. His action, as has been suggested, was seen as growing out of his essentially practical religion. The strength he displayed in dismissing the Rump Parliament in 1653 was much admired by stauncher opponents of political corruption in the nineteenth century. Harrison described 'sheer worship of brute force for its own sake among those who despised the gentilities of civilised life: of capacity to penetrate the shame, pretences and hypocrisies in order to detect the heart of any contemporary problem'. He quoted the *Bradford Observer* of 1849 describing Cromwell as 'the incarnate genius of genuine Saxon liberty'.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Harrison, in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 209–210.

<sup>100</sup> *Bradford Observer*, 27 Dec 1849; see *Nineteenth Century Cromwell*, 100, 211.

As far as this thesis is concerned, these categories of Cromwell as man of principle and action are probably the key points of Harrison's introduction. However, it is also worth taking into account the other sections into which he divided his comments on the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project. He devoted one section of his introduction to describing ways in which Cromwell embarrassed nineteenth-century England, including both Tories and Liberals. He discussed what the project had revealed concerning attitudes towards Cromwell amongst nineteenth-century working men, most significantly the notion that Cromwell was seen as a benchmark by which to judge contemporary society.

Harrison's 'Agenda for further research' outlined a number of avenues, including several mentioned earlier in Mason's letter to contributors: both historians agreed that 'full scale research' was required in order to achieve a comprehensive view of Cromwell's importance in the nineteenth century. These avenues for research included the attitude of the Labour Party to Cromwell; the academic history of Cromwell interpretation; reviews of Godwin's *Commonwealth* and Carlyle's *Cromwell*; nineteenth-century biographies of Cromwell; the availability of works concerning Cromwell in mechanics' institute libraries; articles on Cromwell in the Poole and Wellesley indices; mentions of Cromwell in minute-books of mutual improvement societies; newspaper reports of incidents involving Cromwell statues and paintings; school textbooks discussing Cromwell; the extent to which Dissenting opponents of Imperialism, particularly relating to the Crimean and Boer Wars, dissociated themselves from Cromwell; discussion of Cromwell in denominational periodicals before the publication of Carlyle's *Cromwell* in 1845; nineteenth-century Whig historiography of the seventeenth century; newspaper reports concerning Oak Apple Day; and the historiography of the Levellers in the nineteenth century.

In all, the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project uncovered an array of possibilities regarding Cromwell's nineteenth-century reputation. It underlines his importance to the nineteenth century as a central figure of the seventeenth century. The two chief characteristics of his that stood out to the nineteenth century – power and action – were both indicative of the strength that England at this time so admired.

### ***Connected work***

Although the findings of the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project have never been published, and no monographs have resulted directly from it, various of its

contributors have continued to be interested in this area and completed articles, essays and chapters on it. These have reflected the project's mood and themes, and the development of these historians' historiographical ideas in its wake.

John Dunbabin's essay 'Oliver Cromwell's Popular Image in Nineteenth-Century England' appeared in 1975, and admits to being founded on the work of *Past and Present's* Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project.<sup>101</sup> In his original contributions to the project, Dunbabin had focused on a comparison between Cromwell and Garibaldi, and also on the adoption of Cromwellian names by nineteenth-century friendly societies. His notes suggested that neither of these findings were of immense significance.<sup>102</sup> However, he was clearly keen to discuss the significance of the project as a whole. Conflating various of the project's sources regarding popular descriptions of Cromwell, Dunbabin suggested:

[We only have] tentative explanations [for the changed attitude towards Cromwell], notably the social and political rise of Old Dissenters, the impact of Thomas Carlyle's writings on Cromwell in the early 1840s, and the gradual softening of upper-class and establishment partisanship for King Charles [...]. In the process some of the immediacy of his example was lost; it became vaguer and less controversial. In the end, Cromwell became a symbol, not unimportant, but perhaps interchangeable with other symbols.<sup>103</sup>

This analysis is similar to, if simpler than, that offered by Brian Harrison. By 'Old Dissenters', Dunbabin meant the Nonconformists and Whigs whose power and influence were ascending in the early nineteenth century, and also the Chartists, such as Henry Vincent and Thomas Cooper, whose positive presentations of Cromwell had been recorded in the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project.<sup>104</sup> Dunbabin's argument that the poignancy of the Cromwell motif had lost some of its power by the end of the century is particularly notable. This seems to over-simplify the reasons for Cromwell's increase in popularity, seeing it only as connected to the ascent of Dissent. The Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project also showed that Cromwell appealed to Victorian sensibilities concerning public and private piety, and even to British Imperialists who were neither Whig nor Nonconformist. With this in view, it

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<sup>101</sup> J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'Oliver Cromwell's popular image in nineteenth-century England', in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands Vol. 5: Some Political Mythologies* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 141–63, 143.

<sup>102</sup> See *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 45–49.

<sup>103</sup> Dunbabin, 'Oliver Cromwell's popular image' (1975), 151.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

seems that Cromwell's recovery was much broader and more comprehensive than he allows for here. The erection of the Cromwell statue outside Parliament in 1895 also strongly suggests that Cromwell was still very much in public favour towards the close of the century and that his motif was actually still going strong. *Patriot Heroes in England and America* was a large-scale work by Peter Karsten that, though published in 1978, had been conceived as early as 1965, so predated the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project.<sup>105</sup> Karsten fitted his project contribution in 1968–9 to his ongoing research in this area. He emphasised that Cromwell's Puritan contemporaries Sydney and Hampden had been popular figures of veneration in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century, well before Cromwell's memory was popularised. In fact, Karsten argued, Cromwell's popularisation eclipsed, and perhaps even led to the demise of, support for Hampden and Sydney.<sup>106</sup> In his project contribution, Karsten went on to examine different causes for the rise of Cromwell's popularity in the nineteenth century. Unlike Dunbabin, Karsten focused on Cromwell's abilities as a leader of a nation, and how he appealed to the Imperialistic mindset of many in the nineteenth century. He saw Cromwell as lauded in the nineteenth century for his ability to 'guide the state'.<sup>107</sup> Karsten saw this image of Cromwell steering the ship of state as feeding into the popular nineteenth-century yearning for Britain's national power and international domination. Cromwell's chief purpose, then, for nineteenth century readers, was as a figurehead, making England strong.

In the published version of *Patriot Heroes*, Karsten extended his previous analysis of Cromwell's recovery, and focused more on the contribution of historians towards it, and on other aspects of Cromwell's appeal in the nineteenth century. An important aspect of Karsten's contribution to this area is the way he described the development of Cromwell's recovery and reputation during the course of the nineteenth century. In the early days of this recovery, he had represented for Macaulay and Carlyle something very much in the past of which the Englishman could be proud. Perhaps picking up on Harrison's categories in the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project, Karsten described Cromwell's reputation as increasingly becoming that of a diplomat of Protestantism and a man of admirable power and action. By the time of Samuel Rawson Gardiner, Karsten argued, Cromwell had

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<sup>105</sup> See Peter Karsten's note in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 101.

<sup>106</sup> See *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 104.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 106–107.

become the ‘national hero’ because he, better than anyone else, represented the interests of British Imperialism.<sup>108</sup>

*Patriot Heroes* contextualised Cromwell, as interpreted in the nineteenth century, as a British hero in the same category as Lord Nelson and Alfred the Great. Karsten also outlined various other representative roles that Cromwell held in the nineteenth century, including as an archetypal man of strength and power who could be an encouragement and model for the individual Englishman (or British-man).

The nineteenth-century Cromwell Karsten wrote about seems a different man altogether to the one described by Dunbabin. The historians’ differences in emphasis perhaps stem from the purposes of their projects. Karsten was conducting research on Patriot Heroes, so his discussion of Cromwell was bound to focus on his role as hero. Dunbabin’s arguments, on the other hand, were more based on the ascendancy of the particular political and religious classes who have more traditionally been associated with Cromwell. All of this is further support, perhaps, for Harrison’s suggestion that the depth and complexity of Cromwell’s reputation could not be covered by a single historian.

Raphael Samuel was one of the organisers of and leading contributors to the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project. In his contributions, he produced and presented a wide range of evidence from different sources relating to Cromwell in the nineteenth century, from popular Radicalism in the early century, to the impact of Carlyle’s work on public lecturers, to discussions in newspapers regarding a new painting of Cromwell. As a whole, his contributions pointed very clearly to the depth and wealth of interest in Cromwell in the nineteenth century across the board of British society. Perhaps because of this, Samuel’s contributions had no particular focus on the reasons for Cromwell’s rise in popularity or ways in which he was seen as providing a strengthening or liberating force for nineteenth-century Britain.

Samuel’s essay ‘The Discovery of Puritanism’ was published in 1993. Despite being several decades afterwards, it still contains echoes of the work contained within the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project. Like this thesis, however, Samuel’s work aimed to reach beyond Cromwell and consider Puritanism as a whole, including Cromwell’s role within it. Throughout, he emphasised the importance of Puritan piety to nineteenth-century society (both to individuals and in terms of social justice). He presented the role of Carlyle’s *Cromwell* as ‘turning

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<sup>108</sup> Karsten, *Patriot Heroes* (1978), 151–152.

history into a moral drama'.<sup>109</sup> His main focus, then, rather on political or Imperial motifs, was on Cromwell as a figure of social importance.

As we have seen, the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project was interpreted and used by historians in various different ways, highlighting several of Cromwell's perceived roles in nineteenth-century Britain. The work undertaken in this Project and its aftermath has continued to have an impact on scholarship, including among those of a generation too young to have been involved in the Project itself, up to the present day.

### *A growing tradition*

Richardson's *Debate on the English Revolution* (1977, 1998) is a particularly important contribution to this field. A chapter in this book is devoted to nineteenth-century perspectives on the English Revolution. Particular attention is given to Cromwell and, as in this thesis, to the role of specific historians in presenting the Revolution and the associated people and times. Richardson's work is especially helpful in re-clarifying the chronological dimension of Cromwell-recovery in the nineteenth century, and in particular the important roles of Macaulay and Carlyle, and the development of academic history leading to the work of Gardiner in the late century.

*Images of Oliver Cromwell* (1993), a volume of essays edited by Richardson and published in honour of Robert Howell Jr. (it stemmed from Howell's uncompleted magnum opus), focused on the historical development of Cromwell historiography. Howell saw Samuel Rawson Gardiner as forging a Cromwell as 'Puritan hero' from Carlyle's idea of him simply as a hero. Howell also observed the nineteenth-century Nonconformist partiality for Cromwell as reflecting a very nineteenth-century liberal political agenda.<sup>110</sup> While *Images of Oliver Cromwell* focuses on these aspects of Cromwell's importance, it also notes, importantly, that Cromwell became a possible figure of admiration for the Tories by the end of the century, particularly because of his personal strength and apparently prototypical Imperialism.<sup>111</sup> Richardson saw that Cromwell was used by nineteenth-century Imperialists to help justify their approaches to the world.

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<sup>109</sup> Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 216.

<sup>110</sup> R. C. Richardson, ed., *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell Jr.*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 28.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

Worden's *Roundhead Reputations* plots the geography of the developing currents of history-writing through specific characters from the seventeenth century onwards. Worden saw the seventeenth century as represented in history-writing by Ludlow, the eighteenth century as represented by Sidney, and the nineteenth century as represented by Cromwell. He saw Cromwell as becoming representative of the Protestant interest in the whole world, and described the importance of this in justifying an Imperialist agenda. He also described the way that seventeenth-century Puritanism was seen, in the nineteenth century, as a prototype of overseas mission.

*Roundhead Reputations* examines Cromwell's nineteenth-century popularity in detail, arguing that it began as a non-establishment phenomenon, but that the establishment had come to terms with it by the end of the century.<sup>112</sup> Worden described 'Cromwellianism' in the first half of the nineteenth century as predominantly secular, with Cromwell being admired in spite of his Puritanism. He then mapped a transformation in the joint fortunes of both Cromwell and Puritanism.<sup>113</sup> In large part, this mapping involved a series of categorisations of Cromwellianism, although there is a danger that this may cloud something of its true breadth and of the ambivalence that even individuals in society seem to have felt towards Cromwell.

By the later nineteenth century, Worden argued, Cromwell had become a 'national hero'.<sup>114</sup> Worden acknowledged a debt to Karsten,<sup>115</sup> and followed him in arguing for the significance of nineteenth-century 'Cromwellianism', perhaps even more so than Puritanism, to the entire nation.<sup>116</sup> Like Karsten and Richardson, Worden accepted that the recovery of Cromwell moved beyond being a historical vindication of Nonconformity. In a particular focus on Cromwell, he also noted that the recovery of the politician gradually, in the wake of Carlyle, became articulately combined with portrayals of a sincere and honest man. Only once Cromwell's public career had been rescued, he argued, could his moral habits be truly appreciated, in this case by Gardiner, without fear of hypocrisy.

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<sup>112</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 243.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 250–251.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

### 1.3 Change in this project

Here we have examined the different changes that occurred in history writing from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, and reasons behind them, as described by historians in this field. A particular view has been given, where relevant, to the changing approaches to Puritanism in the early nineteenth century. Several different perspectives and reasons for the general changes have been seen, which can be summarised in brief as follows:

First, the changing vogue of philosophical and theoretical opinions and the European Continent. While Gooch presented various continental historians, he did not follow through with how their ideas became popularised in Britain.

Second, the growing importance of and interest in specific characters in history-writing, particularly in this case Oliver Cromwell. As a political figurehead, he became seen as a representative of all Puritanism, both political and religious, during the nineteenth century. Carlyle's eulogy of Cromwell and new political understandings of his strength as a leader worked together to underpin this recovery. Having a specific character as a leader figure enabled many in the nineteenth century to see Puritanism as more of a unified entity.

Third: the influence of Romanticism. A history that simply listed facts was no longer sufficient for the reading public. Instead, as Samuel stated, readers wanted to feel involved in the world they read about, and to sympathise with its people. As Hale argued, this led historians to place a greater emphasis on understanding the characters about whom they wrote, and presenting them as sympathetic.

Fourth: the influence of France: both the French Revolution and the French Wars. The exact influence of France upon English historiography has not been agreed upon: while Firth argued that the troubles in France marked a swing from Tory to Whig history, Peardon argued that they catalysed a growth in English Nationalism, and Richardson stated that they spurred on the growth of Radicalism but ultimately made people hold on to their previous opinions more strongly. Whatever France's precise influence was, historians seem to agree that it was important.

Fifth, specific historians. Much of the historiography of the nineteenth century puts changes down to developments in individual writing styles. Hume's popularity was due to his immense capability as a writer, and the widespread acceptance of Macaulay and Carlyle was connected to their own writing styles and genius.

Sixth, the ascendancy of the Whig political party. The Whig party was becoming stronger, and political and religious liberty and toleration were increasingly being achieved, so a version of history that supported Whiggism would quickly become more palatable.

Seventh, the growing toleration and acceptance of religious Dissent in England. As Dissenters gained their political liberty, so the voice of Dissenting history became increasingly credible to respected historians.

Eighth, and finally for now, the changing climate of history-writing in England. The nineteenth century saw history transform from a layman's pursuit into a serious academic discipline. Primary sources were becoming available as never before, and writers were held to increasingly rigorous standards. We will be able to see this theme becoming increasingly important as we trace the way in which the recovery of Puritanism developed during the course of the century.

The focus of this thesis will be on various positive interpretations, or 'recoveries', of Puritanism and the Puritans between 1824 and 1880. New interpretations of Puritanism in this period were of course reliant upon the historiographical changes that have just been described. Using these views as a springboard, this thesis offers a more detailed view to the actual content of the recoveries of Puritanism, from Thomas Babington Macaulay through Robert Vaughan and Thomas Carlyle, and others that followed after them from a variety of provenances. It will argue that, despite its theoretical beginnings, Puritanism's recovery was not limited to the Whig and Dissenting causes and hero-worship, as Lang implied, but that it was also evidenced by historians with very different agendas, including staunch supporters of the Church of England, social reformers, and cultural Imperialists. Yet the writers from these different backgrounds not only supported Puritanism: they adopted it as a banner and used it to promote their own agendas.

While the reasons and background for the changes that occurred have been well explored by other writers in this field, the existing accounts of *how* a phenomenon such as Puritanism was recovered by historians in the midst of these changes remain at surface level. The basic idea has been well presented: Puritanism was portrayed in a much more positive light by historians from the early nineteenth century onwards. The centrality of Carlyle and his *Cromwell* in this has long been

recognised,<sup>117</sup> and recently Macaulay's role too has been seen.<sup>118</sup> Timothy Lang's work in particular has also observed this movement. However, Lang saw Puritanism's recovery as an essentially Dissenting and Whig phenomenon with the exception of Carlyle, and with primarily political and religious ramifications. Worden noted that the recovery of Puritanism moved further than this, stating 'Puritanism came to seem to have had many parts, spiritual, literary, evangelical, theological, political, each making its own contribution to a movement of rich diversity'.<sup>119</sup> We will observe these purposes and themes in their context in the nineteenth century, and, through close textual analysis, will see in more detail how the historians in our study connected them with Puritanism.

Raphael Samuel also raised ideas that are central to this thesis. In his essay 'The Discovery of Puritanism', he noted:

In the nineteenth century the word 'Puritan' was rescued from near oblivion and was subject to a vast metaphorical inflation, without which it would be difficult to account for its subsequent versatility, or its salience in present-day historical and sociological thought. It reentered the field of religious and political controversy, providing a newly-awakened and increasingly militant nonconformity both with a symbolic inheritance and a source of borrowed prestige. Transposed from the field of doctrine to that of personal conduct, it provided the self-help manuals with their exemplars, housemasters and Sunday School superintendents with their character training ideals. In the hands of Bible-carrying sergeants and town missionaries it helped to Christianise the British Army [...] it offered alternative ideas of masculinity and femininity to those associated with the world of rank and fashion.<sup>120</sup>

Puritanism, Samuel argued, had an important social role to play, in a wide variety of settings. This idea of Puritanism's 'startling reversals', which 'have moved it from Left to Right in the political spectrum', quoted from Samuel in the Introduction, is very pertinent to the work.<sup>121</sup>

In 'The Strange Death of Puritan England', part of his essay collection *The Passing of Protestant England*, Simon Green has explored the decline of the Puritan

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<sup>117</sup> In addition to works previously noted here, see also Blair Worden, 'Thomas Carlyle and Oliver Cromwell', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 105 (1999); 'The Victorians and Oliver Cromwell', in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750–1950*, ed. by Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 112–35.

<sup>118</sup> For instance by Lang.

<sup>119</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 257.

<sup>120</sup> Samuel, 'Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 206.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

outlook in the early twentieth century. In order to do this, he has also helpfully outlined the importance and intellectual impact of Puritanism's nineteenth-century recovery. He states that it:

Exerted an almost talismanic influence over early twentieth-century Britain, right up to the outbreak of the First World War, precisely because it comprehended all the classes at a time of other-wise profound social division; more still, because it transcended denominational disputes in the first great age of religious pluralism; but, above all, because it constituted the raw material of national self-definition and moral self-confidence.<sup>122</sup>

This thesis will argue, along with Samuel and Green, that Puritanism was influential on both sides of the political spectrum in the nineteenth century, and that it was used increasingly to make social and moral, as well as political, statements. How this multifaceted recovery took shape, how the Puritans were described by the historians recovering them, what benefits and positive characteristics were attributed to the Puritans, and to what extent the Puritans were seen as models to be emulated in the nineteenth century, all remain to be seen and will all be under investigation in this thesis.

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<sup>122</sup> S. J. D. Green, *The Passing of Protestant England: Secularisation and Social Church, c. 1920–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 152.

## **Chapter 2: The shape of the recovery**

### **2.1 Beginnings of the movement**

#### **2.1.1 Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859)**

Thomas Babington Macaulay was one of the most profoundly influential and popular historical writers of the nineteenth century. His books were bestsellers, coffee-table books in aristocratic and middle-class houses alike. His readers had grown up with the work of the Romantic Poets and had developed a taste for passion, lyricism and sympathy. With Macaulay's writings, they were not disappointed.

A great strength of Macaulay's was his ability to read and write about historical documents with passion and imagination. Hale described the fabric of his work as 'a combination of the shot silk of Scott and the linsey-woolsey of Hallam'.<sup>123</sup> Apart from being a meticulous historian, and of course a successful Whig politician and thinker, Macaulay popularised a view of British history that had thitherto largely been rejected, the basis of which was described in Gardiner's 'Alleged Apostacy of Wentworth'. From his early twenties, Macaulay also challenged received opinions about Puritanism and helped bring it back into some degree of public favour.

Macaulay is rightly considered essential study material for a historiographer of the nineteenth century. In his 1939 *On the Writing of History*, Charles Oman described it as 'one of the testimonies to the fundamental merit' of Macaulay's *History of England* that it had provoked so many still-existent controversies.<sup>124</sup> Macaulay was a writer who successfully challenged existing opinions, and gained both staunch advocates and equally staunch detractors.

He has also been the subject of several biographies. Most writers have seen his work as the epitome of 'Whig' history and British Imperialism as Britain reached the climax of its world domination.<sup>125</sup> But Macaulay was uncomfortable with the way that most historians swayed to one party or the other, and claimed to be searching for

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<sup>123</sup> Hale, *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967), 38.

<sup>124</sup> Charles Oman, *On the Writing of History* (London: Methuen, 1939), 214.

<sup>125</sup> See in particular C. H. Firth, *A Commentary on Macaulay's History of England* (London: Macmillan, 1938); Robert Livingston Schulyer, 'Macaulay and His History: A hundred years after', *Political Science Quarterly*, 63 (June 1948), 161–193; John R. Griffin, *The Intellectual Milieu of Lord Macaulay* (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, 1965); Jane Millgate, *Macaulay* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973); Joseph Hamburger, *Macaulay and the Whig Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Margaret Cruikshank, *Macaulay* (Boston: Twayne, 1978).

a via media.<sup>126</sup> Until recently, the majority of commentators on Macaulay have seen Butterfield's category of 'Whig history' as more important than Peardon's argument that party history was, in Macaulay, beginning to merge into Nationalist history. However, more recent investigations of Macaulay have increasingly presented him as a Nationalist historian.<sup>127</sup>

Some historiographers such as Peter Geyl have seen Macaulay's writing as too 'cocksure', 'sown with blind spots', and problematic historically. Geyl described Macaulay as infusing so many nineteenth-century ideals and standards into his work that his resulting view of historical events is warped.<sup>128</sup> In particular, he saw Macaulay's ideals of 'liberty' and 'progress' as 'noble battle cries', but ultimately arguments for the superlatively civilised society of nineteenth-century Britain. We will see more of Macaulay's Nationalism later.

Historian Ernst Breisach has also described Macaulay's popularity as waning shortly after his death, because his own view of history did not match up to those of the new generation of critical historians from the 1850s and 60s onwards.<sup>129</sup> Even so, he, like Geyl, saw Macaulay's work as 'a peak in a peculiarly English historiographical development shaped by a remarkable sense of separateness and pride'.<sup>130</sup> Although Macaulay's popularity has continued more than Breisach allowed, this is also a helpful reminder that Macaulay's work was a climax of pre-scientific historical writing, and that he was on the edge of a sea change in the discipline of history.

One of the most notable works on Macaulay in the last few decades, and an exception to the recent trend of seeing Macaulay as essentially a Nationalist, has been Owen Dudley Edwards' *Macaulay*.<sup>131</sup> This work embraced Macaulay's imaginative spirit and passion, and presented well a man who was not simply an epitome of 'Whig' history, but who thought and felt deeply and threw himself into his historical work. Dudley Edwards revealed Macaulay in a manner honouring to the great historian himself, and noted the holes in the arguments of many who

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<sup>126</sup> See Macaulay, 'History of England', Vol. 1 (1948), 331.

<sup>127</sup> See Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931); Peardon, *The Transition in English Historical Writing* (1933); Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012).

<sup>128</sup> See Peter Geyl, *From Ranke to Toynbee: Five Lectures on Historians and Historiographical Problems* (Northampton, Massachusetts: Department of History at Smith College, 1952), 23, 26, 31.

<sup>129</sup> Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 1994), 251.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>131</sup> Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988).

connected the historian simply to a Whig progressivism. He was, Dudley Edwards pointed out, also deeply influenced by his father Zachary Macaulay and his Evangelical roots, and by his Scottish and Celtic ancestral origin.

Hall's recent *Macaulay and Son* (about Thomas Babington and his father, Zachary) provides a personal and sympathetic portrait of a man who struggled personally while achieving great success in public life. Hall contended that Macaulay was primarily a Nationalist with a secular, latitudinarian vision for how Britain could benefit the world. Hall argued that liberty and toleration were key principles for Macaulay, but always in the context of education and the rule of law. His view of history, she argued, was shaped by a narrative of progress. Rather contentiously, Hall also saw Macaulay's vision as strongly racialised, with Anglo Saxon supremacy at its centre. In her work, Hall has effectively documented Macaulay's role in providing an intellectual and historical epistemology for the Empire.<sup>132</sup>

Perhaps an even more successful exploration of how Macaulay's personal life and experiences shaped his historical attitudes can be found in Koditschek's chapter on Thomas and his father in his *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*. Koditschek has described the layering of different historical perspectives from both feminine and masculine viewpoints on the young Macaulay, and emphasized the writer's overriding drive to produce a history that was both masculine in strength and drive and popular enough to oust Scott's novels on the coffee tables of young women. However, Koditschek argued that Macaulay's chief aim in his *History of England* was to give England a new account of its history that was worthy of modern society:

No longer a recurrent history of rises and falls, but an upthrusting linear history of development and progress – of economic growth and technological improvement. Even more (if more problematically) it was the history of moral advance and political elevation through an ever-extended penumbra of intelligence and liberty.<sup>133</sup>

As we will see, the Puritans played a significant new role in the trajectory of this history for the modern England.

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<sup>132</sup> See in particular Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 183, 213, 232, 233, 265, 289.

<sup>133</sup> Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination* (2011), 111–112.

### *Macaulay's early essays*

In his essay on 'Milton', the impact of the Civil War and regicide was of paramount concern to Macaulay, and his examination of both ran alongside his consideration of Milton himself.<sup>134</sup> Thirty-three pages in, he moved to viewing the Puritans and Puritanism by name.

Macaulay approached those he called Puritans as the antithesis to Royalists; the two groups each formed half of 'a short survey of the parties into which the political world was at that time divided', one of the sections of Macaulay's essay. He acknowledged that, at a time of change, there is often present 'an useless and heartless rabble' of politicians, but stressed that his main interest was with the true partisans: that is, those who believed in a cause.<sup>135</sup> And so he began with the Puritans.

He made no effort to cover over faults which he saw in the Puritans and Puritanism. His description of presentations by satirists and dramatists, easily mocking these partisan extremists, seems almost to drift into this mockery itself:

They were not men of letters; they were as a body unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers.<sup>136</sup>

This caricatured description remained vividly in the minds of historians for the rest of the century – that 'nasal twang' is a subject of surprisingly frequent discussion. As with many other vivid pictures of the seventeenth century in the minds of nineteenth-century writers, historians were indebted for this to Walter Scott. Hezekiah Mucklerath, a raving and fanatical Covenanter in *Old Mortality* (1816), certainly has a lot in common with the more extreme descriptions of Puritans, their dress and manners, which the nineteenth-century historians produced. Macaulay himself had played on 'their Hebrew names' in his 1824 poem 'The Battle of Naseby', narrated by Puritan 'Obadiah Bind-Their-Kings-In-Chains-And-Their-Nobles-With-Links-Of-

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<sup>134</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton', (1825), 304–346.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

Iron, Sergeant in Ireton's Regiment'.<sup>137</sup> In the brief analysis that follows his look at satirists in the 'Milton' essay, Macaulay regretted that the Puritans lacked 'lofty elegance' and 'easy good breeding'. But he never attacked the Puritans maliciously. In the next sentence, he warned: 'It is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt'.<sup>138</sup> From here, he moved to discuss the Puritans in a positive light, leaving his readers feeling cruelly complicit in ridiculing the Puritans and eager to hear what more Macaulay had to say in their defence.

And a strong defence it was. He described the Puritans as 'the most remarkable body of men perhaps which the world has ever produced'.<sup>139</sup> He proclaimed that mankind of his day owed the Puritans' courage and talents 'inestimable obligations'. He connected Puritanism with a bold religious sincerity and warmth, and the trailblazing of religious and political liberty.<sup>140</sup> He described Puritanism very sympathetically, and expressed his sadness that it had been for so long misunderstood.

But Macaulay's essay was not simply cast in the shape of defining or vindicating Puritanism. From the beginning, he had also gone a long way to vindicate the Revolution of the 1640s,<sup>141</sup> and the constitutionality of the regicide – he saw its fault as purely practical, and Cromwell as a sincere and powerful leader. He argued each of the above with careful cogency and considerable rhetorical force. Thus began the project that was to make such a difference in the way that the events of the seventeenth century were viewed by the time Gardiner wrote fifty years later.

Obviously, this was a youthful essay. Perhaps here Macaulay revealed the power of his Scottish roots and Evangelical background more readily than he would later in his life. Even so, Macaulay's primary interest in Puritanism remained historical. In several of his other early *Edinburgh Review* essays, he described Puritanism's strange fate at the time of the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660.

In 'Hallam', he stated: 'The whole [Restoration era] was made up of extravagant transformation and burlesque contrasts; Atheists turned Puritans;

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<sup>137</sup> T. B. Macaulay, 'The Battle of Naseby, by Obadiah Bind-Their-Kings-In-Chains-And-Their-Nobles-With-Links-Of-Iron, Serjeant in Ireton's Regiment' (1824), in *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1878), 438–440.

<sup>138</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 338.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 337–338.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 338–341.

<sup>141</sup> Which until this point had been called the Great Rebellion, after Clarendon.

Puritans turned Atheists [...]’.<sup>142</sup> By becoming perceived as simply another religious movement, to be interchangeable even with Atheism, Puritanism had lost the respect of the English people. In another essay, this time ‘On Southey’s Colloquies’ (1830), he pithily described both Puritanism’s beginnings and its downfall and replacement: ‘The training of the High Church ended in the reign of the Puritans, and [...] the training of the Puritans in the reign of the harlots’.<sup>143</sup> From being an opposition movement, Puritanism had gained political and religious ascendancy across Britain. Then, at the Restoration, Macaulay argued, Puritanism was replaced by its polar opposite: unchristian worldliness. The ‘immorality’ was, for Macaulay, and indeed for all the historians under study here, repugnant. By the time of the ‘Glorious Revolution’, the term ‘Puritanism’, he explained, had become associated with the religious sectarians ejected at the 1662 Act of Uniformity, and the political action that brought the Protestant William and Mary to the throne was instead associated with a latitudinarian Whig party.

### ***Macaulay and ‘History’***

The meaning and use of words do of course change over time. In another early essay in the *Edinburgh Review*, this time on ‘History’, Macaulay expressed the purpose of historical writing as exhibiting the ‘character and spirit of an age’ ‘in miniature’.<sup>144</sup> However loosely he may later have held on to the other ideas articulated in that essay, the way in which his historical writing seemed to bring forgotten, lost things back to life was one of the reasons for his immense popularity both then and later in his career. Even so, he was careful to note, the ‘frantic delusions’ of Vane, and the ‘hysterical tears’ of Cromwell, belonged ‘to one time alone’.<sup>145</sup> He noted that there was something unique about the seventeenth century that simply did not exist in his own time, whatever romanticised notions people of his own day might have of understanding its characters. In the first part of his *History of England*, Macaulay succinctly stated: ‘In past times, people thought differently’.<sup>146</sup> Sympathy may be able to cross such a gulf of thought and time, but understanding and experience could not. In this section of his *History of England*, he also commented on the difficulty of

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<sup>142</sup> Macaulay, ‘Hallam’ (1828), 96–169, 151–152.

<sup>143</sup> T. B. Macaulay, ‘Sir Thomas More; or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospect of Society, by Robert Southey’, *Edinburgh Review*, 50 (Jan 1830), 528–565, 553.

<sup>144</sup> Macaulay, ‘History’ (1828), 364.

<sup>145</sup> Macaulay, ‘Bunyan’ (1831), 456.

<sup>146</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 27.

imagining from the nineteenth century back to a time when the people had a check of physical force against a king. He then warned against comparing ancient and modern polity.<sup>147</sup> For all his ability to inspire imaginations and make people feel as if they were living history, Macaulay was as aware of anyone of the gap between humans and their civilisation's past.

David Lowenthal described this gulf very perceptively in *The Past is a Foreign Country*.<sup>148</sup> Lowenthal saw this growing awareness of separation, while being present in many time periods, as a distinct nineteenth-century phenomenon. He argued that, in the nineteenth century, 'the kind of guidance the past provided [...] underwent a major shift. Men of the eighteenth century assumed the past to be so similar to the present that classical models exemplified eternal virtues: they saw antiquity's honour, patriotism, stoicism mirrored in their own times [...] growing awareness of the past's diversity and dissimilarity from the present tempered its authority'.<sup>149</sup> When we consider nineteenth-century historians, we need to balance Lowenthal's account with a nuanced understanding of how our historians aimed to learn from and, in some senses, emulate history.<sup>150</sup> Even so, it is important that we notice the strong sense of isolation from the past felt both by Macaulay and several of our other historians.

### ***Macaulay's History of England***

#### Puritanism in Macaulay's *History of England*

In his *History of England*, Macaulay's resoundingly important description and characterisation of the turning points in English history followed many of the leads of his earlier work. However, his approach to Puritanism, or at least description of it, had shifted. We shall now follow a narrative of the early part of his *History of England*, with specific relation to Puritanism.

By the time he wrote his *History of England*, Macaulay still saw the Puritans as emerging chiefly as an opposition force in the late sixteenth century. He used the word 'Puritan' to denote Protestant extremism shortly after the Reformation.<sup>151</sup> He

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 27–28.

<sup>148</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>150</sup> See for instance Dwight A. Culler, *The Victorian Mirror of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>151</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 46.

described the early Puritans as so influenced by the persecution of Protestants under Mary that they could not abide the idea of having a Catholic at the head of the English Church. In the later sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth and her government persecuted these ‘Puritans’ and Roman Catholics alike, though for political rather than religious reasons: ‘She expected a more profound obedience from those who saw in her both their civil and their ecclesiastical chief, than from those who, like the Papists, ascribed scriptural authority to the Pope, or from those who, like some of the Puritans, ascribed it only to heaven’.<sup>152</sup> Elizabeth was less politically expectant of the Puritans than of other groups, and she even persecuted them. In the face of this, Macaulay related, the Puritans proved themselves to be patriots of the highest order:

To strengthen her [Elizabeth’s] hands was, therefore, the first duty of a patriot and Protestant: and that duty was well performed. The Puritans, even in the depths of the prisons to which she had sent them, prayed, and with no simulated fervour, that she might be kept from the dagger of the assassin, that rebellion might be put down under her feet, and that her arms might be victorious by sea and land.<sup>153</sup>

Macaulay presented these early Puritans, persecuted by Elizabeth, as remaining loyal, some of the most loyal, subjects of their Queen. This theme of the Puritans’ patriotism – especially in the late sixteenth century – was to become a very important aspect of the mid-nineteenth century recoveries of them.

Macaulay’s ‘Puritanism’ became antithetical to Roman Catholicism in its extreme interpretation of Christian doctrine without the sort of human mediation that the structured ecclesiastical hierarchies provided, and, in its extreme anti-establishment ecclesiology, also antithetical to much of the later sixteenth-century Church of England. This ecclesiological divide was clearly described in his *History of England*:

As the priest of the Established Church was, from interest, from principle, and from passion, zealous for the royal prerogatives, the Puritan was, from interest, from principle, and from passion, hostile to them. The power of the discontented sectaries was great. They were found in every rank; but they were

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<sup>152</sup> Macaulay, ‘Hallam’ (1828), 125–135, esp. 132.

<sup>153</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 52.

strongest among the merchantile classes in the towns, and among the small proprietors in the country.<sup>154</sup>

‘Puritanism’, in this instance, was by definition opposed to the exercise of royal prerogatives in religion, and included all ‘sectaries’ who were discontented for reasons related to these royal prerogatives. In this description, the Puritans were Protestant extremists fighting against the *via media* of the established church of England. These two negations, Puritanism as anti-Roman Catholic and Puritanism against the Church of England’s ecclesiology, provided it with an important role: though its borders and edges remained nebulous, it was by nature polar and representative. Meanwhile, the Church of England, although doctrinally Calvinistic, sat ‘guarded’ between Roman Catholics on one side and Puritans on the other.<sup>155</sup>

Under James as King, and later under Laud as Archbishop, both the Church of England and Protestantism, Macaulay noted, changed dramatically: ‘The interval which had separated the first generations of Puritans from Cranmer and Jewel was small indeed when compared with the interval which separated the third generation of Puritans from Laud and Hammond’.<sup>156</sup> Many in the Church of England shifted doctrinally from extreme Calvinism to Arminianism. The form of the Arminianism that was being instated also placed a much greater emphasis upon ritualistic observance than allowed Puritans comfort, or than had previously been the practice of the Church of England. All of this, Macaulay stated, added to the rift between the Puritans and the establishment.<sup>157</sup> And herein lay the formation of seventeenth-century Puritanism:

While the majority of the Anglican clergy quitted, in one direction, the position which they had previously occupied, the majority of the Puritan body departed, in a direction diametrically opposite, from the principles and practices of their fathers. The persecution which the separatist had undergone had been severe enough to irritate, but not severe enough to destroy. They had been, not tamed into submission, but bated into savageness and stubbornness. After the fashion of oppressed sects, they mistook their own vindictive feelings for emotions of piety, encouraged in themselves by reading and meditation a disposition to

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 46, 49.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 67–68.

brood over their wrongs, and, when they had worked themselves up into hating their enemies, imagined that they were only hating the enemies of heaven.<sup>158</sup>

Macaulay went on to describe the theological and cultural characteristics of Puritanism, including its identification with the Old Testament Israelites, its reinstatement of a pseudo-Jewish Sabbath, its Pharasaical attention to detail in matters of law, and its eccentric dress and deportment. The seventeenth-century Puritans, Macaulay argued, considered themselves to be pious agents of God, but instead became embroiled in vindictiveness and created trouble. Macaulay's statement 'after the fashion of oppressed sects' may sound unfair, but reminds the reader that there was nothing particularly unusual about the Puritans having inflated opinions of their vision and importance.

There are several other things to note about the ecclesiological changes in the early seventeenth century that Macaulay described. First, he saw 'the majority of Anglican clergy' as changing their theological opinions. This shift was important: in reaction to it, he saw the Puritans moving from moderate to extreme Calvinism, from moderate to extreme opposition to ritualism in all its forms, and then from persecuted irritation to anger and zealous, misguided vindictiveness. Second, this move encompassed the 'majority', not the entirety, of Church of England clergy, and the clergy rather than the Church itself.

The idea that the change in doctrinal preferences for Church of England clergy was instrumental in the theological development of Puritanism was an important part of Macaulay's recovery of Puritanism. The fact that their opponents had moved both doctrinally and in terms of ritual went some way to explaining the Puritans' anger and apparent desire for vengeance, and to substantiating the authentically 'English' credentials of the Puritan movement. Although the Puritanism Macaulay described in his *History of England* was eccentric and not wholly positive, he explained its motivation, and gave it a framework that helped to save it from seeming simply ridiculous and vindictive, as Hume and others in the eighteenth century had presented it.

Thirdly, it is crucial to recognise the way that Macaulay described the Puritans as 'hating the enemies of heaven'. The Puritans' anger at the Establishment was not based simply on jealousy or vengeance, but on the notion that they were God's agents on earth fighting his enemies. Their reaction to the theological shift of

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 68.

many Church of England clergy, and to the persecution that they had undergone and continued to undergo, gave them a unity of purpose and a cultural identity that became formative.

Macaulay did not consider Puritanism merely to be a historical phenomenon: he also used the word 'Puritan' to describe people in his own day. In a letter to his sister Frances in January 1854, he stated that 'I hate Puseyites and Puritans impartially; and I think they are never so well employed as in worrying each other'.<sup>159</sup> While it is likely that he was using alliteration to emphasise his point, the use of the term 'Puritan' to describe those in the nineteenth century who were opposed to 'Puseyites', at this stage the Anglican supporters of the Oxford Movement, reminds us that the term Puritan was still extant in the 1850s, and was still used to describe a low-church party that still squabbled with ritualistic movements within the established Church of England.

The historical argument of Macaulay's *History of England*

In Macaulay's *History of England* narrative, when the Parliamentarians began to assume more power at the time of the Long Parliament, the Puritans remained a vocal minority of fanatical extremists, often working to its detriment.<sup>160</sup> In his often-positive descriptions of the Civil War Parliamentarians, the Commonwealth and Protectorate, Macaulay tended not to use the language of 'Puritan' interchangeably with his primary terms 'Parliamentarian' or 'Roundhead', as he had in his early essays. However, because his narrative was so positive about the Parliamentarians and Roundheads, and ultimately about the success of the 'Glorious Revolution', it played a crucial role in popularising the movements with which Puritanism was connected.

Macaulay saw the recalling of Parliament at the beginning of the 1640s as signalling 'one of the most remarkable epochs in our history'.<sup>161</sup> He described the new Parliament as the first place in which the Whig and Tory parties became clearly distinct, although at the time under the appellations of Cavalier and Roundhead. Although initially they formed an apparent concord, 'a great schism was latent',<sup>162</sup> which was later to result in the Civil War. Although he was a nineteenth-century

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<sup>159</sup> T.B. Macaulay, 'Letter to Francis Macaulay', 17 January 1854, *Letters of Macaulay*, 6 vols., ed. Thomas Pinney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), Vol. 5, 377.

<sup>160</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 46.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

Whig politician, and would later frequently be described as a ‘Whig’ historian, we have already seen that Macaulay was ostensibly seeking to present a politically unbiased history. He described faults in both parties, and emphasised that the majority was in fact moderate: ‘The great majority of those who fought for the crown were averse to despotism; and the great majority of the champions of popular rights were averse to anarchy’.<sup>163</sup> The language ‘champions of popular rights’ reminds us where Macaulay’s own sympathies lay, but he should be credited with presenting both sides of the debate.

His narrative moved on to describe first briefly the events of the Civil Wars, then the decades after the Restoration (which, as he had already argued in his early essays, he saw as marked by a disgraceful departure from morality), and then the ‘Glorious Revolution’, which he saw as resulting from the unity of the Whig and Tory parties and as bringing the victory of the civil liberties of which the Whigs would always be champions. Macaulay’s repeated commendation of the ‘Glorious Revolution’ again demonstrated his delight in seeing Tory and Whig working together.

Macaulay was both one of the first and one of the most prolific movers in this recovery of Puritanism. But as has been seen, his main role was in developing an outlook on English history in the seventeenth century, which was novel in its time, but eventually became seen as a ‘popular judgment’. Macaulay’s view of the Puritans in particular, but more generally of the history of England, proved to be hugely important and influential both for public opinion and for the historians who came after him.

### **2.1.2 Robert Vaughan (1795–1868)**

Puritanism had always been highly revered by certain religious Dissenters and political Radicals. One historian who had been a strenuous advocate of Puritanism before the nineteenth century, so much so that he was known by many simply as ‘the Puritan historian’, was Daniel Neal (1678–1743). He was a Congregational minister, and saw himself as a direct spiritual descendent of those Puritans ejected from the Church of England at the 1662 Act of Uniformity. His *History of the Puritans* had been published in instalments from 1732. In the Preface to the first volume of the Octavo edition, he had made his objectives clear:

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

To preserve the memory of those great and good men among the reformers, who lost their preferments in the church, for attempting a further reformation of its discipline and ceremonies, and to account for the rise and progress of that Separation from the national establishment, which subsists to this day.<sup>164</sup>

Neal was unashamedly partisan, with no pretensions of being ‘disinterested’ or attempts at objectivity; he saw the Puritans as ‘great and good men’, and he was a self-appointed spokesman for them. The Puritanism he described was religiously and politically sincere. His work was thorough, thoughtful and read well into the nineteenth century, but never gained credibility outside of Nonconformist circles. Such a pro-Puritan history remained marginal.

It was not until the nineteenth century that Dissenting views and historical argumentation gained a measure of credibility in ‘respectable’ opinion. Robert Vaughan, a Congregational minister in Kensington, and also a historian who became Professor of Ancient and Modern History at University College, London, played an important part in this gaining of credibility, himself commanding academic respect.

In his *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage*, Lang considered Vaughan’s contribution to the portrayal of Puritanism, alongside two other Dissenting historians, John Forster and William Godwin. Lang described Vaughan’s account as emphasising ‘the excellence of the Puritan clergy, their popularity, loyalty and willingness to compromise. They remained Calvinists, the preference of the nation, at a time when the court was Arminian, and they stayed within the Church until the intolerance of the court made accommodation impossible’.<sup>165</sup> Tending to conflate all of the Dissenters’ voices into one, Lang argued that ‘This preoccupation with the Puritan past was part of a larger effort by Dissenters to justify their nonconformity’.<sup>166</sup>

Lang recognised Vaughan’s role in vindicating Puritanism and Dissent. Vaughan is not one of the major characters in this thesis, but his role as a Dissenter who was involved early on in the nineteenth-century recovery of Puritanism should indeed be recognised. After a study of John Wyclif that appeared in 1829, his two-volume *Memorials of the Stuart Dynasty* was published in 1831. True to its title, it covered the period from the death of Elizabeth to the abdication of James II.

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<sup>164</sup> Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans or Protestant Nonconformists from the Reformation in 1517 to the Revolution in 1688*, 5 vols. (London: William Baynes, 1822; first published 1732), Vol. 1, Preface, iii.

<sup>165</sup> Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995), 111–112.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

In this work, Vaughan demonstrated a keen historical eye and a strong awareness of the controversies surrounding interpretations of seventeenth-century Puritanism, and raised his colours, showing that he was self-consciously presenting a Puritan-sympathetic Nonconformist's account of the events of the seventeenth century:

It was not to have been expected that writers, having no sympathy with the religious principles of these men, should treat their story, in this view of it, either adequately or fairly, and it is a little singular that no nonconformist should ever have attempted that separate and continuous investigation of it, which its interest and importance so clearly demand. The leading design of the author has been to produce a work of this nature.<sup>167</sup>

The words 'separate and continuous' here can be taken to mean not pursuing a biased didactic agenda in a way that would otherwise detract from faithfulness to historical sources. Vaughan was determined from the outset to get his point across clearly: 'Should it be inferred from these observations that the ensuing narrative will be found to consist of indiscriminate censure on the one hand, and more eulogy on the other, the perusal of a few chapters will probably be sufficient to correct this misapprehension'.<sup>168</sup> True to his word, Vaughan produced an account for specialists and general readers alike, which attempted, from a Nonconformist viewpoint, to vindicate the Puritans. His critique of the Puritans' detractors was biting and comical. He described the prevailing historical opinion of his day regarding the Puritans as follows:

The Puritans were a compound of "barbarism, intolerance, and madness," and animated by a relentless malignity, against everything great, and good, and beautiful. They did infinite mischief, and always from a pure love of doing it: a little good they also did, but it was ever with an intention to do evil.<sup>169</sup>

Many historians, he stated, had created monsters out of them, exaggerating all of their faults for dramatic effect and out of general distrust of their religious beliefs, piety, and cultural practice. Vaughan described Hume as a chief detractor. In a footnote regarding an unfavourable quotation from Hume about a contemporary of

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<sup>167</sup> Robert Vaughan, *Memorials of the Stuart Dynasty*, 2 vols. (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1831), Vol. 1, iv.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, iv-v.

the Puritans, he stated: ‘this choice bit of slander has passed, as usual, to the lips of the writings of thousands’.<sup>170</sup> This testament to Hume’s wide-ranging influence and popularity also labelled him a slanderer, setting the tone of Vaughan’s own work as a minority defence of a group long overdue fair treatment by historians.

From the beginning of his work, Vaughan made clear his view that the Puritans played an important role in the history of England, along much the same lines as Macaulay was arguing and was to lay out more fully in his own *History of England*. Vaughan asserted that the ‘Glorious’ Revolution of 1688, the ‘acknowledged epoch of our civil and religious liberties’, had at its roots the struggles of the Puritans earlier in the century. He described the Puritans as having ‘important aid from members of the established church’, but essentially being led by Nonconformists. This may have been a history, as Lang has argued, that aimed to vindicate his own group, but Vaughan was making an important historical statement in a much more pertinent way than previous Nonconformists, and articulating an opinion that was to become much more commonplace by the final quarter of the century.

In 1839, Vaughan edited a collection of documents referring to the Protectorate of Cromwell, a series of letters between John Pell, Samuel Morland, William Lockhart, Secretary Thurloe, and others. This was the first time that these documents had been published. This was part of the larger nineteenth-century project of bringing historical works into the public domain. Vaughan’s editorial notes are on the whole clarifying rather than partisan, and his selection is coherent and intriguing, demonstrating his ability as a scholar and editor. His preface stated the desire that independent minds should show their ability to rise above party prejudice.<sup>171</sup> He also described the Puritan spirit as loving liberty but sadly intolerant.<sup>172</sup> Yet throughout his career, Vaughan was a known Congregationalist who retained a mission of promoting and recovering Puritanism.<sup>173</sup> His venturing into the editing of historical documents, and his willingness to criticise his beloved Puritanism, reveals a genuine

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, iv–v.

<sup>171</sup> Robert Vaughan, ed., *The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell and the state of Europe during the Early Part of the Reign of Louis XIV illustrated in a series of letters between Dr. John Pell, Resident Ambassador with the Swiss Cantons, Sir Samuel Morland, Sir William Lockhart, Mr. Secretary Thurloe, And other Distinguished Men of the Time, Now first published from the Originals*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), iv.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., lxxiv.

<sup>173</sup> See especially Robert Vaughan, *English Nonconformity* (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 1862).

historian with a desire to enable the public to come closer to the reality of historical events and people. In any case, years before Carlyle's *Cromwell* was published, Vaughan was already republishing texts relating to the Protector in order to allow readers to judge him and his rule for themselves.

### 2.1.3 Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881)

Another unmistakably influential voice in nineteenth century Britain, Thomas Carlyle was brought up in Ecclefechan in South-West Scotland, and was raised in a Seceding Presbyterian Church (old light, anti-burgher). He became a highly esteemed man of letters, leaving his family's Presbyterian Secession faith and eventually moving from Scotland to Chelsea, where his house became a popular destination for many of the biggest names in Victorian times. He had a particular interest in German idealist philosophy, and played an important part in translating its ideas into English-language thought. One particular speciality of Carlyle's was history and biography – he wrote a three-volume history of the French Revolution<sup>174</sup> and a ten-volume history of Frederick the Great (which later was to be so loved by Adolf Hitler).<sup>175</sup> He had also always been interested in Puritanism; a volume of his writings on Puritanism, taken from his early notebooks and called *Historical Sketches*,<sup>176</sup> was published posthumously. But Carlyle's writing was always highly individualised and eccentric. His *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*<sup>177</sup> outlined a view of history known as 'hero-worship', based around particular heroic characters. This view was to shine through the rest of his historical work, and became a powerful movement in the nineteenth century, also influencing less extreme movements such as Gardiner's emphasis on character. In 1845, Carlyle's edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, including an extensive preface and comments, was published.<sup>178</sup> In contrast to the predominant eighteenth-century interpretation of Cromwell as a usurper, hypocrite and villain, Carlyle regarded Cromwell as the pinnacle of heroism and virtue. Unlike Macaulay and

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<sup>174</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *French Revolution*, 3 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1837).

<sup>175</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *History of Freidrich II of Prussia, called Frederick the Great*, 10 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1872–73; first published 1858–65).

<sup>176</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Historical Sketches of Notable Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (London: Chapman and Hall, [1898]).

<sup>177</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1841).

<sup>178</sup> Thomas Carlyle (ed.), *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 5 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845, 1849).

Vaughan, Carlyle made no claims to be unbiased. In his positive interpretation, he was much closer to those Evangelicals who considered themselves spiritual descendants, Dissenters who considered themselves ecclesiastical descendants, and Radicals who considered themselves political descendants of Puritanism, than to the interpretations of Puritanism by Hume and others, which were still in vogue when he wrote. Carlyle did not, however, admit to influence from Macaulay. In fact, the two had little respect for one another.<sup>179</sup>

Thomas Carlyle and his history-writing have been the subject of many and varied treatments by historians. A. Ralli's *Guide to Carlyle* was published in 1920.<sup>180</sup> Pro-Carlyle and anti-Froude (after the controversy of Froude's biography)<sup>181</sup> this is mostly a summary, rather than a critical analysis, of the historian's work. Wilson's three-volume biography of Carlyle (1925),<sup>182</sup> while largely uncritical, engages more with the context of Carlyle's writing. L. M. Young's consideration of Carlyle's history works was published in 1939.<sup>183</sup> Her focus was on *The French Revolution*,<sup>184</sup> but her work included an analysis of Carlyle's idea of history. In 1934, C. F. Harrold's *Carlyle and German thought* was published. In it, Harrold considered Carlyle's role in bringing German thought into the English language and psyche.

In his 1937 work *A History of Historical Writing*, Harry Barnes described Carlyle as the 'least attractive personality' and the 'least worthy as a historian' of those in the mid-century influenced by Romanticism. Barnes's critique of Carlyle is primarily in contrast to Jules Michelet and other Continental European historians, who by this time had already adopted a more scientific historical method than was known in Britain. Even so, Barnes had to acknowledge that Carlyle's *Cromwell* had achieved its stated purpose: it was 'a vigorous effort to vindicate the character of Cromwell, and in this it succeeded. But it was a feeble contribution to constitutional history and a complete failure in analysing the economic and social factors involved in the civil war and commonwealth'.<sup>185</sup> Although Barnes noted Carlyle's contribution

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<sup>179</sup> For a description of their mutual antipathy one time they met, see T. Wemyss Reid, *R. M. Milnes*, 2 vols. (London: Cassell and Company, 1891), Vol. 1, 190–191.

<sup>180</sup> A. Ralli, *Guide to Carlyle* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1920).

<sup>181</sup> For this controversy, see especially J. A. Froude, *My Relations with Carlyle* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903) and James Crichton Browne and Alexander Carlyle, *The Nemesis of Froude: A Rejoinder to J. A. Froude's 'My Relations with Carlyle'* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1903).

<sup>182</sup> D. A. Wilson, *Carlyle*, 6 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1923–1934).

<sup>183</sup> Young, *Carlyle and the Art of History* (1939).

<sup>184</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *French Revolution* (1837).

<sup>185</sup> Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (New York: Dover, 1937, 1962), 183.

as a character historian, he did not accept this as enough to make him a valuable asset to his field, and clearly took issue with aspects of Carlyle's personality, describing him as having a 'sour contempt of the masses'.

In 1966, Sharrock's essay 'Carlyle and the sense of history' took a different angle, underlining the poetry that Carlyle conveyed in his historical writings.<sup>186</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project of the late 1960s, and the works that its various collaborators produced afterwards, resulted in several different historians discussing Carlyle's role in uncovering Cromwell. In his contribution to the project, Mason saw the 'decisive intervention of Carlyle's historical research' as the fact it gave 'new focus and life to the memory of Cromwell'. He also argued that Carlyle's influence on Cromwell's legacy, particularly on the way in which the Commonwealth was presented in *Nonconformity*, and the rising popularity of Cromwell as compared to Parliamentarians Hampden and Sydney, needed much more thorough investigation.<sup>187</sup>

For Harrison, the nineteenth-century worship of brute force tended towards a dangerous obsession, and saw its descendants in twentieth-century fascism. While Carlyle's *Cromwell* and various of his other works probably helped this obsession with heroism gain momentum, it is clear, Harrison argued, that the ideas Carlyle espoused concerning hero-worship were already widespread in the 1840s, and were probably articulations of deeply-rooted opinions that were already common in Britain. This idea that Carlyle was not merely a historical anomaly, but was expressing something people already felt – for instance, that Cromwell may have already been in many places a popular hero – is very important for our understanding of nineteenth-century views of Cromwell and Puritanism as a whole.<sup>188</sup> Harrison considered Carlyle's impact on public attitudes towards Cromwell in some detail, noting that, although Carlyle's positive approach to Cromwell was not entirely original, it was hugely influential on many prominent public lecturers and popular writers.<sup>189</sup> Perhaps, more than anything, Carlyle provided positive estimations of Cromwell with a stamp of legitimacy.

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<sup>186</sup> R. Sharrock, 'Carlyle and the sense of history', *Essays and Studies*, 19 (1966), 74–91.

<sup>187</sup> Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell* (1968), 189.

<sup>188</sup> Harrison, in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–69), 209–212.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

In his *Patriot Heroes*, Karsten saw Carlyle as envisaging a ‘neofeudal’, ‘more fundamental’ world, meaning that he was predisposed to approve of the staunch, uncompromising character of Cromwell.<sup>190</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, given Carlyle’s apparent indifference to public opinion, Karsten also saw Carlyle’s realisation that Cromwell was popular with ‘the people’ as an important factor in his growing admiration for the Protector, leading him to produce his *Past and Present* (1843) as a paean in his memory.<sup>191</sup>

Ernst Breisach’s 1983 *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* portrayed Carlyle as having a mixed record as a historian.<sup>192</sup> He saw Carlyle’s ‘Great Men Theory’ as innovative but unscientific, and not as influenced by German rationalism and scientific method as the Continental European historians of his time. Breisach also saw Carlyle’s critics as belittling his historical enquiry and emphasising only his ‘ecstatic’ terminology, ‘vivid pictures’ and spiritual language.<sup>193</sup>

Rosenberg’s monograph *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (1985)<sup>194</sup> investigates Carlyle’s prophetic role, and the relationship between the past and the present individual in Carlyle’s work. Again, its primary focus is on *The French Revolution*. Thomas Carlyle received several significant treatments at the turn of the twenty-first century, beginning with Blair Worden’s ‘Thomas Carlyle and Oliver Cromwell’.<sup>195</sup> Worden emphasised the similarities in doctrine and world-view between Carlyle and his subject. Two essays on Carlyle were published in *Scottish Christianity in the Modern World* in 2000. Ian Campbell’s ‘Carlyle and the Secession’ illustrated his religious beginnings, and Kenneth J. Fielding’s ‘A Carlylean Elogy in Auchtertool Kirkyard’ explored the religious faith of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle in their mature years, and provided an intimate view of their relations with each other and with their extended family, which included the Church of Scotland minister of Auchtertool.<sup>196</sup> Both Campbell and Fielding saw Carlyle as retaining a profound respect for the Christian faith, especially Scottish Calvinist Presbyterianism, throughout his life. Most recently, an ongoing Carlyle project

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<sup>190</sup> Karsten, *Patriot Heroes* (1978), 146.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>192</sup> Breisach, *Historiography* (1983, 1994), 254.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>194</sup> Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (1985).

<sup>195</sup> Worden, ‘Carlyle and Cromwell’ (1999).

<sup>196</sup> Stewart J. Brown and George Newlands, ed., *Scottish Christianity in the Modern World* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2000): Ian Campbell, ‘Carlyle and the Secession’, 17–36; Kenneth J. Fielding, ‘A Carlylean Elogy in Auchtertool Kirkyard’, 37–51.

jointly between Edinburgh University and Duke University has fuelled continuing critical discussion about the great eccentric man of letters and his works. This project also involves the publication of Carlyle's letters, which at the time of writing have reached their 41st volume. Carlyle remains the subject of continuing discussion and interest.

***Carlyle: Puritanism in and outside history***

As we have seen, Carlyle did not begin the recovery of Puritanism. He did, however, seem to come to his conclusions about Puritanism by himself, although of course there were many potential influences that could have contributed to his forming opinions.<sup>197</sup> His main works of interest in this project are his early *Historical Sketches* (n.d.), *Heroes, Heroes Worship and the Heroic in History* (1840), and *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845). In part I of his *Historical Sketches*, very early writings of his that were incomplete vignettes of the times of the first two Stuart Kings of England, he introduced what he saw as Puritanism's beginnings.

For Carlyle, Puritanism was not simply a historical movement embedded in time: it was also expressive of an ancient and eternal spirit. He ignored any notion of English Puritanism existing in the sixteenth century. Instead, he described the 1603/4 Hampton Court conference as 'the first authentic appearance of Puritanism on the stage of official life', before which the Puritan-heroes had been sleeping in a mystical cave, awaiting their destiny.<sup>198</sup> Yet his narrative of the Hampton Court conference in 1603/4 had the unsuccessful Puritans at the end of it scrambling back into their cave to wait a few more years before re-emerging.<sup>199</sup> Like the stuff of myth or legend, their connection with history began tenuously.

Carlyle went on later in his *Historical Sketches* to set out a description and definition of Puritanism that well summarised his treatment of it later in his writings.

Puritanism, heartfelt conformity not to human rubrics but to the Maker's own laws – what nobler thing was there, or is there? All noble things, past, present, future, are even this same thing under various conditions and embodiments'.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> These include his upbringing in a Presbyterian Church with the same sort of Reformed background, his emotional and passionate temperament, and his commitment to German Idealism, with its strong emphasis on moral order.

<sup>198</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches* ([1898]), 32.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

Carlyle's noble (elsewhere 'heroic' and 'prophetic') Puritanism was one incarnation of something that had appeared and defined the height of nobility throughout history – an aspiration towards what is beyond human laws and rationality, and a desire for conformity to this higher goal. Although in this context Carlyle was dealing with historical Puritanism at the time of the Stuart Kings in Britain, his affirmation and promotion of it were divorced from the concerns of most of the other historians considering that era.

Unlike Macaulay, Carlyle did not praise Puritanism for promoting civil liberties or Parliamentary freedom from a king who raised standing armies. He did not see value in the subculture that Puritanism produced. He distanced himself from its theological and ecclesiological positions, calling the Puritans' Calvinistic creeds 'incredible'.<sup>201</sup> He did not emphasise the patriotism of the British Elizabethan Puritans, or the pioneering heroism of the New England Puritans. In fact, he did not show any concern for or interest in most of the main values of Puritanism that were so highly lauded by the other historians involved in this nineteenth-century recovery process. Instead, he venerated extreme views, when they were sincerely held, and he mocked the popular ideas of toleration. In *Cromwell*, for instance, he described the regicide as striking 'a damp like death through the heart of flunkeyism in the whole world',<sup>202</sup> providing a deep-seated and unnerving challenge to the still-popular view that the regicide was at best seriously problematic.

And yet despite his unconventional attitudes, Carlyle has consistently been seen as one of the most influential factors in changing opinions of the Puritans. What he did produce and say, albeit eccentric and highly individualized, was terrifically important for the nineteenth century. Philosophically, as we have stated, Carlyle was playing a significant role in bringing German Idealism, boldly and shockingly, into the English language.

In his *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, Carlyle introduced the seventeenth-century Puritans as his archetypal Prophets, but also historically as Act 2 of a great three-act European play, of which Act 1 had been the Protestant Reformation and Act 3 would be the French Revolution.<sup>203</sup> Most importantly, the Puritans were heroes. For Carlyle, Cromwell was the archetypal Puritan and the chief of Puritans, and so too the chief of these sincere, noble, heroes.

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<sup>201</sup> Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), 209.

<sup>202</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 94.

<sup>203</sup> Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), 123.

The Puritans, for Carlyle, were an astounding group of people, in the same way as the Norse gods, who command another chapter of his *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*. They were unusual, passionate, and reactionary. The work he wrote was a very different kind of history from Macaulay's, but valuable in its own way. Like Macaulay's history, however, Carlyle's was shot through with influence from Scott, and was part of a struggle for authentic history to deliver something of what people *were* rather than simply what happened to them.

Carlyle championed the cult of the individual. For those who could tolerate his eccentricities and extreme language, he promoted the idea of the great man as the centrepiece and saviour of all historical epochs, and worthy of worship.<sup>204</sup> He called his readers also to strive after heroism themselves: 'A whole world of Heroes; a world not of flunkies where no Hero-King can reign: that is what we aim at!'<sup>205</sup> This heroism, for Carlyle, was importantly seen in some Puritans, particularly Oliver Cromwell, on whom he doted. He published Cromwell's letters and papers, thus like Vaughan participating in the project of bringing historical documents into the public domain.<sup>206</sup> While his views were not always respected by other historians, nothing he said could be ignored, and he had a profound influence on the reading public. Almost incidentally, Carlyle lived and wrote at a time when Puritanism and Cromwell were already becoming more palatable: it so happened that his work bolstered a recovery that was already under way.

Through his depiction of Cromwell, but also more generally of the Puritans, Carlyle championed their sincerity: 'he will be wise to believe that these Puritans do mean what they say, and to try unimpeded if he can discover what that is'.<sup>207</sup> What they *did* mean, Carlyle himself never really articulated. Indeed, apart from their spirit and genuineness, he never seemed entirely sure what it was tangibly about the Puritans that he liked: 'the naked formlessness of Puritanism is not the thing I praise in the Puritans; it is the thing I pity, – praising only the spirit which has rendered that inevitable'.<sup>208</sup> Carlyle's desire for a yearning of the unseen, and his unwillingness to connect it with what can be seen or described, be that creed or formula,<sup>209</sup> echoed the

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 11, 13.

<sup>205</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), 37.

<sup>206</sup> It is worth noting that the letters he published were mostly already available elsewhere. He made them accessible in the sense that he provided for them a wide audience and readership.

<sup>207</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 69.

<sup>208</sup> Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), 205.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 142.

link between Idealism and Romanticism, but also poignantly promoted and underlined the argument that the Puritans were sincere. After Carlyle, the view promoted by Clarendon and later by Hume that the Puritans were hypocrites could no longer be accepted uncritically.

It is also important to note that Carlyle said not enough had been written about the Puritans, and encouraged his readers to bear this in mind. ‘One wishes there were a history of English Puritanism, the last of all our Heroisms, but sees small prospect of such a thing at present’.<sup>210</sup>

Yet for Carlyle, as for Macaulay, it was also important to emphasise that English Puritanism was and remained a seventeenth-century phenomenon. He stated: ‘All Puritanism has grown inarticulate; its fervent preachings, prayings, pamphleteerings, are sunk into one indiscriminate moaning hum, mournful as the voice of the subterranean winds’.<sup>211</sup> Again, he described Puritanism’s separation from his own day: ‘The Age of the Puritans is not extinct only and gone away from us, but it is as if fallen beyond the capabilities of Memory herself; it is grown unintelligible, what we may call incredible’.<sup>212</sup> Puritanism may have owned and articulated a spirit that was timeless, but the movement itself, Carlyle argued, was well and truly gone by the nineteenth century.<sup>213</sup> Attempts to revive it would be worse than futile.

However, an attempt at re-connection with the seventeenth century was apparently also important to Carlyle. The following is from earlier in his introduction to *Cromwell*:

We have wandered far away from the ideas which guided us in that [seventeenth] Century, and indeed which had guided us in all preceding Centuries, but of which that Century was the ultimate manifestation: we had wandered very far: and must endeavour to return, and connect ourselves therewith again!<sup>214</sup>

In this quotation, it seems likely that he was referring to the historical endeavour that he was pursuing in his re-editing and publishing of Cromwell’s letters. This desire for historical re-connection came earlier in the introduction to *Cromwell* than his aforementioned description of Puritanism’s irretrievability. But it was not that he lost

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<sup>210</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 2.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 1.

hope eight pages into his narrative, and changed his mind. In fact, the need for ‘endeavour to return’ and the fact that history is fallen ‘beyond the capabilities of memory’ are important sentiments to hold in tension for any historian, however unusually they may have been expressed by Carlyle.

This impossibility in viewing the past completely, and the sense of detachment that resulted, were as troublesome for Carlyle as they had been for Macaulay. When the historians viewed such a movement in which they identified so many positive characteristics, it is perhaps not too surprising that they regretted its irretrievability.

## **2.2 Puritanism regained**

The latter half of the nineteenth century saw many portrayals, perspectives and definitions of Puritans and Puritanism, reflecting a variety of sources, influences and attitudes. This section will outline the work and opinions of several historians, and attempt to reveal something of the diversity of those who promoted Puritanism in the nineteenth century.

### **2.2.1 John Stoughton (1807–1897)**

#### ***Stoughton: Congregational minister and historian***

John Stoughton, like Robert Vaughan, was a Congregationalist. Over a sixty-year writing span from the early 1840s to the early 1890s, he produced an exceptional amount of material concerning Puritanism. And he was respected for his writing prowess. In 1874, he was called upon to speak at the unveiling of the statue of John Bunyan in Bedford; he performed a similar honour for the statue of Richard Baxter in Kidderminster in 1875.<sup>215</sup> On both of these occasions, he was considered a voice of articulate Nonconformity. And yet his historical writing was also viewed by Evangelicals within the established church as fair and balanced. In his essay on Archbishop Laud, the Anglican future bishop Ryle recommended Stoughton’s *Ecclesiastical History* by name.<sup>216</sup> Stoughton also moved in influential circles, and was long-term friends with the leading Anglican Broad Churchman, A. P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster. Stoughton saw Britain, the world superpower of the time, as in

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<sup>215</sup> John Stoughton, *Recollections of a Long Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894), 233–235.

<sup>216</sup> J. C. Ryle, ‘Archbishop Laud and his times’ (London: Church Association Lectures, 1869).

danger of excessive pride, and looked for examples to humble, correct, and preserve it.<sup>217</sup>

As a Congregationalist, Stoughton had a weighty claim to spiritual descent from those who had been ejected from the established church at the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The Puritans in their persecuted state anticipated the social and political marginality of later Dissent, and provided role models for nineteenth-century Dissenters who, even with a new political voice, retained something of an outsider mentality. This was reflected in Stoughton's historical writing, but he also worked hard to achieve a balanced narrative.

Unlike Vaughan, Stoughton was first a minister rather than an academic. His autobiography, *Recollections of a Long Life*, reveals a warm-hearted man with an eventful upbringing. He was of mixed denominational provenance. His father worshipped in a Methodist congregation, but still considered himself to be a Church of England man. His mother was a Quakeress until she married. His father was thus not, as J. M. Rigg and H. C. G. Matthew claimed in the Oxford DNB, a 'strict churchman', although he did have John baptised in the Church of England.<sup>218</sup>

Growing up in Norwich, John Stoughton spent a large portion of his time at Bethel Hospital, 'an institution for the insane', where his maternal grandfather was the master. John was still a child when his grandfather died, and his autobiography relates the sad tale of the latter's demise. The grandfather was gardening in the grounds of Bethel Hospital, alongside one of the patients, who had been deemed healthy enough to mow the lawn. The patient turned on him with a scythe and nearly severed him in two. Stoughton did not dwell on this incident later in his work, and it is not clear to what extent this trauma affected him.<sup>219</sup>

Stoughton did have several influences as a young man. An elderly lady who stayed with his family for a time had been a friend of Evangelical preacher George Whitefield, and shared her passion for his work with the young John Stoughton. When he was seventeen, he had an experience of calling to Evangelical ministry, brought on by reading a Thomas Chalmers sermon on Romans 5.10, and the same evening hearing a Methodist minister preach on John 3.16.<sup>220</sup> He had been in legal training, but gave it up to follow his 'call'.

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<sup>217</sup> See John Stoughton, *The palace of glass and the gathering of people: a book for the exhibition* (London, 1851).

<sup>218</sup> Stoughton, *Recollections of a Long Life*, 1–2.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

Although Stoughton knew that he felt a call to ‘spend life in Christian preaching and pastoral work’, he did not yet know his preferred denomination, ‘and was ready either to be a clergyman or a Dissenting minister’.<sup>221</sup> After researching different options, he decided that, although no existing church model seemed to fit exactly with New Testament teaching, he felt that Congregationalism came closest. This decision set the path for the rest of his life.

After this time, Stoughton moved to London, became deeply involved with the British and Foreign Bible Society, and was much moved by the members’ love of Evangelicals from all denominations, while continuing attachment to their own:

They loved the Establishment, and, judging of it by its formularies, identified it with the cause of evangelical religion. They knew much less of Anglo-Catholic theology than of Puritanical works. Owen and Baxter occupied a conspicuous place on their literary shelves, by the side of Latimer and Calvin. The Evangelicals were nevertheless faithful to their own ecclesiastical order, preferring episcopacy to any other form of government. Not on social or literary grounds had they sympathy with Dissenters, or from what is now recognised as “breadth of opinion,” but they cultivated union, on purely evangelical grounds.<sup>222</sup>

This openness of the Bible society to Evangelicals of different denominational backgrounds suited Stoughton very well. He was also deeply influenced by the Bible Society’s affection for the seventeenth-century Puritans, seeing them as theological antecedents of nineteenth-century Evangelicals. This helped to foster Stoughton’s attitude towards the Puritans, and shape a lifelong interest in them.

Stoughton became a co-pastor of a Congregational church in Windsor in 1833, and moved to Hornton Street Church, Kensington, in 1844, where he succeeded Vaughan as minister. His first volume on the Puritans, *Spiritual Heroes*, was published in 1848. Timothy Lang has described it as inspired by Carlyle’s *Cromwell*,<sup>223</sup> and not without reason: there is a text from Carlyle on its frontispiece: ‘Hah! these men, I think, had a word. – History will have something to say about this for some time to come’. But while his early book’s title may have been influenced by Carlyle’s emphasis on heroism, Stoughton was of a political and religious background that would have considered the Puritans to be heroes long before

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 50–51.

<sup>223</sup> Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995), 136.

Carlyle's day. As Stoughton matured as a writer, his polemical tone relaxed and he gradually adopted the methods and writing style of a more 'scientific' historian, although he remained clearly sympathetic both to Dissent and Evangelicalism. The development of tolerance and of political and religious liberty remained special interests for him. Because of the analogous nature of many of his titles and works, Stoughton's corpus has generally been misunderstood, including by J. M. Rigg's Oxford DNB essay, revised by H. C. G. Matthew. His 1852 volume *Lights of the World* (ignored by Rigg) included mini-biographies of Bunyan and Baxter, as representative of 'Spiritual Valour and Victory' and 'Earnest Decision' respectively. Ten years later, his *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* considered ecclesiastical affairs in England from 1660 to 1663. After writing various pamphlets and short studies, his two-volume *Ecclesiastical History from the opening of the Long Parliament to the death of Oliver Cromwell* was published in 1867. It was followed by *Ecclesiastical History, Church of the Restoration* (2 vols, 1870), and *Ecclesiastical History, Church of the Revolution* (1874) (which Rigg's essay again overlooked). Continuing this religious history of England, two further volumes covering the period from Queen Anne to 'the Georges' were published in 1878. In 1872, he had accepted the chair of historical theology at New College (for Independent Dissenters), St John's Wood. His studies on historical theology and the Westminster Assembly appeared in 1880 and 1882 respectively. In 1884, his chronological church history was completed with *Religion in England from 1800 to 1850* (2 volumes), which included a postscript on 1850 to 1884.<sup>224</sup> He also wrote studies on the rise of congregationalism, the 1688 Revolution's bearing on Protestant Nonconformity, a book on the atonement, a book on early Christianity, a volume on historical theology up to the time of the Reformation, and an autobiography, *Recollections of a Long Life* (1894).

Clearly, Puritanism and the events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were of particular interest to Stoughton, and he produced a vast body of historical

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<sup>224</sup> Stoughton's nine-volume ecclesiastical history of Britain from the opening of the Long Parliament to his own day was published in four separate two-volume works: *Ecclesiastical History of England from the Opening of the Long Parliament to the Death of Oliver Cromwell*, 2 vols. (London: Walford and Hodder, 1867); *Ecclesiastical History of England: Church of the Revolution* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874); *Ecclesiastical History of England: Church of the Restoration*, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870); *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1878); *Religion in England from 1800–1850*, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884). For ease of reference, these works will be described in this project as *Ecclesiastical History* Vols. 1–9.

writing. Yet, except for a posthumous biography by one of his daughters and a few brief mentions in other works, Stoughton has largely been ignored by posterity.<sup>225</sup>

As we have seen, Lang mentioned his *Spiritual Heroes* as a nod to the influence of Carlyle on mid-century Nonconformist thought. But even in this early work, far more profound influences on Stoughton seem to have been the ‘Puritan historian’ Daniel Neal<sup>226</sup> and the liberal Anglican educational reformer Thomas Arnold.<sup>227</sup>

We will first consider Stoughton’s earlier work, up to *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* in 1862. We will then consider how his later work developed his earlier ideas from the *Ecclesiastical History* onwards.

### ***Stoughton: Spiritual Heroes – Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago***

Stoughton’s presentation of the Puritans throughout this early work was unsurprisingly positive.

In *Spiritual Heroes*, he asserted that the Puritans were ‘a strong party, distinguished by their piety, talents, and learning, forming the very sinews of the reformed cause in England’.<sup>228</sup> They were ‘men in earnest’, equipped with ‘stern moral grandeur’ and ‘solid value’.<sup>229</sup> They fought for their consciences, ‘that sacred and supreme rule of action’.<sup>230</sup> He also saw it as crucial for the nation that ‘The Puritans [...] saved England in the seventeenth century from a relapse into Popery’.<sup>231</sup> For him, saving England from Roman Catholicism went alongside being morally commendable. We will study Stoughton’s and other historians’ commendations of anti-Roman Catholicism in more detail in Chapter Three. By the time of the writing of *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*, Stoughton’s determination to rescue Puritanism’s reputation for posterity had solidified still further: ‘it is time to give up the wholesale ridicule of all Puritan society’.<sup>232</sup>

In *Spiritual Heroes*, Stoughton described early Puritans as those who were opposed to ‘showy worship’ (as he pejoratively labelled it) at the time of Elizabeth in

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<sup>225</sup> See J. S. [John Stoughton], *a short record of a long life, by his daughter* (London, 1898); William Robbins, *The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (London: Heinemann, 1959), 150; Geoffrey Cantor, *Religion and the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 169.

<sup>226</sup> For Stoughton being influenced by Neal, see *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 110, 365.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 42, 107.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.

<sup>232</sup> Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 24.

the later sixteenth century.<sup>233</sup> Like Macaulay, he did not see their opposition as moderation or a true expression of the Church of England. Rather, he described the early Puritans as the very same people who had been Marian exiles on the European Continent and had imbibed first-hand the doctrines of Reformed Geneva.<sup>234</sup> At this stage, Stoughton again, like Macaulay, recognised a difference in terms of what Puritans were reacting against in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>235</sup>

As a Dissenter, Stoughton in his early work focused on his sense of historical lineage and descent from the Puritans. He saw this in terms of the religious Dissent which he championed, rather than of fashion and cultural heritage. He described the Puritans as ‘our fathers’ in a specific spiritual sense, and described the physical ritual of visiting their graves in a way that resonated with Scott’s *Old Mortality*.<sup>236</sup> The fact that Stoughton had chosen Congregationalism as his own, rather than been born into it, perhaps made this adoptive lineage resonate still stronger.

For all this sense of descent, Stoughton did note, in *Spiritual Heroes* and in *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*, the fact that the nineteenth century could never understand the seventeenth entirely. ‘How much’, he stated, ‘is lost in the history of our Puritan ancestors’.<sup>237</sup> When describing certain apparent cultural eccentricities, he observed: ‘What the affected mode of utterance in the pulpit might be, we cannot tell, having never heard any of the old Puritan divines’.<sup>238</sup> This note that we cannot physically *hear* the Puritans may have been framed as a comical defence against their continuing detractors, but it actually serves to re-emphasise, as Macaulay and Carlyle had before, the completeness of the gulf between past and present encompassing all of the senses.

Stoughton’s individual voice as a historian was clear even at this stage in his writings. He did not swallow whole Carlyle’s idea of the hero, and he called the Puritans heroes because they obeyed their consciences, not because they reached towards a higher ideal. He adopted Neal’s grand polemic in their favour, but this was in order to combat years of misrepresentation and neglect, rather than to assert himself as a remnant of their party.

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<sup>233</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 31.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 408–9.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>238</sup> Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 27.

‘They are emerging from the clouds of slander – their virtue and heroism begin to excite general admiration: but it must not be forgotten that much more remains to be done by the historian before the debt of justice will be fully paid to their long-dishonoured names’.<sup>239</sup> Much was indeed done in this early volume alone, but the work Stoughton engaged in later in his life, no longer ostensibly to exonerate the Puritans and with a much greater degree of critical detachment, went further still to argue for their political and religious strengths.

### ***Stoughton: Ecclesiastical History and later works***

Stoughton’s later historical work retained many of the distinctives of his early writing, and continued to follow its general path.

He continued to describe Puritanism as a legitimate and faithful descendent of the Protestant Reformation. He argued: ‘the Puritans of the seventeenth century, and the civil war which grew out of it, were practical protests against the attempts of Charles, Strafford, and Laud, to revive what the Reformation in the country had destroyed’.<sup>240</sup> The Puritans, for these historians, were standard-bearers for the principles of the Reformation. They cared deeply about the interests of British Protestantism and were its sole defenders when the rest of the country was ‘in danger’ of returning to Rome.

Stoughton also continued to see his own Congregationalism as a minority religious interest comparable to Puritanism itself. Both before Puritanism’s ascent to power, and after the Act of Uniformity, the Puritans were, he argued, a persecuted, outcast, minority. He traced their spirit through a historical lineage of persecuted religious Dissent reaching back through the ‘Cathars, Lollards and Wicliffites’.<sup>241</sup> The Puritans were heroes of the faith, he argued, along the same lines as these pre-Protestant martyrs. Even in the mid and later nineteenth century, after toleration had been achieved, Dissenters continued to see themselves as somehow out of the ordinary. Stoughton’s *Lessons for Nonconformists* drew several lessons from the Puritans and related them to Nonconformists of his own day. As shall be seen looking at other historians in this selection, however, it was not just Dissenters who saw minority status as a link between themselves and Puritanism.

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., iv.

<sup>240</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 26.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 38.

In Stoughton's work, he argued for a divide between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, but a connection between Puritanism and nineteenth-century Dissent. In his later work, he also drew explicit comparisons between several other groups and ideologies in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. For instance, he stated that 'arguments were now urged to the effect that it was unreasonable for people not to be allowed to select their own spiritual guides; much, in short, being advanced upon the subject, of the same kind as is common in the present day'.<sup>242</sup> He compared the arguments for individual volition in religious matters between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. For Stoughton, the fact that churches, and indeed the nation as a whole, were still battling with the same issues as they had been two-hundred years earlier, made the historical endeavour that much more important and relevant. In one case, he reminded his readers that the seventeenth century, for all its strangeness, was no more strange than the nineteenth:

The nineteenth century, with all its rationalism, has seen Joanna Southcote [Southcott], and her numerous disciples. The seventeenth, with all its fanaticism, witnessed, in the greatest enthusiast of the age, less absurdity, and with him a smaller following than we have witnessed even in our own time.<sup>243</sup>

Here, the seventeenth-century movement Stoughton referred to was the Society of Friends and the great 'enthusiast', George Fox. Stoughton's assertion that many apparently more absurd groups, such as prophetess Southcott and her followers, existed in his own time, was probably intended to warn his readers against historical condescension.

In some places, Stoughton's narrative also afforded a view of the positive progress that society had made, for instance concerning its treatment of the Jews:

Inveterate intolerance which down to our own day excluded them from a full share in political rights, then resisted even their moderate claims to a home, a house of prayer, and a grave on British soil.<sup>244</sup>

While there were similarities between the Britain of his own day and the Britain of the seventeenth century, Stoughton was also keen to stress the progress that had been made in many areas. In *The Palace of Glass and the Gathering of People*, he had

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., Vol. 3 (1870), 58–59.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 504.

previously warned against complacency in nineteenth-century Imperial Britain, but he later showed himself impressed by the developments that had occurred in British toleration and liberty between the seventeenth century and his own time. As will be seen in Chapter Four, Stoughton also considered Puritanism to be an important precursor of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism.<sup>245</sup>

And yet, by the time he wrote his *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*, and more so when he wrote his *Ecclesiastical History*, Stoughton was also more prepared to describe what he saw as faults in the Puritans than he had been when he wrote *Spiritual Heroes*. He acknowledged that there were ‘worthless people’ among the Puritans.<sup>246</sup> He was later prepared to catalogue their faults even more explicitly.<sup>247</sup>

Several other aspects of the Puritans’ lives and work were also of particular interest to Stoughton. He closely followed Macaulay’s historical narrative regarding the growth of toleration and moderation amongst the seventeenth-century Parliamentarians. He put forward a powerful discussion of the Puritans’ role in achieving political liberty.<sup>248</sup> He was particularly interested in the Puritans’ initial rejection of and their later promotion of toleration.<sup>249</sup> His discussion and commendation of the Puritans’ social views, especially concerning family life and the role of women,<sup>250</sup> will be considered in Chapter Four. He considered the Puritans’ views on wider theological issues, including the Sabbath<sup>251</sup> and Providence, both contentious issues when he wrote. He also encouraged Evangelicals and others both within and outside the Church of England to take note of the Puritans and to emulate their examples on certain matters.

### **2.2.2 James Anderson (1804–1877)**

James Anderson has been almost ignored by posterity. Having been minister of a Secession Church (old light, anti-burgher, the same as Thomas Carlyle had been raised in) in his hometown of Kirriemuir from 1830 to 1837, he retired due to an ‘infirmity of speech’, moved to Edinburgh where he was close friends with noted

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>246</sup> Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 24.

<sup>247</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 54–55.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., Vol. 3 (1870), 182.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1867), 378–9.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1867), 165.

Scottish Church historian James A. Wylie – the two used to take early morning walks together in the Queen’s Park and the Meadows – and wrote.<sup>252</sup>

His passion was religious history. He wrote the religious section of a co-authored book concerning the history of the Bass Rock, the notorious prison of Covenanters, which was published in 1848.<sup>253</sup> His special interest, though, was in writing historical prosopography of women. He did not explain in print his motivations or reasoning in writing about women, and he did not reveal himself as a social revolutionary or advocate of women’s liberation. Perhaps he was picking up on Sarah Stickney Ellis’ popular works and entering what he saw as a niche market.<sup>254</sup>

Anderson was quick to affirm the place of women in the home as supports to their husbands and families, and he disapproved of women taking on roles he deemed more suitable to men. Yet he was not precisely a misogynist: he affirmed the courage and ability of many women and he encouraged his female readers to emulate aspects of their lives. As well as volumes on women at the time of the Reformation in Britain and across Protestant Europe,<sup>255</sup> he wrote on women in Scotland at the time of the Covenanters<sup>256</sup> and, of particular interest to this project, two volumes on *Memorable Women of the Puritan Times*.<sup>257</sup> Throughout his writing career, Anderson retained and frequently mentioned his Reformed Evangelical faith that traced its lineage to the Covenanters. His mindset of religious continuity carried over to his treatment of the English Puritans.

Anderson drew up an idealised picture of the female Puritan which resonated with other nineteenth-century social attitudes and was only a minor concern for the other historians in this selection. As a historian writing from a Seceding Presbyterian

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<sup>252</sup> See David Scott, *Annals of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1886), 566.

<sup>253</sup> Thomas M’Crie, Hugh Miller, James Anderson, Professor Fleming, Professor Balfour, *The Bass Rock: its civil and ecclesiastic history* (Edinburgh: J. Greig and son, 1848).

<sup>254</sup> See Sarah Stickney-Ellis, *Women of England, their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839); *The Daughters of England, their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (1842); *The Wives of England, their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Obligations* (1843); and *The Mothers of England, their Influence and Responsibility* (1843). Ellis wrote conservatively, accepting womens’ subordination to men, and encouraged her female readers to follow suit. Her works became popular and inspired others. I am indebted for this reference to Prof. Frank Turner’s *Edinburgh Gunning Lectures* delivered in Edinburgh, November 2007.

<sup>255</sup> James Anderson, *Ladies of the Reformation: England, Scotland, The Netherlands* (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son, 1855), *Ladies of the Reformation: Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain* (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son, 1857).

<sup>256</sup> James Anderson, *Ladies of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: Blackie and Son, 1850).

<sup>257</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women* (1862).

viewpoint, and considering himself to be descended from the Scottish Covenanters, he provided a different perspective from English Nonconformists such as Stoughton. Moreover, Anderson's focus on social, family, and female issues was distinctive.

When Anderson used the term 'Puritan', it was in a positive sense. In his preface to *Ladies of the Covenant*, he described the Puritans as 'that noble race of saints'.<sup>258</sup> But his view of the Puritans did not end at saintliness and nobility. He was interested in the word's historical origins in Britain: in a footnote in his introduction to *Memorable Women of the Puritan Times*, he stated that 'Puritanism did not come unto use until after the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Baxter informs us that in his times it was applied to all, whether conformists or nonconformists, who showed any concern about religion'.<sup>259</sup> Anderson then, following Baxter, saw *all* whom he considered to be passionate about religion in the sixteenth century to be, in a sometimes vague way, Puritans. His description *Puritan times* in his title, and the breadth of women from different backgrounds whom he included in his study, testifies to this. When describing the reign of James I (of England, VI of Scotland), he stated: 'Puritanism was a powerful element; and it exerted then and afterward a most important influence both religious and political, on England, disseminating principles which wrought out, steadily and surely, despite oppression and persecution, English liberty'.<sup>260</sup> For Anderson, as for Stoughton before him, the achievement of political liberty was the great contribution of the Puritans. Both Anderson and Stoughton were following Macaulay when they said this,<sup>261</sup> though, as we have seen, in his mature work Macaulay used terminology other than 'Puritan' to express it.

Anderson's perspective, though, was a little different. Macaulay, Stoughton, and other historians in our selection had all seen the Presbyterians as intolerant, and the Independents as the pioneers of political liberty (although they often used the one term 'Puritan' to describe both ecclesiastical groups in the mid-seventeenth-century). Anderson, however, was a Presbyterian and was specifically positive about Presbyterianism's influence in England.

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<sup>258</sup> Anderson, *Ladies of the Covenant* (1850), preface.

<sup>259</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 2.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>261</sup> Macaulay's impact on Anderson is in no doubt. See for instance Anderson's quotations from Macaulay in *Memorable Women*, Vol. 2 (1862), 323, 371.

From the beginning, Anderson presented his history as a sort of doxology. He stated:

How much do we owe to the memory of these men for all that they did and suffered to achieve a result so fraught with blessings, religious, political and social, to posterity! And above all, how much do we owe to the great Ruler of the world, who mercifully crowned with success and triumph their exertions, which otherwise would have met only with defeat and disaster.<sup>262</sup>

The readers, posterity, owed a debt to the Puritans, but above all to God. In view of his focus on women in his volumes, it is notable that when Anderson emphasised those to whom posterity owed a debt, they were always male Puritans. He also remained keen to emphasise the teleological nature of the history that he was writing: ‘The history of those times must ever engage the attention, and be fraught with the lessons of wisdom’.<sup>263</sup>

The historical background that he provided for the women he was studying was brief, and whatever he stated about Puritanism’s main achievement, the main focus of his text was the social and pietistic strengths of the women in his work, and the lessons he thought they should teach his readers in the nineteenth century. Other issues that were of interest to Anderson included literature, toleration, providence and the Sabbath.

### **2.2.3 James Anthony Froude (1818–1894)**

J. A. Froude was one of the most prolific historians of the nineteenth century. In his early years, his brother Hurrell (who died in 1835) had been a key player in the Oxford Movement, and James Anthony too had become involved, collaborating with John Henry Newman in writing a life of St Neot. This period in his life was followed by a time of intense and searching doubt, as reflected in Froude’s *Shadows of the Clouds* and *The Nemesis of Faith*, which in some ways pre-empted the struggles connected to Biblical interpretation that the Broad Church movement was to address from the 1860s.<sup>264</sup> Froude was moved by his experience of working and holidaying with an Evangelical family in Ireland, but he never accepted their religious principles. Back in England, he fell deeply under the power of Thomas Carlyle and

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<sup>262</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 30.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

<sup>264</sup> J. A. Froude, *Shadows of the Clouds* (London, 1847); *The Nemesis of Faith* (London: Libris, 1988; first published 1849).

developed a similar, though less eccentric and exaggerated, approach to heroism and greatness. While remaining critical both of Church mediocrity and hypocrisy, he settled into a profession of Protestant orthodoxy in the Church of England, and soon became a capable and well-spoken historian and increasingly an advocate of Britishness and Protestantism. His magnum opus was a twelve-volume *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*.<sup>265</sup> He also wrote a biography of John Bunyan, and some of his *Short Studies on Great Subjects* discuss Puritanism.<sup>266</sup> Later in his career, he travelled widely across the world, and reported on what he saw and experienced. He was always deeply supportive of the British Empire and Commonwealth, and considered patriotism an important trait of an Englishman.

Over the years, he has been the subject of considerable critical interest, featuring alongside Macaulay, Carlyle, Gardiner and others in several major works considering nineteenth-century historians.<sup>267</sup> His reputation was damaged late in his life due to bitter controversy over an addition he had written to his authorised biography of long-time friend, Carlyle, where he had described the latter as impotent and his relationship with his wife as ‘wretched’.<sup>268</sup> Carlyle’s surviving relatives did not take kindly to this and a scathing, damaging response ensued.<sup>269</sup> This, too, provides a valuable insight into the implicit importance placed on masculinity and virility in late nineteenth-century Britain.

Barnes’ *History of Historical Writing* was first published in 1937. Despite Froude’s many critics, Barnes saw his faults as rooted in a ‘constitutional’ carelessness, rather than deliberate error.<sup>270</sup> He took Froude’s historical approach seriously, seeing in it a threefold strand of hatred for Rome (by which he means the Roman Catholic Church) emulating Macaulay’s story-telling, and emulating

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<sup>265</sup> Froude, *History of England*, 12 vols. (1856–1870).

<sup>266</sup> Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, (1890). See especially ‘The Science of History’ (1864, Vol. 1, 1–38); ‘Times of Erasmus and Luther’ (1867, Vol. 1, 39–153); ‘Influence of the Reformation on the Scottish Character’ (1865, Vol. 1, 154–187); ‘A Plea for the Free Discussion of Theological Difficulties’ (1863, Vol. 1, 202–240); ‘England’s Forgotten Worthies’ (1852, Vol. 1., 443–501); ‘Calvinism’ (1871, Vol. 2, 1–59); ‘Condition and Prospects of Protestantism’ (1868, Vol. 2, 146–179); ‘On Progress’ (n.d., Vol. 2, 351–398); ‘Scientific Method Applied to History’ (n.d., Vol. 2., 563–598); ‘Cheneys and the House of Russell’ (1879, Vol. 4, 480–542).

<sup>267</sup> See for instance Gooch, *History and Historians* (1913), and Hale, *Evolution of British Historiography* (1967).

<sup>268</sup> Froude followed his *Thomas Carlyle*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1882) with a pamphlet, *My Relations with Carlyle* (written in 1887 but published posthumously by his daughter in 1903).

<sup>269</sup> Crichton-Browne and Carlyle, *The Nemesis of Froude* (1903).

<sup>270</sup> Barnes, *History of Historical Writing* (1937), 190.

Carlyle's hero-worship. Barnes clearly admired Froude's style, describing it as excelling 'even Macaulay', and combining 'Macaulay's narrative ability, Carlyle's capacity for portrait painting, and the method of a lawyer in organizing a long and telling brief'.<sup>271</sup> Whereas many other writers before him had disparaged Froude, Barnes recognised and lauded his ability as a writer and a historian.

In his 1939 *On the Writing of History*, Oman saw Froude, like Macaulay, as provoking many attacks by his work. Oman praised Froude's 'admirable power of dramatic narrative – more effective because less lurid than Carlyle's', but also saw it as carrying 'the reader over many doubtful crises before suspicion arises'. Oman critiqued Froude's historical approach as omitting adverse evidence, and garbling the documents he professed to quote. Serious faults, perhaps, for a scientific historian of the later nineteenth century (into which Froude continued to write), but unlike many of Froude's contemporary detractors Oman saw his work as no worse than what the demands of a 'professedly biased' historical view required.<sup>272</sup>

In his essay on Froude in *More Nineteenth Century Studies* (1956), Basil Willey described the historians' 'robust, free-thinking Protestantism' as 'unfashionable today'.<sup>273</sup> He saw Froude as the archetypal thinker of the nineteenth century:

Swift, eager and essentially simple, he finds himself buffeted between two contrary winds of doctrine, flutters despairingly for a while, then yields himself for ever to one of them. Not himself a spiritual pathfinder, he is dependent upon outside strength; following first one guide, then the other, he marks for us, with peculiar distinctness, the tendency and direction of their leadership.<sup>274</sup>

Unlike Macaulay and Carlyle, Willey argued, Froude was not a man of new ideas, but a follower and processor, whose role was to make existing ideas coherent, and who became a servant to one mindset rather than another not necessarily through conviction, but through a lack of anything else to do. This judgment of Froude is perhaps not entirely fair: the historian was indeed buffeted between contrary doctrines, but continued to recognise value and strength in many different viewpoints throughout his career.

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Charles Oman, *On the Writing of History* (1939), 214–5.

<sup>273</sup> Basil Willey, *More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), 106.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

‘J. A. Froude and his History of England’, an essay by Geoffrey Elton, printed in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, was written in 1983.<sup>275</sup> Elton’s helpful study on Froude emphasised his great significance as *the* Tudor historian of the mid-nineteenth century. In 1981, J. W. Burrow presented Froude as the archetypal historian of the Imperialist tradition, writing in the knowledge of Britain’s supremacy and attempting to vindicate it. Here, Burrow saw him as one of the main non-Whig historians of the nineteenth century. Kenyon’s 1983 *The History Men* categorised Froude differently, seeing him as a ‘moralist’ along with Acton. 1987 saw a new monograph on Froude by the prolific Cornish historian A. L. Rowse.<sup>276</sup> Rowse presented a useful comparison of Froude and Macaulay, and highlighted Froude’s success as a writer of literary history and in becoming a prophet of the British Empire.<sup>277</sup> He also described Froude’s affection for Calvinism, and therefore Puritanism, as waning in his later years by the time he wrote *Bunyan*.<sup>278</sup> This is not necessarily the case. Although in *Bunyan* Froude did label certain Puritan practices cruel: ‘the uncivilised Puritans passed an act of Parliament to punish adultery with death’, he had never condemned a Puritan lifestyle wholesale, and he retained admiration for the movement. He described *Pilgrim’s Progress* as ‘the true record of the genuine emotions of the human soul’.<sup>279</sup> He also restrained himself from judging Bunyan’s theological and practical precision, saying ‘He was himself the best judge of what his conscience and his situation required’.<sup>280</sup> Froude saw it as important not to judge characters in history on the basis of what they had done in good conscience. He also defended Puritan theology: ‘[it] is not more open to objection on the ground of unreasonableness than the Catholic theology or any other which regards man as answerable to God for his conduct’.<sup>281</sup> Froude had certainly not completely rejected Puritanism by the time he wrote *Bunyan*. In fact, this work can provide us with important insights into his complex mature view on the subject.

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<sup>275</sup> Geoffrey Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), Vol. 3.

<sup>276</sup> A. L. Rowse, *Froude the Historian: Victorian Man of Letters* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987).

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>279</sup> J. A. Froude, *Bunyan* (London: Macmillan, 1880, 1909), 16.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

The professor of literature and biographer Julia Markus wrote a new biography of Froude, published in 2005, suggesting that Froude had been ‘forgotten’, and trying to bring the historian and his writings back into the public sphere.<sup>282</sup> In *The Science of History*, Hesketh focused a chapter in Froude and Charles Kingsley, and helpfully positioned them in the context of nineteenth-century historiography. Hesketh presented Froude as an important historian who refused to conform to the new style of ‘scientific’ history-writing, preferring instead his dramatic and individual approach to the new wealth of sources that were becoming available.<sup>283</sup> Koditschek re-emphasized the generational difference between Froude and Macaulay, stating that ‘where Macaulay’s *History* had exalted the liberty of the subject, Froude’s would extol the security of the state’.<sup>284</sup> He also noted Froude’s penchant for seeing early Puritans as ‘moral exemplars and martyrs’,<sup>285</sup> quite apart from their impact on the political history of the nation. However, the most significant recent work on Froude has been Ciaran Brady’s recent intellectual biography. Brady delved deep into Froude’s life and work, and the result is a fascinating portrait of a complex and not always sympathetic character. Describing Froude as late Victorian England’s ‘self-appointed moralist’, he saw the writer as pre-disposed to favour Puritanism. He emphasised the importance of Bunyan, for instance, in the formation of Froude’s thought. He also underlined the way that Froude’s preferences fed into his intellectual arguments, and his conviction of ‘the moral elitism of his heroes’ conduct’ and ‘the absolute superiority of passionate intensity over moderate consideration’.<sup>286</sup>

### ***Froude: Puritans as patriots***

The chronological focus of Froude’s *History of England*, and his chief historical interest, was the sixteenth century, meaning that the Puritans we encounter in his *History* tend to be sixteenth-century ‘early’ Puritans. These characters were fascinating to him and he was their vociferous advocate and promoter.

The main way in which Froude promoted this early Puritanism and brought it to the fore was by extolling its Englishness and patriotism. Froude was also more specific than Anderson (or Baxter) about the origin of the term *Puritan*. In his

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<sup>282</sup> Markus, *Froude* (2005).

<sup>283</sup> Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011).

<sup>284</sup> Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination* (2011), 152.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>286</sup> Brady, *Froude* (2013), xi, 325, 450–451.

*English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century*, he described a letter by a distinguished Jesuit in 1585, three years before the Spanish Armada, ‘for the use of the Pope and Philip, with a special view to the reception which an invading force would meet with’:

“The only party,” he says (and this is really noticeable), “the only party that would fight to death for the Queen, the only real friends she had, were the Puritans (it is the first mention of the name which I have found), the Puritans of London, the Puritans of the sea towns.” These he admits were dangerous, desperate, determined men. The numbers of them, however, were providentially small.<sup>287</sup>

The Puritans were described as the only party who would be willing to fight to the death for Queen Elizabeth. He also stated that this was the first instance of the name ‘Puritan’ that he had found. Although he did not claim to have made a comprehensive review of its origins, it is interesting that Froude did not connect the beginnings of the word Puritan with persecution and insult, but rather with bravery and patriotism, albeit in the context of extreme religious views. In the context of his writing, this is highly significant: Puritanism for him was primarily associated with patriotism, not with a persecuted minority.

In Froude’s *History of England*, he had stated that Queen Elizabeth ‘was assured that the Puritans would be loyal to her. Their constancy had been tried, and there was no fear that ill-usage would alienate them’.<sup>288</sup> His interest in the patriotism of the Puritans can be linked to the value he placed on patriotism, and English Nationalism, in the nineteenth century.<sup>289</sup>

Froude also asserted that, at its darkest hour, it was the Puritans who saved the English Church from destruction:

There needed an enthusiasm fiercer far to encounter the revival of Catholic fanaticism; and if the young Puritans, in the heat and glow of their convictions, snapped their traces and flung off their harness, it was they, after all, who saved the Church which attempted to disown them, and with the Church saved

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<sup>287</sup> J. A. Froude, *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green, 1894–5), 7, 8.

<sup>288</sup> Froude, *History of England*, Vol. 12 (1870), 547.

<sup>289</sup> See for instance J. A. Froude, *Oceana* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886).

also the stolid mediocrity to which the fates then and ever committed the government of it.<sup>290</sup>

This description of the Puritans as those who from within rescued an established church that was otherwise doomed to destruction, rather than as those who were persecuted and cast out, naturally reads as a positive interpretation from the establishment itself. In Froude's view, the Puritans became heroes of the Church of England, just as for the Dissenters they were heroes of Dissent. In noticing this, Froude spoke for the more Protestant end of the Church of England, as opposed to the more ritualistic, who would still have seen Puritanism as a negative force in the seventeenth-century Church. But he also mentioned here the 'stolid mediocrity' to which he saw the established Church as forever doomed. He was not uncritical of the Church of England, and his point that, in their fanaticism, the Puritans rescued something doomed to be mediocre, then and afterwards, shows both a spark of humour and his continuing ambivalence towards the Church.

***Froude: Puritanism's spirit and descent***

Froude did, however, briefly plot a chronology of religio-political succession within England leading into the nineteenth century: 'To Catholic and Protestant succeeded in England Anglican and Puritan, Cavalier and Roundhead, Tory and Whig, Liberal and Conservative'.<sup>291</sup> Nineteenth century Whigs, and later Liberals, were, he claimed, successors of the Puritans, just as Puritans were successors of early Protestants. But this description is probably meant to be generalised, and to signify continuing divisions within English culture rather than specific descent.

Like Carlyle, Froude believed that Puritanism had a 'spirit' that superseded the historical phenomenon itself. 'The [Puritan] religion of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is the religion which must be always and everywhere, as long as man believes that he has a soul and is responsible for his actions'.<sup>292</sup> For Froude, the ancient and eternal spirit expressed in Puritanism would be 'disinterred' in the form of history repeating itself. As Carlyle had compared the Puritans to the Norse Gods, so he compared them to the ancient Persians:

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<sup>290</sup> Froude, *History of England*, Vol. 10 (1866), 114–5.

<sup>291</sup> Froude, 'Scientific Method Applied to History', in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 592.

<sup>292</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 91.

The Persians caught rapidly Zoroaster's spirit. Uncorrupted by luxury, they responded eagerly to a voice which they recognized as speaking truth to them. They have been called the Puritans of the Old World.<sup>293</sup>

The Persians and the Puritans shared a spirit that sought truth beyond what they could see, and rejected 'luxury'. Froude elsewhere stated: 'the religious history of man is essentially the same in all ages'.<sup>294</sup> Again:

I have been describing a natural process which has repeated itself many times in human history, and, unless the old opinion that we are more than animated clay, and that our nature has nobler affinities, dies away into a dream, will repeat itself at recurring intervals as long as our race survives upon the planet.<sup>295</sup>

The religious spirit that gave birth to Puritanism was something that, according to Froude, would keep reappearing so long as humans had a concern for spirituality. In this model, as with Carlyle's, Froude created a sense that historical and future events were somehow inevitable.

Although Froude argued that the theological integrity of Puritanism in the form of Evangelical Calvinism was essential to its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century incarnation, this was not to say that Evangelical Calvinism of the nineteenth century, while its theological descendent, has imbibed this spirit. Froude argued, rather, that it had not, and could not. Froude was strongly critical of attempts to revive or continue the Puritans' specific theological beliefs. In the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, Evangelical Calvinism had, he argued, neither integrity nor sincerity, and its followers could not hope to be the true successors of the Puritans. Scientific, political, religious and philosophical developments had rendered untenable in the nineteenth century what was the climax of the seventeenth.

Carlyle had strongly emphasised the separation between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries: this was also an important emphasis for Froude. The influence that Carlyle had on him was, however, always measured by a greater awareness of the society and climate in which he lived and worked, and he was careful not to be branded an Evangelical or a lover of Puritan theology. He extended Carlyle's

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<sup>293</sup> Froude, 'Calvinism' (1871), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 28.

<sup>294</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 16–17.

<sup>295</sup> Froude, 'Calvinism' (1871), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 18.

argument, articulating even more pointedly than Carlyle the importance of Puritanism still remaining separate from nineteenth-century life.

The fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us; yet nobler men than the Puritans are not to be found in all English history.<sup>296</sup>

Nobler men than the Puritans were not to be found in all English history, but readers should still be warned, Froude insisted, against trying to be like them in the nineteenth century. While it would be self-evident to most in the nineteenth century that completely emulating Puritan practice, including the attempted construction of a religiously monolithic theocracy, would be unfeasible, Froude frowned upon attempts even to continue Puritan theological belief. He warned against the sort of Evangelical theology that upheld similar theological standpoints to the Puritans, and that encouraged similar practice, even in his own day. Systematic theology itself, he argued, had also made dead what was once alive:

Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands for now two hundred years. The bloom is gone from the flower. The plumage, once shining with hues direct from heaven, is soiled and bedraggled. The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology [...].<sup>297</sup>

In the seventeenth century, Puritan theology had been vibrant. In the late nineteenth century, Froude argued, it was dead. The Evangelicals who seemed to be following Puritan theology were in fact, he stated, representing a ‘pale shadow’,<sup>298</sup> patching together what had been rejected by others:

The Evangelicals shrink from being behindhand. They have lost confidence in themselves; they play with mysticism, and admit that things untrue in one sense may be true in another. They are patching their garments from the rags which their fathers cast away, anxious rather to maintain their party than their principles, as the Tories steal policy of the Radicals to keep their cabinet in office.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 171.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>298</sup> Froude, ‘Conditions and Prospects of Protestantism’ (1868), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 153.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 168–9.

Although they claimed theological orthodoxy, they had, according to Froude, reached opinions on certain issues that were self-contradictory and could not be rationally maintained. But the Evangelicals, he argued, had a lot in common with most English Protestants. They repeated similar doctrinal statements, but they continued to believe and act upon what others in his time only pretended: ‘In the seventeenth century, all earnest English Protestants held this belief. In the nineteenth century, most of us repeat the phrases of this belief, and pretend to hold it’.<sup>300</sup> In that sense, perhaps Froude saw the Evangelicals as having the upper hand: at least they still maintained a semblance of sincerity. Given the fact that this was written in Froude’s later years, well after his return to the Church of England and apparent Protestant orthodoxy, it reveals a lot about what he perceived as religious shallowness, or even hypocrisy, in nineteenth-century England.

Froude saw the self-indulgence and heightened sense of individuality in the nineteenth century as having prevented another, newly guised, rendition of the Puritan spirit. We can only hope, he went on, that somehow the circle of history continues and the nobility and sincerity that it represents are not lost to us for ever.

Even in the context of widespread religious hypocrisy, Froude did not favour or predict a mass apostasy or departure from orthodox Church of England Protestantism, or from Christianity itself. ‘The creed of eighteen centuries is not about to fade away like an exhalation, nor are the new lights of science so exhilarating that serious persons can look with comfort to exchanging one for the other’.<sup>301</sup> He also saw the power of the Christian gospel as unmatched in the history of the world: ‘All that we call modern civilization in a sense which deserves the name is the visible expression of the transforming power of the gospel’.<sup>302</sup> Maintaining a sense of separation from an irretrievable past was important for Froude, but it was always held in the balance with the triumph of Britishness and its Christian roots, and with history’s repetitive nature and continuity.

And here, perhaps, he equivocated for a moment. For all of his rancour at their apparent stupidity and inconsistency, he had a deep admiration for Evangelical piety, sincerity, and practice. The nineteenth-century Evangelicals were spineless and ridiculous perhaps, but there was something about them, something about their

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<sup>300</sup> Froude, *Bunyan*, 50.

<sup>301</sup> Froude, ‘Plea for the free discussion of theological difficulties’ (1863), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 1, 217.

<sup>302</sup> Froude, ‘Calvinism’ (1871), 47.

‘benevolent, generous, and self-forgetful’ attitude, in which there is a little glimmer of hope, suggesting that all the greatness of Puritanism might not, after all, have been irretrievably lost.<sup>303</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Charles Kingsley (1819–1875)

Charles Kingsley’s promotion of Puritanism, like Froude’s, was far removed from the Whig, Dissenting paradigm outlined by Lang. Actually, Kingsley was Froude’s brother-in-law, and greatly admired his historical writing. Church of England minister and sometime canon of Chester Cathedral, novelist and children’s author, poet, social reformer, natural scientist (the natural history gallery in Chester Museum is named after him), man of letters, professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, and later a canon at Westminster Abbey, Kingsley was not a man to be kept to one field. Originally from Devon, he retained a lifelong love of the outdoors, of exercise and ‘manliness’, and of England.<sup>304</sup> His sermons combined warmth, practicality, and love of God, country and heritage.<sup>305</sup> He has also been associated with the Broad Church movement, and combined a passion for Britain with a commitment to the Church of England.<sup>306</sup> He did have a special interest in Puritanism too, seeing it on the one hand as a worthy subculture to be embraced and partially imitated, and on the other hand as an extremist religious movement very much of its own time, though still with lessons for the nineteenth century.

In 1985, Norman Vance’s *Sinews of the Spirit*,<sup>307</sup> about Muscular Christianity, was concerned largely with both Kingsley and Carlyle. It describes the profound impression that Carlyle’s theistic gospel had on Kingsley and Maurice (who was a

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<sup>303</sup> See Froude, ‘Conditions and Prospects of Protestantism’ (1868), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 148.

<sup>304</sup> See for instance Kingsley’s children’s novel, *The Water Babies* (The Works of Charles Kingsley, Vol. 9 (London, Macmillan, 1886; first published 1863); *Phaethon or, loose thoughts for loose thinkers* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1859); *Yeast: A Problem* (London: Macmillan, 1879; first published 1851), directed against the Oxford Movement; *Historical Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1880); *Literary and General Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1880); *Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1892); and *Miscellanies*, 2 vols. (London: John W. Parker, 1859).

<sup>305</sup> See for instance his *All Saints Day and Other Sermons* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1878); *The Good News of God* (London: Macmillan, 1881); *Discipline and Other Sermons* (London: Macmillan, 1868), *Sermons on National Subjects preached in a village church* (London: John J. Griffin, 1852); *Village Sermons and Town and Country Sermons* (London: Macmillan, 1878); *Westminster Sermons* (London: Macmillan, 1874).

<sup>306</sup> See Stewart J. Brown, ‘The Broad Church Movement, National Culture, and the Established Churches of Great Britain, c.1850–c.1900’, in Hilary M. Carey and John Gascoigne, eds., *Church and State in Old and New Worlds* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99–128, 110.

<sup>307</sup> Vance, *Sinews of the Spirit* (1985).

friend of Kingsley's, a controversial theologian and Christian socialist).<sup>308</sup> Vance emphasised the manliness that was attached to Cromwell's seventeenth-century Puritans: 'engaged in the battle for truth and right and social justice as Maurice and Kingsley envisaged it'.<sup>309</sup> At the same time, Vance made an important distinction between Carlyle, who wanted people to be hero-worshippers, and Kingsley, who wanted all to be brothers in Christ. Kingsley's emphasis on a distinctly Christian manliness has been discussed more recently by Louise Lee.<sup>310</sup> Kingsley has also been the subject of several other works relating to his various areas of interest.

Kingsley's sermons provide valuable insights into his social theories and his pioneering of Christian socialism. Along Samuel's lines, Kingsley's advocacy of better social care and sanitation could be investigated as possible developments of his advocacy of Puritanism.<sup>311</sup> Recently, Hesketh's *Science of History* included a study of Kingsley's mixed relationship with the new historical establishment, while Conlin's 'An Illiberal Descent' has provided a valuable new angle on Kingsley's unusual approach to history.<sup>312</sup>

### ***Kingsley: Westward Ho!***

Kingsley's bestselling historical novel of 1855, *Westward Ho!*, was heavily influenced by Froude's representation of sailors in the sixteenth century. In this novel, Kingsley portrayed Puritanism as a cultural extreme with much to teach the patriotic Englishman. His character Salvation Yeo manifests this most clearly. He is first mentioned when Yeo's elderly mother pleads with the book's hero, Amyas, to find her son: he has been lost on the high seas and has been missing for years. When Amyas discovers him, it is not as the profligate English sailor he had come to expect, but as a converted Anabaptist, a firebrand and a fanatic. At first troublesome to Amyas, he eventually becomes a potent force in Amyas's own journey towards piety and maturity, and gloriously elevates loyalty to crown and country through his higher loyalty to God (in much the way that both Macaulay and Froude described the extreme patriotism of the sixteenth-century Puritan sailors). His interpretation of the Old Testament renders him a most vigorous opponent of the Spaniard and the 'Papist'; he sees them as enemies of God himself rather than just of England. He

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<sup>308</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>309</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>310</sup>Lee, 'Kingsley's stuttering Christian manliness' (2008).

<sup>311</sup>Samuel, 'The Discovery of Puritanism' (1993), 206.

<sup>312</sup>Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011); Conlin, 'An illiberal descent' (2011).

infuses a genuine un-hypocritical piety into the crew's notion of the connection between their country and their church, and makes Protestantism a living reality for them rather than a quasi-political idea. Yeo also helps Amyas in his quest for vengeance against the Spaniards, who had caused the heroine Rose's death in the Inquisition, leading to his pivotal role in the dramatic climax of the novel, set in the storm during the famous sea-chase immediately after the failed Spanish Armada:

A crack which rent the sky, and made the granite ring and quiver; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast and sail, and rock, and Salvation Yeo as he stood just in front of Amyas, the tiller in his hand. All red-hot, transfigured into fire; and behind, the black, black night!<sup>313</sup>

The Spanish ship has hurtled into the rocks and its destruction, Amyas has cried out at being deprived of revenge, and now the lightning strikes. Amyas is blinded, and Yeo is sent to the death he desired, burning and martyr-like. This profound experience leads Amyas to the conviction that his search for vengeance is wrong and he settles down to peaceful, married and idyllic life.

In *Westward Ho!*, Yeo is representative of much more than a sixteenth-century Anabaptist. He becomes the archetypal Puritan (Kingsley even described him as having a 'Puritan head').<sup>314</sup> He is fanatical, raving, other-worldly, pious, immense, and one of the greatest forces for good in the book, both in his uncompromising piety and in the bold colours with which he represents the dangers of Biblical misinterpretation. His very name – Salvation of or for the Yeoman, perhaps – speaks volumes.

Finally, then, *Westward Ho!* portrayed Puritans as patriotic defenders of England and English Protestantism, who trail-blazed the Empire on the one hand, and promoted anti-Catholicism on the other. Kingsley's heroes in *Westward Ho!*, like the New England Puritans we see elsewhere, were adventurers and sea explorers.

So Kingsley's defence and promotion of Puritanism was, in a literary sense, very powerful. The ideas of character and sincerity, similar to those propounded by Carlyle, were here developed via Froude's examination of them into traits that taught fictional characters. *Westward Ho!* was not necessarily intended as a didactic lesson, but certainly functions effectively as a coming-of-age novel in which the principal

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<sup>313</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (London: Macmillan, 1879; first published 1855), ch. 32.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 14.

characters mature and, of course, are profoundly influenced by the patriotism and piety of Puritanism.

Kingsley's advocacy of Puritanism in *Westward Ho!* was subtler than that of the historians who focused primarily on factual historical writing about the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although he was part-time Regius Professor at Cambridge from 1860, as Norman Vance argued in his Oxford DNB article he 'lacked some of the critical and technical skills of later professional historians'.<sup>315</sup> The pressure from proponents of a more 'rigorously professional footing' in historical study, particularly E. A. Freeman, combined with other family pressures, induced him to resign his post in 1869.

### ***Kingsley: 'Plays and Puritans'***

Kingsley, like Macaulay and others, described the Puritans as a minority. Here, he differentiated between extreme Puritans and the moderate and visionary antecedents of nineteenth-century attitudes and opinions, but still gave the latter the 'Puritan' title. He sang the praises of these moderates:

For surely these Puritans were dramatic enough, poetic enough, picturesque enough. We do not speak of such fanatics as Balfour or Burley, or any other extravagant person whom it may have suited Walter Scott to take as a typical personage. We speak of the average Puritan nobleman, gentleman, merchant or farmer; and hold him to have been a picturesque and poetical man, – a man of higher imagination and deeper feeling than the average of court poets; and a man of sound taste also.<sup>316</sup>

Kingsley credited the Puritans with being, on the whole, a minority of insight, good taste and good breeding: the perfect Victorian gentlemen before their time. It was this comparison that fuelled the argument of his 'Plays and Puritans'.<sup>317</sup>

In this late and rather sultry essay, Kingsley went on to commend Puritanism for its piety, and for the social example it set, of modest dress, humanity, and wholesome art, especially in contrast to the unrestrained debauchery of the Restoration era. This essay was written late in his life at a time of financial crisis and was never critically well received. Even so, its cultural critique and praise of

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<sup>315</sup> Norman Vance, Oxford DNB article on Charles Kingsley. See also Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 55–60.

<sup>316</sup> Charles Kingsley, 'Plays and Puritans' in *Plays and Puritans, and Other Historical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1890; first published 1873), 1–84, 73.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

Puritanism can be valuably compared with those offered by Stoughton, Anderson and John Charles Ryle. In this essay, Kingsley was not particularly interested in a wider political impact of Puritanism, and did not directly associate it with the advent of British political liberty, or discuss Puritans in relation to their theological extremism. But his work challenged any who argued that support for Puritanism within the Established church was limited to the Evangelical party.

Froude in his mature period was very private about his religious views. Kingsley, on the other hand, was a preacher and a pastor throughout his life. His social Christianity is often associated with mid-late century liberalism, but this was more due to his inclusivity than any particular unorthodoxy of doctrine. He tends to be considered broad church and a liberal, although his sermons did not deny traditional Protestant orthodoxy.

In 'Plays and Puritans', Kingsley saw the historical repetition articulated by Froude even more vividly in cultural tastes and practices:

The temper of the British nation towards 'Art' is simply that of the old Puritans, softened, no doubt, and widened, but only enough so as to permit Art, not to encourage [...].<sup>318</sup>

Later in this essay, he repeated several times that Puritanism had been approved by nineteenth-century styles and tastes:

Either all England is grown very foolish, or the Puritan opinions on several matters have been justified by time [...] Even in the matter of dress and of manners, the Puritan triumph has been complete. Even their worst enemies have come over to their side, and the 'whirligig of time' has brought about its revenge [...] The Puritan, and not the Cavalier conception of what a British gentleman should be is the one accepted by the whole nation at this day.<sup>319</sup>

This conception that the nineteenth century had taken on important visual attributes of Puritanism shall be considered more fully in Chapter Four. At this stage, it is important to note that Kingsley here described the nineteenth century not simply as another stage in a repeating historical cycle, but as seeing the vindication of cultural Puritanism.

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 73, 74, 75.

### 2.2.5 John Buxton Marsden (1803–1870)

Another Church of England minister who contemplated Puritanism, of more decidedly Evangelical leanings, was John Buxton Marsden. He was a minister in Staffordshire, Middlesex, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, and in 1851 moved to St Peter's, Dale End, Birmingham, where he served as Perpetual Curate (in that Parish the designation for Priest-in-Charge) until his death in 1870, although a lingering illness incapacitated him throughout the mid to late 1860s.<sup>320</sup> His main pastime appears to have been history-writing, and his main field of interest was the Puritans. His *History of the Early Puritans* was published in 1850, followed by *History of the Later Puritans* in 1852. In 1856, his two-volume *History of Christian Churches and Sects* was published. He edited the moderate Evangelical *Christian Observer* for ten years from 1859 to 1869 (although because of his illness he did not work on it for the last four of those years). Marsden's obituary in the *Christian Observer* attributed his painful illness and slow death to the strains of continuing parish ministry when he should have been devoted to his research and writing. It bewailed his obscurity and lack of ecclesiastical influence.<sup>321</sup>

Although he has a short entry in the Oxford DNB,<sup>322</sup> Marsden has received little critical attention. George Mosse, one of the few writers to mention Marsden in an article, stated that he was 'an avowed enemy of the Puritans'.<sup>323</sup> From the undulating nature of Marsden's presentation, and his occasionally cynical arguments, it is easy to see how he could be thus misread. But in reality, Marsden wrote on the whole very favourably about the Puritans. Before we consider this in more detail, however, let us observe his views on history more generally.

Marsden was in some ways typical of the serious amateur historian writing immediately prior to the major developments in publication and ease of retrieving key primary materials from his period of interest, including the *Calendars of State Papers* (the first volume of which was published in 1856). He relied on both primary and secondary sources, though he increasingly used primary sources in his later volumes. He strongly dissociated himself from extremist interpretations and prided himself on his lack of prejudice, but still saw his role as a historian as to judge the

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<sup>320</sup> See 'Records of the ecclesiastical parish of St Peter, Dale End', *Birmingham City Archives*. Catalogue Details, available online at <<http://www.a2a.org.uk>>, accessed 10 January 2007.

<sup>321</sup> 'Obituary of the Rev. J. B. Marsden', *The Christian Observer*, August 1870, 584–588.

<sup>322</sup> By Gordon Goodwin, revised Nilanjana Banerji.

<sup>323</sup> George L. Mosse, 'Puritan Political Thought and The "Cases of Conscience"', *Church History*, 23 (1954), 109–18, 111.

facts and reach a moral conclusion. 'It is not', he stated, 'the use of history to pronounce with dogmatism, but rather to lay bare with an equal hand the faults and virtues whether of parties or of men; and to teach the lessons of wisdom by suggesting the exercise of discriminating justice, and of wise and patient thought'.<sup>324</sup> He argued passionately and coherently for mutual tolerance and acceptance.

As we have seen with several of the other historians in this study, and again as proposed by Lowenthal,<sup>325</sup> Marsden emphasised the gulf between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and his own day.<sup>326</sup> During the course of his *Puritans*, he explained several ways in which the world had changed. Let us view the idea of toleration as an example of the way he presented this:

Toleration, we must repeat, was a word unknown. To us of the present generation, it is, and must ever remain, a problem hard to be resolved, how good men could carry on so long and so fierce a warfare, while the questions at issue were, by the confession of each party, of secondary, and not of vital, importance.<sup>327</sup>

In this context, Marsden was referring to the struggles between Puritans and Prelatists in the 1590s. His emphasis of the inevitable divide separating the centuries echoed Carlyle's sense that Puritanism was beyond the reach of the nineteenth century. It demonstrated at once desire and inability to understand the past. The 'war' over less than crucial issues was difficult to comprehend: for it to have been fought by good men, over a long time period, would remain a mystery.

Even in the seventeenth century, Marsden explained, religious toleration was still looked down upon by the vast majority of puritans. 'Even Baxter, who abhorred the violence of the Presbyterians, felt it necessary to purge himself from the imputation of not favouring intolerance'.<sup>328</sup> Here he stated briefly that there were 'some minds upon whom a clearer light had broken in', who 'reasoned for toleration' on the grounds of 'hatred of oppression and a reverence for the truth'.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 310.

<sup>325</sup> Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985).

<sup>326</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 47.

<sup>327</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 231.

<sup>328</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 158.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

Marsden was averse to crediting his sources, but did distance himself from Cromwell's most vociferous eulogists.<sup>330</sup> He specifically referred to Merle D'Aubigne, but he may have meant Carlyle too. Despite this, he was positive about the achievement of 'disinterring' Cromwell. He wrote:

The character of this extraordinary man, buried beneath the slanders of two centuries, is now once more disinterred. The eagerness with which it is discussed, and the extreme variety of the conclusions which our living writers derive from it, will probably afford hereafter a curious subject in the light of which posterity will study the condition of England, and of English feeling political and religious, in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>331</sup>

Poignantly observed. Marsden saw that divergent views of Cromwell and the seventeenth century in the nineteenth century could be a topic 'for posterity'. Thus he pre-empted the work of twentieth and twenty-first century historians, from Gooch, Hale and Peardon to the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project, Richardson, Samuel, Worden, and Hutton.<sup>332</sup>

Marsden's views on hero-worship were a little ambiguous. On the one hand, he resented the concept as unchristian and 'unworthy of a christian nation'.<sup>333</sup> On the other hand, however, he was deeply attracted by the study of great character.

### ***Marsden's presentation of the Puritans***

Marsden's presentation of the Puritans was always mixed; he described the great impact they had on England and New England, but he also compared them with religious and political extremism of his own day,<sup>334</sup> seeing both strengths and weaknesses. He followed Macaulay in attributing to the Puritans the growth of political liberties, stating: 'by these men, whatever their infirmities, the foundations of our English liberties were fastened and secured'.<sup>335</sup> But he also moved beyond this by suggesting that his readers might have something to learn from the Puritans' downfall: 'We enjoy the fruits for which they toiled; and warned by their misfortunes, we may escape the rocks on which they perished'.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 396.

<sup>332</sup> Ronald Hutton, *Debates in Stuart History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>333</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 170.

<sup>334</sup> See Marsden's discussion of Mary Dyer in *Early Puritans* (1850), 314–315.

<sup>335</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 6.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

‘Shall we for ever tread in the erring footsteps of our forefathers?’<sup>337</sup> Marsden’s final plea at the end of his *Later Puritans* was an impassioned call to his readers to learn from history and to work for achieving moderation and peace for England. In the main body of his work, didacticism was tempered by a description of underlying similarities between struggles in the past and in his own century. He described the historical treatment of the regicide of Charles I.

Writers, however, of every shade have thought it necessary to assume the consent of the nation, because it had been supposed that without its concurrence such an outrage could not have been perpetuated. Recent events have taught us the weakness of this reasoning. We have seen governments uprooted, against the sense of millions, by a morning’s uproar and the outrage of a mob.<sup>338</sup>

Marsden’s understanding of history was deeply affected by his view of current affairs. Soon afterwards in his narrative, a moving section compares the seventeenth century massacres in Ireland to the French massacres in Algiers in the late 1840s, just before this was published.<sup>339</sup> Until the question he presented at the very end of his major work (‘shall we forever tread in the erring footsteps of our forefathers?’), Marsden did not seem interested in teaching moral lessons to his readers so much as showing that the seventeenth century bore many unpleasant similarities to the nineteenth.

In the advertisement to his *History of the Early Puritans*, he stated that he wanted to present his work ‘to the cause of Christian charity, of moderation, and of peace’.<sup>340</sup> He was not ostensibly aiming, therefore, at promoting one side of a debate over another. His mission of promoting moderation and peace, however, became in its own way didactic during the course of his narrative. He did not always hold the Puritans up as exemplars, but did see them as teaching important lessons to his nineteenth-century readers, particularly through their various misfortunes and sufferings.<sup>341</sup>

As a Church of England minister, Marsden’s description of the Puritans in relationship to the Church of England also merits particular note. He stated that ‘Had

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<sup>337</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 472.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 301–2.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>340</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), advertisement.

<sup>341</sup> See Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 108.

the puritans remained within the national church they would have possessed a vast and salutary influence'.<sup>342</sup> When defining the Puritans, those whom he thought the *best* Puritans were those who remained in the national church. For him, the Puritans were heroes, but the most heroic deed was to remain part of the establishment, so he modified his definition of them until it fitted his idea of heroism.

### ***Marsden's Early and Later Puritanism***

Marsden's narrative of the Early and Later Puritans followed Macaulay's account of ecclesiastical changes in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries relatively closely, but went into more detail than Macaulay could afford in his introduction, and obviously had a much narrower focus.

Marsden considered the divisions and distinctions within what was known as Puritanism in some depth in his *History of the Early and Later Puritans*, and then more briefly in his *History of Christian Churches and Sects*. His main distinction was between 'The Early Puritans' and 'The Later Puritans', generationally separated by the changes in the theology and polity of the Church of England at the beginning of the seventeenth century. His main project was a historical narrative that bridged the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For him, Puritanism was originally a very broad term expressing a sense of dissatisfaction with the Church of England during Elizabeth's reign. At this time, 'Under the common name of puritans were comprised [...] all those except the Romish body who were dissatisfied with the state of things in the church recently established'.<sup>343</sup> The dissatisfaction they expressed ranged from service styles to ecclesiastical polity, and was most notably expressed by Cartwright in his arguments with Whitgift. Although he did not give his sources for the use of the term at such an early date, it is likely that Marsden, like Anderson, was taking a cue from Richard Baxter. He did not attempt an analysis of the origins of the word. Both historians assumed the reader understood that 'Puritan' was meant insultingly in the sixteenth century, and used their examples to demonstrate the difficulties associated with religious fervour in the early days of Elizabeth. Labelling people as Puritans became associated with marginalising and segregating them.

Dissenters and other separatist groups broke off from the Established Church, but the 'true' Puritans (according to Marsden's definition) remained in it and

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<sup>342</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 96–7.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

attempted to change it from within.<sup>344</sup> The Puritans of the seventeenth century, according to Marsden, had different priorities and struggles from sixteenth-century Puritans. Just as Macaulay had argued, so Marsden followed that as the Church of England flirted with Arminianism and released its grip on Reformed Calvinistic doctrine, the Puritans became more doctrinally hard-line and shifted the ground of their arguments to react against what they saw as the apostatising and attempted re-Romanising of the Church. Many later Puritans did leave the Church of England, although Marsden suggested that the most loyal and the most Puritan (his ‘true’ Puritans) faded at the start of the Civil War, never able to reject the establishment.<sup>345</sup>

The new Puritan generation that Marsden described here was concerned with church government. It also marked the death of Puritanism ‘properly so termed’ (again, Marsden’s ‘true’ Puritans).<sup>346</sup> *The History of Christian Churches and Sects* described the ongoing suffering of the Church Puritans both before and after the overthrow of the Church in the 1640s. Although these Church Puritans were divided and distracted,<sup>347</sup> in this work he did not see them as being made extinct when the Church was overthrown.

In *The Early and Later Puritans*, Marsden described the various machinations of *Political, Religious, Democratic, and Church Puritans*, all of whom he saw as separate groups. Only the *Democratic Puritans* were described as an extreme and often powerful sect, possessing ‘ungoverned passions’, ‘intense fanaticism’, and ‘profound ignorance’.<sup>348</sup> Those in control in the brief Commonwealth were, according to Marsden, a mixture of different types of Puritans. When Marsden stated that ‘during the commonwealth and the protectorate of Cromwell puritanism enjoyed its triumph’, and ‘it was to be seen whether Puritanism would withstand the temptations of prosperity’,<sup>349</sup> he seems to have been referring more to Political rather than more Religious Puritans.

By 1650, Marsden argued, national feeling had begun to turn against Political Puritanism.<sup>350</sup> At the battle of Dunbar, English Political Puritans (many Presbyterian,

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<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>345</sup> See Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 285, 385, 386, 391.

<sup>346</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 385.

<sup>347</sup> In time, most of those who had been Church Puritans became moderate Presbyterians. *Later Puritans* (1852), 247.

<sup>348</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 386–7.

<sup>349</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 326, 327.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

others Independent) fought against Scottish Presbyterians, and Puritanism experienced ‘the turning of its arms upon itself’.<sup>351</sup> After this, many of the Religious Puritans broke away from the Puritan statesmen<sup>352</sup> and a new diaspora was created. Religious Puritans were instrumental in the re-instatement of Charles II.<sup>353</sup> Political Puritanism ‘found itself deserted, and discovered with dismay that it had lost its hold upon the people’.<sup>354</sup>

Marsden described the 1662 Act of Uniformity as ‘treacherous’.<sup>355</sup> Many of the Religious Puritans, who had helped to restore Charles II to the throne, were expelled from the Church of England. At this stage, Marsden stated that: ‘The term Puritan was passing out of date, and that of presbyterian now succeeded it’. Marsden viewed the Puritan religion of the ejected ministers and their descendents as providing the basis of Nonconformist Presbyterianism. It also became ‘cold and formal, then arian, and at length socinian’. But Puritanism was not, he asserted, a direct ancestor of ‘the Dissent of the present century’.<sup>356</sup> During the course of his study, Marsden had identified and described no fewer than nine different categories of Puritanism.<sup>357</sup>

Despite their differences, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Puritans were close enough, according to Marsden, to fall under the same appellation.

Marsden was never quite clear on what he meant by Puritanism proper. At times he seemed to argue that ‘real’ Puritans remained in the established church, and disappeared during the Commonwealth era. At other times he seemed to view Puritanism as synonymous with Presbyterianism. But at other times, he described ‘Independents’ as being under the banner of the Puritans.<sup>358</sup> Marsden’s work is a

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 336.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 343.

<sup>353</sup> ‘Several of the old puritan leaders who had taken arms against the father were now fighting for the son’. Ibid., 406.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., 468, 469.

<sup>357</sup> These were: Ultra-Puritans (J. B. Marsden, *History of Christian Churches and Sects*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1856), Vol. 2, 134), Church Puritans (*Christian Churches and Sects*, Vol. 2 (1856), 135), Doctrinal Puritans (*Christian Churches and Sects*, Vol. 2 (1856), 138), New World Puritans (*Early Puritans* (1850)), Presbyterians and Independents (*Christian Churches and Sects*, Vol. 2 (1856), 131), Religious Puritans (*Christian Churches and Sects*, Vol. 2 (1856), 137), Political Puritans (*Early Puritans* (1850), 385–7), Democratic Puritans (*Early Puritans* (1850), 386–7).

<sup>358</sup> Marsden, *Christian Churches and Sects*, Vol. 2 (1856), 137. He also, however, stated in his *Later Puritans* (1852), 291, that Independents were not strictly Puritans.

testimony to the complexity of trying to view such a broad term which had been put to so many multiple uses.

### **2.2.6 John Charles Ryle (1816–1900)**

Brought up in Macclesfield in Cheshire, John Charles Ryle was converted to Evangelicalism while at Oxford University. He was a Church of England minister in East Anglia for many years, and in 1880 became the first Bishop of Liverpool. As well as being an Evangelical, Ryle was also a patriot, a political and social conservative, and a great advocate of the Empire. From the 1850s onwards, he developed a lasting reputation as a preacher, polemicist and pamphleteer. He also became deeply involved in various mission agencies. He also was very interested in history, but his historical works were limited to public lectures, popular books, and references within many articles and exhortational pamphlets on other subjects. He singled out three groups as representing his spiritual forbears: Reformers, Puritans and eighteenth-century Evangelicals. In his consideration of the Reformers and eighteenth-century Evangelicals, he emphasised the ‘Churchmanship’ of both.

After several biographical studies focusing more on his pastoral work, preaching and religious teaching,<sup>359</sup> Ryle is now attracting attention for his contributions as a historian. A recent chapter on Ryle by David Bebbington emphasised both his interest in history and his English patriotism.<sup>360</sup>

#### ***Ryle and the Puritans***

Ryle is another character through whom many of the other historians in this selection can be seen and mapped again. He stated that he followed Carlyle in his views of Cromwell, but did not seem entirely clear what this entailed. He referred to Marsden and Stoughton as commendable historians of the Puritans, and, like many others, saw Macaulay and Froude as ‘great historians’ of the nineteenth century.

His relationship with the Puritans was complicated. As a ‘Churchman’, he disagreed with their ecclesiology and thought that they made bad decisions. In his description of their history, none of the Puritans remained within the Church of England, and yet he fervently encouraged Church of England clergy to emulate their

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<sup>359</sup> See especially Peter Toon, ed., *J. C. Ryle: A Self Portrait* (Swengel, Pa: Reiner, 1975); M. Guthrie Clark, *John Charles Ryle* (London: Church Book Room, 1947); Loane, *John Charles Ryle* (1953); Eric Russell, *That Man of Granite with the Heart of a Child: Biography of J.C. Ryle* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2001), J. I. Packer, *Faithfulness and Holiness: the Witness of J.C. Ryle* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002).

<sup>360</sup> See Bebbington, ‘John Charles Ryle’ (2008).

devotion and pastoral commitment. Thus he combined an Evangelical agreement with many tenets of Puritan theology with a Church of England dislike of their ecclesiology. But even in his critical view of their ecclesiology, he remained broadly sympathetic. When he described Puritan ecclesiology, it was as if he were demonstrating that even these great men could make mistakes. There was a similar effect when he described their mixed views of toleration. He described them as guilty of ‘stupid intolerance’, perhaps thinking of several Puritan faults and apparent inconsistencies that were also important problems for Marsden.<sup>361</sup>

At the same time, Ryle was deeply influenced by Puritan theology and piety, and built up a fearsome library of Puritan works. He became especially interested in the Puritan history of East Anglia, where he lived for several decades. Along with his lectures and short works on Richard Baxter, William Gurnall, Samuel Ward, Thomas Manton, and Archbishop Laud,<sup>362</sup> he also discussed the Puritans and Puritanism as side-themes in many of his other works. His history was always pointedly didactic and teleological, teaching his readers lessons from his subject.

For example, Ryle put an emphasis on the Puritans’ Sabbath-observance as a positive model for his nineteenth-century readers. He associated this with Evangelicalism, but twenty-first century writers would be more likely to see it as a nineteenth-century cultural phenomenon. As has been seen, several of our historians presented the Puritans as models to be emulated in the nineteenth century. The Evangelical historians in this selection in particular tended to commend Puritan theological understanding, piety and practice. Puritanism was an important marker for nineteenth-century Evangelicals outside and inside the established church in their quests both for historical justification and theological teaching.

Ryle also placed a significant emphasis on the Puritans’ sufferings. For him, as for Marsden, the Puritans’ sufferings were not purely an aspect of their Nonconformity and persecution by the establishment. Rather, through the way they were consistently highlighted, the sufferings were used to vindicate and support the Puritans’ piety and even theology: they were harshly treated and excluded, so they

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<sup>361</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Principles for Churchmen* (London: William Hunt, 1884), 49. It is worth noting that the publication dates of Ryle’s work often do not reflect their date of writing, as he frequently chose to publish papers years after they had been written.

<sup>362</sup> J. C. Ryle, ‘Baxter and his times’ (London: 1853); ‘Samuel Ward’, in *Facts and Men: Being pages from English Church History between 1553 and 1683* (London: W. Hunt, 1882), 195–215; ‘William Gurnall’, in *Facts and Men* (1882), 292–351; ‘An Estimate of Manton’ (1870), from *The Works of Thomas Manton*, ed. William Harris, 22 vols. (London: James Nisbet, 1870–1875), Vol. 2, ix–xix.

became, in a sense, heroes. This definition of heroism, and way of attaining it, was a far cry from Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Although Carlyle certainly had an impact on the promotion of the Hero in the nineteenth century, the Hero's appearance in Ryle's work is often as the man who was cast out and persecuted.

Like Macaulay and many of the other historians in this selection, Ryle too described the Puritans as harbingers of political liberty:

Never let us forget that the happy and profitable freedom which we enjoy was only won by long-continued and intense struggles, by the blood and sufferings of noble-minded men, of whom the world was not worthy; and never forget that the men who won this freedom for us were those most abused men – the Puritans.<sup>363</sup>

His lecture on Baxter, from which this quotation is taken, was first delivered in the early 1850s, only a few years after the first volume of Macaulay's *History of England*, but the sense that political liberty had been achieved by those often styled as Puritans was by then already well embedded in English historical opinion.

***Ryle: similarities between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries***

Unlike most of the writers under consideration here, Ryle did not emphasise the historical gulf between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries: indeed, it was not in his interest. Rather, Ryle made a point of highlighting the similarities between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. In his lectures and essays, he would rhetorically ask what a similarity was between the past and the present, then answer with many didactic comparisons. Two particularly memorable comparisons between Puritanism and nineteenth-century Church of England Evangelicalism follow:

There are some ecclesiastical orators of high rank and brilliant reputation, who are never weary of flinging the epithet "Puritanical" at Evangelical Churchmen, as the hardest word of scorn that they can employ. Let no Churchman's heart fail when he hear himself stigmatised as "a Puritan". The man who tells the world that there is any disgrace in being "a Puritan" is only exposing his own ignorance of plain facts, or shamefully presuming on that wide-spread ignorance of English Church history which marks the nineteenth century.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Ryle, 'Baxter', 37.

<sup>364</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Facts and Men* (1882), xvi.

Mocking certain credible ‘ecclesiastical orators’ who used Puritan as an insult in his own time, Ryle called upon Evangelicals in the Church of England not to see this appellation as an insult, but to credit it to themselves. He repeated a similar notion in his pamphlet *Can a greater amount of unity be attained?*, in different though equally passionate terms:

In fine, the old Evangelical flag, the flag which for 300 years has braved the battle and the breeze, is a flag of which no member of our school has any need to be ashamed. It may look tattered and torn, after many a storm and many a conflict. It may lack the glitter and gaudiness and attractive colours of some more modern banners. But never was there less cause to change the flag, – less cause to lower it one inch, – less cause to hang out signals of distress. Rather, I say, let us nail it to the masts, and fight under it, if need be, till we sink.<sup>365</sup>

Ryle described Anglican Evangelicalism as a development from the Protestant Reformation (three hundred years earlier), through Puritanism. This demonstrated the importance he saw in historical succession, even though here and elsewhere he did write as though Christianity had begun at the Protestant Reformation. This connection with the past was an effective response to those who claimed that identification with Puritanism existed only outside the Church of England. Ryle encouraged those within the Church of England who identified with the historic Puritan movement to consider themselves as part of a persecuted minority within a majority Church, and to believe that this minority had a rich ecclesiastical tradition behind it. Ryle was himself immersed in Puritan readings and theology, and was a warm supporter of the Evangelical cause. He would have shuddered at Froude’s assertions that Puritan theology and practice were no longer credible, but may well have agreed with him that many in the nineteenth-century Church of England no longer believed in an orthodox Protestant creed.

### **2.3 Conclusion: recurring approaches**

As we can see, both the recovery and the definition of Puritanism can be characterised by their complexity. Chapters Three and Four will analyse the detail of this recovery thematically. We can roughly divide our historians’ presentations of Puritanism into political and social categories: these will form the structure of Chapters Three and Four respectively.

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<sup>365</sup> Ryle, *Can a greater amount of unity be attained?* (London: n.d.), 31.

### 2.3.1 Political themes

For many of our historians, starting with Macaulay, there was a great emphasis on national strength, and the Puritans were increasingly seen as important in developing both England's internal coherence and its international power during the seventeenth century. During the height of mid-nineteenth century national and Imperial pride, presenting the Puritans as patriots who had helped make Britain great provided readers with a 'new' set of ancestors to look up to.

A major innovation of Macaulay's *History of England* was in arguing that the Parliamentarians of the mid-seventeenth-century Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate helped to lay the groundwork for what was to be achieved at the Glorious Revolution: that is, the beginning of the triumph of English political liberty and the advent of religious toleration. During the course of the nineteenth century, this sense that the Civil War, Commonwealth and Protectorate era had seen the beginnings of political liberty and toleration gradually became the dominant view amongst historians and the general public, regardless of political party preferences.

However, presenting the Puritans in a new positive light caused several problems for our historians. Several key elements that were seen as positive achievements of the Puritans, including their ideals of patriotism, liberty, and toleration, were also counterbalanced or contradicted by other aspects of the Puritan legacy.

### 2.3.2 Social themes

Once the political significance of Puritanism had been established and was widely recognised, it became more acceptable for our historians to present the Puritans as positive social role models. For all of our historians, it was important to emphasise that, contrary to Hume and others, Puritanism was *not* born out of hypocrisy, and that the leading Puritans were both sincere and virtuous.

The historians under study here all stressed that Puritanism was a valid descendent of the Reformation, with solid Protestant credentials. This groundwork was important in order for them to argue that Puritanism represented orthodoxy and integrity within the churches – a particularly important point for Evangelicals aiming to connect themselves with Puritans in the nineteenth century, or for others trying to show historically that Laud and the Arminians, rather than the Puritans themselves, were the theological innovators. Macaulay introduced this argument in his early 'Milton' essay, and it would perhaps be a helpful contribution to the recent debates

concerning the doctrinal convictions of the pre-Laudian Church of England.<sup>366</sup> The Evangelical historians used this re-validation of Puritanism as a way to present it as their religious ancestor, giving their own movement more credibility. Carlyle and Froude, however, both vociferously opposed this view, stating that Puritanism's theological and practical tenets were no longer viable, and that Evangelicalism was merely a 'pale shadow'.<sup>367</sup> For them, Puritanism's importance lay in idealised heroic characters and moral strength.

Beyond theological preferences, the Evangelical historians and Kingsley in particular also aimed to present Puritan social and cultural preferences in a more positive light. In some senses, this was a natural progression from the idea that they were sincere. However, we can also see it in the context of these historians attempting to guide their readers' own preferences and encourage them to adopt aspects of Puritan attitudes and lifestyles themselves. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, this idea that history had a specific teleological role, which had been a key aspect both of Puritanism's original denigration and its nineteenth-century recovery, was near the end of its lifespan.

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<sup>366</sup> A debate has raged within academic circles for the last two decades concerning whether the Puritans or the Laudians were more theologically orthodox in the Church of England in the early seventeenth century. For both sides of the argument, see for instance Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Prebyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (1988); Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>367</sup> See Froude, 'Conditions and Prospects of Protestantism' (1868), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 153.

## **Chapter 3: The political impact of Puritanism**

### **3.1 Puritans bringing great change**

The Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace represented a triumphal episode for the British Empire. In Mrs Gaskell's *North and South*, the protagonists converge there, and it is there that heroine Margaret Hale finally begins to understand her own country and her place in it.<sup>368</sup> It was the perfect setting for this realisation, as it was also the place where the British people realised and celebrated their own place in the world, and the responsibility and honour that came with it. The Great Exhibition was the inspiration for countless pamphlets and lectures, and the writers in our selection were no exception. John Stoughton reflected the general mood when he stated:

The invitation we have given to the world, to send its treasures to enrich and bedeck our Crystal Palace, and its tribes to visit us, for the sake not only of inspecting that great emporium but of witnessing our national condition under its various aspects, implies a conscious greatness, on the part of our country, sufficient to warrant such a bold and unprecedented step. It would be presumptuous and idle for an inferior state to ask her potent neighbours thus to honour her, and no such state would venture on the experiment. Indeed, the resources necessary for carrying out so formidable an enterprise could not be at its command. Great Britain, while she assumes by her present conduct a high standing in the rank of nations, can with perfect easy justify herself in this respect.<sup>369</sup>

Britain in 1851 was at the absolute peak of its world supremacy. As Brown has noted, 'From the close of the Napoleonic Wars until the beginning of the Great War, the United Kingdom was *the* great world power'.<sup>370</sup> This sense of England's superiority, Brown argues, was often connected to a providential belief that their country was the child of God's special favour.<sup>371</sup> Wheeler has also pointed out that there was something quintessentially Protestant about the Great Exhibition and the

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<sup>368</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994; first published 1855).

<sup>369</sup> Stoughton, *The Palace of Glass and the Gathering of People* (1851), 53–54. Stoughton was not the only of our historians to have a strong emotional reaction to what he saw. As Cantor has observed, 'it behoved Christians to subject their own responses to the Exhibition to rigorous spiritual examination' (Cantor, *Religion and the Great Exhibition*, 2011).

<sup>370</sup> Brown, Stewart J., *Providence and Empire, 1815–1914* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2008), 1.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

supremacy it represented.<sup>372</sup> The historians in this study both imbibed and promoted this belief, and they increasingly presented the Puritans, and Cromwell in particular, as having a key role both in shaping England as that place of God's special favour, and in helping make it superior to other nations.

### 3.1.1 Cromwell as a great leader

As we have already seen, the remarkable figure of Oliver Cromwell sparked great debate and emotion; indeed, he was presented as a figurehead for Puritanism. Our historians portrayed Cromwell as strengthening England's interests at home and abroad, and he became a representative hero for nineteenth-century Britain.

The revival of Cromwell's reputation was crucial for, and in some ways central to, the recovery of Puritanism. As we have seen, Macaulay was a key writer in the recovery of both Puritanism and Cromwell from their poor eighteenth-century reputations. Blair Worden and Peter Karsten have stated that Macaulay's opinion on Cromwell was initially critical and became more favourable over time. However, it seems that, in reality, Macaulay's descriptions of Cromwell were always infused with a great admiration for his strength and courage, right from his early essays of the 1820s.

In *Patriot Heroes in England and America* (1978), which contains a crucial study of Cromwell's reputation, Karsten stated that 'Thomas Babington Macaulay first regarded Cromwell as a "buffoon"', but that by 1828 he acknowledged Cromwell's popularity with 'the great body of our countrymen' and that he 'eventually came to champion Cromwell's "high, stout, honest English heart"'.<sup>373</sup> However, when we observe Macaulay's arguments closely, we can see that the dichotomy that Karsten presents between his apparently earlier negative view that Cromwell was a 'buffoon', and a later claim that Cromwell was universally popular, is false.

First, we need to correct the timeline. Macaulay's statements about Cromwell's popularity and heart (1828) were actually written before his descriptions of Cromwell as a buffoon (1831).

Second, both views need to be taken in context. Macaulay's suggestion that the 'great body of our countrymen' favoured Cromwell can be found in his essay for

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<sup>372</sup> Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies: Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>373</sup> Karsten, *Patriot Heroes* (1978), 145–146.

the *Edinburgh Review* on ‘Hallam’ (September 1828), written notionally as a review of Hallam’s *Constitutional History*, which was published the previous year.<sup>374</sup> Here, Macaulay presented Cromwell as a natural-born leader, a sort of David of England, and as a figure greater than Napoleon. But his memory or reputation, Macaulay argued, was soiled in the aftermath of the Restoration. While he was broadly positive about Hallam’s own even-handedness, Macaulay clearly had strong feelings about the treatment that seventeenth-century history had been given to date:

We should probably like Mr. Hallam’s book more if, instead of pointing out with strict fidelity the bright points and the dark spots of both parties, he had exerted to whitewash the one and blacken the other. But we should certainly prize it far less. Eulogy and invective may be had for the asking. But for cold rigid justice, the one weight and the one measure, we know not where else we can look.<sup>375</sup>

Macaulay held fairness and good historical judgment as sacred, but this did not stop him from preferring one view of events to another. In fact, Macaulay framed his own moral assessment of the events of the mid-seventeenth century within his passion for historical truth and accuracy. His own positive view of Cromwell, then, was from the outset presented as the antithesis to an invective eulogy: it was a measured recovery built on the principle of fair judgment, in response to a long-lasting conspiracy against the man. This is a crucial aspect of our historians’ recovery of Puritanism. It was not simply the result of a political pendulum swinging back in Cromwell’s favour, but it grew out of a fundamental change in attitudes to history, which in turn reflected developments in public consciousness.

Within this essay on Hallam, Macaulay’s statement about Cromwell’s popularity can be found in the middle of a discussion about how Cromwell’s memory, as it existed subjectively within the minds of English people and English understanding, had been fundamentally soiled. In particular, this statement is placed at the end of a several-thousand word rhetorical flourish in which we also hear that ‘his memory has not been taken under the patronage of any party [...] every device

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<sup>374</sup> Macaulay, ‘Hallam’ (1828), 147. It is also worth noting that Macaulay’s discussion here was altered slightly in later editions of this essay, with some of his discussion of the regicide being cut. In 1828, Macaulay described Cromwell’s agreement with the regicide as a ‘questionable’ decision: by the publication of his collected *Critical and Historical Essays* in 1870 this had been altered to ‘blameable’ (see Macaulay, *Critical and Historical Essays* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1870).

<sup>375</sup> Macaulay, ‘Hallam’ (1828), 100.

has been used to blacken it [...] to praise him would long have been a punishable crime'.<sup>376</sup> If we understand Macaulay's essay on Hallam at face value, rather than as a vehicle for Macaulay to promote his own historical viewpoint, we can see that it is as much about historians (such as Hallam himself) as about the content of their histories.

So Macaulay's point here about memories of Cromwell was that he always *should* have been known to be a great leader, and that it took a concerted and politicised historical effort by his enemies to present him as anything else. He stated of Charles II that 'But for the weakness of that foolish Ishbosheth, the opinions which we have been expressing would, we believe, now have formed the orthodox creed of good Englishmen'.<sup>377</sup> Macaulay was not really being contrary when, a few pages later, he described Cromwell's popularity as 'enduring'; rather, he was reiterating the notion that it *ought* to have been.

This can be linked to an important insight into Macaulay's view of history and his own role as a historian: his argument that 'truth and merit at last prevail'.<sup>378</sup> This optimism, rather than any overt politicisation of the process of writing history, is the heart of what Herbert Butterfield would later describe as the 'Whig Interpretation of History'.<sup>379</sup> Macaulay saw himself as spearheading the recovery of the true Cromwell as a hero for the people of England. Although Macaulay did not himself seem to be certain of the extent of Cromwell's underlying popularity, he was keen to give ordinary people the benefit of the doubt: his readers were to receive Cromwell as a hero, and it was crucial to Macaulay that the history he was writing was *for* England as well as *of* it.

As for Macaulay's description of Cromwell as a 'buffoon', it has been taken out of context entirely. What he actually wrote was that, after Hampden died in 1643, 'There still remained, indeed, in his party, many acute intellects, many eloquent tongues, many brave and honest hearts. There still remained a rugged and clownish soldier, half fanatic, half buffoon, whose talents, discerned as yet only by one penetrating eye, were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and the prince'.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 146–7.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>379</sup> See Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931).

<sup>380</sup> Macaulay, 'Hampden' (1831), 549.

This is not the same as calling Cromwell a buffoon. To the contrary, Macaulay was presenting Cromwell as the great unexpected hope that remained for England after the death of Hampden, the honest and talented statesman. It is clear from the second half of the sentence – ‘were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and prince’ – that the adjectives of the first were meant in fond jest. In fact, they help to create a sense of dramatic suspense, as well as emphasising Hampden’s own insight. According to Macaulay in this essay, one of Hampden’s most important achievements was the discovery and nurturing of his cousin, Oliver Cromwell, and bringing him from what he initially describes as ‘an exterior experience of coarseness and extravagance’ into the front line of politics.<sup>381</sup> This has nothing to do with undermining Cromwell: actually it emphasizes his importance further.

Macaulay’s gentle mockery of certain aspects of Puritanism and the Puritan way of life was never at the expense of valuing their historical contributions, a view that he seems to have established clearly before his first historical works were published. In 1824, he imagined a conversation between Milton and Cowley, which illustrates clearly that his opinions regarding both the importance of Cromwell and the trajectory of the Civil War were already well developed. His imagined Milton eloquently stated:

Such men [as Cromwell] often, in troubled times, have worked out the deliverance of nations and their own greatness, not by logic, not by rhetoric, but by wariness in success, by calmness in danger, by fierce and stubborn resolution in all adversity. The hearts of men are their books; events are their tutors; great actions are their eloquence: and such an one, in my judgment, was his late Highness, who, if none were to treat his name scornfully now shook not at the sound of it while he lived, would, by very few, be mentioned otherwise than with reverence. His own deeds shall avouch him for a great statesman, a great soldier, a true lover of his country, a merciful and generous conqueror [...] He [Oliver Cromwell] gave to his country a form of government so free and admirable that, in near six thousand years, human wisdom hath never devised any more excellent contrivance for human happiness.<sup>382</sup>

The ‘conversation’ of this essay forms an amusing and absorbing political fantasy from the twenty-three year old Macaulay, and the reader should not be surprised to

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<sup>381</sup> Macaulay, ‘Hampden’ (1831), 526.

<sup>382</sup> Macaulay, ‘Conversation between Cowley and Milton’ (1824), in *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, 68.

learn that Milton seems to come out on top. Even as Macaulay wrote, we can imagine, he was testing his own fledgling opinions in Milton's voice.

As we have seen, there was no 'eventually' about Macaulay's championing of Cromwell, and no sense that Macaulay was feeding into a party line. He was deliberately recovering a character whom he believed to be a great man, a great leader, and a great figurehead for a movement that changed the course of English history. His imagination about a Cromwellian dynasty<sup>383</sup> may sound implausible or even dangerous, but he was already, decades before Carlyle, introducing something of the focus on character and hero-worship that was to become so important during the rest of the nineteenth century. He described Cromwell as a man of archetypal English greatness:

He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown robustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which, if our national partiality does not mislead us, has peculiarly characterised the great men of England. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. The cup which has intoxicated almost all others, sobered him.<sup>384</sup>

This description of greatness may also sound jarring to modern ears, but the qualities he was outlining would prove to be seminal characteristics for much nineteenth-century popular religion, society, and self-reflection. In *God's Englishman*, Christopher Hill portrayed Macaulay's Cromwell dismissively as revealing 'most of the qualities of the nineteenth-century English middle class'.<sup>385</sup> Maybe so, but when Macaulay was writing this 'middle class' was still very much in its formative stages, and Macaulay's Cromwell became one of its representative symbols.

So Macaulay's views on Cromwell were securely positive from his earliest works. He may not have reached the peak of his fame and popularity until his bestselling *History of England*, which began appearing in 1848, but Macaulay was already a well-respected public intellectual and politician long before Carlyle's *Cromwell* was published.<sup>386</sup>

We have already seen that Carlyle's *Cromwell* has rightly been given considerable credit for the recovery of Cromwell and the Puritans in the nineteenth

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<sup>383</sup> Macaulay, 'Hallam' (1828), 146.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>385</sup> Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 258.

<sup>386</sup> See Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 139.

century.<sup>387</sup> Harrison and others involved in the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell project have clearly shown that what Carlyle may have lacked in originality and orthodox historical methodology,<sup>388</sup> he certainly made up for in influence.<sup>389</sup> This influence spanned across practising Christians, working men, Radicals, and even the upper class. Harrison summarised Carlyle's achievement regarding Cromwell: 'What seems to happen, then, in 1845 – is not so much a blinding flash of originality on the part of Carlyle – but a breaking through into the upper class world of ideas, slightly touched up, which had been current for years in the world of Dissent and of the working class'.<sup>390</sup>

Radical and Nonconformist writers and lecturers were used to moving in circles 'where adulation for Cromwell had been common since the seventeenth century'.<sup>391</sup> But Carlyle's presentation of Cromwell seems to have provided them with greater confidence through critical and respectable corroboration. Henry Vincent, the prominent Chartist, had always spoken in favour of Puritanism, but it was only after Carlyle and in reference to Carlyle's vindication of Cromwell and the Puritans that he became his most eloquent and impassioned on the subject, and indeed cemented his oratorical reputation. In 1846, apparently in response to reading Carlyle's edition of Cromwell's letters, he said 'the noble Cromwell should be redeemed from all calumnies cast upon him'. By 1850, he was confidently describing Hume's history as 'nothing but falsehood and fraud, having been written purposely to defend the Stuarts'.<sup>392</sup>

In his study of the arguments regarding whether to place a statue of Oliver Cromwell outside parliament, R. C. G. Matthew argued that 'the different opinions on Cromwell mirrored exactly different opinions on contemporary issues [...] the uses made of his name were on the whole predictable and rather trite. The study of history, in the form of Cromwell, does not seem to have changed men's minds'.<sup>393</sup> However, one of the fascinating things about the recovery of Cromwell and

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<sup>387</sup> Worden, for instance, states that 'The cult of Cromwell was not the product only of political and social and religious movements. It was the achievement of a book, which spoke to Victorians with extraordinary power [...] Thomas Carlyle's edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*'. (Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 263).

<sup>388</sup> See Harrison, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 215.

<sup>389</sup> See Samuel, 'Cromwellanea', in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 113.

<sup>390</sup> Harrison, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 215–216.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>392</sup> Quoted in Harrison, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 216.

<sup>393</sup> Matthew, 'Oliver Cromwell's Statue', in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 260.

Puritanism is the variety of uses it was put to, as we shall see throughout this thesis. Cromwell's recovery was always more substantial than simply providing a motif for pre-existing political ideals. We can see that many people, including writers and lecturers as well as the general public, genuinely did change their minds about Cromwell and the Puritans as a result of reading the works of both Macaulay and Carlyle.

Thomas Cooper, for instance, criticised Cromwell's 'crafty dictatorship' in 1842, but by the time he wrote his *Letters to Young Working Men* in the late 1840s, he advised that 'your reading will not be complete unless you read Mr. Carlyle's *Letters of Oliver Cromwell*'.<sup>394</sup> In his 1871 work surveying Christian history, *The Bridge of History Over the Gulf of Time*, Cooper introduced the chapter on the seventeenth century as follows:

What shall we call the Seventeenth Century? Let us call it the ARCH OF OLIVER CROMWELL. He was the most distinguished person of the century in our country, at any rate. And, thank God, there is no one ashamed of the name of Oliver Cromwell now. His name does not lie at the bottom of the ditch of defamation, covered with the mud of spite and malice. You may thank my illustrious friend Thomas Carlyle for taking up Cromwell's great memory, and clearing it from the dirt so long cast upon it. Oliver Cromwell is known now to have been a large-hearted Christian man, and to have wished to establish a Christian Government in this land.<sup>395</sup>

Many people in the third quarter of the nineteenth century shared Cooper's feeling that Cromwell had been rescued by Carlyle, and that any part they played in it was merely confirming the truth of the Protector's sincerity and greatness. Writing in Edinburgh in the early 1860s, James Anderson also reflected on Cromwell's changing critical reputation in the introduction to his *Memorable Women of the Puritan Era*. He initially described Cromwell's ability as a leader as undisputed, but saw previous accusations that he was not religiously sincere as reason for concern: 'The anomalies in his character rendered it a subject difficult to scan by his contemporaries, and have bequeathed it as a puzzling problem to posterity'.<sup>396</sup> He described Cromwell's recent posthumous achievement at having been finally able to

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<sup>394</sup> See Harrison, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 116.

<sup>395</sup> Thomas Cooper, *A Bridge of History Over the Gulf of Time* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1871).

<sup>396</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 18.

vindicate himself from accusations of hypocrisy and worse, through the publication of his letters and papers (he seems to have been referring to Carlyle's 1845 edition):

This cloud of prejudice long rested on his memory, and he continued to be considered and vilified as one of the worst, or at best as one of the most doubtful characters in the whole range of history. His speeches and letters, which have been recently collected and given to the public, many of them for the first time, have greatly contributed to dissipate this cloud of prejudice, and to produce a more generally favourable and just opinion of him, as a man as well as a rule, than had previously been entertained [...] Comparing the whole together, the conclusion to which we come is, that he was a man of piety, not a hypocrite.<sup>397</sup>

For Anderson, as for many others, Cromwell was more than a political idea: he was a man, and whether or not he was also a sincere and great man really mattered. And it was the greater presence of primary sources in the public domain that was enabling Anderson and his contemporaries to achieve a better understanding of the events of the seventeenth century. Carlyle was seen as a figurehead of this, even though the popular re-publication of old works significantly preceded his own input. Ironically, the implication of Anderson's observation here was that the interested public no longer needed to rely on the opinions of historians, but could instead become informed enough to judge historical events and characters for themselves. However, the great self-education of the nineteenth century also needed amateur historians such as Anderson and public lecturers such as Cooper to cement and normalise ideas like the greatness of Cromwell in the public domain.

Marsden's two volumes on the Puritans are particularly interesting in the way they show the developments in the availability of sources, and the growing interest in primary sources, for an amateur historian of the time, even over the space of two years in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>398</sup> Even during the course of his volume on *Later Puritans*, Marsden's political and religious ideas, such as his view of Cromwell's action in Ireland, seem to develop and modify as he moves away from his Evangelical pre-conceptions and considers his topic in more depth.<sup>399</sup> Cromwell's recovery, then, was situated at the cusp of a new wave of history-writing, and was

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>398</sup> See for instance the differences in referencing sources and writing style between Marsden's *The Early Puritans* (1850) and *The Later Puritans* (1852).

<sup>399</sup> See Marsden, *The Later Puritans* (1852), 323–325.

swept along by the force of a great public interest in all things historical, and a passion for the seventeenth century. R. J. Morris noted that, in Leeds (where Macaulay first campaigned politically in the 1820s), ‘it is evident that [the middle class] felt seventeenth-century history to be important in the interpretation of events of their own time’.<sup>400</sup> The historians in this selection spoke both to and for the general public in their writings.

In 1860, a painting by T. H. Maguire, and its positive critical reception, demonstrated how Cromwell’s reputation as a great English hero had been consolidated.<sup>401</sup> An article in the *Manchester Guardian* from 18 September, encouraging readers to go and see the touring painting, which was at the time on display at Manchester’s Royal Exchange, quoted both Macaulay and Carlyle in praise of Cromwell. On 3 December that year, the *Liverpool Albion* echoed Cooper and Anderson in stating:

The character of Cromwell, long misunderstood, and often ridiculed, is now receiving from the pens of our ablest writers that justice which his eminent ability, undoubted patriotism, and unyielding struggle for the civil and religious liberty of his country demand. Macaulay, Carlyle, and others have rescued his memory from the obloquy which the blind devotion of the adherents of the unhappy Stuarts had heaped upon him, and we therefore rejoice that Mr. Maguire has, in this fine picture, commemorated an event which places his character in a light at once favourable, noble, and disinterested.<sup>402</sup>

So we can see that, by 1860, some newspapers were recognising both Macaulay and Carlyle as central in the revival of Cromwell’s reputation. This description of Cromwell as ‘disinterested’ is particularly noteworthy for a modern reader: the ideal of disinterestedness has fallen out of use in the twenty-first century; if anything the word only appears now mistakenly as a replacement for ‘uninterested’. But from the 1600s onwards, and probably peaking in the 1800s, to be disinterested meant to be impartial, or, more comprehensively, ‘free from self-seeking’ or detached from interest in personal gain.<sup>403</sup> For the Cromwell in Maguire’s painting to be described

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<sup>400</sup> Morris, in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 109.

<sup>401</sup> Maguire’s painting of Cromwell Refusing the Crown of England (1860).

<sup>402</sup> *Liverpool Albion*, 3 December 1860, p.6 col.3. Quoted in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project*, 184.

<sup>403</sup> See Oxford English Dictionary.

as disinterested means that he was seen as someone who truly had England's best interests at heart.

And Cromwell's Englishness, for many of his supporters, was central to his, and Puritanism's, recovery. According to Ryle, Cromwell's two chief characteristics were his Englishness and his Puritanism. For his Englishness, Ryle stated: 'That Oliver Cromwell was one of the greatest Englishmen that ever lived I feel no doubt at all'.<sup>404</sup> By emphasising Cromwell's status as an Englishman, Ryle connected him to national pride. Surely one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived should be revered by those who love their country? Ryle also saw Cromwell as the chief of the Puritans, and warmly described the 'standard of morality' that he enforced, which would have been 'unknown in the days of the Stuarts'.<sup>405</sup> The very fact that Ryle chose to devote so much space to Cromwell in a lecture on Richard Baxter demonstrates that he saw Cromwell as crucial for an understanding of Baxter's time. For Ryle, then, Cromwell represented both model Englishness and model Puritanism. The positive image of Cromwell (as Ryle stated, 'I think we ought to consider the estimate of Cromwell, which Carlyle and D'Aubigne have formed, to be a near approach to the truth')<sup>406</sup> combined strong leadership, Englishness and Puritanism, and reflected a new reverence for all things Puritan. The elevation of Cromwell was part of Ryle's larger aim of promoting Puritan theology and spirituality to his largely English, largely Anglican, readership.

In a brief note included in the Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project, Raphael Samuel emphasised the importance of ensuring a distinction between 'admiring bourgeois reformers on the one hand and critical working-class Radicals on the other'.<sup>407</sup> This is a helpful corrective to Harrison's contention that Cromwell's figure 'appeals to politically immature classes who think that everything wrong can be attributed to corruption among those in power'.<sup>408</sup> At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, those in favour of Cromwell might have been described as 'politically immature' – placing themselves against authority for the sake of it – although given their political and religious circumstances this seems excusable. While Carlyle's edition of Cromwell's letters and papers, and the Idealism it

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<sup>404</sup> Ryle, 'Baxter' (1853), 11.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Samuel, 'Cromwelleana 2' in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c. 1968–9), 60.

<sup>408</sup> Harrison, *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c. 1968–9), 210.

espoused, were certainly very influential on those speaking to the working classes, Macaulay's historical and political achievements also allowed a more 'mature' Cromwell to emerge and to represent something quite different from mere opposition: the hope of England's, and Britain's, greatness.

The Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project was left incomplete. The agenda for future research was left broad, but the project's focus remained primarily on the working classes, and particularly those influenced by the Chartists and Radicals who deemed that Carlyle was speaking to them. As we have seen, a recovery of Cromwell's reputation amongst the rising middle classes was also already well underway, being spearheaded by Macaulay. Broadly speaking, Macaulay and Carlyle managed to effectively communicate a message about Cromwell to both of these groups. Cromwell's greatness as an English leader and figurehead was one thing at least that the great middle and working classes of mid-century England could agree on.

### **3.1.2 Harbingers of reforms that changed the world**

#### ***Macaulay and Puritan reforms***

The Puritans' contributions to constitutional reform were vital for Macaulay. He credited Cromwell with personally fighting for England's ancient constitution, and, with his contemporaries, laying the foundations of the stable political system that England enjoyed in the nineteenth century. His early essay on Milton described the mid-seventeenth century as a time when the foundations were laid for future freedom.

He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind; at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes – liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with a strange and unwonted fear!<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 325.

In emotive language, Macaulay presented Milton's time as one on which was staked 'the destiny of the human race'. No small matter, then. Milton died in 1674, so Macaulay is not talking about the Glorious Revolution of 1688 here. Rather, the conflict he is describing between 'Oromasdes and Arimanes,'<sup>410</sup> liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice' was the Civil Wars, with the roundhead Parliamentary Puritans against the cavalier Royalists. In this context, Macaulay implied that Cromwell and the Puritans in the seventeenth century had been battling for universal liberty.

Macaulay praised Cromwell's work for toleration, liberty and reform in several of his notable early works. His Milton in 'Conversation between Mr Abraham Cowley and Mr John Milton, Touching the Great Civil War' (1824), with whom the historian's sympathies clearly lay, stated:

He [Oliver Cromwell] gave to his country a form of government so free and admirable that, in near six thousand years, human wisdom hath never devised any more excellent contrivance for human happiness.

Justice was equally administered; God was freely worshipped.<sup>411</sup>

Cromwell had, according to Macaulay, helped to form the most just and free system of government that the world had even seen.

The political implications of Macaulay's arguments in the 1820s may seem obvious with hindsight. Britain was about to undergo the most comprehensive set of reforms it had seen for over a century, including the repeal of the Test and

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<sup>410</sup> Macaulay was here referring to ancient Persian principles of good (Oromasdes) and evil (Arimanes), which were perceived to be in constant tension with each other; the victor never clear. These were laid out in more detail two years later in a chapter called 'The origin of the doctrine of eternal punishment', in Thomas Brown's *A History of the Origin and Progress of the Doctrine of Human Salvation*, Printed for the author by G. Wood, 1826, available online at <[http://books.google.co.uk/books/pdf/A\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Origin\\_and\\_Progress\\_of\\_.pdf](http://books.google.co.uk/books/pdf/A_History_of_the_Origin_and_Progress_of_.pdf)>, accessed 17 March 2008). Brown stated as follows: 'The magicians at Babylon, who were the most learned of the Persian empire... believed that there exists two independent principles, good and evil. That all created things, with which we are acquainted, are the result of the combination of these two. That they are in continual struggle with each other, and continually counteracting each other's designs. That where light prevails, there is the most virtue and happiness; and where darkness prevails, there is the most evil and misery... The former they said conducted the affairs of heaven, and was called Orasmasdes, and the latter, presiding over hell, Arimanius. The grand outlines of this philosophy are found to lead the vulgar belief of many savage nations, especially those which are the most ignorant...'

<sup>411</sup> Macaulay, 'Conversation between Cowley and Milton' (1824), in *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, 69.

Corporation Acts, Catholic emancipation, and the Reform Act.<sup>412</sup> From the mid-1820s onwards, Macaulay was actively involved in campaigning for Whig party candidates, and he would take his own seat in Parliament in 1830.<sup>413</sup> If Cromwell could be seen in a positive light, he could provide an excellent precedent for the reforms that, when Macaulay was writing these essays, were already beginning to gain momentum and support. It is important to note, though, that Macaulay was attempting to recover Cromwell and the Puritans as English heroes, not simply as Whig heroes. He may have wanted his middle-class, voting readers to identify Cromwell with reform. He also traced the trajectory of two great parties from the Civil War onwards, with the implication that the Whigs could trace their lineage back to the Parliamentarians. However, he never accepted Whig policies uncritically, but was a supporter of what they represented. Cromwell, as a proto-Whig, was most of all a great Englishman who wanted reforms and toleration for the sake of his country's strength. Macaulay identified with this, and was always more interested in reforms and 'progress' than in party politics. At times he was led to doubt his own future in the Whig party, but eventually he convinced himself to remain on principle because he saw the Whig party as having historically represented truth and progress to its very core.<sup>414</sup> In so doing, he was following his own advice that in history 'the facts are given, to find the principles': that is to say, that it is possible to derive one's understanding of history from sifting through the facts to find 'the abstract truth which interpenetrates the facts'.<sup>415</sup> Macaulay's adherence to this motto can also be seen in the way he used his knowledge of history in his political speeches. Rather than writing a politically-charged history, Macaulay was determined to learn from history and shape his politics around it.<sup>416</sup> As we have seen, while he did not have access to the same sort of resources as Gardiner half a century later, Macaulay took the discipline of history-writing very seriously, and saw it as his duty to present a just and balanced account. The concept of 'justice' or 'principle' here is helpful in contrast to Gardiner, as we can see that, in these days preceding higher criticism, it was still deemed to be the historian's role to provide a 'judgment' and to establish 'principles' based on what he saw. However, it was important to Macaulay that this

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<sup>412</sup> See Brown, *Providence and Empire* (2008), 80.

<sup>413</sup> See Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 139.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>415</sup> Macaulay, 'History' (1828), 340.

<sup>416</sup> See Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 156.

judgment should be balanced, based on the facts, and ‘disinterested’, in the true sense of the word.

While we need to recognise the significance of the concepts of liberty and toleration to Macaulay and the other historians in this selection, it is important that we do not confuse nineteenth-century ideas of toleration and liberty with our own. Macaulay never advocated universal suffrage, stating that it would be unworkable without first achieving universal education.<sup>417</sup> His views regarding the relationship between Church and State were moderate, complex, and in turn far removed from twenty-first-century opinions. While supporting the principle of overseas Christian missionary activity and arguing that India, for instance, was in great need of Christian instruction, he argued that such instruction ought to be given ‘on a voluntary basis’.<sup>418</sup> But this could be connected in some sense, he argued, to the state, as long as it was not ‘in such a manner as to excite... discontents dangerous to the public order’.<sup>419</sup> Using the political union between the religiously different states of England and Scotland as an example, he argued that the continuation of their two separate Churches was critical to their union. He described the connection between Church and State in terms of expediency, arguing that ‘the State must control the Church’ to prevent fanaticism.<sup>420</sup>

Indeed, while Macaulay was controversial in his time for apparently distancing himself from the established Church,<sup>421</sup> we can see that his outlook was still very much Protestant and establishment, and that he saw Britain’s place in the world as somehow defined by its version of Christianity.

Macaulay emphasised the centrality of religion to the Puritans’ views and attitudes, stating ‘the Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion’.<sup>422</sup> Their political advances, he emphasised, were intimately connected to their religious views. In that sense, we can see that Macaulay interpreted nineteenth-century Britain as still living with the Puritans’ religio-political inheritance.

We can also see that the ideals of liberty and toleration, which Macaulay identified strongly with Cromwell and the Puritans, were bound up with the reforms

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>422</sup> Macaulay, ‘Milton’, 341.

that Macaulay helped to implement. In both contexts, civil liberties and religious toleration were bound together and essentially inextricable from one another. But the way that both concepts were defined, both by the seventeenth-century Puritans and even by the historians themselves, remained hazy. The nineteenth-century historians also recognised a huge gulf between the fledgling Puritan interpretations of these terms and their own. Several of the historians we are observing, from Macaulay onwards, promoted the Puritans' achievements in terms of liberty and toleration as literally revolutionary, and no mean feat. They also used this idea that seventeenth-century liberty and toleration were incompletely revealed to celebrate further the achievements, and more 'complete' understanding, of their own century.

Anderson, for instance, was careful to warn against anachronistic judgments. The context here was the perceived intolerance of the New England Puritans.

From this censure we do not attempt to vindicate or to exculpate the pilgrim fathers. But in forming our judgment as to their intolerance, the stand-point from which we are to look at them is their own age and circumstances, not ours. Looking at them from the stand-point of this nineteenth century, and demanding that they should have acted from an enlightened spirit of toleration, we are in danger of judging them too severely; but looking at them from their own position, though we cannot free them from all blame, we will yet find some things which may reasonably mitigate the severity of our condemnation. Let us then try to judge of them as to this matter by the standard of their own age and circumstances.<sup>423</sup>

Anderson applied the gap of understanding between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries to judgments concerning the Puritans' stance on toleration or otherwise, stating that the New England Puritans should be measured, so to speak, with their own yardstick rather than expecting them to have lived reflecting an 'enlightened spirit of toleration'. 'Enlightened' in this context presumably refers to the Enlightenment, and the popularisation of religious and political toleration that ran alongside it. For Anderson, the nineteenth-century perceptions of toleration should certainly not be undermined by the seventeenth-century indifference thereto, but nor did those writing from the vantage-point of the nineteenth century have any place to pronounce condemnations on those in the seventeenth century using standards that simply did not exist when their subjects lived. Since Anderson was a Presbyterian, and given the bad press that Presbyterians continued to receive from other historians,

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<sup>423</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 9–10.

this is perhaps unsurprising. This corrective that Anderson offered right from the outset of his *Memorable Women of the Puritan Times* did not stop him from pronouncing his own ‘judgments’, both positive and negative, on the Puritans at times, and even from recommending their actions to his readers. Anderson’s evaluation regarding the New Englanders’ lack of toleration was not entirely favourable, but it was a bold historiographical move to attempt to detach them from nineteenth-century comparisons, even if he did not completely manage to achieve it in his own writings.

Anderson’s call for detachment and caution before pronouncing condemnation echoed the tone of several of our other historians. These historians generally agreed that, when judged by their own standards, the Puritans could be seen to be demanding liberty and freedom of conscience in a way that was revolutionary in their day.

***Stoughton’s nuanced understanding of the Puritans’ toleration and liberty***

Of the historians we are considering in this thesis, it was John Stoughton who provided the fullest consideration of the Puritans with respect to their roles in promoting toleration and civil liberties. These issues were major foci of his throughout his corpus, and he tracked the development of both concepts from the seventeenth century through to his own time. For Stoughton, toleration had been bound up with Puritanism since its inception in the later 1500s. But its emergence was gradual, and it was still only partial when Cromwell came to power.

Cromwell did what many rulers do. Without having an intolerant law repealed, he relaxed its execution. The time was not ripe for perfect religious liberty. Cromwell understood its broad principles better than Mazarin; but it was not given to the Protector, as it has been to his posterity, to see the entire breadth of their practical application.<sup>424</sup>

Stoughton’s discussion of ‘the time’ for ‘perfect religious liberty’ and what was given to posterity but not to Cromwell, rings of providential theology.

Stoughton’s sense that his own nineteenth century, the ‘posterity’ of this quotation, was more able to see the practical application of religious liberty than the generation of Cromwell’s own day, was well-grounded. Where religious liberties during the Commonwealth only lasted a few years and were very restricted,

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<sup>424</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 3 (1870), 136.

Stoughton's own lifetime had seen huge and permanent developments, including votes and university education for the first time for Nonconformists, Catholics and Jews. For Stoughton, this progressive view of Britain as steadily and positively developing, of the concepts of civilisation unfolding, and centred on Britain, seemed natural. Like Macaulay, he identified Cromwell as one of the people who first introduced this religious toleration, and made nineteenth-century liberal Britain possible.

At the same time, though, Stoughton noted that Cromwell's religious toleration was limited. Cromwell only conceded toleration to those whose 'opinions and proceedings did not imperil the stability of the republic'.<sup>425</sup> Elsewhere, Carlyle argued that the Puritans granted liberty only to themselves and other like-minded Protestants, begging the question as to whether their views of toleration were actually any different from those of their predecessors, as they tolerated only their own.<sup>426</sup> But Stoughton framed the issue far less cynically. He described the Puritans' views on toleration as essentially a practical compromise: they had a conception of progress, and it would have been impolitic for them to have extended toleration any further at this time as it would have jeopardised the stability of the Commonwealth.

Although it was only ever achieved in a compromised form, the idea that true toleration, and the political liberty that runs alongside it, were ideals near the heart of Puritanism, was still important for Stoughton.

But happily for the fame of the latter [the Puritans], they were led, by the persecution they suffered, to connect themselves with the friends of political liberty; and thus to share in the honour belonging to the noble band of patriots, who not without some mistakes but with a wisdom and heroism which it would be idle to question and unthankful to forget, secured for us those national privileges which distinguish England from the rest of Europe.<sup>427</sup>

Stoughton made sure to retain a descriptive distinction between the Puritans (whom he always described in a religious or ecclesiological sense) and the 'friends of political liberty', but here he accepted that this distinction became blurred. Although he maintained that the Puritans were a religious group, he argued, following Macaulay, that they joined others in a political stance for liberty that would privilege

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1867), 92.

<sup>426</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches*, ([1898]), 167.

<sup>427</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 31.

England well into the nineteenth century. This argument commended the Puritans for their forward-looking political views and their embracing of toleration. His phrase ‘not without some mistakes’ provides Stoughton’s text with a sense of critical distance that seems to give it more weight and credence.

Stoughton’s personal life can be seen as an example of what nineteenth-century Evangelicals meant by a more complete realisation of religious toleration. As we have seen, his own religious background was mixed, with a Church of England father and ex-Quaker mother, who as a couple attended a Methodist church.<sup>428</sup> As a young man, he had determined upon his own religious path and, after studying the early Church and current denominations, decided that Congregationalism best fitted a New Testament Christian model, and so he became a Congregational minister.<sup>429</sup> But he was open to learning from other denominations. He was active in the British and Foreign Bible Society, which welcomed both Dissenters and Church of England Evangelicals, and which he had admired from his childhood. He described the Church Evangelicals within the Bible Society as identifying more with Puritanism than Anglo-Catholic theology, but being ‘nevertheless faithful to their own ecclesiastical order, preferring episcopacy to any other form of government. Not on social or literary grounds had they sympathy with Dissenters, or from what is now recognised as “breadth of opinion”, but they cultivated union on purely evangelical grounds’.<sup>430</sup> Stoughton celebrated unity through the common ground of Evangelicalism. In truth, Stoughton found instances of unity with people from other denominations particularly moving. One passage in his autobiography, describing two competing histories being published at the same time, one from a Dissenting standpoint and the other by a ‘Churchman’, states: ‘Each editor proposed success to his brother editor on the other side [...] This was an instance of mutual recognition and charity, worthy of being known; standing out, as it does, in pleasant contrast with bitter ways in which ecclesiastical controversies have been too often waged’.<sup>431</sup>

Stoughton longed for a society where ecclesiastical differences would be accepted amicably and where people of different Evangelical Protestant denominations would support each other in friendship (the idea of befriending and learning from people of different religions had probably not occurred to him).

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<sup>428</sup> Stoughton, *Recollections of a Long Life*, 2.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–14.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

However, although he was keen to embrace many within the Church of England, he did not extend this hand of friendship either to Anglo-Catholics or Roman Catholics, and this omission is notable.

The ideal of religious toleration between Protestants was very important to Stoughton. He was familiar with Carlyle's disregard for these concepts and was keen to address this view. In his discussion of the seventeenth century in *Historical Sketches*, Carlyle had mocked the position that Stoughton represented:

For as yet there is no babble of toleration and so forth, alas, there is yet no Exeter Hall Christianity, but quite another sort; doubt and indifference do not yet say to themselves, How noble am I; don't you observe how I tolerate? But the toleration there, and always, meant by good men, was toleration of the unessential, total eternal intolerance of the other; vow like that of Hannibal to war with it forever...<sup>432</sup>

Exeter Hall, as Brown notes, was built in the Strand in 1830 to hold the annual meetings of various different mission societies, 'and the name "Exeter Hall" soon came to signify a recognisable moral and Evangelical interest, especially with reference to the expanding empire'.<sup>433</sup> The great mission engine-room of London and the meeting place of many different Protestant denominations and individuals had also become a symbol of universal political toleration from an Evangelical standpoint. Their doctrinal statements had not developed much in two hundred years, but Reformed Evangelicals of the nineteenth century, according to Carlyle, had seen the language of the Reformed Protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries deteriorate into 'babble'. Carlyle was consciously drawing a contrast between what he called 'indifferent' toleration according to Exeter Hall – Stoughton's brand of toleration – and the toleration that the Puritans exercised in the seventeenth century. Carlyle greatly admired the Puritans' 'toleration of the unessential, total eternal intolerance of the other' and saw it as representing passion and strength of character. He could not associate the Evangelicals of his own day, who saw toleration itself as a virtue, with the passionate firebrands of the seventeenth century who went to war for their beliefs.

But it was just this association that Stoughton wanted to emphasise. The Independents of the mid-seventeenth-century, he argued, had toleration at their heart.

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<sup>432</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches* ([1898]), 163.

<sup>433</sup> Brown, *Providence and Empire* (2008), 35.

Toleration is sometimes reckoned a daughter of indifference, but most certainly in their case toleration can be ascribed to no such parentage... The Fundamental principle of Independency, consistently carried out, could not but lead to the advocacy of a perfect freedom of profession and worship.<sup>434</sup>

For Stoughton, it was precisely the zealous theology and ecclesiology of the Independents, also admired by Carlyle, that led to their advocacy of religious toleration. As was seen earlier with discussions of intolerance, it was the Independents' spirit, or their 'fundamental principles', that when followed through would lead to 'perfect freedom'. There is no indication that this should be just for themselves; rather, 'perfect freedom' suggests an ideal of freedom and toleration for all. Here in the first volume of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Stoughton's view of the Independents' connection with religious toleration was forcefully stated: here, religious toleration at least was their idea, and a natural outworking of their principles. This connection between true religion and toleration was for Stoughton also an important apologetic defence of religion: contrary to Carlyle and others, he could state that true religion was neither indifferent nor intolerant.

Stoughton did note, however, that toleration and liberty in the seventeenth century had its basis in religion. 'Toleration belonged to them [the English people in the mid-seventeenth century] only as saints, not as subjects. Liberty was counted a religious privilege, not a social right'.<sup>435</sup> The religious toleration afforded in the time of the Commonwealth and Protectorate was, he stated, not yet fully extended into the political sphere. This suggests that Stoughton saw the political changes of his own lifetime as having their roots in religious attitudes. Tracing the historical continuity of the idea of toleration through the next few decades, Stoughton's narrative told a sorry tale. He observed the treatment of the Puritans at the time of the Restoration of the monarchy:

Treatment such as they generally received reflects, beyond anything else, upon the character of the times for toleration and Christian justice. England at large could not have learned the doctrines of religious liberty, and must have been sadly out of sympathy with Cromwell and others, to have inflicted such wanton

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<sup>434</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 336.

<sup>435</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 3 (1870), 145.

barbarities upon people who were harmless as a rule, and mischievous only in a few exceptions.<sup>436</sup>

The ascendancy of Cromwell and the Independents, Stoughton argued, saw the beginnings of a new movement towards toleration that would change the face of England, though the measures of toleration that were introduced often proved short-lived. Their lasting effects – that is, full political rights regardless of religious affiliation – would not come until the later nineteenth century. The journey to religious liberty had been slow and hard. Before the nineteenth century, those unwilling to conform to the new religious standard were persecuted, and ‘wanton barbarities’ inflicted upon a mostly harmless people.

For Stoughton, the influence of the Puritans upon the growth of religious and political liberty did not end with Cromwell. In connection with civil liberties and the emerging concept of rights, John Locke was also important, and Stoughton saw Locke as rising in the later seventeenth century out of the ashes of political Puritanism. Although the history Stoughton was writing was religious and ecclesiastical, he noted the significance of John Locke in transforming a religious ideal into a potentially normative political theory. As he stated, ‘Locke brought the doctrine of toleration out of the domain of theology, and placed it on the basis of political righteousness’.<sup>437</sup> As Stoughton saw it, even the political ideology that was to be so important in the constitution of the United States, and was to have such a lasting impact on British politics, was adapted from ideas inherent in Puritan Independency. It was England that first introduced the checks and balances that prevented monarchical tyranny. As he had previously maintained that the Puritans had not moved out of line politically from the ancient constitution or religiously from the spirit of the Protestant Reformation, Stoughton now argued that the reforms of the nineteenth century were following the same political and religious trajectory. For great civil liberties to originate in England was the highest celebration of England’s power and Puritanism’s importance.

Even though its influence continued, most historians agree that the Puritan era, and Puritanism proper, ended at the Act of Uniformity. As Marsden stated, ‘It seems as if Puritanism, after a stormy life, had been satisfied at last to retire into

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<sup>436</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1867), 362.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., 340.

obscurity and die in peace. The return of liberty did not revive its strength'.<sup>438</sup> Stoughton would not have agreed with Marsden that Puritanism died in obscurity, seeing it as the direct ancestor of his own Congregational church. That said, he would have accepted the idea that the 'Glorious Revolution' did not revive Puritanism.

In the first volume of his *Ecclesiastical History*, Stoughton also described a mysterious spirit in some of the Puritans that went beyond what even Locke was going to achieve: 'it appears that the Roundhead army really contained a set of men who anticipated John Locke's doctrine of toleration, and something more'.<sup>439</sup> The way he framed his sentence here 'it appears that... really' emphasised the sense of surprise he wanted to portray when, delving through the *Calendars of State Papers*, which had become available in the 1850s, he discovered that Locke's doctrine had been anticipated by the views of common soldiers during the English Civil War. Although Stoughton did not elaborate on this, for him it reflected well on the beliefs of the common people, when they mirrored the principles of early modern England's most influential political theorist. It also demonstrated, for Stoughton, the true religiousness of toleration – which grew in all places where God was worshipped boldly and solemnly, and in minds and hearts, of whatever social class, that were receptive to God's voice.

For Stoughton and other historians, the early nineteenth-century reforms that brought political rights for Nonconformists, Catholics, and Jews, were the culmination of the movement begun by Puritanism. Froude shared Carlyle's scepticism as to the extent of the Puritans' own tolerance, but he still recognised the importance of the movement they began: 'Liberty of conscience has found recognition and has become the law of modern thought. It is as if the ancient Catholic unity, which was divided in the sixteenth century into separate streams of doctrine, as light is divided by the prism, was again imperceptibly returning; as if the coloured rays were once more blending themselves together into a purer and more rich transparency'.<sup>440</sup> He saw liberty of conscience as the new Christian Catholicity, and the credal root of any new unity that was to be achieved. Froude was no Whig, but these sentiments were only possible because of what the Reforms instituted by

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<sup>438</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 408.

<sup>439</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 450.

<sup>440</sup> Froude, *History of England*, Vol. 3 (1858), 364.

the Whig government earlier in the century had achieved, which many historians in turn were tracing back to the influence of Puritanism.

Indeed, to several of our historians, as we have seen already of Stoughton, a great deal of Britain's mid-nineteenth century moral and political strength – the favourable economic climate of the mid-century, the rapturous international banquet of the Great Exhibition, even the end of the slave trade a generation earlier, and the positive elements of the European Revolutions (and later the American Civil War) – were attributable, at least in part, to Puritanism.<sup>441</sup> Puritanism was celebrated as a liberating, as well as an English, phenomenon. For a nineteenth century historian to discuss freedom in connection with English Puritanism was also profoundly connected to a grand celebration of England and of the notions of toleration and civil liberty.

### **3.1.3 International strength and proto-Imperialism**

In his *History of England*, Macaulay compared Britain's growing success during the Protectorate to the apparently disastrous Stuart era on either side of it:

After half a century during which England had been of scarcely more weight in European politics than Venice or Saxony, she at once became the most formidable power in the world, dictated terms of peace to the United Provinces, avenged the common injuries of Christendom on the pirates of Barbary, vanquished the Spaniards by land and sea, seized one of the finest West Indian islands, and acquired on the Flemish coast a fortress which consoled the national pride for the loss of Calais. She was supreme on the ocean. She was the head of the Protestant interest.<sup>442</sup>

Here Macaulay turned his focus to the wider world. He recognised that under Cromwell England quickly became 'the most formidable power in the world', an Imperial power with expanding global trading networks and the chief defender of Protestantism's interests. England's assertive Protestantism, and its willingness to take the Protestant side in any religious arguments of the time, complemented its military and naval power in Western Europe.

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<sup>441</sup> See for instance, as described in Chapter Two, Froude's arguments that modern civilisation owed much of its progress to 'the transforming power of the gospel' ('Calvinism' (1871), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 67). Brady also describes Froude's commitment to the role of faith in history: 'it is faith alone that initiates all real historical change' (Brady, *Froude* (2013), 247.

<sup>442</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 120–122.

Macaulay contended that Cromwell's foreign policy enabled England to become great on the international scene in a way that it had never been before, and this was intimately connected with, and arguably as a direct result of, his (and the Puritans') fervent religious outlook. For Macaulay, Cromwell's England, as an expansive, Imperial nation, was still very recognisable in the England of the nineteenth century. It was Cromwell who first made England the most powerful country in the world, and so it remained.

But Macaulay saw more in Cromwell than simply exemplary political skills and an assertive foreign policy. The Protector was motivated by a religious passion, and it was this passion that enabled him to conquer in the way that he did. England became the head of Europe's Protestant cause precisely because it was, for the first time, being ruled by those for whom the Protestant interest really was a matter of Christ or Anti-Christ, salvation or eternal damnation.

In his own political career, Macaulay gained some notoriety for trying to steer away from religious issues, and he was never forthcoming about his own religious opinions.<sup>443</sup> While this may have been related to his family circumstances and his reticence to alienate himself especially from his Evangelical father, it is important that Macaulay saw Cromwell's international success as partly based on his Protestant outlook. For many in the mid-nineteenth century, Protestantism still represented a political ideal as much as a set of religious beliefs.

Macaulay did not explain precisely why he thought that England's overseas conquests during the Protectorate were so successful. But whatever the reasons, he argued that England was made strong by Cromwell, and this was always in the context of its being made more and more Protestant. As Owen Dudley Edwards has argued, Macaulay seems to have inherited a strong element of his father's missionary zeal and spirit.<sup>444</sup> Although he was not himself an Evangelical, Macaulay's portrayal of Cromwell as a great Protestant Imperialist inspired many Evangelicals in their own celebrations of international missionary endeavour.

No man, perhaps, ever won supreme power by the sword, and then used that power with such moderation as he [Oliver Cromwell] did. England was

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<sup>443</sup> Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 173.

<sup>444</sup> Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988) 84, 124.

probably more feared and respected throughout Europe, during the short time that he was Protector; than she ever was before, or ever has been since.<sup>445</sup>

In his lecture on Baxter (1853), J. C. Ryle described England during Cromwell's Protectorate as at the zenith of its European power and influence. It was more feared and respected under Cromwell, he stated, than ever before or since. He was speaking here only two years after the Great Exhibition, England's great display of her industrial and commercial supremacy in the world. True, Ryle was specifically referring to England's dominance in *Europe* under Cromwell. Britain's mid-nineteenth-century Empire, whilst covering much of the globe, had only a modest presence in Europe. Even so, Ryle's description of Cromwell and his achievements here cannot be confined to the European setting: he also implicitly compared the Puritan leader to other conquerors winning 'supreme power by the sword', though he commended *Cromwell* for his matchless ability to temper power with moderation. So did Ryle really think that England was greater under Cromwell than in its mid-Victorian heyday?

It seems more likely that Ryle was not attempting to underplay Victorian greatness, but was rather presenting Cromwell as the sort of ruler of whom his working-class, Evangelical, listeners ought to approve: a war-hero who was also a man of temperance and moderation, a man who inspired fear and respect wherever his armies went, but who was a man of deep Protestant Christian faith and sincerity. In doing so, Ryle was also presenting Cromwell as a model ruler for all times, with ideals and principles that would well bear emulation, and who anticipated something of England's mid-nineteenth-century glory.

The previous year, in 1852, Marsden had also picked up on the foreign policy of Cromwell, and the way in which it became representative of the 'Protestant interest' outside of Britain itself. He described the British approach to foreign policy in the mid-seventeenth century as spelling out the beginnings of British mission work:

Its operations were to embrace a great part of the world, and it is generally set down as the first missionary project of which there is any record in this country. It seems however to have been designed rather to protect Protestantism against the machinations of the propaganda, than to provide for the preaching of the gospel anywhere to the heathen. Still the design deserves

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<sup>445</sup> Ryle, *Baxter* (1853), 11.

to be noticed as exhibiting something clearly akin to a missionary spirit. It was a recognition of the principle that is the duty of a Christian state not to confine its exertions to its own subjects but to maintain and defend the gospel in every part of the world.<sup>446</sup>

Probably taking his cue from the implications of Macaulay's work, Marsden consciously linked Protectorate-era Puritanism to nineteenth-century missions, and saw the former as providing the latter with precedent and ancestry. He also described the pro-Protestant Puritan foreign policy as the *first* missionary endeavour coming out of the British Isles. In so doing, he overlooked the centuries of missionary endeavour *within* the British Isles, and everything that occurred before the Protestant Reformation, including the Crusades. In any case, Marsden dated the very beginnings of missionary activity from Britain to the time that Cromwellian foreign policy took hold. He also here described the maintenance and defence of the Christian (Protestant) gospel as a responsibility and duty of any Christian state, and argued that the Puritans were the first to recognise this. This demonstrated agreement between his own world-view and that he associated with the Puritans, and re-emphasised the nineteenth-century Evangelical emphasis on mission, and its connection to the national good.<sup>447</sup> Marsden and other nineteenth-century Evangelicals, as we shall see in Chapter Four, attached great importance to finding historical precedence for their own Evangelical endeavours in the actions of the Puritan leaders.

Harrison also described nineteenth-century views of Cromwell as linked with 'British self-assertion overseas'. Cromwell's highly successful policies had resulted in an increasing sense of Britain's superiority over the rest of the world. By the mid-nineteenth century, this superiority had grown into the undisputed supremacy that the Great Exhibition represented. Harrison also noted that Cromwell's strength as a ruler of Britain could, by the mid-century, be appropriated by those in authority as a precedent for nineteenth-century Imperialism: 'a type of Imperialism, which promotes faith in God and freedom'.<sup>448</sup> This was a significant aspect of the recovery

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<sup>446</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1850), 401.

<sup>447</sup> For an even clearer connection of mission with Nationalism, although not directly referring to Cromwell, see John Stoughton, *British Influence and Responsibility* (London, 1850), 41: 'One thing remains, England, my country! God has made thee great among the nations. He has given thee vast resources. He has bestowed on thee his best gift – the Gospel. The world – the whole world is waiting to receive it at thy hands, – to hear it from thy lips. Rise, and go forth, holding up the torch of truth to the men who walk in darkness'.

<sup>448</sup> Harrison, in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 211–212.

of Puritanism in the nineteenth century, and has received little critical attention thus far.<sup>449</sup>

### 3.1.4 Pride and patriotism

It was important for several of the historians in our selection to emphasise the Puritans' Englishness and their commitment to England as a chosen nation.

Macaulay observed in his *History of England* how the persecuted later sixteenth-century Puritans were none the less amongst the most loyal subjects of Elizabeth:

For in that age it had become a point of conscience and of honour with many men of generous natures to sacrifice their country to their religion. A succession of dark plots, formed by Roman Catholics against the life of the Queen and the existence of the nation, kept society in constant alarm. Whatever might be the faults of Elizabeth, it was plain that, to speak humanly, the fate of the realm and of all reformed Churches was staked on the security of her person and on the success of her administration. To strengthen her hands was, therefore, the first duty of a patriot and a Protestant; and that duty was well performed. The Puritans, even in the depths of the prisons to which she had sent them, prayed, and with no simulated fervour, that she might be kept from the dagger of the assassin, that rebellion might be put down under her feet, and that her arms might be victorious by sea and land. One of the most stubborn of the stubborn sect, immediately after his hand had been lopped off for an offence into which he had been hurried by his intemperate zeal, waved his hat with the hand which was still left him, and shouted 'God save the Queen!'<sup>450</sup>

Once Elizabeth was recognised as the guardian of the Reformed churches, her political rule in their eyes gained its own element of theocracy, and patriotism became an expression of the religious zealot. Macaulay's recognition of this demonstrates that he fully understood the idea, elsewhere attributed to Carlyle, that the Puritans' sincere intensity of belief led them to unusual, heroic extremes.<sup>451</sup>

We have already seen that the British Empire was at its height in the 1850s. However, later in our period of study, from about 1870 onwards, doubts started to grow about the British Empire's real strength, and the notion that it might be faltering, or at least that it was past this zenith, gained public support. Froude was

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<sup>449</sup> As we shall see later in this chapter, Kingsley connected the Church of England, and Puritanism's impact on it, to the birth of Imperialism in his novel *Westward Ho!*. Brown has helpfully discussed the importance of the Church of England to the Broad Church Movement's Imperialism in his recent essay 'The Broad Church Movement' (2011), 112, 119.

<sup>450</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 52.

<sup>451</sup> See for instance Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 69.

one of many writers determined to counter this notion. The way he used the Puritans' patriotism in defence of England's ongoing supremacy is particularly interesting.

In his *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century*, one of his last works, Froude drew an interesting conclusion from several decades of reflection on the Puritans' patriotism:

It appears to me that the true right to rule in any nation lies with those who are best and bravest, whether their numbers are large or small; and three centuries ago the best and bravest part of this English nation had determined, though they were but a third of it, that Pope and Spaniard should be no masters of them. Imagination goes for much in such excited times.<sup>452</sup>

This 'third' of the English population towards the close of the sixteenth century was composed of staunch Protestants, or Puritans. These people, according to Froude, were a minority with imagination, passionate for the self-rule and self-determination that has so often then and since been connected with Protestantism. For them, liberty from the Roman Catholic Church also meant liberty from the political oppression of the powerful Spaniards. England's Protestantism was effectively synonymous with its self-governance.

According to Froude, the Puritans' passion in being 'best and bravest' superseded even their patriotism and desire for England's political freedom from continental Europe in determining their worthiness to rule. It goes without saying that this rule was not achieved for another half-century, by which time the members of the Puritan 'party', and indeed the political landscape of the entire British Isles, had changed completely. But Froude's clear assertion that they earned this rule through their strength of character is unmistakable. He was not diminishing the contributions of the Tudor monarchy, but rather suggesting that while Elizabeth was right to uphold the Protestant cause to the extent she did, even though staunch Protestants were a minority, she would have been still more effective had she made better use of Puritan commitment.

Froude's assertions about the best and bravest deserving rule resounded with Carlylean ideals of hero-worship, and could even have been intended as a re-buff against some of the criticism he received in the wake of the scandal regarding his biography of Carlyle. Froude's suggestion here that the ability to lead might be even

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<sup>452</sup> Froude, *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century* (1894–5), 202.

more important than political direction was probably anachronistic when connected with the sixteenth century. In the later sixteenth and up to the mid-seventeenth century, most British people would have agreed that relations with the Roman Catholic Church and continental Europe were some of the most important issues facing a leader. Froude's assertions, like Carlyle's hero-worship of half a century earlier, had their philosophical roots firmly in German Idealism, and could only be plausibly stated in Britain after the Whig party had accomplished its aims, and in the vaguely unsettled state of Imperial Britain during the relative economic down-turn of the later nineteenth century.

Britannia does still rule the waves, and in this proud position she has spread the English race over the globe; she has created the great American nation; she is peopling new Englands at the Antipodes; she has made her Queen Empress of India; and is in fact the very considerable phenomenon in the social and political world which all acknowledge her to be. And all this she has achieved in the course of three centuries, entirely in consequence of her predominance as an ocean power.<sup>453</sup>

For the ageing Froude, the British Empire had its foundations in the patriotism of these early Puritan Elizabethan seamen. But the tone of the passage also feels rather desperate. The need to re-assert that 'Britannia still rules the waves' could only exist because of a perceived threat to Britain's supremacy, or doubt about its strength.

## **3.2 Paradoxes of the Puritan influence**

As we have seen, the recovery of Puritanism consolidated the popularity of Cromwell and the Puritans among both the working and middle classes of nineteenth-century England, where previously their support had been the enthusiasm of a small, antagonistic, minority. Yet for all of its political and social force in presenting the English Puritans as the precursors of so many nineteenth-century British achievements, this view was beset by paradoxes.

### **3.2.1 The paradox of the Puritans and patriotism: the Puritans who left England**

So far, this thesis has been discussing the English Puritans. As we have seen, a central aspect of their recovery, for our historians, was emphasising their credentials as English, not necessarily in terms of race, but in terms of patriotism and what they

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<sup>453</sup> Froude, *English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century* (1894–5), 2.

achieved for the nation, enabling the British Empire of the nineteenth century to become what it was. But thinking back to the terminology we are using, the words ‘Puritan’ and ‘Puritanism’ have equally important connotations on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. The New England Puritans are famous for leaving England to found their own nation: surely this was the opposite of English patriotism? Our historians recognised this tension in different ways in their arguments, and constructed different approaches to it.

As we have just seen in his rhetorical passage on Britannia still ruling the waves, Froude saw ‘Britain’ (or England, perhaps) as ‘creating the great American nation’. By using the phrase ‘new Englands at the antipodes’ immediately afterwards, he brings to mind the other New England that the English Puritans founded in America in the 1600s.<sup>454</sup> By implication, he glossed over both the War of Independence and the fact that these New England Puritans in particular were fleeing persecution in England, to place the whole American nation firmly within the ideological Empire and Commonwealth. For Froude, this was clearly both a solution to the paradox and a further proclamation of Britain’s greatness. In this case, it seems to have been Froude’s passion for the empire that led to his departure from acknowledged historical fact. This had often been the butt of criticism, but perhaps by his old age, and in what was already a fairly rhetorical piece, he felt able to allow his emotions a freer rein.<sup>455</sup>

Without developing this kind of apologetic, Stoughton also portrayed the migration of Puritans across the Atlantic as a positive English movement. For him, the Puritans who left England were forced out by the unjust rule of the Stuarts, and that was England’s loss: ‘Many a conscientious Puritan was driven from the shores of his fatherland to seek an asylum in a foreign country, and thus England lost some of her richest jewels, if citizens of integrity and uprightness be a nation’s wealth’.<sup>456</sup> These Puritans perhaps represented the Nonconformists who, like him, had left

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Marsden was one of many critics to notice this tendency. An unattributed reviewer in the journal he edited had commented on it decades earlier, saying of Froude’s *History of England* ‘The history that ought to be veracious is little better than a historical novel. Whatever advantages result, are on the side of fiction, for history gains nothing. Historical writing, it is true, becomes more popular, becomes more exciting, but what is lost in truth is poorly compensated by what is gained in passion. The ancient gait of history was, we admit, cold and stately; but even this was preferable to rhetorical artifice, and the graces of a charlatan’. (‘Froude’s History of England: Reign of Edward VI’, *The Christian Observer*, August 1860, 539–555.) This complaint accused Froude of taking Macaulay’s idealised 1828 ‘History’ too far, and losing his grip of historical reality.

<sup>456</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 69.

England's Church. Their departure began the separate thread of his admiration for the American dream: 'It was a great thought, the seed of a great empire, which was thrown out by the man, whoever he was, that first suggested to his companions the daring enterprise'.<sup>457</sup> And, of course, this unknown man was one of the English Puritans. Similarly, Anderson described the New England Puritans as 'a noble race of men, and we would do well to learn from their many virtues'.<sup>458</sup> Both historians, like Macaulay before them, had seen the New England Puritans as positively English, and their departure as more an exile than an abandonment, long before Froude attempted to claim the United States as part of the Empire.

Beyond considering the New England Puritans as simply being separated from England, there is also the question of how they compared politically and religiously with their namesakes in England. As we have already observed, the use of the same name for both groups inextricably links them now in the mind of the reader, even though their fortunes were separated by thousands of miles of ocean.

In his *History of England*, Macaulay observed that the persecuted Puritans who moved to New England in the early seventeenth century were characterised by great strength and resolution. As he stated:

There were a few resolute Puritans, who, in the cause of their religion, feared neither the rage of the ocean nor the hardships of uncivilised life, neither the fangs of savage beasts nor the tomahawks of more savage men, had built, amidst the primeval forest, villages which are now great and opulent cities, but which have, through every change, retained some trace of the character derived from their founders. The government regarded these infant colonies with aversion, and attempted violently to stop the stream of emigration, but could not prevent the population of New England from being largely recruited by stouthearted and godfearing men from every part of Old England.<sup>459</sup>

These Puritans were romantically portrayed as possessing uncompromising bravery and perseverance in the face of the unknown. Their character was so deeply rooted as to be maintained in the continuing characters of the cities that stood where their colonies were planted two centuries earlier. Macaulay clearly regarded these Puritans with a degree of awe. They were, for Macaulay, examples of what could be accomplished by Puritans when they gained political ascendancy. Beyond this, it

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>458</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 218.

<sup>459</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 80.

could be seen as an implied commendation of those leaving Britain in the nineteenth century to colonise and help develop new lands in the Empire. By linking the New England Puritans with ‘every part of the Old England’, Macaulay managed not chiefly to present the New Englanders as those who resented and left England, but as noble and fearless patriots full of their old country’s spirit, who sought their God first. Meanwhile, he described the government under Charles I as being ‘as despotic as that of France’,<sup>460</sup> and, also in stark contrast to the pioneering Puritans, as weak and impotent. The exodus of the New Englanders paved the way for the civil unrest that was shortly to follow in England itself: they were antecedents, Macaulay suggested, of the Civil War Parliamentarians.

Marsden made this comparison more explicit. Decades before the Protector, and thousands of miles away, the New England Puritans had, Marsden believed, foreshadowed the events of England in the nineteenth century. When he considered them as a group of pious Protestants gaining political ascendancy, he emphasised their hopefulness and political Idealism:

But the pilgrim fathers had purer hopes and higher expectations than national prosperity, even the most unbounded, can satisfy. They braved the perils of the sea, not to plant a great republic, but a pure church. What no political visionary, in his wildest moments, ever dreamed, had been accomplished and surpassed.<sup>461</sup>

In the early seventeenth century, as Marsden saw it, the New England Puritans put into motion a religio-political experiment unlike any that had been attempted before. However, just when it seemed Marsden was about to glorify this great adventure, he checked himself and observed how ‘within a few years the religion of the pilgrim fathers seems to have been reduced to the ordinary standard, if not worn out’.<sup>462</sup> He described the decaying of the piety of the New England Puritans, and emphasised what he saw as their moral failures, particularly the massacre of the Pequod Indians. While the New England Puritans had left England as adventurous and idealistic English people to establish an ideal Puritan civilisation, Marsden described that civilisation as soon failing, and falling into deep intolerance: ‘the service of the Church of England was now, if possible, a greater crime in New England, than the

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>461</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 322.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 323.

conventicles of the brownists and Anabaptists had been at home in the days of Whitgift and of Barlow'.<sup>463</sup> He went on to argue that 'except intolerance, the Puritans of New England had learned nothing from the example of their oppressors'.<sup>464</sup> Marsden presented the failure of the theocracy of the New England Puritans as a warning to the English Puritans that, whatever religious ideals a group may hold to, a functional state needed to be conducted politically rather than theocratically.

And some New England Puritans, Marsden argued, came close to achieving just this. He praised Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, in particular:

His name must be had in everlasting honour, as the first man in these latter ages who taught that the civil magistrate may not coerce the conscience... He maintained, that as to civil government, all religions were alike: that is, he denied the right of a body of Christian men to found a state upon Christian principles.<sup>465</sup>

Williams, Marsden argued, had been one of the true trailblazers of the toleration and political liberty that were, perhaps, the Puritans' greatest legacy. But the very fact that Rhode Island became a haven for the religious misfits was testament to Williams' political eccentricity at the time.

### **3.2.2 The paradox of toleration and liberty**

In stark contrast to our twenty-first century notions, the toleration that these historians presented Puritanism as promoting was counterbalanced by hatred and intolerance. We have already considered how the Puritans were portrayed as harbingers of liberty and toleration. But one of the Puritans' most lasting legacies was their fundamental intolerance. Their reputation in the eighteenth century, if any, was one of intolerance and hypocrisy. The historians approached what appears here to be a fundamental paradox through a fascinating construction of different apologetics, as Worden has stated:

If there were unsatisfactory restrictions on Cromwell's toleration, satisfactory arguments could be found to account for them or to extenuate them. He had inevitably shared, it was decided, the limitations of his age. Or (it was more commonly said) he had been ahead of his age, an age that did not understand

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid., 308.

the principles of toleration or perceive the inevitable limits of doctrinal certainty.<sup>466</sup>

Worden recognised several means by which the new ‘Cromwellians’ of the nineteenth century defended Cromwell’s approach to toleration. We shall consider in more detail how the historians in our selection approached the apparent inconsistencies of both Cromwell and the Puritans as a body.

### ***Semantics and definition***

In his 1828 essay on ‘History’, Macaulay described several of his contemporaries thus: ‘enthusiastically attached to the name of liberty, these historians trouble themselves little about its definition’.<sup>467</sup> Our historians in this selection, likewise, too often refrained from defining the key terms they were promoting, including liberty and toleration. Even the definitions of Puritanism were often ambivalent or vague. We have already considered the way that the historians broadened their concepts to include the moderate as well as the immoderate, the tolerant as well as the intolerant. Effectively, *Puritan* could be used, and was by the historians at times, to describe all religious and political zealots who dissociated themselves from Catholicism.

Moreover, if the Puritans were to be portrayed as paradigms of toleration and liberty, then intolerant people were not true Puritans. But this too led to problems. Marsden’s *Early Puritans* and *Later Puritans* repeatedly struggled to define Puritanism (he stated explicitly ‘it is difficult... to give an exact explanation of the word’<sup>468</sup>), offering several methods of categorising the different types of Puritanism, none of which he seemed entirely satisfied with. While recognising some of its weaknesses, Marsden aimed not only to help redeem Puritanism, but also to identify with it. As a Church of England Evangelical, he seemed suspicious of the Dissenters of the 1620s and 1630s and stated that ‘[the Early Puritans] melt away and disappear from sight; and henceforth the history becomes that of the Nonconformists, not of the puritans properly so termed’.<sup>469</sup> Marsden’s distinction about proper terminology is important here. The next group he described were the ‘democratic puritans; strange men, whose history can be likened only to a tornado which bursts on some devoted

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<sup>466</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 259.

<sup>467</sup> Macaulay, ‘History’ (1828), 344.

<sup>468</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 5.

<sup>469</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 385.

land without warning, covers it with ruin and desolation, and hurries away'.<sup>470</sup> If he was to sustain the idea of Puritans as good people, he needed to qualify his definition in order to exclude those about whom he felt uncomfortable. But Marsden was clearly unsatisfied with even his own definition here, as he continued to classify more and more groups of 'Puritans' throughout another volume.

Whereas Marsden was entangled with the semantics of defining Puritanism, Ryle contradicted himself. In his lecture on *Laud*, Ryle discussed the 'universal ignorance of toleration' of the early seventeenth century, where injustice often prevailed and in which 'the ground was prepared for an abundant crop of Dissent in after times'.<sup>471</sup> In his *Principles for Churchmen*, Ryle led his argument forward into describing the reactive intolerance of the Puritans themselves in the mid seventeenth-century:

Smarting under Laud's tyranny, they [the Puritans of the Long Parliament] retaliated by deposing the Bishops and prohibiting the use of the Liturgy, and cramming down every throat the "Solemn League and Covenant." How true it is that "Oppression maketh a wise man mad"! The studied intolerance of the Puritans produced its natural result. A violent reaction took place when Charles II returned to the throne, and the Episcopal Church regained its old position.<sup>472</sup>

The specific characters that Ryle described as the Puritans who advocated the 'Solemn League and Covenant' were of course the Scottish-influenced Presbyterians, although he only refers to them here as 'Puritans of the Long Parliament'. Elsewhere in his writings, Ryle was a great proponent of the Reformed theology and piety of this group, but here he was clearly impatient of their snapping so readily at the bait of violence and intolerance, actually calling their actions 'stupid'.

However, Ryle also described Cromwell and his 'generation', undoubtedly including these 'Puritans of the Long Parliament', as follows:

I will only ask my readers to remember, in addition to these facts, that Cromwell's generation was remarkable for its toleration, and this, too, in an age when toleration was very little understood, – that his private life was

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> Ryle, 'Laud' (1869), 219.

<sup>472</sup> Ryle, *Principles for Churchmen* (1884), 49.

irreproachable, – and that he enforced a standard of morality through the kingdom which was, unhappily, unknown in the days of the Stuarts.<sup>473</sup>

Here, Ryle's paper on Baxter and *Principles for Churchmen* appear to contradict each other completely. It is clear to us, through observing the language in which his contemporaries delineated between these two groups more clearly, that his issue was partly semantic. He wished to include Presbyterians alongside other Independents under the banner of Puritanism as he admired their theology, but while the former seemed intolerant, the latter pioneered toleration. But it is hard to get away from the essential contradiction here. If the Puritans existed as any sort of coherent group, it seems hard for them to have both been pioneering toleration and exercising profound intolerance.

We can find the answer to this conundrum from Ryle's perspective in the context of these quotations. His *Principles for Churchmen* was a didactic work aimed at encouraging Evangelicals within the Church of England. He could highlight historical examples of intolerance within the Church and use them as lessons from which his own readers could take note: Evangelicals were sometimes under pressure within the Church of England, but, by implication, aggressive responses would not help their cause. In his lecture on 'Baxter', Ryle was likely speaking to a mixed working-class audience of Dissenters and 'Churchmen', and was trying to promote the piety of Baxter and his contemporaries. Ryle did not stop at describing Cromwell's toleration, but went on to commend other aspects of his life and political example. Even by the early 1850s, when Ryle was speaking, barely two decades after the Reform Bill, the notion of toleration had come to be so representative of Christian morality that the former could be seen as a mark of the latter.

However, the nineteenth century historians were still left with the paradox that those they called Puritans seemed to be both supremely intolerant and the great instigators of toleration. They had several different ways of confronting this paradox, as we will now discuss.

### ***Blame the Presbyterians***

The view of the Puritans as intolerant and immoderate was not expunged altogether from the historians' perspectives. While the different historians defended the Puritans from charges of hypocrisy, they continued to make charges of intolerance.

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<sup>473</sup> Ryle, *Baxter* (1853), 13.

For our English historians, these charges were especially levelled against the Presbyterians.

Stoughton described the conflict between Cromwell and his followers and the Presbyterians:

Not that Cromwell and others had any great distaste for Presbyterianism considered in itself, since in doctrinal tenets and religious feeling they agreed with the Genevan school; but with the exclusiveness and intolerance of its ecclesiastical polity they were at issue...<sup>474</sup>

For Stoughton, with his emphasis on the Puritans' promotion of liberty and toleration, it was important to differentiate the Covenanting Presbyterians from his mainstream Puritans. Later, he also stated that 'However admirable the purpose of the Presbyterians might be, the means employed for its accomplishment were inappropriate, dangerous, and unjust'.<sup>475</sup> While respecting the Presbyterians' ideals (in a sense, the English Presbyterians were his own doctrinal ancestors), he condemned their actions in a way that dissociated himself, and by implication his Congregational denomination, from them. Ryle, moreover, described the Presbyterians as exercising 'stupid intolerance',<sup>476</sup> while Marsden noted their 'violence'.<sup>477</sup>

More concretely, Macaulay highlighted the contrast between Cromwell and his followers and the later actions of those Presbyterians who collaborated with the Restoration of the monarchy.

The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents, sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all the old principles. Without casting one glance on the past, or requiring one stipulation for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.<sup>478</sup>

As Macaulay noted, by the time the Presbyterians had sided with Charles II, they had already been given their religious freedom by Cromwell's Protectorate, and it was this that they 'threw down'. They had fought with the Independents for freedom, but

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<sup>474</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol, 1 (1867), 428.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>476</sup> Ryle, *Principles for Churchmen* (1884), 49.

<sup>477</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 153.

<sup>478</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 336.

were willing to give it up for the sake of revenge on the new society for refusing to model itself fully around their own theocratic ideas. From within the Puritan movement, he argued, they rebelled against, and helped to crush, the political and religious freedoms that the Puritans as a whole had fought to achieve.

Anderson's work, as we have seen, focused on individual women and their lives and piety. His Scottish perspective on Presbyterianism and the Covenanters provides an interesting counter-balance to the criticisms of them levelled by the other historians. Anderson suggested that, if only the English Independents in government had listened to the Covenanters and had taken them more seriously as political activists, some of the nineteenth-century reforms would have been enacted two centuries earlier.

They had attained to an elevation and compass of Christian character, which would have rendered them no unmeet associates and coadjutors of prophets and apostles; and even many of their measures, ecclesiastical and civil, bore the stamp of such maturity of wisdom, as showed them to be in advance, not only of their age, but even of ours, and the defeat of which measures, it may be said, without exaggeration, has thrown back the religious condition of Britain and Ireland for centuries.<sup>479</sup>

Anderson felt that Britain would have been stronger, both politically and religiously, if the Covenanters had been given more respect and freedom by the English.

### ***Violence engenders violence***

We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that *a revolution was necessary*. The violence of those outrages will always be proportional to the ferocity and ignorance of the people: and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportional to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live.<sup>480</sup>

Violence naturally engenders violence. The spirit of Protestantism was therefore far fiercer and more intolerant after the cruelties of Mary than before them.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Anderson, *Ladies of the Covenant* (1850), viii.

<sup>480</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 331.

<sup>481</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 50.

These two quotations from Macaulay were written over two decades apart, but show the remarkable consolidation of his political opinions and confidence even from his early 20s. The first passage quoted here, from his essay on Milton in *The Edinburgh Review*, was ostensibly discussing the English Civil War, but could refer to all revolutions and instances of oppression. His formularisation of the proportionality of violence, ignorance and oppression has the ring of Thomas Malthus to it, in terms of its generalisation about the human condition, but its distinctive voice speaking out against oppression and situations in which people had become ‘accustomed to live’ echoes the mission-focused Evangelicalism of his father.<sup>482</sup> By the time he wrote his *History of England*, Macaulay no longer needed to emphasise this point, and was content with the more confident ‘Violence naturally engenders violence’. The Protestant spirit in the later sixteenth century was seen as feeding in anger and revenge on the violence of the preceding Marian reign, but Macaulay implicitly excused the Protestants from blame by presenting their reaction as an inevitable result of their oppression.

Several other historians in our selection used the notion that violence leads to violence to excuse (or at least to gloss over) the attitudes and actions of the Puritans and other early Protestants. The same leniency was not always granted to the Puritans’ opponents, but the historians’ emphasis in this point seems to have been that the Puritans were an oppressed people from their inception: this in turn made their indiscretions, even when they were in power, easier to forgive.

Froude also recognised the spiral of violence created by violence, and it was no surprise to him that the Puritans, both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, felt threatened by Roman Catholicism. He saw the motivations behind such violence as religiously based: ‘before toleration is possible, men must have learnt to tolerate toleration itself; and in times of violent convictions, toleration is looked on as indifference, and indifference as Atheism in disguise’.<sup>483</sup> In Froude’s argument, extreme religious convictions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries naturally tended against toleration. Toleration amounted to indifference, which amounted to atheism. Atheism was seen as the arch-enemy. Toleration, therefore, was not to be tolerated. Both Macaulay and Froude described the violent reaction against Catholicism in particular by the Puritans as apparently natural at the time, and noted the then-foreign nature of toleration as a concept.

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<sup>482</sup> See Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988), 86, 124.

<sup>483</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 66.

Marsden provided a specific example of the otherness of toleration in the mid-seventeenth century: ‘Even Baxter, who abhorred the violence of the Presbyterians, felt it necessary to purge himself from the imputation of not favouring intolerance’.<sup>484</sup> According to Marsden, Richard Baxter, seen universally as a great promoter of piety and a champion of moderation and a *via media* in Puritanism, could not stand the idea of being labelled ‘tolerant’. From the reign of Elizabeth right through to the time of the Civil Wars and the ensuing Commonwealth and Protectorate, Puritanism was fundamentally violent.

### ***Incompleteness of political and religious liberty***

Froude was not alone in noting that ‘even’ Cromwell, despite pioneering religious toleration for many Protestants, stopped short of tolerating Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.<sup>485</sup> We have already seen that several of our historians emphasised the gulf between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. As we have noted in our discussions of Macaulay and Stoughton, they used this gulf to explain the apparent ‘incompleteness’ of the development of both political and religious liberty by the Puritans, and as one of their chief ways of addressing the paradox that the Puritans’ combination of tolerance and intolerance confronted them with. As we have seen, this worked as another means of bolstering their celebration of their own century, in which toleration and liberty were realised more fully. The political advances and forward-looking changes in the nineteenth century, such as the political liberation of Catholics and Jews, would have been out of the question during the Protectorate.

### ***The Puritans as beyond toleration***

Walter Scott had recognised that the Puritans could be firebrands. Their passion was legendary, and even their political achievements seemed to have emerged from a deep personal faith, against which modern standards of civilisation seemed irrelevant. It was of course Carlyle who addressed this most directly, and took the idea much further than Macaulay had or would, in his *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*. In stark contrast to Macaulay’s argument that the Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty ‘mainly because it was the cause of religion’,<sup>486</sup> Carlyle, and later Froude, argued that sincere religious views were, by nature, fundamentally opposed to toleration. He even saw the Puritans’ intolerance as one of their strengths.

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<sup>484</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 158.

<sup>485</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880) 67.

<sup>486</sup> Macaulay, ‘Milton’ (1825), 341.

In his *Historical Sketches*, Carlyle considered English and Scottish Protestant soldiers fighting in Germany against a Catholic army late in the reign of James I. He stated: ‘To the souls of Protestant men it is the cause of causes. Shall God’s Truth, indubitable to all open hearts, survive in this world, or be smothered again under the Pope’s cloth chimera, indescribable, to all but half-shut hearts, – frightful, detestable, to all but such?’<sup>487</sup> Toleration ‘of the other’, especially of Roman Catholics, was simply irrelevant to the English or Scottish Protestants at this stage, as their purpose was to promote that which was their own and literally fight against ‘the other’. He completely separated the ideas of toleration and nobility, which he associated with the nineteenth century, especially Evangelicalism, and sidelined the Puritans’ promotion of toleration as something that was ‘unessential’ to them. There were, as they saw it, larger issues at stake.

As we have noted, Froude saw strong religious convictions and intolerance as essentially concomitant.<sup>488</sup> While he did not express the same disdain for toleration that Carlyle espoused, he saw the heart of Puritanism as being far from the toleration that was promoted in the nineteenth century.

This was distinctly removed from the eighteenth-century descriptions of the Puritans as intolerant hypocrites, but it was also very distinct from the ‘Whig’ arguments that the toleration and political liberties were great achievements of the Puritans. For Carlyle, the Puritans’ real achievement was their strength of character, and their ‘unessential’ toleration was simply a by-product of it.

While trying to provide a synthesis of the different accounts of Puritanism that he had encountered, Marsden recognised the contrast between Macaulay and Carlyle. He addressed this contrast in his repudiation of the idea of ‘hero-worship’ as ‘unworthy of a Christian nation’, stating ‘when a nation arrives at this point it is utterly debased’.<sup>489</sup> However, he also seemed to have felt that Puritanism’s paradoxes, combining the ‘dark’ and heroic with the ‘civilised’ and Christian, were an inevitable result of a sort of dual-personality syndrome.

The consequence was of a hybrid character, which has been always perfectly inexplicable to those who have not traced its parentage; – many Christian virtues flourishing in high perfection, and a dark ferocity unworthy of civilised men. The Jewish and the Christian element by turns prevailing, and the puritan,

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<sup>487</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches* ([1898]), 163.

<sup>488</sup> See Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 66.

<sup>489</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 170–171.

in whom they strangely co-existed, by turns exciting our indignation and commanding our highest reverence.<sup>490</sup>

By ‘the Jewish’ element, Marsden was not being deliberately anti-Semitic, but was referring to the Old Testament theocracy so often associated with Puritanism. Marsden argued that the Puritans were a mixture of two wholly different characters, and that their apparent inconsistencies resulted from a great inner contradiction.

### 3.2.3 The Puritans and the Church of England

The final apparent paradox that we will consider is the Puritans’ role in the Church of England. The Puritans have traditionally been seen as those who first refused to conform within the Church of England, and later left it altogether, shunning the Episcopacy along with the Monarchy. But we have already seen that Marsden, for one, felt that the true, or ‘best’, Puritans had either remained within the Church of England or disappeared altogether.<sup>491</sup> Ryle emphasised Baxter’s pastoral commitment to the established church,<sup>492</sup> and Macaulay and Froude (both ostensibly Church of England but sharing a reticence to discuss their own private religious beliefs), while paying less attention to religious Nonconformity, focused on the Puritans’ strength being revealed in their great patriotism.

Brown has recently explored how Broad Church thinkers combined their nationalism with their passion for the established church, ‘inclusive of all inhabitants and rooted in national history, which would express and elevate the nation’s moral and spiritual life’.<sup>493</sup> For Kingsley, historical Puritanism was part of this root, and had provided England with its conscience and moral bearings, while the Protestant English Church was the great vehicle of its religious and cultural influence across the world. *Westward Ho!* functions as a powerful allegory of this. Amyas, the archetypal English hero, always has the Puritan Salvation Yeo at one hand and Church of England minister Jack Brimblecombe at the other. Kingsley leaves us in no doubt that ‘Amyas is a symbol, though he knows it not, of brave young England longing to wing its way out of its island prison, to discover and traffic, to colonise and to civilise, until no wind can sweep the earth which does not bear the echoes of an English voice’.<sup>494</sup> While Yeo is no doubt a fanatic, and Amyas originally hopes to

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<sup>490</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 421.

<sup>491</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 385; *Later Puritans* (1852), 221.

<sup>492</sup> Ryle, *The Bishop, The Pastor, and the Preacher* (n.d.), ix.

<sup>493</sup> Brown, ‘The Broad Church Movement’ (2011), 119.

<sup>494</sup> Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (1855), ch. 1.

rescue him, the voyage they undertake seems as much emotional navigation of the Puritan's wisdom, godliness and sincerity as learning to sail the physical seas. Meanwhile, the pig-like coward Jack Brimblecombe, under the influence of Yeo, becomes a brave fighter, a godly preacher, and increasingly sincere.<sup>495</sup> Eventually, Brimblecombe's 'pious soul looked up to the old hero with a reverence which had overcome all his Churchman's prejudices against Anabaptists'.<sup>496</sup> Brimblecombe is only able to come of age as a priest through the influence of the firebrand Yeo. After Yeo has died and Amyas been blinded, it is Brimblecombe who takes on the aegis of religious leader, and who brings Amyas safely home. For Kingsley, then, we can see Puritanism as helping to provide the Church of England with its strength, courage and maturity that would fuel its role on the world stage in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, he seemed to ignore that there had ever been more than a conflict of understanding between Puritans and the Church of England, arguing rather that it was 'Anglicans' (by which he meant Anglo-Catholics) who had repeatedly tried to lead England's Protestant Church astray.<sup>497</sup>

As a Nonconformist, it was not in Stoughton's interests to describe the Puritans as saving the Church of England per se: instead, in his early *Spiritual Heroes*, he described them as saving England itself. He stated: 'The Puritans, taking the word in its old-fashioned and comprehensive signification, saved England in the seventeenth century from a relapse into Popery. On this account they deserve to be honoured and loved by the Protestants of the present day'.<sup>498</sup> 'A relapse' compared returning to 'Popery' (a pejorative term) to falling back into a dangerous illness. Most significantly, Stoughton called on nineteenth-century Protestants to honour and love the Puritans as a result of their protection of England. As he wrote, Stoughton saw his own Nonconformity gaining increasing sway in English life and politics. For him, it was not primarily the Church of England, but Protestantism in England, including Nonconformity, that was preserved. A nineteenth-century Protestant experience of Puritanism, he suggested, should invoke thankfulness for the Puritans' historical role against Roman Catholicism.

Ryle saw the Puritans 'saving the English church', as follows:

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid., ch. 18.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid., ch. 23.

<sup>497</sup> See Charles Kingsley, *Yeast: A Problem* (London: Macmillan, 1879; first published 1851), xvi–xvii.

<sup>498</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), iv–v.

Let us settle it down in our minds that for sound doctrine, spirituality, and learning combined, the Puritans stand at the head of English divines. With all their faults, weaknesses, and defects, they alone kept the lamp of pure, evangelical religion burning in this country in the times of the Stewarts, – they alone prevented Laud’s popish inclinations carrying England back into the arms of Rome.<sup>499</sup>

Ryle’s support for the Puritans’ keeping ‘the lamp of pure, evangelical religion burning in this country’ is in no doubt in this quotation. He described the success of the Puritans’ stand against ‘Laud’s popish inclinations’ as a grand proof of the Puritans ‘sound doctrine, spirituality and learning’, making them ‘stand at the head of English divines’, despite what he considered to be their faults. This lecture on Baxter was one of Ryle’s first published works, and like Stoughton’s *Spiritual Heroes* reveals an author of staunch opinions and polemical anti-Catholicism. Ryle’s opinions about Laud softened in his later work. In his essay on Laud, he admitted that Laud’s aim was to un-Protestantize, rather than to Romanize, the Church of England.<sup>500</sup> However, he never retracted the statement he made in his lecture on Baxter and allowed it to be re-published in collections of his work throughout his later life. For Ryle, like Stoughton, a major way that Puritanism was experienced in the nineteenth century was through the continuing existence of Protestantism, particularly Evangelicalism, and this Protestantism was essential to the fabric of Britain.

Stoughton and Ryle had written these statements in the late 1840s and early 1850s respectively. In one of the later volumes of his *History of England*, written in 1866, Froude also saw the Church of England as owing its continued existence to the Puritans:

There needed an enthusiasm fiercer far to encounter the revival of Catholic fanaticism; and if the young Puritans, in the heat and glow of their convictions, snapped their traces and flung off their harness, it was they, after all, who saved the Church which attempted to disown them, and with the Church saved also the stolid mediocrity to which the fates then and ever committed the government of it.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Ryle, ‘Baxter’ (1853), 37.

<sup>500</sup> Ryle, ‘Laud’ (1869), 240.

<sup>501</sup> Froude, *History of England*, Vol. 10 (1866), 114–5.

The ‘enthusiasm’ of Puritanism was fierce, but it was only this ferocity that could have saved the Church of England. Froude reflected on the irony that something so passionate in the ‘heat and glow of its convictions’ could save a Church and condemn it to such ‘stolid mediocrity’. We will see more of this in Froude’s comparisons between Puritanism and Evangelicalism in Chapter Four. For now, it will suffice to note that Froude saw Puritanism as playing a crucial role in the survival of the Church of England. Likewise, he saw Calvinism as saving the Roman Catholic Church itself: ‘having shamed Romanism out of its practical corruption the Calvinists enabled it to survive’.<sup>502</sup>

For Froude, the irony of these episodes fed neatly into the dramatic approach to history of which he was a master. Puritanism had rescued that very Church of England that brought about its downfall at the Restoration, and sustained it for a future of mediocrity while the Puritans themselves faded away. While Macaulay on the one hand and the Evangelical historians on the other were keen to show similarities between the Puritans and the nineteenth century, Froude was attracted to the Puritans as an extinct tribe full of strange contrasts.

### **3.3 The Puritans and the Roman Catholic Church**

The historians in our selection rejoiced in the liberties that they saw as beginning with the Puritan movement in the seventeenth century. But one of the most notable liberties that had been achieved in their own century was Catholic Emancipation.

And Macaulay, for one, had framed his 1820s discussions of the seventeenth-century promotion of civil liberties in part to provide a reassuring epistemological basis for this very emancipation. As Dudley-Edwards has observed:

Macaulay wanted first and foremost to show Daniel O’Connell [...] that an English writer, in the ideological quarterly journal of an English political party, was prepared to go to the historical root of religious controversy to show their cause would get an English championship founded on a manifest search for justice [...] The resurgent Catholics might well feel, he could hope, that they needed no further rhetoric of alienation when their wrongs were hurled into the light of day by the son of the great Protestant evangelical [...] The Hallam essay leaped at the opportunity to show in historical terms that the cause of Catholic Emancipation was naturally the cause of all the more radical Whigs [...] the government legislation against Catholics was the descendent of the

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<sup>502</sup> Froude, ‘Calvinism’ (1871), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 55.

same kind of Royal tyranny, whether represented by Tudor persecution of the Catholics or Stuart persecution of the Puritans'.<sup>503</sup>

For Macaulay, the persecuted Puritans of the early seventeenth century could be compared to the persecuted Catholics of the early nineteenth. Likewise, the achievement and promotion of civil liberties from the mid-seventeenth century onwards were as a grand celebration of the political advancement of England, and as an encouragement to Catholics in his own day that their hope of political and religious freedom would be achieved.

Macaulay was proved right. Shortly afterwards, both Nonconformists and Catholics won their rights. And as the nineteenth century progressed, Evangelicalism once again gained a strong foothold in the Church of England, but so too did the Oxford Movement and Anglo-Catholicism.

But the legacy of Macaulay's recovery of Puritanism as the great beginning of civil liberties in Britain, and the presentation of the Puritans as a great example of the persecuted minority that achieved their freedom, did not always follow the lines of liberty and support for emancipation and religious equality that he envisaged. Rather, it produced some of the strangest contrasts in the recovery of Puritanism.

The Puritans, as we have just seen, managed to 'preserve' the Church of England from something they saw as deadly and hateful. Carlyle described Puritanism's 'eternal hatred of the other' as essential to its being. Several of the other historians, in their definitions of Puritanism, saw it as essentially reactionary, like Protestantism but more so,<sup>504</sup> and this accounts for something of the breadth of its definition: the term *Puritanism* was used variously to cover any pious group that objected to anything they felt was not sufficiently reformed from Roman Catholicism. If we are to understand the impact that the historians perceived Puritanism as having, we must consider how they presented its relationship with Catholicism.

To return for a moment to semantics, the word 'Popery' was used in the nineteenth century as a pejorative adjective to describe tendencies, often within the Church of England, that seemed too close to Roman Catholicism for comfort.<sup>505</sup> Ryle, Kingsley, Stoughton and even Macaulay all used the terms 'Popery' and

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<sup>503</sup> Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988), 97–98.

<sup>504</sup> Carlyle asserted, 'The most interesting phasis which the Reformation anywhere assumes, especially for us English, is that of Puritanism' (*On Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841), 142).

<sup>505</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 8.

‘papist’ to describe both the Roman Catholics as perceived by the Puritans and the Roman Catholics of their own day.

### 3.3.1 The war against Popery

The Puritans saw their war against Roman Catholicism as a religious war into which they had been summoned by God himself.<sup>506</sup> Portrayals of the Puritans’ active hatred of Roman Catholicism are found in the writings of all our historians. They are one of the only undisputed aspects of Puritanism’s description in the spread of all their work. The historians’ various approaches reveal a wide range of literary approaches and nuances with very similar aims and meanings.

Macaulay memorably portrayed Puritan opinion in his poem *The Battle of Naseby*. One stanza reads:

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the crown;  
With the Belial of the Court and the Mammon of the Pope;  
There is woe in Oxford halls: there is wail in Durham’s Stalls;  
The Jesuit smites his bosom: the Bishop rends his cope.<sup>507</sup>

The obviously crazed narrator here connects bishops and royalty with the Pope, and links Jesuits and Bishops. The emotive appellations Belial (a devil or fallen angel) and Mammon (the god of evil worldly riches) demonise the royal court, the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Church (seeming to equate the latter two) as altogether rotten and evil. The victory of the Parliamentary Roundheads in the Battle of Naseby causes the narrator joyfully to proclaim the downfall of all of his enemies. All that was really defeated was King Charles’ army, but the Puritan narrator entwines him so closely with Roman Catholicism that he sees both as wonderfully fallen. Macaulay’s narrator here was deliberately a parody of Puritan extremism and the blurring of all distinctions of their enemies into Roman Catholic anti-Christ.

Ryle echoed Macaulay’s sense of the strength of Puritan hatred when he stated in his essay on Laud: ‘There was a wide-spread feeling that Popery was a false religion, and Protestantism was God’s truth; that Popish doctrine in every shape was to be held in abhorrence, and that Reformation doctrines ought never to be given

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<sup>506</sup> For an excellent exploration of the seventeenth-century Puritans’ anti-Catholicism, see Peter Lake, *The Anti Christ’s Lewd Hat* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).

<sup>507</sup> Macaulay, ‘The Battle of Naseby’ (1824), in *Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches*, 440.

up'.<sup>508</sup> Protestants in seventeenth-century Britain, chiefly Puritans, Ryle asserted, saw Reformation doctrines as God's revealed truth, and all Roman Catholic doctrines as false and to be hated.

Marsden developed this idea of the fundamental nature of Puritan abhorrence of Roman Catholicism when he wrote that 'It was always a test of Puritan orthodoxy to deny that the church of Rome was a true church'.<sup>509</sup> To deny that something was a true Church may sound inconsequential now, but it was essentially to deny God's blessing on it and headship of it, and to deny salvation to its members. The Puritans' belief that Roman Catholicism was literally leading people into eternal damnation goes some way towards explaining their hatred of it.

Kingsley also commented on the widespread rejection of 'Popery' in his essay 'Plays and Puritans'. When he described the perceived Puritan hatred of arts and high culture, he noted that dramatic art was rejected by Puritans because it came from Italy, the home of Popery.<sup>510</sup> While this may sound absurd to a twenty-first-century reader, Kingsley's point was serious. The hatred of all things connected with Roman Catholicism was no comical matter in the seventeenth century.

Stoughton, too, in his *Spiritual Heroes*, emphasised that the Puritans hated 'with all their hearts' not only 'the system of Popery', but also 'its external badges and accompaniments'.<sup>511</sup> Anything that seemed to be connected to Roman Catholicism was suspect, however pious and apparently righteous. The Puritans' Protestant conviction, he argued, was not based on pragmatism, but on their opinion that it had 'Scriptural authority'.

But how else was this extreme hatred framed? What precisely was it hatred against, and how did it fit with the historians' views of Puritanism as something that was liberating and developmental for England's political and religious future?

### **3.3.2 Freedom/liberty as liberty from Catholicism**

Stoughton saw Puritan's 'reaction against Popery' as more than simply a religious move. He stated that:

The Puritan reaction against Popery is to be regarded as also aided by its alliance with the reactions, moral and political, against despotism; freedom

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<sup>508</sup> Ryle, 'Laud' (1869), 220.

<sup>509</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 375–6.

<sup>510</sup> Kingsley, 'Plays and Puritans' (1873), 19.

<sup>511</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 39–40.

appeared to the Puritan not merely as something expedient, and to be desired for temporal ends, but as a heaven-born right, a gift of God, which it was man's duty to claim and assert, in the face of earth and hell...<sup>512</sup>

For Stoughton, the Puritans' reaction against Roman Catholicism was bound up with a reaction against political despotism (in forms seen both in Roman Catholicism itself, with the Pope as undisputed visible head, and in monarchical England, with the King as absolute ruler). The freedom that the Puritans were seeking, according to Stoughton, seemed to them to be available only through absolute rejection of systems of government, both religious and political, that they deemed to be oppressive. Moreover, the freedom they determined to assert was thought to be a gift from God and, as such, a right and a necessity.

Marsden also used this language of freedom in introducing early Protestantism and Puritanism in England: 'The chains in which the English church had been fettered for a thousand years were broken; and now the task remained to model it anew, yet so as to retain the visible unity which it had worn beneath the papacy'.<sup>513</sup> It is not clear here whether Marsden actually believed that the English church had been 'fettered for a thousand' years, or whether he was attempting to voice sixteenth-century Protestant feeling and language. In any case, Marsden saw the Reformation, and the Puritanism that followed, as a liberation from a slavery that had lasted for many centuries. Kingsley conveyed a similar sense of freedom from slavery in the early pages of his *Westward Ho!* 'The half-century after the Reformation in England was one not merely of intellectual freedom, but of immense animal good spirits. After years of dumb confusion and cruel persecution, a breathing time had come'.<sup>514</sup> In this context, Kingsley was preparing the reader for the 'animal good spirits' and earthy humanity of Amyas and his other Bidford heroes.

At a time when the British Empire was celebrating the abolition of slavery, references to the fetters of slavery would have been potent. For the historians to compare Catholicism to slavery was to connect it with an old world order that the British Empire was sweeping away.

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<sup>512</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 53.

<sup>513</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 1.

<sup>514</sup> Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (1855), ch. 2.

### 3.3.3 Britain as Protestant

To suggest that all our historians portrayed Roman Catholicism completely negatively would be an exaggeration. Macaulay carefully described the benefits of Roman Catholicism in England in the Middle Ages, concluding that England owed a lot *both* to Roman Catholicism *and* to the Reformation. He designated Roman Catholicism as right for Europe in its time of childhood, and Protestantism right in its adulthood. In this context, he described Protestantism as connected to a ‘higher grade of civilisation’.<sup>515</sup> But even by acknowledging that Catholicism had once been very important for the development of European civilisation, Macaulay went much further in support of Catholicism than many other Protestants would have dared in the nineteenth century, and certainly further than the other historians in this selection. Macaulay, of course, was one of the influential Whigs who played an important part in Catholic emancipation. For him, it may have been Protestantism that had brought England its greatness, but this greatness could now encompass more, including educated Catholics, Nonconformists, and Jews.

Although he differed considerably from Macaulay on many other points, Froude, too, was able to see the positive impact of Catholicism in Europe’s history: ‘Such I believe to have been the central idea of the beautiful creed which, for 1500 years, turned the heart and formed the mind of the noblest of mankind’.<sup>516</sup> But he, too, saw the England of his own day as Protestant to its core: ‘We inhale the spirit of Protestantism with our earliest breaths of consciousness’.<sup>517</sup>

This theme of the Protestantism of England was especially important to our Evangelical historians. Stoughton and Ryle, in their historical works, deemed it particularly important to emphasise the Protestantism of England in their time. For Stoughton, an emphasis on Protestantism was a way of asserting the authentic Englishness of the Nonconformist denominations and highlighting their new status within society.

This was reflected in Stoughton’s geographical Protestant tour in his *Shades and Echoes of Old London*.<sup>518</sup> If Oxford and Durham were the heartlands of high

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<sup>515</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 40–41.

<sup>516</sup> Froude, ‘Philosophy of Catholicism’ (1851) in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 1, 188–201, 200.

<sup>517</sup> Froude, ‘England’s Forgotten Worthies’ (1852), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 1, 443.

<sup>518</sup> Tour guides were increasingly popular during the nineteenth century, especially as the advent of the railways led to far greater numbers of people travelling and exploring new places. Tour guides afforded even the non-traveller a glimpse into a new place. See for instance Robbins, *Nineteenth-*

Anglicanism, then, for Stoughton, Cambridge, East Anglia and London were the centre of Puritan strength.

The history of the Protestant establishment ever since is involved in that of our city; places connected with its grand events, its advocates, and its ornaments, are dear to the hearts of its children; while other spots in London, little known to fame, are linked to the memory of the Puritans, and, reverently traced out by those who love him, become hallowed ground.<sup>519</sup>

This work of Stoughton's was really a tour guidebook, and for his many London Nonconformist and Evangelical readers it would encourage visits to places where key incidents in their history had taken place, and the homes and graves of their heroes. He was also keen to ingrain in his readers an appreciation for the Protestantism of the city, and the nation, that they loved.

Stoughton's tour-guidebook was published in 1864. Just fourteen years earlier, the Roman Catholic Church had re-established the territorial hierarchy in England, sparking public fears that it was trying to re-claim England for the Catholic faith. Westminster Cathedral was still in the planning stages when Stoughton wrote. Although not stating it in as many words, Stoughton re-assured his readers that no new diocese would compromise London's staunch historical Protestantism and connection with Puritanism itself.

Ryle's agenda was different from Stoughton's. Well aware of the tensions within the Church of England, he was determined to promote Protestantism as England's true religion, and thus as the heart of the Church of England, in the face of apparent Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic opposition. He was also keen to show Puritans as somehow the seventeenth-century ancestors of nineteenth-century Protestantism, and in particular, Evangelicalism, including within the Church of England. In his essay on Laud, he appealed to an argument of the educated:

The bulk of our middle classes and educated lower orders in the Church do not want chasubles, copes, dalmatics, birettas, banners, processions, incense, pastoral staffs, crucifixes, incessant bowings, turnings, and genuflexions, or any such pernicious trumpery. Such things are mere gaudy toys, which may

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*Century Britain: England, Scotland, and Wales the Making of a Nation – The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1986–1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 25.

<sup>519</sup> Stoughton, *Shades and Echoes of Old London* (London: 1864), 11.

please children, and satisfy idle young men and women, and the whole herd of the ignorant, the weak-minded, and the superstitious.<sup>520</sup>

Those who knew well enough to know better, he argued, found Roman Catholic-style symbolism and ceremony (as practised by the Anglo-Catholics in his own time) to be unnecessary and repulsive. Those who did appreciate High ceremonies, including the ‘weak-minded’, were, he implied, largely the vulnerable and unthinking. One could conclude from reading this that Ryle saw Anglo-Catholicism and Roman-Catholicism as somehow preying on the ignorant and gullible. Those with a reasonable English education, he presumed, would naturally recognise its ‘pernicious trumpery’. This emphasis on education as a path to religious liberation echoed Macaulay’s arguments that political liberty was only relevant or meaningful in the context of sufficient education.<sup>521</sup> It does not seem to have occurred to Ryle to connect the poverty of many Roman Catholics with the fact they had long been politically and religiously ostracised.

However, where Macaulay had been keen to tone down links between the church and the political establishment, Ryle repudiated this idea:

I dislike the modern principle, unknown to the good old Puritans, that States have nothing to do with religion, and that it matters not whether the sovereign is Protestant or Papist, Jew, Turk, Infidel, or Heretic. I see these things floating in the air. I confess they make me uncomfortable.<sup>522</sup>

For Ryle, Protestantism was at the heart of British identity, and he felt uncomfortable even hearing discussions that questioned this notion. His use of the Puritans in defending this point is particularly interesting when we consider how other historians of his time were commending them for the religious freedoms they granted in the political sphere. Again, it was all a matter of perspective. For Macaulay and Stoughton, the Puritans granted great freedom to Nonconformists of many different backgrounds, and saw freedom itself as a religious principle. For Ryle, these same Puritans would have seen the idea of granting freedoms to non-Protestants as unthinkable. And, of course, both perspectives have elements of truth. Once again, we can also hold both of these ideas in tension with Carlyle’s argument that the

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<sup>520</sup> Ryle, ‘Laud’ (1869), 252–253.

<sup>521</sup> See Hall, *Macaulay and Son* (2012), 192.

<sup>522</sup> J. C. Ryle, *James II and the Seven Bishops* ([1987]), 24.

Puritans' toleration only related to matters that were inconsequential to them, such as specific denominationalism, because they placed such a great emphasis on what did matter, especially Protestantism.

As a Church of England minister who was also an Evangelical, it was very important to Ryle to define the Church of England as firmly a Protestant Church, because many High Anglicans defined their Church as a *via media* between Catholicism and Protestantism. Like Stoughton, Ryle was also involved in dialogue and mission work with Evangelicals of other denominations. Seeing England as quintessentially Protestant must have helped him to frame his cross-denominational work and support for overseas missions as something that was simultaneously religious and patriotic.

### **3.3.4 The recovery of Puritanism as a channel for anti-Roman Catholic polemic**

But this could also work the other way: if Englishness and Protestantism were united, Roman Catholicism was somehow un-English, and Roman Catholics were, in some sense at least, outsiders.

Anti-Catholicism was a significant movement. Michael Wheeler's fascinating work *The Old Enemies* provides a helpful overview of the divide between Protestantism and Catholicism in nineteenth-century Britain, its historical roots, and its literary and intellectual expressions. Wheeler also traced the development of and transitions within anti-Catholicism during the course of the century:

In the early nineteenth century, when Catholics formed a small minority in England, the conflict between the old enemies had been largely political, as pressure built up for Catholic relief and for Emancipation. At mid-century the description of the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy as 'Papal Aggression' reflected visceral anxieties concerning the other, expressed culturally in forms such as historical fiction and paintings. A troubled and internally divided established Church of England now felt threatened by the growth and ambition of its old enemy on the margin of national life.<sup>523</sup>

We could certainly add the works of some of our historians to Wheeler's cultural expressions of 'visceral anxieties concerning the other'. Some nineteenth-century historians used the fears articulated by Puritans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to fuel an ongoing mistrust and, indeed, hatred of Roman Catholicism. Flying in the face of Macaulay's promotion of the Puritans as advocates of universal

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<sup>523</sup> Wheeler, *The Old Enemies* (2006), 295.

toleration, our Evangelical historians: Stoughton, Ryle and Marsden, seem to have been most keenly anti-Catholic, alongside Kingsley, whose form of Protestant Nationalism, strongly influenced by Froude, firmly articulated an anti-Catholic polemic that Froude never seemed fully able to voice.

Stoughton revealed personal anti-Catholicism in both his earlier and later writings. In *Spiritual Heroes*, he linked Catholicism to immorality, stating that the ‘immorality’ described by one of his sources was supported by ‘an immense mass of examples’ and was essentially endemic in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>524</sup>

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Stoughton made a similarly obtuse comment concerning Roman Catholicism, this time particularly directed against Jesuits: ‘One of them [Charles I’s counsellors], probably Williams [of Lincoln] – suggested a distinction between the public capacity of Charles as a King, and the private capacity of Charles as a man: a distinction worthy only of a Jesuit, and as such, if allowed, would tear up the roots of all morality in official life’.<sup>525</sup> Stoughton’s complaint against Catholicism was again directed at what he perceived to be its destruction of morality. His complaint that the distinction was ‘worthy only of a Jesuit’ seems hasty when it is borne in mind that the King’s Two Bodies theory was a widespread notion and had its roots in medieval political theology.<sup>526</sup> But the phraseology that he used ‘worthy only of a...’ is a classical formula of a prejudicial statement.

Stoughton was not our only historian who mistrusted Jesuits in particular and Roman Catholics in general. In the quotation we have already seen from Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!*, the phrases ‘dumb confusion’ and ‘cruel persecution’ also indicate a dislike of Roman Catholicism on Kingsley’s (or his narrator’s) own part, seeming to see its effect on England in the centuries before the Reformation as wholly negative and indicative of anti-intellectualism and unjust treatment of its people.<sup>527</sup> There are moments when the Devonian heroes’ unfavourable preconceptions about Roman Catholics are challenged: when their Spanish guest seems to be noble and charming, for example, but then they are reinforced with a vengeance when he effectively kidnaps the heroine, Rose. The Inquisition also plays a significant role in this work, and is presented entirely as a place of graphic, hyperbolic doom, including for Rose

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<sup>524</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 12.

<sup>525</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 138.

<sup>526</sup> See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>527</sup> Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (1855), ch. 2.

herself. Kingsley also has severe words for Amyas' cousin Eustace's decision to become a Jesuit. Before this stage, he had been a disturbing Catholic cousin threatening the lives of Amyas and his brother Frank. From this time on:

This book is a history of men; of men's virtues and sins, victories and defeats: and Eustace is a man no longer; he is become a thing, a tool, a Jesuit; which goes only where it is sent, and does good or evil indifferently as it is bid; which, by an act of moral suicide, has lost its soul, in the hope of saving it; without a will, a conscience, a responsibility (as it fancies), to God or man, but only to "The Society".<sup>528</sup>

Kingsley saw 'The Society' as a body with no responsibility even to God, and therefore as completely divorced from even a corrupted form of Christianity. He saw becoming a Jesuit as the end not only of Eustace's interest as a character in his novel, but also as the end of his humanity: he was dead to Kingsley for the rest of the novel.<sup>529</sup>

Anderson, too, focused on the cruelty of Roman Catholicism. He criticised earlier anti-Puritan writings as showing far greater leniency to the Roman Catholics than the Puritans, despite worse atrocities being committed by the Catholics. The Spanish Inquisition in particular captured his imagination as a source of horror:

Yet such is the peculiarity of the mental vision and feelings of some, that, from their hatred of the Puritans, they are more horrified by the few cases of persecution with which the pilgrim fathers were chargeable, than by Papal Rome's immolation of fifty millions of victims, often with circumstances of revolting cruelty, just as Gibbon's mental vision and feelings were, from his hatred of Calvin, so peculiar that he was more horrified, or as he expresses it himself, "more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus than at the hetacombs which have blazed in the *auto da fes* of Spain and Portugal".<sup>530</sup>

Anderson did not ignore the 'few cases of persecution' that the New England Puritans perpetrated. However, he contrasted them with the 'revolting cruelty' of the Inquisition. He specifically referred to the anti-Calvinistic bias of Gibbon, but also more vaguely described 'some' who hated the Puritans. It is likely that Anderson was referring to the anti-Puritan rhetoric of eighteenth-century historians,

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid., ch. 22.

<sup>529</sup> For a helpful discussion of this moment in *Westward Ho!*, see also Wheeler, *The Old Enemies* (2006), 109.

<sup>530</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, vol. 1 (1862), 241.

but he probably also pointed towards those in the first half of the nineteenth century who had continued to criticise Puritanism.

Marsden, although determined to be seen as a moderate, stated that ‘It would betray the greatest ignorance to deny that the church of Rome is once more the most formidable adversary of the Protestant faith in England’.<sup>531</sup> Writing in 1846, when unrest about the increasing tolerance of Roman Catholicism had not yet reached its peak, Marsden reflected an atmosphere of fear and agitation amongst many Protestants that was to be expressed in the anti-Catholic riots when the new archdiocese of Westminster was announced four years later. Marsden went on a few pages later to state: ‘Either the Church of Rome is the predicted Anti-Christ, or we have inflicted on her a grievous wrong’.<sup>532</sup> Here, Marsden encouraged the Church of England to act consistently with its historical claims. If the Roman Catholic Church was the Anti-Christ, as the Church of England, and Puritans in particular, had historically claimed, then Marsden argued that discussions with it were unwise and it was much to be feared. If it was not the Anti-Christ, then it had been much maligned. Marsden’s implication was that, in either event, negotiating with Rome was not a wise path.

Even as late as 1870, Ryle warned his readers of the dangers of ‘the undying enmity of the Church of Rome’ in their own day, even comparing its danger to nineteenth-century Protestants with its danger to seventeenth-century Puritans.<sup>533</sup> Ryle continued to see the Roman Catholic Church as the largest threat to the Church of England. The emotive ‘enmity’ and the use of the word ‘danger’ both seem to have been intended to instil dread and dislike in readers, and to foster negative attitudes towards Roman Catholicism.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The two great thinkers behind the nineteenth-century recovery of Puritanism were unlikely bedfellows: Macaulay and Carlyle. Their respective ‘recoveries’ had different foci and different results. Macaulay aimed to present Puritanism as a forward-thinking movement and a great force for change that had helped Britain to

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<sup>531</sup> J. B. Marsden, *Churchmanship of the New Testament: An Inquiry, Historical and Theological, into the Origin and Process of Certain Opinions Which Now Agitate the Church of Christ* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1846), 213.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>533</sup> Ryle, *Church Reform Papers* (London: William Hunt, 1870), 20.

develop into the world power it became in the nineteenth century. Carlyle, however, saw it in more much metaphysical terms: Puritanism, and Cromwell in particular, for him, represented a great force of zeal, strength and passion that could lead to greatness in the face of mediocrity. Toleration and liberty, Carlyle argued, were only ever incidental to its achievements.

But by engaging with the work of lesser-known historians who were influenced by both Macaulay and Carlyle, we can see something of the way their big ideas were synthesised and processed. These lesser-known historians in turn had their own quite separate political and religious agendas, and we can see something of how the ‘recovery’ movement they created took shape in surprising ways. A new generation of amateur historians was excited about the increasing availability of primary sources and the prospects for a forward-looking Britain and Empire that had been forged by great English heroes of the past. The recovery of Puritanism led different writers down different routes, variously changing their minds or using what they had discovered in history to justify their existing opinions.

At the same time, then, this recovery of Puritanism resulted in several serious paradoxes. These include the ideals of liberty and toleration which emerged from the reforms of the 1820s–1840s, but which had their roots in the Puritanism of the Civil War and afterwards. And yet these ideals of liberty and toleration that the historians discerned growing out of the Puritan experience were combined with a belief system that condemned all of its opponents to eternal damnation.

None the less, the mid-nineteenth-century historians who portrayed Puritanism in a favourable light were confident that it had been a source of strength to England and helped the British Empire to gain world supremacy. As the nineteenth century progressed and British supremacy seemed less secure, the historians continued to use the historical examples of the Puritans and Puritanism to bolster a belief in the nation’s strength and superiority.

As we have already established, however, a significant group behind the recovery of Puritanism, increasingly so as the nineteenth century progressed, were the historians who were within the established Church of England, and who showed no particular affinity to Whig political ideals. It was these writers who took Macaulay’s arguments about the importance of the Puritans several steps further, and connected them to Britain’s status as the dominant world power.

Puritanism’s connection to Nationalism and Imperialism was a major element of its recovery, and one which has hitherto received little attention. The increasing

popularity of Puritanism was simply not party-political – even for Macaulay – and went far further than simply presenting an alternative to a Tory Nationalism that saw the Royalists as the beaten heroes of the Civil War. Rather, these historians aimed to connect the Puritans to a quintessentially English Nationalism, infused with love of their country, sincerity and pride. For our historians, Puritanism represented patriotism and political advancement.

We have already also seen that Puritanism was used in the nineteenth century to promote apparently contradictory viewpoints. In Chapter Four, we will observe this phenomenon more as we move to consider the ways the historians presented Puritanism in a religio-social setting: where we have been observing what Puritanism was deemed as doing for England politically, we will see how the historians presented its social implications.

## **Chapter 4: The social implications of Puritanism**

### **4.1 Puritanism and personal piety**

During the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of the most defamatory accusations laid against the Puritans was that they were base hypocrites, preaching a creed they would never practice and living in contradiction to their stated beliefs. Our historians were intent on re-asserting their integrity. The Puritans were moral, sincere and devout, they argued, and it was from this sincere devotion that some measure of their success and influence seems to have stemmed.

For several of our historians, the need to re-assert the integrity of the Puritans had a broader teleological purpose: Puritan standards of morality were to be presented as a new ideal for a nineteenth-century public. This recovery of Puritanism was an important part of a wider moral mission. As Green asserts, those involved in Puritanism's recovery saw Puritanism as 'a feature of national character that had to be rescued from virtual oblivion... indeed, it was only as a self-consciously revived, thereby also subtly transformed, ideal that Puritanism became the chief moral educator of the Victorians – the critical base of Sunday-school teaching, self-help manuals, also *avant garde* social and political criticism'.<sup>534</sup>

#### **4.1.1 The Puritans' morality, faith and sincerity**

It may seem self-evident that the Puritans are associated with a strict moral code and high personal and ethical standards. For our historians, the Puritan moral code often afforded positive comparison with moral standards in their own nineteenth century. The historians did not balk at describing the Puritans as far preferable (morally speaking) to the Stuarts on either side of them. They often also defended their own particular heroes against charges of over-structure, or made contextual excuses for them.

As we move to consider both the social aspects and more of the social context of the recovery of Puritanism, we can see that the historians, to different degrees, felt that their own role was intrinsically a moral one. As we have already seen in Macaulay's intention to pronounce a 'judgment' on his discoveries, our historians viewed the imposition of their own ethical standards on actors in the past to be an integral part of the history-writing process.

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<sup>534</sup> Green, *The Passing of Protestant England* (2011), 147–8.

We can, however, see considerable differences between our historians, which reflect their contrasting backgrounds and purposes. We also venture to argue that, for all the criticism that was levelled against Froude at the time,<sup>535</sup> we can see a marked historiographical development between Macaulay and Froude.

Naturally, it was in the specific interests of the religiously-motivated historians such as Ryle to state what was moral and what was not. His historical essays began as lectures and pamphlets for working men, and he frequently used historical examples in his popular theological writings (many of which still remain in print). A major way that he emphasised the morality of the Puritans was by describing their opponents negatively: for example, he insisted that during the Civil War ‘the general irreligion and immorality of the King’s party did more to ruin his cause than all the armies which the Parliament raised’.<sup>536</sup> Without actually labelling the Parliamentarians’ victory as providential, Ryle consciously aligned himself with the Puritans’ moral stance. He also saw the moral failure of their opponents as a major cause of the revolution and Civil War: ‘In short, the public came to the conclusion that Laud and his companions thought Puritanism a greater sin than open immorality... men said you might lie, or swear, or get drunk, and little notice would be taken; but to be a Puritan, or a Nonconformist, was to commit the unpardonable sin!’<sup>537</sup> Even the general public of the seventeenth century, in Ryle’s eyes, had a strong moral code that was revolted by the Royalists’ combination of ecclesiastical stricture and ethical leniency. Despite this obvious disapproval of Laud, however, Ryle also made a point of not judging him: ‘God forbid that we should judge [Laud]’.<sup>538</sup> Here he demonstrated something of his own equivocity about the extent of didacticism that his role as a historian should entail. We can sense this ambivalence in the works of most of our historians.

Macaulay, too, emphasised the immorality of the Puritans’ opponents. The hatred that Stuart Kings James and Charles engendered was an emotive subject for him even in his early work. In his essay on Milton, he observed that ‘England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols [James and Charles] with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the

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<sup>535</sup> See for instance Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 72, for a discussion of how Freeman attempted to expose Froude’s work as ‘a relic of the past’.

<sup>536</sup> Ryle, ‘Baxter’ (1853), 8.

<sup>537</sup> Ryle, ‘Laud’ (1869), 234.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, 239–40.

race accursed by God was a second time driven forth...'<sup>539</sup> The introduction of the Puritans' Judaic conviction here with 'second time driven forth' tints Macaulay's statements with semi-comic absurdity, but his sympathy for the Puritans is unmistakable and the powerful rhetorical force of 'crime to crime' and 'disgrace to disgrace' creates a sense of the perpetuation and growth of immorality that, perhaps in Macaulay's mind even when he wrote this essay in the 1820s, had led inexorably towards the necessity of the Glorious Revolution and the development of modern Britain. In any case, the ultimate failure of the Restoration of the monarchy was a cornerstone in the construction of the 'Glorious Revolution' narrative of his *History*.

For Macaulay, morality and Puritanism always went hand in hand: he literally used 'the morals of a Puritan' to describe Hampden.<sup>540</sup> Even in his later writings, 'That which chiefly distinguished the army of Cromwell from other armies was the austere morality and the fear of God which pervaded all ranks'. In other words, morality was one of the Puritans' chief distinguishing characteristics.

However, aspects of the Puritans' extreme version of morality were hard for Macaulay to swallow. He described Bunyan as suffering 'horrible internal conflicts' as a result of his supposed sinfulness<sup>541</sup> and saw the Puritans as creating a Pharisaical unorthodoxy 'in defiance of the express and reiterated declarations of Luther and Calvin' when they turned 'the weekly festival by which the Church had, from the primitive times, commemorated the resurrection of her Lord, into a Jewish Sabbath'.<sup>542</sup>

For Macaulay, the Puritans had definitely taken the idea of the Sabbath too far. The Evangelical historians in our selection, on the other hand, were more supportive of the Puritan views of Sunday rest. Ryle once again presented Puritan views as reflecting those of the wider general public, describing King Charles's revival of the *Book of Sports* in 1633 (originally published by James I in 1617–18) as 'offending the feelings of the nation about the Sabbath'. He also stated that, in his own time, 'in complete public worship the Sabbath should always be honoured' and 'I maintain no other standard of Sabbath observance than that which all the best and holiest Christians, of every church and nation, have maintained almost without

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<sup>539</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 337.

<sup>540</sup> Macaulay, 'Hampden' (1831), 508.

<sup>541</sup> Macaulay, 'Bunyan' (1831), 457; see also his description of Bunyan's 'sensitivity which amounted to a disease' in 'John Bunyan' (1854), contribution to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, in *Biographies* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1860), 27.

<sup>542</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1848), 70.

exception'.<sup>543</sup> Whereas Macaulay had noted a distinction between the early Reformers' more relaxed views about what could and could not be done on Sundays and the Puritans' apparent obsession with strict Sunday observance,<sup>544</sup> Ryle took it for granted that the fourth commandment of the Decalogue was still entirely applicable in the nineteenth century.

Stoughton focused on the Puritans' view of the Sabbath as one of their distinctive features, but saw it as something positive, connected to their reverence for God. Noting one occasion on which they sat in debate on a Sunday, he observed, 'Often likened to the Pharisees for rigid formalism, these men, on this occasion, really showed that – with their devout reverence for the holy season – they had caught the spirit of Him who said, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath'.<sup>545</sup> For Stoughton, it was important to nuance the labels of 'rigid formalism' presented by Macaulay and others, and present the Puritans' Sunday observance as an aspect of their morality that remained in their control and could be reviewed when necessary. Marsden, too, emphasised the Puritans' occasional exceptions to strict Sabbath observance, describing how, while the Jews had 'perished unresisting' on the Sabbath, the Puritans 'fought without a moment's hesitation, for they regarded the work before them as a special work of God'.<sup>546</sup> The Puritans' engagement in what they believed to be a holy war was a theme that troubled Marsden throughout his *Early and Later Puritans*. Rather than presenting them as simply violent, he highlighted their belief that they were doing God's work by showing that they were willing to abandon their Sabbatarian principles for the sake of it.

While, as we have seen, Macaulay saw the Puritans as over-legalistic, the Evangelicals amongst our historians, particularly Ryle and Stoughton, seem to have respected Puritan attention to moral detail precisely for these small exceptions where they showed themselves not to be overly legalistic, but rather exceptionally moral. These Evangelical historians saw Puritan morality not simply as a means of pleasing

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<sup>543</sup> Ryle, 'How do you worship?' (London: William Hunt, 1868), 16; *Knots Untied* (London, 1900; first published [1879]), 378.

<sup>544</sup> Calvin stated, in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1960; first published 1536), Vol. 2, viii, 30: 'There is no doubt that by the Lord Christ's coming the ceremonial part of this commandment was abolished... He is, I say, the true fulfillment of the Sabbath... Christians ought therefore to shun completely the superstitious observance of days'. And in 34: 'By the very day that brought the shadows to an end, Christians are warned not to cling to the shadow rite'.

<sup>545</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 187.

<sup>546</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 130.

God, but rather as an expression of devotion to God. For these Evangelicals, the Puritans' underlying religious values were always based on faith in God's grace, to be lived in the context of morality. This was one of the key features of Evangelical doctrine, and they identified with the Puritans through this theological context. For these historians, personal faith, as opposed to general cultural reliance on an ecclesiastical or moral framework, was a defining element of Puritanism.

Stoughton admired the 'stern moral grandeur' of the Puritans, but for him 'distinguished as many of them were by moral superiority and literary attainments, it was their spiritual excellence which imported to them, as a class, the highest distinction'.<sup>547</sup> Likewise, where Macaulay had seen the Parliamentary army as coloured by their morality, Stoughton saw them as chiefly notable by their devotion to their spiritual cause: 'No Crusader could be more devout, as he buckled on his sword to fight for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, than the Roundhead was, when he buttoned his "souldier's pocket bible" in his waistcoat, and shouldered his musket to fight against Rome and the devil, as well as against political despotism'.<sup>548</sup>

Both Stoughton and Ryle used Baxter as an example of an idealised Puritan combination of morality and Christian faith. Ryle stated:

While others were entangling themselves in politics, and burying their dead amidst the potsherds of the earth, Baxter was living a crucified life and daily preaching the Gospel. I suspect he was the best and wisest pastor that an English parish ever had, and a model that many of us would do well to follow.<sup>549</sup>

Ryle distrusted politicians and soldiers, but found in Baxter a minister for whom he did not have enough hyperbolic praise, and in whom he wished both the Church of England ministers and laity he was addressing to find an example.<sup>550</sup>

Stoughton similarly described Baxter in terms of both his faith and life: 'Though ever arguing on behalf of a practical Christianity – a Christianity full of purity, love and good works – he kept his faith fixed on the one only hope of the fallen: – round the cross his arm was firmly clasped, and even when he spoke not of

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<sup>547</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 42–43, 409–410.

<sup>548</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 240.

<sup>549</sup> Ryle, 'Baxter' (1853), 29–30.

<sup>550</sup> Although this lecture on Baxter was delivered to a mostly lay audience, it was re-published in various forms during Ryle's lifetime, and he did state elsewhere 'We want... more pastors like Baxter'. He also bemoaned that Baxter had not become a bishop (*Bishop, Pastor, and Preacher*, [n.d.], viii–ix).

his Lord, it is plain there dwelt in his soul habitual thoughts of him'.<sup>551</sup> This working combination of morality and faith was something to be emulated by nineteenth-century Evangelicals in both the Church of England and the Nonconformist churches. For Stoughton, however, such a practical Christianity was also something that could serve a social purpose in wider society. He compared Richard Baxter to Thomas Arnold. Stoughton's friend, A. P. Stanley, Arnold's biographer, had said of Arnold that 'He was of a class whose whole being, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, is like the cloud of the poet, – "Which moveth altogether, if it move at all"'.<sup>552</sup> Stoughton applied this description to Baxter, presenting Baxter, like Arnold, as a person of integrity and consistency. While this description fits with what Stoughton and Ryle both stated about the connection between Baxter's morality and faith, Stoughton took it a step further. Thomas Arnold was no Evangelical, having refused for a time priestly ordination for reasons of conscience (he was ordained in 1828) and continuing to doubt certain points of the Athanasian Creed.<sup>553</sup> He was, however, a devout Christian, as Reeve has stated: 'at the heart of all Arnold did was an unswerving faith in the divinity of Christ and a personal devotion to him as his saviour, which influenced all his conduct'.<sup>554</sup> Arnold was public about his determination that the pupils of Rugby School should both have high moral standards and be taught in a Christian way. Indeed, he was a very important public intellectual and reformer in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, whose influence permanently changed the English education system and continued to be felt throughout the rest of the century. For Stoughton to compare Baxter to Arnold was not only to present him as a model for spiritual emulation, but also to bring him to life and memory in a tangible way for his readers. It was also a way of bringing a figure whose significance may seem to have been chiefly spiritual into the public consciousness as a social force for good.

Macaulay had seen the Puritans' morality as really too extreme, and the Evangelical historians had wanted to present this morality as positive, arguing that the Puritans were not bound by it, and that their true convictions were based on grace and faith. Froude's work on Bunyan in the 1870s, however, reflected a new historical

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<sup>551</sup> Stoughton, *Lights of the World* (1852), 138–9.

<sup>552</sup> Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Life of Thomas Arnold*, 2 vols. (London, B. Fellowes, 1844), Vol. 1, xviii. Stanley was quoting William Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence' (1807).

<sup>553</sup> See Collini, *Matthew Arnold: A Critical Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 18.

<sup>554</sup> See Oxford DNB article on Thomas Arnold by A. J. H. Reeve.

temperament. Rather than judging him to be ‘diseased’, as Macaulay had, Froude portrayed Bunyan’s moral sensitivity as ‘fervid temperament’.<sup>555</sup> He also self-consciously announced: ‘It is not for us to say that Bunyan was too precise. He himself was the best judge of what his conscience and his situation allowed’.<sup>556</sup> While Froude certainly did not speak for all historical writers of the 1870s, his lack of interest in ‘judging’ Bunyan could be seen as indicative of the change of historical mood that had occurred during the third quarter of the century. It was no longer in a historian’s interests to repudiate someone for being of his own time. Similarly, instead of criticising Puritan views of the Sabbath, Froude employed his own comic touch to explain them through Bunyan’s text: ‘Mr Wiseman never doubts that the Puritan Sunday ought to have been appreciated by little boys. If a child disliked it, the cause could only be his own wickedness’.<sup>557</sup> While Froude was criticised in his own time for being old-fashioned in his historical approach, and his language has been compared to Macaulay’s, there is little doubt that his attitude to writing history showed a marked generational difference.<sup>558</sup>

Likewise, the morality of the Puritans was, for Froude, something to be observed in its context rather than held against nineteenth-century standards. The Evangelicals had presented Puritan morality in terms of the language of faith and the cross. Froude constructed a similar argument but with different terminology, seeing their intense morality as based on their belief of an intensely intimate relationship between God’s providence and everyday events, with supernatural proportions: ‘They not only believed that God had miraculously governed the Israelites, but they believed that as directly and immediately He governed England in the seventeenth century. They not only believed that there had been a witch at Endor, but they believed that there were witches in their own villages, who had made compacts with the devil himself’.<sup>559</sup> As a result of this, ‘an intense belief in the moral government of the world creates what it insists upon’: the Puritans’ idea of morality stemmed from their faith in the immediacy and proximity of God, his work and his judgment.<sup>560</sup>

So Froude argued that conscience and situation were really what held a person to account, and that the Puritans’ beliefs could be used as a framework for

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<sup>555</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 25.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>558</sup> See the Oxford DNB article on James Anthony Froude by A. F. Pollard.

<sup>559</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 1.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

understanding both their moral perspective and their other actions. Marsden had approached, but not fully comprehended, this idea in the 1850s when he stated ‘it is enough to justify the Puritans if, on the whole, their motives were pure and their conduct wise’.<sup>561</sup> After the recovery of Puritanism had become fully established in the later 1840s and 1850s, it was this sincerity and strength of belief that really seemed to impress itself upon the imagination of the wider public.

We have already seen the importance to Macaulay, Anderson and Ryle of affirming Cromwell’s sincerity as an integral part of his recovery.<sup>562</sup> We have also seen that Carlyle and Froude in turn controversially connected the Puritan’s religious sincerity with intolerance of the other. But once this sincerity had been established, not least by Carlyle’s *Heroes* and its concomitant philosophical outlook,<sup>563</sup> it became a serious motif or emblem of Puritanism in British culture and religion.

Augustus Egg’s painting *The Night Before Naseby* (1859) is particularly poignant in this regard. Cromwell is kneeling in prayer in his tent with a hillside of military tents to his side, ready for battle the next morning. He is lit not by the moon, like the battlefield, but by an inner light emanating from his tent. His Bible is open on a folding table in front of him and his sword crosses over him. He is, of course, kneeling up in prayer, Protestant-style. He faces upwards and outwards, as if looking up to God and out towards the world.

Even at first glance, it is clear that this painting portrays Cromwell as a pious man for whom the battle ahead genuinely held a religious significance. It is clearly also depicting someone who saw himself as having a personal relationship with God, and as being a man of the Bible and of prayer. But this painting also performs another, subtler function. This image of Cromwell, the man attributed with whitewashing England’s churches and cathedrals and stripping them of all art and ornamentation, is echoing Roman Catholic devotional iconography of the Saints, the Virgin Mary (for instance at her Annunciation), and even of Jesus at Gethsemane. Even the hill of the battlefield in this painting looks distinctly more like part of the Middle East than England’s East Midlands. Yes, Cromwell thought he was fighting God’s war. But Egg’s romantic treatment of his subject here invites the viewer to feel that he really was fighting God’s war. This painting also posits itself in contrast to the famous seventeenth-century image of Charles I’s martyrdom from William

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<sup>561</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 24.

<sup>562</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 19.

<sup>563</sup> See Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841).

Marshall's *Eikon Basilike* (1649).<sup>564</sup> The two images are remarkably similar, despite the formulaic allegory of the seventeenth-century composition. One of the most noticeable differences is that Charles faces inwards, towards the building and the unseen light; the switch in direction was surely meaningful for Egg, who wanted to present Cromwell as a man of and for the people. The conscious offering of the pseudo-martyrdom of Cromwell as an alternative to the martyrdom of Charles reflects both the strength of Puritanism's recovery and something of the polarity of opinion in 1850s England.

By reclaiming Puritanism and celebrating it and its sincerity in art and popular culture, a number of figures from different disciplines also became involved in expressing the historians' recovery of Puritanism in all facets of cultural life. Richards has noted this public acceptance of Cromwell as a hero, and the polarity between Cromwell and Charles, in his recent work on the celebrated Victorian theatrical actor, Sir Henry Irving:

Cromwell was widely accepted as an English national hero like Drake and Nelson. It was this heroic image that was enshrined in the popular paintings of the time, paintings like T. Maguire's *Cromwell Refusing the Crown of England* [...] and Augustus Egg's *The Night before Naseby* (1859) [...]. The heroic image was reinforced later in the century by such canvasses as Ford Madox Brown's *Cromwell Discussing the Protection of the Vaudois with Milton and Andrew Marvell* (1878), David Wilkie Wynfield's *The Death of Oliver Cromwell* (1867), with its long catalogue quotation from Carlyle on the Lord Protector's last moments, and A.C. Gow's *Cromwell at Dunbar* (1886) with Cromwell leading his troops in singing 'The Old Hundredth [...]. Nevertheless partisanship prevailed, with the King a particular hero to conservatives and royalists, and Cromwell a hero to radicals and liberals. In the context of the play *Charles the First*, the partisanship took the form of the staging of a rival play. *Cromwell*, by Colonel Alfred Bate Richards opened on 21 December 1872.<sup>565</sup>

While we have already argued that Cromwell was a hero to more than Radicals and liberals, it is important to note that Charles was still popular too, and that Cromwell's sincerity was often presented in order to rival the martyrdom of Charles. It is also

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<sup>564</sup> Karsten's *Patriot Heroes* (1978) helpfully provides copies of many patriotic images concerning both the Puritans and King Charles, including these two paintings: see images 30, 38. Karsten describes Egg's painting as reflecting 'the religious quality of the renewed attention and respect for Cromwell'.

<sup>565</sup> Richards, Jeffrey, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and his world* (London: Continuum, 2007), 328.

important to note that this infiltration of Cromwell's and the Puritans' heroism, which we have already discussed in detail, into popular culture, was almost always connected to his, and their, personal faith and piety.

#### **4.1.2 Anderson's Puritan women as models of piety**

Anderson's *Ladies of the Covenant*, *Ladies of the Reformation*, and *Memorable Women of the Puritan Times* are constructed as a series of character sketches. Anderson was more interested in outlining the characters and attitudes of these women than in assessing what they may have achieved or accomplished. These sketches of women were frequently didactic, offering clear judgments on the women's actions and attitudes and even at times suggesting alternative actions and attitudes that would have been preferable.<sup>566</sup> Themes such as piety and duty are often revisited and considered at length. The result feels like a work with a dual purpose: both historically informative and devotional, presenting Puritan women as models for his own female readers to emulate while clearly spelling out the consequences when this was ignored. Anderson was establishing his own niche within the popular genre of history-writing, and he was addressing women whom he thought would willingly learn lessons from the 'memorable women' of the past. As he stated: 'The history of those times must ever engage the attention, and be fraught with the lessons of wisdom'.<sup>567</sup>

#### ***Subjective and objective piety***

How beautifully combined were subjective piety and objective piety in the character of Mrs. Baxter – the piety which consists in strenuous endeavours for personal salvation and for perfecting the inward man, and the piety which consists in active efforts to contribute to the spiritual well-being of others! In the present day there is a danger of men's regarding piety as chiefly objective, to the neglect of the subjective, of their being more concerned about the salvation of others than about their own – more zealous and active in promoting the kingdom of Christ in the world than in promoting it in their own hearts, even as in Mrs. Baxter's day the danger lay in the other direction, though her life was an excellent example to the contrary. Piety under both aspects ought to be cultivated.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> See for instance, Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 2 (1862), 153.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1 (1862), v.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 2 (1862), 186–7, author's emphasis.

This distinction between subjective and objective piety provides a pivotal explanation of Anderson's aims and attitudes that helps to frame the rest of his work. Elizabeth Baxter, like the other women Anderson wrote about, provided an idealised model of what a woman ought to aim for. Interestingly, he describes subjective piety as a person's private faith and self-understanding, but still sees this in terms of 'strenuous endeavours': personal faith, in Anderson's mind, requires at least as much struggle and effort as engaging in Christian works. On the other hand, he saw objective piety as a person's actions in the world to 'contribute to the spiritual well-being of others' or 'promoting the kingdom of Christ'. No mention is made here of any other kind of well-being, but we can assume that by 'spiritual well-being' Anderson was referring generally to Christian ministry and mission work. Broadly speaking, he described subjective piety as a strength of the seventeenth century and objective piety as a strength of the nineteenth century, with Elizabeth Baxter providing an exemplar of how the two ought to be combined. It is fascinating that Anderson placed emphasis on the differences between the two centuries but still laid out an 'objective' teleological framework of how a person ought to be (encompassing both a person's objective and subjective world) that seems to transcend both of these time periods and leaves no historical space for their differences.

As our view of Anderson's model of a pious woman develops, we can see that he saw piety and the domestic roles of a woman as entirely transcendent of time and space, and, therefore, that he saw the fundamental roles of women as unchanging.

### ***Being good***

Simple as it may sound, the idea of goodness was very important in Anderson's idealised conception of womanhood. In line with his notions of subjective and objective piety, this goodness included both 'goodness of heart' and 'cultivating and practicing good things'.<sup>569</sup> It also importantly included both passion and familial affection.<sup>570</sup> Anderson's model woman was definitely an emotional being, and she cultivated her emotions to help her work for the benefit of others.

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<sup>569</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 140; Vol. 2 (1862), 118–9.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1862), 297, 373.

### *Devotion to duty*

For a woman, in Anderson's view, the main expression of goodness and piety was always in the context of 'restraint', and devotion to 'the unobtrusive discharge of domestic and social duties' in an atmosphere of 'faithfulness and sincerity'.<sup>571</sup> This restraint was one of the attitudes that, according to Anderson, should ideally govern women in all situations. He was clearly impressed by the attitude of Lady Russell when witnessing her husband being led to the scaffold. His description of how 'uncontrollable sorrow tumultuously vents itself' in such situations seems a more likely or normal scenario, but Lady Russell was apparently a model of solidarity and restraint, expressing little or no emotion, and Anderson praised her for this:

There were neither shrieks nor passionate exclamations, neither sobs nor tears, either on her side or on his, but a composed silence, each, from the dictates of the truest wisdom and the purest tenderness, restraining the expressions of grief that they might spare, as much as possible, each other's feelings. How noble, sublime, and heroic, does the character of Lady Russell appear as presented in this scene!<sup>572</sup>

It is hard to imagine a twenty-first century reader framing positively a complete lack of emotion when witnessing one's spouse being taken for execution, or indeed sacrificing one's emotion completely for the sake of sparing someone else's feelings. Anderson, however, saw Lady Russell's restraint as borne out of her love for her husband, and her coolness as the greatest possible sign of her devotion to her duty of upholding him and enabling him to be strong and restrained too. Anderson described this as a great achievement and a sort of idealised epitome of womanhood: the ability, through unswerving devotion, to make a man strong, even in the face of his own death.

Anderson sustained this idealised image of a woman upholding a man in trouble throughout his work. This would ordinarily include a man's work and faith on a more mundane basis, and would especially involve a woman's gifts being used to complement her husband in his Christian life and ministry.<sup>573</sup> But the woman's relationship with her husband need not be entirely submissive. Anderson respected the concept of a woman being her husband's chief advisor, and challenging and

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 219; Vol. 2 (273, 296).

<sup>572</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1862), 296.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 331; Vol. 2 (1862), 168, 236.

remonstrating with him when necessary.<sup>574</sup> In the ordinary circumstances of a woman's life, Anderson argued, this work and devotion is often ignored and taken for granted, but God sees it and applauds it. A woman's reward for exercising herself dutifully within her proper sphere, Anderson stated, was received directly from God.<sup>575</sup>

This notion of humility extended to Anderson's description of the model mother, desiring 'goodness rather than greatness for her children', above all things wanting to raise a family with integrity.<sup>576</sup> Anderson had a high opinion of a woman's domestic duty. He took great exception to the idea of a woman failing to prioritise this duty, even in the pursuit of other apparently pious tasks. In one description, he stated that his subject revealed pride that was 'unbecoming for a woman',<sup>577</sup> and destroyed her family's happiness by breaking away from her domestic role at home.<sup>578</sup>

In exceptional cases, Anderson did recognise strengths of women outside of a family or domestic situation. While the greatest heroism of a woman was to be found in supporting her family, he also described women as heroes when they showed strength of character, qualities of mind, and engaged in hard work. In these situations, Anderson described women as having 'masculine understanding', and there was always the sense that a woman was becoming heroic out of necessity and circumstance, and adopting an atypical role against the odds.<sup>579</sup>

It is hard to describe Anderson as a misogynist. His respect and emotional admiration for his subjects is undeniable. In a fascinating essay on Nonconformist obituaries and women, Linda Wilson has argued that what many writers have seen as misogynistic stereotypes of women can actually teach us a considerable amount both about the positive role of women in Nonconformist circles and about subtler aspects of attitudes towards them.<sup>580</sup> As very popular reading materials, she argued, the

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1862), 3–4.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 151, 276; Vol. 2 (1862), 209.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2 (1862), 307.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 218.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 236.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1 (1862), 87, 112, 140, 228; Vol. 2 (1862), 402.

<sup>580</sup> Linda Wilson, 'Nonconformist obituaries: How stereotyped was their view of women?', in Anne Hogan and Andrew Bradstock, eds., *Women of faith in Victorian culture: Reassessing the Angel in the House* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 146.

obituaries in denominational magazines would also ‘have had a shaping effect on women’s perceptions of their own lives’.<sup>581</sup>

Wilson explored how obituaries defied simple stylisations and presented a very specific model of female piety that went far beyond the ‘Angel in the House’ motif to an individualised sense of ministry. This was not just a woman in the house, but a woman running the house and in charge of the personal and spiritual welfare of her family. She also often had multiple roles supporting the wider community.<sup>582</sup>

There are many parallels between Wilson’s discoveries in these obituaries and Anderson’s fond portraits of seventeenth-century women. While Wilson specifically discussed Nonconformist obituaries, Anderson came from a Scottish Presbyterian background, and his writing seems to be addressed to anyone sympathetic with Puritanism and ideals of piety, presumably including English Evangelicals of all denominations. Both Anderson and the obituaries unashamedly presented idealised models of saintly women for their readers. Both too seemed more inclined to stimulate their female readers to positive home attitudes and social action, rather than consciously trying to suppress them.

Christine Krueger has also observed the ‘empowerment’ of women in the nineteenth-century Evangelical tradition, although she has described this as occurring more despite men’s writing about women than through it.<sup>583</sup> There is certainly scope for more sympathetic readings of the roles of women in the Evangelical and in particular the Dissenting churches, and for feminist efforts to see beyond the apparent misogyny of masculine presentations of women into what their writings show us about their attitudes and beliefs.

#### **4.1.3 The disputed relationship between Puritans and Evangelicalism**

We have already explored something of the disagreements amongst our historians regarding the extent to which the Puritans were really the harbingers of tolerance and liberty. Unsurprisingly, the relationship between seventeenth-century Puritanism and nineteenth-century Evangelicalism was another matter of some contention.

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<sup>581</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid., 150–153.

<sup>583</sup> Christine Krueger, *The Reader’s Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3.

The Evangelicals amongst our historians at times anachronistically described the Puritans themselves as Evangelicals.<sup>584</sup> Ryle, for instance, saw the ‘old Evangelical flag, the flag which for 300 years has braved the battle and the breeze, as a flag of which no member of our school has any need to be ashamed’.<sup>585</sup> The three centuries Ryle was referring to of course led him back to the time of the Reformation, at which his interest in church history seems to begin. These Evangelical historians also emphasised the ‘Evangelical understanding’ of the Puritans, underlining their commitment to justification by faith.

But whether or not the Puritans themselves could be seen as prototypical Evangelicals, the historians were committed to noting the importance of Puritanism to the history of their Evangelical faith. As we have seen, many Nonconformists had traced their spiritual and historical ancestry to the Puritans long before Macaulay began the ‘recovery’ of Puritanism.<sup>586</sup> Stoughton identified with this tradition to an extent, but as someone who had undergone a personal journey of ‘Dissent’, his sympathies were closest to others who had done likewise.

Multitudes of Nonconformists in the nineteenth century are made after the fashion of the seventeenth. The Minervas of Dissent do not frequently burst full-armed from Jupiter-like brains. People are brought within our pale, through evangelical and spiritual instincts. They love the Gospel, and will come and hear it, where it is faithfully and forcibly preached. They prefer – and the taste they have imbibed from the New Testament – an ‘unsacramental’ system of doctrine, and a simple, unencumbered ritual of worship. They cannot believe in baptismal regeneration. They have no faith in apostolical succession. They will not be imprisoned within liturgical forms. They are just Puritans in sentiment. As to their ecclesiastical opinions they are vague, unformed and unsettled. Intellectually and dogmatically, such folks are much about where the Ejected were in 1662. They feel they cannot remain in the Church any longer, and come over to us under the influence of simple Puritan sympathies.<sup>587</sup>

Stoughton clearly saw those Evangelicals who left the Church of England in his own time as modern-day Puritans. He described Evangelical beliefs as a spiritual instinct that led people to desire liberation from a sort of ecclesiastical imprisonment. As

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<sup>584</sup> While the term ‘Evangelical’ had been in use for many centuries, it was not used to describe a specific party until the eighteenth century, although Protestantism itself at occasionally been referred to as ‘Reformed Evangelical Religion’, referring to the Reformers’ emphasis on Scriptural teaching (see etymological note in OED).

<sup>585</sup> Ryle, ‘Can a greater amount of unity be attained?’ ([~1872–1880]), 31.

<sup>586</sup> See Lang, *Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995).

<sup>587</sup> Stoughton, *Lessons for Nonconformists* (London, 1862), 7.

Stoughton saw it, even though the Evangelicals he described were theologically uneducated, with only ‘vague’ ideas about ecclesiology and theology, there was something attractive about the ‘Puritanism’ of Nonconformity in the confused and ecclesiastically complicated climate of the nineteenth century. With his reference to the New Testament, he argued that these personal preferences were authentically Biblical and Christian, as well as offering a different perspective from the often-made connection between Puritanism and the Old Testament. By comparing these new Dissenters to those who had ‘left’ the Church of England at the Act of Uniformity, he also implicitly authenticated the non-episcopal Church of England of the 1650s and identified the Dissenters of his own time with a persecuted minority.

Although Stoughton saw Puritanism as a direct ancestor of nineteenth-century Nonconformity and Dissent, he also embraced the heritage of the eighteenth-century Evangelical revival.

The history of the last [eighteenth] century cannot be properly understood without a careful remembrance of what happened in the century before; the story I have attempted to tell in volumes already published. The religion of the eighteenth century had its roots in the seventeenth. The Puritans of the Commonwealth and the Caroline divines were fathers to the Dissenters and Churchmen of the Hanoverian times. But under George II, there came an outburst of religious zeal in this country, which bore an original impress and possessed a character not transmitted from a former age. To that wonderful movement I have paid much attention, not from any sectarian bias, but simply as an act of historical justice.<sup>588</sup>

There was, Stoughton argued, something new and distinct about Evangelicalism as a movement, with a ‘wonderful’ character and zeal that had not been seen even in seventeenth-century Puritanism.

The relationship between the established Church of England and Puritanism had always been more complicated. Marsden had spent several hundred pages describing the ‘Early Puritans’ of the sixteenth century within the Church of England, and the uneasy disagreements that had eventually spun out of control when Archbishop Laud had attempted to impose Arminianism on an essentially Calvinist church.<sup>589</sup> Anderson also argued that the Church of England post-Reformation had

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<sup>588</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 6 (1878), vii–viii.

<sup>589</sup> See Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850).

been ‘authentically’ Protestant, and essentially Puritan, until it was derailed and corrupted by internal influences.<sup>590</sup>

As an Evangelical within the Church of England, Ryle could certainly trace elements of Puritanism in his Church’s earlier history. Ryle’s historical writings focused on two main groups of people as a Church of England Evangelical’s spiritual ancestors: the sixteenth-century Reformers and the eighteenth-century Evangelicals. He also wrote warmly about the seventeenth-century Puritans and Puritanism as a strand of their heritage that needed to be affirmed and recovered, providing a chronological link between the Reformers and the Evangelical Revival. He particularly focused on Richard Baxter as a model parish minister. Beyond this, he also explicitly tried to convey the idea of ‘spiritual’ descent from Puritanism, recovering a positive mode of the word ‘Puritan’ and affirming it as a label for Church of England Evangelicals to be proud of.

There are some ecclesiastical orators of high rank and brilliant reputation, who are never weary of flinging the epithet ‘Puritanical’ at Evangelical Churchmen, as the hardest word of scorn that they can employ. Let no Churchman’s heart fail when he hears himself stigmatised as ‘a Puritan’. The man who tells the world that there is any disgrace in being ‘a Puritan’ is only exposing his own ignorance of plain facts, or shamefully presuming on that wide-spread ignorance of English Church history which marks the nineteenth century.<sup>591</sup>

Ryle pleaded with his readers to find their own affirmation of Puritanism in their understanding of history. *Facts and Men* was not published until 1882, after Ryle had become Bishop of Liverpool. This seems late, in regard to both the recovery of Puritanism and the nineteenth-century explosion of popular interest in history, for Ryle to be prompting his readers to return to the history books and bemoan historical ignorance within the Church. It seems likely that he was using his position as a figurehead for Evangelicals within the established Church to encourage them not to lose heart theologically, while insisting that they could embrace the Puritan heritage of their Evangelicalism without rejecting their ‘Churchmanship’.

A major emphasis for Ryle was in encouraging both ministers and laity to become familiar with the Puritans’ theological works. In his early lecture on Baxter, he described a scheme of republication of seventeenth-century texts, and stated ‘I

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<sup>590</sup> Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 87.

<sup>591</sup> Ryle, *Facts and Men* (1882), xvi.

wish [that the scheme of republication will be successful] for the sakes of the Puritan divines. We owe them a debt, in Great Britain, which has never yet been fully paid. They are not valued as they deserve, I firmly believe, because they are so little known'.<sup>592</sup> In his *Estimate of Manton*, a preface to a republication of Thomas Manton's *Works* twenty years later (clearly Ryle's wishes of republication success were coming true), he argued that 'those who disparage' Puritans will 'never give any proof that we ought not to admire, value, and study the writings of Puritan divines'.<sup>593</sup> Whatever could be argued about the conduct and extreme actions of certain Puritans in a political setting, Ryle argued, their theological works and understanding were unparalleled. In one of his essays for clergy, 'Simplicity in preaching', Ryle entreated his readers 'do not be above reading the Puritans'.<sup>594</sup> He then went on to present a guide about which Puritan divines in particular ought to be focused upon, and how to read their style and incorporate their knowledge into preaching in the most effective way. For Ryle, the republication of the theological works of the Puritans was bringing a potential feast of doctrinal knowledge and spiritual enlightenment into nineteenth-century churches and strengthening existing Evangelical faith.

So we have seen that our Evangelical historians were all keen to associate their Evangelicalism with the Puritanism that they were attempting to 'recover'. But other historians, particularly Carlyle and Froude, were at pains to dissociate Puritanism from nineteenth-century Evangelicalism as much as possible.

For Carlyle, the fact that Puritanism was of a previous time, and as such was mysterious, unperceivable, and irretrievable, was a great part of its attraction.<sup>595</sup> Carlyle warned that using nineteenth-century notions of spirituality as a lens through which to try to interpret the seventeenth century would be 'fatal to a right understanding', arguing that 'the Christian Doctrines which then dwelt alive in every heart, have now in a manner died out of all hearts'.<sup>596</sup> This assertion is of course absurdly hyperbolic. However, it does demonstrate Carlyle's consistency in holding to the historiographical notion of separation, about which the Evangelical historians in our selection seem rather more mutable. It also powerfully conveys Carlyle's

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<sup>592</sup> Ryle, 'Baxter' (1853), 37.

<sup>593</sup> Ryle, 'An estimate of Manton' (1870), in *The Works of Thomas Manton*, Vol. 2, xii.

<sup>594</sup> Ryle, 'Simplicity in preaching', in *The Upper Room* (London, 1888), 52.

<sup>595</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 7.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

sense of the powerful doctrinal certainty of the Puritans that led them to fight Old Testament religious wars and even commit regicide in a way that was completely unintelligible even to the rhetoric and missionary zeal of the nineteenth-century Evangelicals. In a more banal way, Carlyle also bemoaned the nineteenth century as lacking in passion, and unable to envisage the unseeable, or try to know the unknowable.

Froude explored the difference between Evangelicalism and Puritanism more thoroughly, even extending it to nineteenth-century Evangelicalism's connection with the Protestant Reformation. He stated variously: 'The pale shadow called Evangelical religion clothes itself in the language of Luther and Calvin' and 'The Evangelicals shrink from being behindhand'.<sup>597</sup> He expressed a similar notion when discussing the theological tenets of Puritanism in his biography of Bunyan:

'Election, conversion, day of grace, coming to Christ, have been pawed and fingered by unctuous hands for now two hundred years. The bloom is gone from the flower [...] The most solemn of all realities have been degraded into the passwords of technical theology'.<sup>598</sup>

He discussed this idea of theological decline more thoroughly in his celebrated essay on Calvinism, which is of course closely linked to Puritanism. He stated: 'After being accepted for two centuries in all Protestant countries as the final account of the relations between man and his Maker, it has come to be regarded by liberal thinkers as a system of belief incredible in itself, dishonouring to its object, and as intolerable as it has been itself intolerant'.<sup>599</sup> He ensured that he emphasised the sometimes astonishing power of Calvinism in its heyday, and the debt that modern society owed it.<sup>600</sup> He ended by narrating the transformations it had undergone by the later nineteenth century (he wrote this essay in 1871): 'The power of Calvinism has waned... Systems have been invented to explain the inexplicable... Metaphors have been translated into formulas, and paradoxes unintelligible to emotion have been thrust upon the acceptance of reason'.<sup>601</sup> For Froude, the theological concepts behind Calvinism simply did not work in a post-enlightenment world. Those Evangelicals

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<sup>597</sup> Froude, 'Condition and Prospects of Protestantism' (1868), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 153, 168–9.

<sup>598</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 34.

<sup>599</sup> Froude, 'Calvinism' (1871), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 2, 3.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 47.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

who still claimed the doctrines and sincerity of Calvinism and Puritanism as their own were, in his opinion, either misguided or foolish. Those who continued to ‘affect’ belief similar to Bunyan’s spoke ‘without a realisation of its tremendous meaning’, and yet, he added ‘most of us repeat the phrases of this belief, and pretend to hold to it’.<sup>602</sup> Here Froude’s charge of hypocrisy seems so broad that he nearly extended it to the entire Church of England,<sup>603</sup> but his real objection seems to be against the idea of mindlessly clinging to truths that seem incredible to the enlightened mind, and refusing to accept that there may be a difference between theory and fact.<sup>604</sup>

Later in his study of Bunyan, and in a slight rhetorical switch from his earlier suggestion that it had taken two centuries of Enlightenment and logical thinking for the English people to drift away from Puritan theological beliefs, Froude argued that beliefs in the stern reality of the supernatural assertions explained in Scripture were already slipping away in Bunyan’s own day.<sup>605</sup> Froude did not doubt Bunyan’s personal conviction or piety, but stated that the use and popularity of allegory demonstrated a weakening of the faith’s grip upon the people. Froude described the distinctions between ‘living principle’, ‘intellectual opinion’ and ‘art and discourse’ as representing a sliding scale as genuine belief faded over time. On the other hand, however, he saw ‘elaborate observances’ as equally detached from a true faith.

The controversy surrounding Froude’s religious doubt in the late 1840s may have faded over time, and his statements here about religion being a ‘language of expression’ were less contentious by the time he wrote them in 1878 than when he was a young man. Although Froude was not aligned with any party, the similarity of his stance to the Broad Church line of the *Essays and Reviews* writers cannot go unnoticed.<sup>606</sup> In this context, Don Leggett has recently described Froude’s approach as helping to provide the language for ‘a conscious acknowledgement of the lack of

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<sup>602</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 24, 50.

<sup>603</sup> As we have seen in Chapter Two, at different points in his arguments Froude seems to have objected equally strongly to hypocrisy and to clinging to implausible ‘truths’.

<sup>604</sup> Froude, *Bunyan*, 39, 181.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>606</sup> Indeed, Brady’s new biography emphasizes Froude’s singular approach to his writing: ‘the persistently uncomfortable nature of Froude’s relations with his own intellectual contemporaries should not, however, be seen simply as a sign of his personal eccentricity. It is, rather, a symptom of the complex, and frequently misunderstood, character of the cultural environment in which he worked’ (Brady, *Froude* (2013), 3).

clear, established conventions of authority' that could help a generation of Victorian doubters to forge 'an active historical and social identity'.<sup>607</sup>

Even if Froude's acknowledgement of doubt was providing the language for other honest doubters, his negative assessment of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism still seems particularly severe, effectively labelling this faith as no longer tenable. And the Evangelicals picked up on this. The *Christian Observer*, the Evangelical magazine edited for many years by Marsden, felt that Froude was prejudiced against Evangelicals. One unattributed reviewer stated that Froude's object was 'to defame the Reformation', and added, as if in defence of Evangelicalism, that 'in the higher qualities of a historian he is utterly deficient'. The same writer also described Froude's 'undisguised contempt of the Evangelical preachers', though did not provide a specific reference for this complaint.<sup>608</sup> However, Ryle gave Froude high praise as one of the greatest historians of the century.<sup>609</sup> Ryle's willingness to praise Froude's achievements as a historian, despite their theological differences, speaks well for Ryle's openness.

Froude's rejection of Evangelicalism was not a total one. He argued that there was still something important left both in the Christian Church in general and the Church of England in particular, saying 'The creed of eighteen centuries is not about to fade away like an exhalation' and 'Men of intelligence... will continue to see in conscience an authority for which culture is no substitute'.<sup>610</sup> He also suggested that the Evangelical movement was realising it needed to search for 'something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century' and that it was 'turning back to Catholic virtues'.<sup>611</sup> Finally, Froude had been deeply moved by his personal experience of Evangelical piety when he had lived for a summer with the Evangelical Cleaver family in Ireland.<sup>612</sup> He described the atmosphere where he stayed as follows: 'There was a quiet good sense, an intellectual breadth of feeling in

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<sup>607</sup> Don Leggett, 'William Froude, John Henry Newman and Scientific Practice in the Culture of Victorian Doubt', *English Historical Review*, 128 (June 2013), 571–595, 580. Although the focus of Leggett's paper is the engineer William Froude's correspondence with John Henry Newman, there is also a helpful discussion of the similarities between William and his younger brother James Anthony.

<sup>608</sup> The reviewer in the *Christian Observer*'s August 1860 review of Froude's *History of England, Reign of Edward VI*, 539–540, 543.

<sup>609</sup> In *Facts and Men* (1882), xiv, Ryle quoted Jenkyns on Froude, who called the latter a reliable source on the authenticity of Foxe. Ryle also described Froude and Macaulay as some of the only historians who could 'make history anything but dry and dull'. ('Laud', 1869, 217.)

<sup>610</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 181; 'Plea for the free discussion of theological difficulties' (1863), 217.

<sup>611</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 56.

<sup>612</sup> See Markus, *Froude* (2005), 28–30.

this household... here were persons whose creed differed little from that of the Calvinistic Methodists, yet they were easy, natural, and dignified'.<sup>613</sup> Despite his criticism of their anti-intellectualism and theological misguidedness, he seems to have respected the serenity he found in this family, although whether he attributed this wholly to their Evangelicalism is another matter.

In a sense, Froude's separation of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism from Puritanism deepened and diversified the recovery of Puritanism. While even some recent researchers have seen Puritanism's recovery as both beginning and ending when religious Nonconformity and Whig politics moved into the mainstream,<sup>614</sup> we can see that this movement spread into different and unexpected political and spiritual waters. The fact that the same movement from two hundred years earlier could simultaneously serve two completely contradictory purposes – of promoting and criticising Evangelicalism – gives us some measure of the reach of history into nineteenth-century society.

## **4.2 Puritan style**

### **4.2.1 Puritan writing**

Just as the definitions of Puritanism varied amongst these historians, so too did the definitions of what written works could be considered truly Puritan. For example, Kingsley saw Milton as a Puritan, but Macaulay argued that he was not. We shall exclude Milton's work from this study as it was far removed from other Puritan writings.

#### ***The Puritan divines***

Ryle and Stoughton found both spiritual power and theological weight in the writings of the Puritan divines, theologians and preachers. In a passage intended to encourage Church of England ministers to adopt a simple and effective preaching style, Ryle suggested a Puritan reading list:

Read John Bunyan's immortal work, the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Read it again and again, if you wish to attain simplicity in preaching. Do not be above reading the Puritans. Some of them no doubt are heavy. Goodwin and Owen are very heavy, though excellent artillery in position. Read such books as Baxter, and

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<sup>613</sup> Froude, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation' (1881) in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 4, 231–360, 295.

<sup>614</sup> See, for instance, Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995).

Watson, and Traill, and Flavel, and Charnock, and Hall, and Henry. They are, to my mind, models of the best simple English spoken in old times. Remember, however, that language alters with years. They spoke English, and so do we, but their style was different from ours. Read beside them the best models of modern English that you can get at.<sup>615</sup>

Ryle's suggestions for further reading here also included the works of various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theologians and preachers, chiefly of the Evangelical persuasion. This essay by Ryle on 'Simplicity in preaching' was explicitly aimed at countering the trend for preachers 'shooting over the heads of the people'.<sup>616</sup> Rather than focusing on body language or elocution, as some of his contemporary Evangelical preachers did,<sup>617</sup> Ryle thought that clergy needed a grounding in the writing and preaching style of powerful preachers in the past. For Ryle, the Puritan style of writing and speaking conveyed important theological concepts and 'Bible truths' in a way that he thought could provide a guide for the clergy of the nineteenth century, and would be clear and comprehensible for everyday parishioners. In this way, the written works of the Puritan divines were continuing to provide a transferable legacy to the churches of his own day. The way Ryle checked his argument to remind his readers that the Puritans spoke the English of 'old times', and that they needed to construct their sermons in 'modern English', also shows the tension he felt between the need to use language that listeners would find clear and easy to understand, and the personal admiration he felt for what he considered the powerful rhetorical style of his seventeenth-century heroes.

Stoughton similarly saw the Puritan divines as providing a rich heritage of writing, although he also presented their writing style as essentially of its time:

The works which some of the leading Puritans produced about that time are monuments of their talents and attainments, as well as of their piety. Baxter, Owen, Howe, Charnock, and others, for depth of thought, compass of intelligence, and occasional power and even felicity of expression, will bear comparison with the most boasted names among the Anglican divines of that century. The fault, and indeed their only fault, from which even their High-Church rivals were not free, was a neglect of artistic culture, a slovenliness of style and arrangement. Certainly they did not value the graces of literature, but this, they pleaded – that there was *truth* in the plea – was because their souls

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<sup>615</sup> Ryle, *The Upper Room* ([1888]), 52.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>617</sup> See for instance the diagrams in Spurgeon, 'Posture, action, gesture, etc.', in *Second series of lectures to my students* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1877).

were so earnestly occupied about the great realities with which their literature was conversant.<sup>618</sup>

The ‘depth of thought’ and ‘compass of intelligence’ were clearly both qualities that Stoughton admired in theological writing. He was also impressed by the overriding idea that the truth weighed so greatly on the Puritan theologians that all stylistic concerns were forgotten, even though apparently no-one else at the time was offering a well-formulated stylistic alternative.

Marsden viewed the Puritan divines’ use of ‘rigid scholastic logic’ as ultimately self-defeating and un-English. But his descriptions of the Westminster Confession portray a language and style that is neither ‘slovenly’ nor un-cultured. In *The Early Puritans*, Marsden described a distinctive early Puritan style:

The age of pedantry had not yet commenced. The quaintness of the puritans was not assumed; their sentences were not curiously involved, their wit was not elaborate, their sermons were not studiously mixed up in tiny fragments, each numbered and duly parcelled beneath its proper head or subdivision, with a view not so much to elucidate the subject as to display the author’s dexterity in his only science – the scholastic logic.<sup>619</sup>

For Marsden, a Puritan scholasticism commenced near the beginning of the seventeenth century, and marked a gradual replacement of early Puritan spiritual sincerity with an obsession with form and correct order. This stylistic format, derivative from Ramist logical principles, is indeed a marked feature of the writings of many Puritan divines,<sup>620</sup> but does not seem to have sparked the interest of our other historians, except for Ryle’s brief positive description of it as an effective simplicity of ‘old times’.

Stoughton considered the theme of Puritan style when describing Baxter’s sermons in his *Ecclesiastical History*: for Stoughton, these sermons were far

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<sup>618</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 225.

<sup>619</sup> Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 238.

<sup>620</sup> See in particular from the seventeenth century: William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying* (1592); Richard Bernard, *The Faithful Shepherd* (1621); John Wilkins, *Ecclesiastes: A Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching* (1646); Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (1649). Explorations of Puritan style with a specific view to Ramist logic include: Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954), 338; Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (London: Harvard University Press, 1958), 83; Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Haywards Heath: Carey, 1979); *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

removed both from the scholasticism of which Marsden had complained and from what Ryle had described as the ‘heavy’ theological texts of the likes of Owen and Howe:

Evangelical and practical, instructive and awakening, convincing and pungent – now grappling with the understanding, and then aiming at the heart – he must sometimes have both convinced and confounded his hearers by his fidelity and acuteness, and then have melted them down completely by his extraordinary fervour. Working out his logic, not in frost but fire, he flung from his lips burning words, which made men start and weep. He had a clear articulate tone of enunciating truth, such as is possessed only by healthy souls, and is utterly different from the indistinct mutterings of those who, by mimicry, have caught up a few religious commonplaces. Nobody can mistake the one for the other; and Baxter’s congregation in the old church of St. Mary must have felt that a God-taught man stood before them, as they crowded within those walls to hang upon his lips.<sup>621</sup>

Once again, we see Stoughton presenting Baxter as the model Puritan. Here, however, Baxter was combining the theological depth and understanding of the Puritan divines with the passion and emotion of a preacher and pastor. Stoughton saw this combination of ‘fidelity’ and ‘fervour’ as a Puritan characteristic and the emotion it produced as a sign of its spiritual power. It is interesting that Stoughton stated here that ‘an articulate tone of enunciating truth’ could only be possessed by those with ‘healthy souls’. On the one hand, he was attempting to shun the ‘indistinct mutterings’ of some popular preachers of his own day who aimed mainly to rouse emotions. On the other hand, he seems to have been arguing that clarity of speech reflected spiritual truth and honesty, and was a sign of theological ‘fidelity’. His argument that ‘nobody can mistake the one for the other’ may seem over-optimistic to a twenty-first century reader in the uncomfortable shadow of the totalitarian rhetoricians of the twentieth century, but his emphasis on the religious significance of clarity is important. We should also remember that Stoughton’s familiarity with Baxter would have been chiefly from reading his sermons.

### ***The poetic voice of the common Puritan***

The language and written style of the Puritan divines gained little attention from historians outside of immediate Evangelical circles. Macaulay, Froude and Kingsley all described the lack of formal oratory within Puritanism, but presented those

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<sup>621</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 2, 1867, 190.

Puritans who were uneducated and apparently lacked eloquence as expressing something beautifully poetic about humanity, rather like Wordsworth's leech-gatherer.<sup>622</sup>

We can see such romantically-influenced descriptions of the Puritans as intrinsically poetic throughout the recovery of Puritanism. Macaulay's defence of Cromwell's lack of oratorical power is particularly noteworthy. He argued in the 1820s: 'The hearts of men are their books; events are their tutors; great actions are their eloquence'.<sup>623</sup> Kingsley echoed this sentiment fifty years later: 'For surely these Puritans were dramatic enough, poetic enough, picturesque enough... there was poetry enough in them'.<sup>624</sup> In the mid-century, Stoughton described the Puritans as being 'poets in spite of themselves' and demonstrating 'poetry and truth combined',<sup>625</sup> and Carlyle mocked the 'sacred poet' Dryasdust and his 'philosophical histories',<sup>626</sup> implying that true poetry was to be found in the heroism and sincerity that he was extolling. All of these descriptions use the language of poetics and eloquence to describe a lifestyle that was self-consciously removed from both. Stoughton saw 'hardly more of poetry than of truth in the picture of a Puritan trooper with his helmet on the ground, and his sword-belt unfastened, sitting by his tent door in the heat of the day, to talk with the angels of God, whom faith in the well-worn book on his knee had enabled him to behold'.<sup>627</sup> For Stoughton, the soaring faith and passionate humanity of the Puritans made them intrinsically poetic.

All of the historians saw Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as the ultimate work of Puritan literature, even though Bunyan probably fought for the Royalist army during the Civil War. While he sat chronologically at the end of Puritanism, writing partly from prison under the restored monarchy, he provided it with a literary voice that would stand the test of time while still accurately representing both the theology and passion of a movement that was notorious for being free of formal literary style and for rejecting many aspects of popular culture and literature.

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<sup>622</sup> See Wordsworth, 'Resolution and Independence', 1807. We have already heard Stanley and later Stoughton quote a cloud analogy from this poem with reference to first Thomas Arnold and then Richard Baxter. The poem provided a challenging image of an old man completely removed from possession, place and friends, but content and even earthily graceful in his speech and manner. This can be seen as representative of the lasting impression that the Romantic movement left on the nineteenth-century imagination.

<sup>623</sup> Macaulay, 'Conversation between Cowley and Milton' (1824), in *Miscellaneous*, 68.

<sup>624</sup> Kingsley, 'Plays and Puritans' (1873), 73.

<sup>625</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 226.

<sup>626</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 3.

<sup>627</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History of England*, Vol. 1 (1867), 456.

Both Macaulay and Froude presented the power of Bunyan's writing as reaching even beyond the Puritan tradition, precisely because his work stood alone and was the product of imagination and household Biblical knowledge without too much in the way of education.<sup>628</sup> As Froude stated, 'It is easy to conceive a university-bred Bunyan, an intellectual meteor, flaring uselessly across the sky and disappearing in smoke and nothingness'.<sup>629</sup> For Froude, it was Bunyan's lack of university education that made him a more accurate bearer of truth. It also enabled *Pilgrim's Progress* to be unaffected, to represent 'the true record of the genuine emotions of the human soul'. The formula for Bunyan's unique achievement here was, in Froude's eyes, equally unusual: 'He had infinite inventive humour, tenderness, and, better than all, powerful masculine sense. To obtain the use of these faculties he needed only composure, and this his imprisonment secured for him'.<sup>630</sup> For Froude, Bunyan's writing was truly Puritan, or Purist, in that it conveyed accurately the character of a person without being compromised by affected media. The irony behind the imprisonment securing Bunyan's composure was obviously not lost on Froude, and it provided a powerful romantic image of the everyman creating the ultimate window into the human soul.

But the Puritans were not all uneducated everymen. Although he had already provided an ample defence both of the Puritan defiance against oratory and of the Puritan written style, Stoughton also argued that, despite common opinion, *some* of the Puritans were just as graceful in oratory as any of the Cavaliers. He asked: 'did Puritanism altogether lack sons who walked in the paths of polite literature, and in the regions of poetry, commonly so called? Were not Harrington and Marvel Puritans and Commonwealthmen?'<sup>631</sup> Froude, too, described the preaching oratory of the European Calvinists and English Puritans together, saying that they were 'able in some way to sound the keynote to which every brave and faithful heart in Europe instinctively vibrated'.<sup>632</sup> Like the Evangelicals, Froude too identified something unmistakably powerful in Puritan words and speech that was capable of shaking people to the core.

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<sup>628</sup> See Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 309; 'Bunyan' (1854), 43, 48–49.

<sup>629</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 177.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 90.

<sup>631</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 227.

<sup>632</sup> Froude, 'Calvinism' (1871), 7–8.

### *The fate of Puritanism in literature*

But this power was not to last. All of our historians agreed that the power of the Puritans' language had waned over the course of the seventeenth century. However, opinions about what exactly happened differed considerably. Ryle, for instance, viewed the 'inherent imperfection of language', and its inability to convey anything precisely or to make 'all men put the same meaning on words',<sup>633</sup> as leading to church divisions and disagreements amongst sincere Christians.

By the time Marsden described the Westminster Confession, perhaps the epitome of scholastic theology under subheadings, in his *Later Puritans*, his views on its style had modified slightly from his 'age of pedantry' discussion, but his opinions of its effects had solidified.

The style is pure and good, the proofs are selected with admirable skill, the arguments are always clear, the subjects well distributed, and sufficiently comprehensive to form at least the outline of a perfect system of divinity. On the other hand, one fault pervades the whole: it is cast in the most exact and rigid mould of ultra-Calvinism: and treats the most difficult questions, those of God's eternal decrees and purposes, with an air of confidence which has always repelled the great majority of English Christians.<sup>634</sup>

For Marsden, the solidification of a living faith into an 'exact and rigid mould' would never be accepted by the English people. Historically, this marked the failure of Presbyterianism in England, but for Marsden, it also marked the failure of Puritan style. Something could be 'perfect' theologically, but wrapping 'God's eternal decrees and purposes' in logic and scholastics was simply untenable.

As we have seen, Froude identified the untenability of Puritanism as revealed precisely by its greatest literary achievement. For him, the use of allegory was a sign that sincere religious belief itself was waning:

The close of the period when the Puritan formula was a real belief, and was about to change from a living principle into an intellectual opinion. So long as religion is fully alive, men do not talk about it or make allegories about it. They assume its truth as out of reach of question, and they simply obey its precepts as they obey the law of the land. It becomes a subject of art and discourse only when men are unconsciously ceasing to believe, and therefore the more vehemently think that they believe, and repudiate with indignation the

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<sup>633</sup> Ryle, *Facts and Men* (1882), xxii.

<sup>634</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 86–87.

suggestion that doubt has found its way into them. After this religion no longer governs their lives. It governs only the language in which they express themselves, and they preserve it eagerly, in the shape of elaborate observances or in the agreeable forms of art and literature.<sup>635</sup>

Froude's claim here that belief systems are only translated into literature when they begin to lose the weight of their power would have been contentious when he wrote it, and his confident descriptions of the workings of religion in the conscious and subconscious mind are impossible to prove. Still, the publication of Bunyan's allegory did sit neatly at the end of the Puritan era. His idea that 'the language with which they express themselves' continues even after a group has lost its central purpose links powerfully with one of his arguments we have already considered: that the language adopted by the Evangelicals had become worn and empty from overuse, and that they were no longer sincere believers in the Reformed doctrines that had been held to by the Puritans.

Bringing us full circle, Macaulay saw Puritanism's ultimate downfall as at least partly caused by its own rejection of literature:

The Roundheads laboured under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable complained so bitterly. Though they were the conquerors, their enemies were the painters. As a body, they had done their utmost to decry and ruin literature; and literature was even with them, as, in the long run, it always is with its enemies.<sup>636</sup>

Perhaps the fable that Macaulay was referring to here was Aesop's fable of the Man and the Lion. In it, a man and a lion are arguing about who is stronger when they come across a statue of a man strangling a lion. The man identifies the statue as proof that men are stronger than lions, but the lion says 'That is only your view of the case. If we lions could make statues, you may be sure that in most of them you would see the man underneath'.<sup>637</sup> Whereas normally in war the victors write the history, in the case of the Civil War, the temporal proximity of the Restoration meant that the 'true' s – the Puritans – had not had time to construct their version of events before they were silenced by a century and a half of bad publicity. In any case, they

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<sup>635</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (188), 152.

<sup>636</sup> Macaulay, 'Milton' (1825), 325.

<sup>637</sup> *Aesop's Fables*, trans. V. S. Vernon-Jones (1907), 73. Macaulay would have been familiar with the Latin and many earlier English versions of these fables.

had not only been disinclined to create literature, but actively opposed to it, so, like the lion, they were unable to ‘make statues’.

Macaulay’s personification of literature being unforgiving to its enemies was apt. But he did not see the process of recovering Puritanism that he began as essentially a radical endeavour against the great power of literature. Rather, it was for him a personal endeavour to use a literary voice, such as that which the Puritans lacked, to convey the greatness that history had thus far failed to record effectively. This, in turn, was part of his broader historical mission to provide a view of English history that combined justice and truth with literary power.

#### 4.2.2 Puritan culture

The extreme Puritan was at once known from other men by his gait, his garb, his lank hair, the sour solemnity of his face, the upturned white of his eyes, the nasal twang with which he spoke, and, above all, by his peculiar dialect.<sup>638</sup>

The dress, the deportment, the language, the studies, the amusements of the rigid sect were regulated on principles not unlike those of the Pharisees who, proud of their washed hands and broad phylacteries, taunted the Redeemer as a Sabbath-breaker and winebibber. It was a sin to hang garlands on a Maypole, to drink a friend’s health, to fly a hawk, to hunt a stag, to play at chess, to wear lovelocks, to put starch into a ruff, to touch the virginals, to read the Fairy Queen. Rules such as these, rules which would have appeared insupportable to the free and joyous spirit of Luther, and contemptible to the serene and philosophical intellect of Zwingli [sic], threw over all life a more than monastic gloom.<sup>639</sup>

When Macaulay penned the first vivid caricature of the Puritan here, based largely on his reading of such works of Walter Scott as *Old Mortality*,<sup>640</sup> he probably had no idea how influentially it would mark the Puritans’ reputation throughout the nineteenth century. The potent ‘nasal twang’ reverberated in the minds of those who described the Puritans, and was a source of some discomfort for their defenders.<sup>641</sup> The latter description, on the other hand, was probably intended to provide an amusing list of the excesses of Puritan moralism, and the religious liberation that was normally attributed to the Reformation. While in many ways Macaulay began the

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<sup>638</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Vol.1 (1848), 71.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>640</sup> Scott, *Old Mortality* (1816).

<sup>641</sup> See for instance Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 16.

recovery of Puritanism, these and similar passages became the points of critical reference for our historians later in the century who wished to defend Puritan manners and culture.

Stoughton, for instance, was determined from as early as his *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), but especially in his *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862) and also in the first volume of his *Ecclesiastical History* (1867), to emphasise that Puritanism as a sub-culture had been horribly maligned and misunderstood.<sup>642</sup> He also repeatedly maintained that the charges against the Puritans regarding the destruction of art in particular were vastly exaggerated.<sup>643</sup> He described the instances of the Puritans' destroying religious art and architecture, both inside and outside churches, as more based on their fears of superstition and idolatry than on their lack of taste.<sup>644</sup> Just as they were determined that their doctrine and conduct should be pure, so too they insisted that their churches needed to be pure. Like the iconoclasts of the eighth century, they believed that images of Christ and the saints were breaking the second commandment, and saw it as part of their divine mission to cleanse the churches of them. Stoughton argued that in this 'honest hatred of superstition, the Puritan did not perceive that objects once devoted to its service, if intrinsically beautiful, might yet deserve preservation. Those who valued religious imagery, Stoughton argued, also saw it as much more than a matter of taste'.<sup>645</sup> For Stoughton, the reduction of the disagreements of the seventeenth century to a simply cultural level was what rendered their significance to the Puritans and their opponents completely incomprehensible to the nineteenth century. Rather than accepting that the Puritans were unrefined haters of culture, Stoughton wanted to present them as people so focused on their spiritual goals that the idea of something holding inherent beauty or value in human terms was irrelevant.<sup>646</sup>

The extension of this determination for purity to musical style, and wider culture as a whole, Stoughton acknowledged, was inevitably based more on taste, but was still set in contrast both to 'Popeishness' on the one side and immorality on the other.<sup>647</sup> Their hatred of the theatre, he argued, was morally indubitable rather than culturally insensitive. In an unusual interpretation that he did not reference,

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>643</sup> See Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 193; *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 311.

<sup>644</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 191–3.

<sup>645</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 308–9.

<sup>646</sup> See Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 224–5.

<sup>647</sup> Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 16, 25.

Stoughton saw the playwright Ben Jonson himself as admitting to the immorality of the playhouse and apparently describing it as a particularly distasteful place.<sup>648</sup> While this way of reading Jonson is questionable, it again demonstrates Stoughton's rhetorical technique of amassing several different types of evidence to back up his own argument.

Stoughton's interpretation gave positive descriptions of Puritan cultural eccentricities, such as 'painting scriptural texts on their doors, and weaving them into their clothes', comparing them to the Nicene fathers of the early church and again emphasising the fact that they were so absorbed in their spiritual mission that it affected every aspect of their lives.<sup>649</sup>

In terms of other cultural pursuits they enjoyed, he commended even the less educated Puritans, both morally and culturally, for being familiar with the spiritual work of the Puritan divines, whose work 'it seems a desecration to compare with the loose songs and scraps of ribald wit which formed the staple of Cavalier learning among the lower orders'.<sup>650</sup> He also extended this verification of Puritan taste into the realm of fashion: 'There is evidence to show that some of them dressed like Cavaliers; and those who did not, really showed all the better taste; for if any will take the trouble to compare the costumes of the period, it will be strange if they do not prefer one of Oliver's gentlemen to one of Charles' courtiers'.<sup>651</sup> Once again, as in the case of Puritan writing and literature, we can see Stoughton here arguing first that the Puritans were not as homogenous or extreme as they have been presented, and second that the Puritan style was preferable in any case.

For all this, Stoughton acknowledged that, by rejecting aspects of popular culture that did not seem to be clearly rooted in Christianity and Protestant doctrine, the Puritans were 'alienating' themselves from something inherently English, albeit with pre-Christian roots. In turn, Stoughton identified: 'The broken May-pole and deserted village green' as 'bringing about some of the worst resentments of the Restoration'.<sup>652</sup> While Stoughton clearly admired the Puritans for holding to their own spiritual consciences, he also recognised that they became increasingly detached from the English people and, to some extent, brought about their own demise.

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<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Stoughton, *Spiritual Heroes* (1848), 227.

<sup>651</sup> Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 26.

<sup>652</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1 (1867), 56.

Stoughton had hinted that Puritan fashion sense might have been better than that of the Cavaliers. In his essay ‘Plays and Puritans’, Kingsley extended this idea to many aspects of Puritan culture, arguing that Puritan taste and style had essentially been validated by history: ‘Either all England is grown very foolish, or the Puritan opinions on several matters have been justified by time’.<sup>653</sup> Puritan taste in the seventeenth-century, Kingsley argued, indicated or pre-empted nineteenth-century taste, which in turn signalled that it was a positive historical development. This idea of ‘justification by time’ demonstrated Kingsley’s epistemological alignment with the great Victorian ideal of history as revealing society’s progress, as well as providing a model for his own trademark concept of historical recapitulation.<sup>654</sup> In this sense, for Kingsley in the 1870s, however flippantly, the Puritans were coming to represent culturally what they had represented politically for Macaulay as early as the 1820s. This also extended to fashion: ‘Even in the matter of dress and of manners, the Puritan triumph has been complete. Even their worst enemies have come over to their side, and the whirligig of time has brought about its revenge’.<sup>655</sup> In an amusing contradiction to the tone of the essay, however, Kingsley added that ‘they were wrong’ about women’s fashion.<sup>656</sup> He also essentially equated Puritanism with Britishness in terms of attitudes to art: ‘only enough so as to permit Art, not to encourage it’.<sup>657</sup> The most important aspect of this essay, however, considered the stage and the theatre. It described the Puritans’ protest against the stage as connected to their hatred of Catholicism, ‘because [dramatic art] came from Italy, the home of Popery’.<sup>658</sup> In an argument that can be seen to have pre-empted twenty-first century concerns about the effects of exposure to violence and explicit material in today’s popular culture, Kingsley presented a most vociferous case against aspects of the dramatic media of the seventeenth century.

The acting of foreign, obsolete, and long since forgotten villanies on the stage, is so far from working a detestation of them in the spectators’ minds (who, perchance, were utterly ignorant of them, till they were acquainted with them at the play-house, and so needed no dehortation from them), that it often

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<sup>653</sup> Kingsley, ‘Plays and Puritans’ (1873), 73.

<sup>654</sup> Kingsley’s own historiographical attitude has been the subject of several fascinating recent studies, including notably Jonathan Conlin, ‘An illiberal descent’ (2011).

<sup>655</sup> Kingsley, ‘Plays and Puritans’ (1873), 74.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

excites dangerous dunghill spirits, who have nothing in them for to make them eminent, to reduce them into practice, of purpose to perpetuate their spurious ill-serving memories to posterity, leastwise in some tragic interlude.<sup>659</sup>

If the poets had really intended to show vice its own deformity, they would have represented it (as Shakespeare always does) as punished, and not as triumphant. It is ridiculous to talk of moral purpose in works in which there is no moral justice. The only condition which can excuse the representation of evil is omitted. The simple fact is that the poets wanted to draw a house; that this could most easily be done by the coarsest and most violent means; and that not being often able to find stories exciting enough in the past records of sober English society, they went to Italy and Spain for the violent passions and wild crimes of southern temperaments, excited, and yet left lawless, by a superstition believed in enough to darken and brutalise, but not enough to control, its victims.<sup>660</sup>

For Kingsley, the theatre, like any other artistic medium, had a moral obligation to its audience: to represent good and evil as receiving their just deserts, and thereby to present a 'correct' moral compass. Playwrights and stage managers were often profiteers who ignored this duty and employed idle arguments about artistic expression in an attempt to defend themselves and exploit their audiences. The Puritans' rejection of something that was presented by its practitioners as morally neutral demonstrated their understanding, Kingsley argued, that nothing is morally neutral. However, Kingsley's argument here also demonstrates something of the petulance of which his later work has been accused. He attempted to compare Puritan attitudes to the theatre to nineteenth-century censorship, but ignored the fact that the Puritans had closed the theatres entirely from 1642 onwards, and that they were only opened again at the Restoration. Even Shakespeare's plays, to which Kingsley of course attributed a suitable didacticism,<sup>661</sup> were banned under the Puritan rule.

Kingsley's discussion of the situation of the theatres in the seventeenth century was influenced by his own time, and also became very quickly dated. In an opaque reference to French theatrical excesses, he stated: 'Why, in all fairness, were the Puritans wrong in condemning that which we now have absolutely forbidden?' A footnote to the 1890 edition here states that in the years between Kingsley writing and the publication of this edition 'We have become... more amenable to the

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<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 9.

influences of the French civilisation'.<sup>662</sup> It seems that Kingsley saw himself as a moral conservative in a society that was beginning to have doubts about the supremacy of moral conservatism: he wanted to defend his territory against a liberalising onslaught. Kingsley's stance on censorship was nothing new, and the development of the nineteenth century had seen the main focus of censorship shifting from the political to the moral.<sup>663</sup> It is also likely that, as a Broad Churchman with a nationalist agenda, he saw one of his major roles as 'cooperating with the state in the moral education of the nation'.<sup>664</sup> But while over-stating his case often gained Kingsley popularity and public support, it did little for his critical reputation.<sup>665</sup> In a fascinating passage in his 'Oxford Counter-Reformation' (1881), Froude outlined the public debate between Cardinal Newman and Charles Kingsley that had occurred in 1863–4. In a review of Froude's *History of England*, Kingsley had unwisely accused Newman of not caring about truth, and Newman had responded in kind. Eventually, Kingsley had retracted part of his statement and apologised, but Newman remained critical of the terms of Kingsley's apology. Kingsley left the controversy with his reputation badly damaged.<sup>666</sup> Markus has argued that Froude began or wished for the controversy, and that he may have even prompted Kingsley to write, perhaps for family reasons. But she seemed to have overlooked Froude's ongoing respect for Newman.<sup>667</sup> The 'Oxford Counter-Reformation' was written after his brother-in-law Kingsley's death, perhaps to save his feelings, but the view it presents seems consistent with Froude's perspective on other points. For Froude, the problem between the two parties in this argument was a complete lack of mutual understanding.

Froude saw Kingsley as mistrusting Newman because of what he represented: first the Oxford Movement and then Roman Catholicism itself.<sup>668</sup> Kingsley, Froude argued, simply could not accept that Catholicism, with its outward decorations, could

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<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>663</sup> See Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets: A history of British censorship* (London: British Library, 2004), 10.

<sup>664</sup> See Brown, 'The Broad Church Movement' (2011), 113.

<sup>665</sup> See Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 55.

<sup>666</sup> For the letters comprising this controversy, see Fordham University, *Modern History Sourcebook*, available online at: <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman/newman1.html>>, accessed 13 June 2013.

<sup>667</sup> Markus, *Froude* (2005), 99–100. She does not seem to be familiar with Froude's 'Oxford Counter-Reformation' essay (1881).

<sup>668</sup> See Froude, 'Oxford Counter-Reformation' (1881), in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol. 4, 329.

represent a true and simple Christian faith. For Froude, Kingsley's love of Puritanism was indicative of his scientific nature. He framed Newman versus Kingsley as essentially the mystic versus the scientist, both with a great passion for truth and beauty, and neither speaking the language of the other.

### 4.3 Puritanism recovered

#### 4.3.1 Matthew Arnold as the anti-Puritan

While Froude rejected the idea that Puritanism's theological tenets were still alive and valid in nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, he did note that there was something timeless about Puritanism's ideals of piety, thought and life, and he saw the Puritans as having had a positive influence on England. He saw Evangelical theology as simply not standing up to nineteenth-century intellectual understanding, but he also saw Puritanism's true meaning as lying deeper than the doctrine and speaking with real wisdom about humanity itself.

Men of intelligence, therefore, to whom life is not a theory, but a stern fact, conditioned round with endless possibilities of wrong and suffering, though they may never again adopt the letter of Bunyan's creed, will continue to see in conscience an authority for which culture is no substitute; they will conclude that in one form or another responsibility is not a fiction but a truth; and, so long as this conviction lasts, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' will still be dear to all men of all creeds who share in it, even though it pleases the 'elect' modern philosophers to describe its author as a 'Philistine of genius'.<sup>669</sup>

Here, Froude seemed to predict the end of orthodox Protestantism in a hopeful post-Enlightenment intellectual future, in which people's understanding was governed more by realistic 'fact' than 'theory'. In this future, he also saw *Pilgrim's Progress*, as the archetypal Puritan text, speaking beyond creeds and cultures to the higher ideals that here he labelled 'conscience' and 'responsibility'.

Perhaps surprisingly, Froude's quarrel here was with Matthew Arnold, who had recently (in 1877, remembering that Froude's *Bunyan* was published in 1878) provided the memorable negative epithets of the great Puritan heroes:

How countless are the deceived and deceiving from this cause! Nay, and the fanatics of the *what*, the neglecters of the *why*, are not unfrequently men of genius; they have the temperament which influences, which prevails, which

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<sup>669</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 181.

acts magnetically upon men. So we have the Philistine of genius in religion, – Luther; the Philistine of genius in politics, – Cromwell; the Philistine of genius in literature, – Bunyan.<sup>670</sup>

Arnold's 'Philistine of genius' was no veiled compliment of a post-religious age, such as Froude may have made in saying that Bunyan would continue to speak to people of all creeds. Rather, it was a rhetorical flourish constituting an important part of Arnold's conclusion to his essay on Falkland, in which the critic systematically took arms against the recovery of Puritanism and presented its lessons and morals as inappropriate models for the nineteenth century, instead preferring Falkland's moderation and lucidity.<sup>671</sup> 'Philistine' was one of Arnold's favoured terms to describe those of his own day, chiefly in the middle classes, whom he felt needed their horizons expanding and widening. In this instance, he seems to have been using the term more specifically to describe religious narrow-mindedness, but the irony of its use to describe those who modelled themselves on the purity and distinctiveness of the Old Testament Israelites would not have been lost on his readers.<sup>672</sup> The 'genius' he described, as we can see from his language of 'deceit', was a morally neutral or even dubious quality that led others to follow a person magnetically, rather than a positive attribute. He presented Puritanism as ogre-ish, failing to promote the real truth and strength that had been attached to it throughout its recovery in the nineteenth century, and casting aspersions of inconsistency upon the real 'sweetness and light' that was best modelled by Falkland.<sup>673</sup>

Matthew Arnold's contentious relationship with Puritanism elsewhere in his writing has already been the subject of considerable critical attention. But this essay on Falkland, while undoubtedly minor within his corpus, demonstrates the climax of his anti-Puritan polemic.

In it, Arnold presented the figure of Falkland as representative of sane 'Anglicanism' in the face of the fanatical Dissent of Puritanism. For Arnold, Falkland summed up all that was truly English. Self-consciously positing himself against Macaulay, he even belittled the Puritans' role in achieving English civil liberties. William Robbins has provided a helpful examination of a letter from Arnold to Gladstone in 1870, in which he suggested that the Puritans approached the

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<sup>670</sup> Arnold, 'Falkland' (1877), in *Mixed Essays* (London: Smith, Elder, 1903), 205–236, 236.

<sup>671</sup> Arnold, 'Falkland' (1877), in *Mixed Essays*, 232.

<sup>672</sup> See Collini, *Arnold* (1988), 73, 97, 106.

<sup>673</sup> Arnold, 'Falkland' (1877), in *Mixed Essays*, 236.

whole idea of civil liberties from a false angle, and that they ‘made a mess of it, and, in my opinion, make a mess of it still’. In this letter, Arnold also described the Church of England’s reticence to become involved in political struggles as a point of good New Testament doctrinal practice in contrast to the apparently meddling Puritanism. In an interesting humanistic turn, Arnold then asserted that he felt that perhaps human affairs needed supplementing by something ‘additional’ to religion ‘taking another order of wants and ideas into account’. Only by moving beyond a simply religious metanarrative, Arnold suggested, might society really begin to progress.<sup>674</sup>

For Robbins, this letter provides the most candid description of Arnold’s true feelings about Puritanism and liberty. Written seven years later, Arnold’s essay on Falkland does not expand the argument proposed to Gladstone, that a new system separate from religion is necessary, but instead uses the idealised image of Falkland’s switching parties in defence of Episcopacy to represent what the Church of England should or could have been: ‘all this in the very spirit of English political liberty, as we now conceive it’. Arnold celebrated the way that Falkland embraced ‘compromise and adjustment’, which he saw as the then-unrecognised tenets of true civil liberties, and through which Falkland became a martyr of his time.<sup>675</sup>

The Puritan approach to enforcing civil liberties from apparently Biblical principles was deeply problematic for Arnold, who felt that the nineteenth-century English admiration for their zeal obscured the fact that Puritanism’s very existence was based on false ideas.<sup>676</sup> This attitude of interpreting the Bible so physically was a basic trait of the Puritan character, as our historians saw it. Scott, and later Macaulay and Carlyle, had presented the visceral humanity of the idealized Puritan, and his uneducated strength and vigour, as Romantic ideals. Kingsley had imbibed these images, and his own fictional English heroes from *Westward Ho!* onwards all have something of the Cromwellian Puritan about them. Some of Froude’s own most memorable characters are the Puritan Elizabethan sailors who stop at nothing to defend their queen and country, even when persecuted by their own government.<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Letter from Arnold to Gladstone in *Gladstone Papers*, 1870, quoted in Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959) 147.

<sup>675</sup> Arnold, ‘Falkland’ (1876), 230–231.

<sup>676</sup> William Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 148; Arnold, ‘Falkland’ (1876), 233; apRoberts, Ruth, *Arnold and God* (London: University of California Press, 1983), 178.

<sup>677</sup> See Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 68, for a discussion of how these Elizabethan sailors played a pivotal role in the construction of Froude’s own *History of England*.

Arnold objected strongly to this romanticized ‘manliness’ as ‘Philistine’ and ‘uncivilized’. Part of what Arnold seems to have despised was the idea of action for its own sake, detached from understanding, and it was precisely this action that the Puritan hero represented. Characteristically, he blamed English society, and Dissent in particular, for its unhelpful emphasis on ‘action’ and its ‘contempt for dreamers and failers’, arguing that, as long as these attitudes prevailed, England would always be in danger from ‘inadequate ideals in life, manners, government, thought and religion’, in danger of following a ‘moral impulse’ such as that of Puritanism without stopping to consider whether it was actually *right*. For Arnold, the recovery of Puritanism was simply further evidence of this weakness in the English temper.<sup>678</sup>

While he noted that English culture wished to present Cromwell and Hampden as heroes, Arnold argued that there was something entirely unEnglish about both Puritanism and Dissent. He criticised the Puritans and Dissenters for separating from the Church of England, and argued that they lacked the moral authority to do so.<sup>679</sup> This may be puzzling until we observe that Arnold attributed much of his early spiritual and intellectual influence to John Henry Newman. He saw Newman’s strong ecclesiology as providing a defence against the ‘uncivilising’ power of Nonconformity, and seems to have adapted aspects of Newman’s ‘theology of faith’ in the development of his own *bedrock credo*.<sup>680</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, Arnold remained in many ways a religious conservative, and claimed a measure of ‘scientific’ certainty and objectivity for himself in a manner that bore a strong resemblance to Newman’s claims for a ‘scientific’ illative sense of religious understanding. Here, both Arnold and Newman argued that moral principle was scientifically verifiable through experience in a way that a time-limited doctrinal Creed or Confession, such as the Westminster Confession, could never achieve.<sup>681</sup>

This may help us to understand what it was about Puritanism that Arnold found so offensive. Arnold’s views developed considerably between the 1860s and the 1880s, but by the 1870s, unlike the writers of *Essays and Reviews*, Arnold was

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<sup>678</sup> Arnold, ‘Falkland’ (1876), 233.

<sup>679</sup> Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 147.

<sup>680</sup> DeLaura, *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold and Pater* (London: University of Texas Press, 1969), 27, 41, 51; Holloway, *The Victorian Sage* (London: Macmillan, 1953), 204–5; Willey, ‘Arnold and Religion’, in *Matthew Arnold*, ed. Kenneth Allott (London, G. Bell, 1975), 243–5.

<sup>681</sup> Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 78; Willey, ‘Arnold and Religion’ (1975), 245. For a helpful recent discussion of Newman’s approach to science and his ‘illative sense’, see Don Leggett, ‘William Froude, John Henry Newman, and Scientific Practice’ (2013).

consistently describing scriptural religion as both true and verifiable, but argued that its truth and verifiability lay in compromise, re-interpretation and the sort of experiential morality that respected the Church of England for its own sake, much like literature for its own sake.<sup>682</sup>

The ‘higher’ criticism that Arnold presented did not denigrate Scripture to the level of other texts, but attempted to return it to the mystical level of the medieval tradition, while gleaning lessons from it for the modern world.<sup>683</sup> The Puritan insistence on unshifting dogmatic literalism would stand in the way of modern development, he argued, and was not something that should be admired or emulated in the nineteenth century. Arnold was concerned that the positive way that Puritanism was presented during the nineteenth century meant that Puritan methods to approaching Scripture and theology were also being revived.<sup>684</sup> Its recovery, for Arnold, was representative of the middle-class Philistinism that he so strongly resented.

Froude did not attempt a full critical response to Arnold’s essay on Falkland, but instead gently mocked him as ‘elect’ – of his own time, perhaps, as much as the Puritans were. Froude’s emphasis on ‘stern fact, conditioned round with endless possibilities of wrong and suffering’ takes exception to the uniform gentility and civilisation of Arnold’s portrayal of Falkland as a man who refused to commit to either the Royalists or the Parliamentarians when he felt that both were wrong, and contrasts his own realism to Arnold’s intellectualism.<sup>685</sup> For Froude, a truly pious life needed its basis in a harsh and visceral reality, and Puritanism would always have wise and ‘dear’ lessons to speak to that.

#### **4.3.2 Competing scientific histories and the completion of Puritanism’s recovery**

In Chapter One, we saw Gardiner pioneering a new ‘scientific’ mode of history-writing, tricycling over battlefields looking for clues and spending years poring over recently-released primary sources. We also saw how his research methods changed the discipline of history for good.

We have argued in this study that Puritanism was ‘recovered’ by Macaulay, Carlyle, and those who followed them for very different reasons, but all as a means

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<sup>682</sup> apRoberts, *Arnold and God* (1983), 31.

<sup>683</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid., 31, 114, 187.

<sup>685</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (1880), 181.

of correcting a negative portrayal that the historians deemed to have been deliberately biased against the Puritans. This recovery was taken and pursued in turn by many other historians with different agendas. But, while our historians may have seen the individualistic outlook that Puritanism pioneered, with its emphasis on conscience, autonomy before God, and freedom, as helping to advance the modern world of the nineteenth century, did the advent of Gardiner's new 'scientific' style of history-writing render this sort of self-conscious historical recovery obsolete? To answer this, we need to look at what 'scientific history' meant and how our historians responded to it. Several recent studies have explored these issues and are worth considering in more detail.

While historians have generally been moving away from a polarised view of science versus religion in the second half of the nineteenth century, other polarities and sources of contention from the 1860s and 1870s have been subject to increasing attention.<sup>686</sup> We have just seen the antagonism that the recovery of Puritanism seemed to inspire in Matthew Arnold as one such contention.

Unsurprisingly, Arnold's arguments against Puritanism, and religious Dissent in general, aroused considerable criticism.<sup>687</sup> Willey has highlighted the paradoxical tension between Arnold's criticism of the credal doctrinal certainty that Puritanism represented and his own doctrinal certainty based on experience. For instance, Willey presents Arnold describing the Westminster Confession as 'unscientific' in a world where 'the modern mind, imbued with the spirit of science, rightly demands verification in all things, and will accept no allegedly factual statement on authority alone'.<sup>688</sup> As we have seen, Arnold argued that the creed that he posited was verifiable through experiential morality. This is probably what Nicholls meant when he described Arnold as removing teleology by claiming to have an objective perspective, only to 'smuggle a new teleology in by the back door'.<sup>689</sup> It is not surprising that Collini found Arnold's continuing religious orthodoxy so

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<sup>686</sup> See for example Hesketh's distinction between different types of history-writing in *The Science of History* (2011) and Nicholls' argument concerning the philological background of the term 'science' (2011).

<sup>687</sup> Robbins has a helpful discussion regarding some criticism that Arnold received in his own time in *The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 147. Sidney Coulling has devoted an entire monograph to the topic: *Matthew Arnold and his critics: A Study of Arnold's Controversies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974).

<sup>688</sup> See Willey, 'Arnold and Religion' (1975), 245. See also Holloway's note on Arnold's doctrinal certainty in *The Victorian Sage* (1953), 205.

<sup>689</sup> Nicholls, 'Scientific Literary Criticism' (2011), 25.

uncomfortable, and that some commentators still choose to emphasise the gulf between ‘scientific’ and ‘religious’ understanding that Arnold had described in his early *Function of Criticism* (1865), ignoring the bridges that he later attempted to build across it.<sup>690</sup>

The extent to which history could be ‘scientific’, and the way this challenged either a teleological or a religious perspective on history, was another significant contention in the nineteenth century. It has recently been receiving more critical attention and has a significant bearing on our view of the recovery of Puritanism and the historiographical questions behind this study. Angus Nicholls’s essay ‘Scientific literary criticism in the work of Matthew Arnold and William Dilthey’ has provided a helpful study of Arnold’s use of the term ‘scientific’, exploring the mixed use of the word ‘science’ as late as the 1870s, and Arnold’s own need to re-examine the way he used the term in the 1880s.<sup>691</sup> Nicholls explained the philology of science words in English and German in the nineteenth century. Today, ‘science’ refers to ‘bodies of knowledge based on hypotheses tested by empirical research and with objectively measureable results’.<sup>692</sup> But Nicholls also described how, before the mid-nineteenth century, the term ‘science’ had routinely been used in English as a direct translation of the German *Wissenschaft*, meaning ‘the systematic pursuit of knowledge’.<sup>693</sup> Arnold and many other English scholars used the term ‘science’ in this sense well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century. In Germany, as natural science became more and more important, the two German terms *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geisteswissenschaft* entered into common usage to differentiate between natural science and human science, or the humanities. In English, however, this linguistic shift was not made as clearly. Gradually, ‘science’ came to mean ‘natural science’, and those who still used it in the broad sense of *Wissenschaft* were left looking behind the times.

Nicholls examines the vitriol with which Huxley, for instance, attacked Arnold’s claims that literary criticism could be scientific in any real sense.<sup>694</sup> When Arnold responded to Huxley, he referred back to Homer critic Friedrich Wolf’s use of ‘science’ from much earlier in the nineteenth century, stating that it can describe

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<sup>690</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., 11, 18.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., 11, 15.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid., 13.

anything ‘which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources’.<sup>695</sup> For Nicholls, Arnold’s confidence that literary criticism could be truly ‘disinterested’ and enable one to ‘see the object as in itself it really is’ is actually Arnold at his most political, revealing his confident, upper-class, and slightly old-fashioned attitude that one objective truth really did exist, in the face of ‘the political or religious controversies that raged Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century’.<sup>696</sup> Arnold’s determination to cling to this form of aesthetic criticism as ‘scientific’ was particularly stubborn and demonstrated a serious misreading of, or stubborn refusal to adopt, the Kantian aesthetic legacy: for Kant, Nicholls reminds us, aesthetics was always essentially subjective. Nicholls concludes that, in describing his form of criticism as both ‘scientific’ and aesthetic, Arnold was at the end of a line of those who thought science and teleology were compatible.

While Matthew Arnold may have been one of the last writers to try to define ‘science’ in terms of literary philology, many other writers at the time, including our historians, were also grappling with arguments related to the exact meaning and boundaries of science. The German term *Wissenschaft* is also important to Hesketh in his monograph *The Science of History*. His narrative is compelling. In 1857, Buckle’s *History of Civilization* seemed to promise a new, scientific history along the lines of the natural scientists of the time. But it was based on sweeping generalizations and, if anything, proved that *Naturwissenschaft* and history were not really compatible. The rest of Hesketh’s argument considers the way that two different groups responded to Buckle. Stubbs and Freeman, representing a new wave of professionalizing, academic, historians, determined to demonstrate how history could and should be a science, not as Buckle suggested, but through the serious discipline of historical research.<sup>697</sup> More romantic ‘history writers’ (Hesketh seems reluctant to call them historians), led by Froude and Kingsley, objected to the idea of science as history, and argued that the two terms were simply incompatible.<sup>698</sup>

The argument became particularly intense between Freeman and Froude, but we can begin to see that their dispute may have been more terminological than they

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<sup>695</sup> Arnold, ‘Literature and Science’ (1882) in Trilling, ed., *The Portable Matthew Arnold*, 410–411, cited in Nicholls, 17.

<sup>696</sup> Nicholls, ‘Scientific Literary Criticism’ (2011), 15–16.

<sup>697</sup> For the argument that Stubbs and Freeman represented a new wave of historical professionalism, see also J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>698</sup> Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 53, 70.

realised: so much emphasis was placed on linguistics that they failed to notice their similarities or common aims. Froude was adamant that history could not be empirical but was always inevitably subject to interpretation. He was also scornful about the issue of terminology: ‘the physical sciences require a repetition of phenomena in order to test hypotheses and establish laws, whereas for history this is impossible’. This was Froude’s issue with Buckle: by trying to codify history and fill it with laws, he removed the drama of what had really happened and the art of historical narrative. Froude wanted to defend history against the need to be scientific.<sup>699</sup>

Froude’s position here can be related to his own familiarity with science in the sense of *Naturwissenschaft*. His brother-in-law Kingsley was very involved with the natural sciences, and his brother William was a prominent theoretical engineer, and he was himself keen to embrace Darwinism and the revolution in scientific understanding that was occurring in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. To try to equate history with this *Naturwissenschaft*, Froude compellingly argued, would actually be to negate both.

However, Stubbs and Freeman never really thought that history could be *Naturwissenschaft*: their ‘science’ was in the old, broad sense of *Wissenschaft*, or in the new, developing sense of *Geisteswissenschaft*. Their quest for history to become a science was really for it to become a ‘humanity’ subject in the modern sense: that is, to be professional and academically respectable. Freeman agreed that the facts of history could never be as certain as the facts of ‘some other branches of knowledge’, and, Hesketh states, ‘the science of history, then, was highly dependent on the way in which the facts themselves are handled and interpreted’.<sup>700</sup>

These historians saw Froude as a threat because they doubted the authenticity of his dramatic historical narrative: something that was presented in such a stylised way seemed to shift the emphasis from methodology to presentation, and some of his narrative seemed so dramatized that it became inconsistent. To some extent, Hesketh admits, Freeman and Stubbs probably also mistrusted Froude’s historical writing because of his immense popularity. His wayward theology had always made him an easy target of controversy, and his alternative, more ‘artistic’ presentation of history was perceived as a threat to the academic rigour that Freeman and Stubbs wanted to pursue. All of this seems a little unfair on Froude, whose *History of England* was one

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<sup>699</sup> Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 70.

<sup>700</sup> Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 81.

of the first pieces of research to make extensive and impressive use of the newly available archival and cataloguing sources.<sup>701</sup>

In addition, as Brady has discussed, Froude's concerns with the new 'scientific' trend with history writing did not end with terminology and disciplinary gaps. For him, attempts to develop a so-called objective approach to history 'inadvertently undermined the legitimacy of historical study altogether'.<sup>702</sup> Objectivity in history was not only practically unachievable, he argued, but it was morally dubious. For Froude, history's central purpose was, like that of the 'great dramatist or poet', to 'present in manifold forms the same moral challenges which, no matter how they may mutate, humanity must confront as long as consciousness survives'. Too much 'methodological confidence' was a symptom of these new historians being 'nefarious', 'intellectually smug and politically self-serving', and 'ethically irresponsible'.<sup>703</sup> For Froude, this commitment to history having a moral purpose was an important part of his self-understanding. While Froude's arguments with Freeman and Stubbs were of a different generation, this attitude echoes Macaulay's idea of the historian's need for 'judgment' from his own early writings.

While Hesketh has presented Kingsley, like Froude, as consciously rejecting 'scientific history' and favouring a more literary approach to historical information, Conlin has helpfully investigated a personal 'scientific' model of history-writing that Kingsley developed. For Kingsley, Conlin argued, this model was part of a larger project of combining his two great interests of science and history into a new expression of natural theology. In describing this natural theology, Conlin relied chiefly on Kingsley's essays on the 'Roman and the Teuton' (1864) and 'The Natural Theology of the Future' (1874). This new natural theology, Conlin has argued, represented a profoundly racist view of both history and science that combined the study of human history with evolutionary biology.<sup>704</sup> The theoretical model of this

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<sup>701</sup> See Brady, *Froude* (2013), 200, on Froude writing the first volumes of his *History of England*: 'Hitherto Froude had confined himself primarily to English materials housed in the Rolls Office, the British Museum, and the Bodleian Library. He had also made use of printed editions and calendars of correspondence of the Habsburg and French ambassadors to the early Tudor courts. Now Froude determined to conduct his own original research abroad, and his volumes on Elizabeth were to be considerably enriched by a mass of documents uncovered in the course of two extensive visits to the Spanish archive at Simancas, the Archive Royaume at Brussels, and the Staatsarchiv at Vienna'. See also Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 68, 86.

<sup>702</sup> Brady, *Froude* (2013), 211.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, 210, 211, 213.

<sup>704</sup> The connection of history with ethnography and racialism was nothing unusual. While Brady comments on Froude's refusal to engage with scientific racism, arguing that humans had the power to

theology is presented in considerable detail, relying on the concepts of superfecundity, recapitulation and degradation, all of which were deemed to combine theology with both history and science. A decade on from Buckle, Kingsley's theory attempted to synthesise new understandings of evolution and natural selection and combine them with a providentialist viewpoint. For Conlin, what Kingsley was trying to create was ultimately incoherent, but it none the less represented part of Kingsley's important contribution to Victorian intellectual life, and Kingsley's work remained widely read and respected for some decades after his death. This natural theology also shows us the way that Kingsley had inherited some of the Puritan ideals and attitudes he espoused, wanting to see all knowledge as holistic and traceable to a great theological denominator.

We can see here that Kingsley's attitude to history and science was more complex and developed than Hesketh has allowed. Even without Conlin's contribution, the fact that Kingsley immersed himself so wholeheartedly in the language and ideas of science is enough to make us doubt Hesketh's assertions that he rejected 'scientific history' out of hand. Kingsley's personal model of scientific history reminds us again that the later nineteenth century represented a melting pot of theory and idea, where those who still had an interest in a topic could pursue their own research, write about it, and be read. In this sense, Kingsley and Arnold were both serious amateurs, but neither would have commanded much academic respect in relation to their attitudes to history even two decades later.

For Hesketh, Froude's (and, to a lesser extent, Kingsley's) historical methods were re-visited some decades after his death, when the reading public was no longer satisfied with accurate historical writing that nevertheless lacked passion and narrative force.<sup>705</sup> But Froude and Kingsley were also both controversial and popular during their lifetimes. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Froude's works, especially his *History of England*, were popular not only amongst religious doubters but also amongst the general public, and were even highly regarded by prominent Evangelicals such as Ryle. Kingsley, too, succeeded in capturing and retaining the public imagination, and his controversial promotion to Regius Chair of Modern History at Cambridge was deemed most of all a nod to public sentiment. 'Scientific history' may have been entering critical vogue in the

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change the course of history, Hesketh notes that work of Stubbs in particular was also imbued with it. See Brady, *Froude* (2013), 414; Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), 50, 51.

<sup>705</sup> Hesketh, *Science of History*, 153.

1870s, but the new professionalism in history did not translate immediately to a shift in the public's tastes, and the close and unwavering analysis of primary sources was not yet mandatory.

Our Evangelical historians, both within and outside the Church of England, seem to have felt unthreatened by the development of history as an academic discipline, probably because less was expected of them than from such historical authors as Kingsley and Froude. For the Evangelical historians, history was a love and a pastime, which they pursued either alongside their ministerial work or in retirement. As amateur historians with no formal historical training and clear didactic priorities, each had his own distinctive voice and style. However, this did not stop them from being widely read and respected, even by people beyond their Evangelical and church circles. Among our Evangelical historians, Stoughton's historical writings in particular had a broad range of admirers, interestingly including Matthew Arnold himself.<sup>706</sup>

At the time history was being professionalised, those historians, both Evangelicals and others, who were most interested in recovering Puritanism for nineteenth-century society, were busy using it to present either teleological lessons or grand narratives for their readers. The idea of moving the emphasis away from narrative, teleology, and heroes, to what they would have perceived along with Carlyle as 'dryasdust' antiquarianism, was not particularly appealing.

Historians now are beginning to reassess the significance of Froude's and Kingsley's roles in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>707</sup> In our study, Froude and Kingsley have represented the continuing re-assessment and recovery of Puritanism in Victorian society. In their hands, the recovery of Puritanism had become more than Macaulay's Whig view that Puritan resistance to Stuart pretensions had formed the roots of civil liberties. It also became more than Carlyle's hero-worship, and more than the Dissenting Evangelicals' vindication of their credentials as truly British. Kingsley and Froude emerged in our study as the later celebrants of a Puritan spirit that was pervasively both British and romantic, that embraced national and personal strength, vigour, and industrial, scientific and social progress, but that also placed a high value on the drama and humanity involved in

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<sup>706</sup> See William Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 150. Robbins describes Stoughton here as 'impartial and objective in a way that is not easy for religious historians'.

<sup>707</sup> See Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), Conlin, 'An Illiberal Descent' (2011), Lee, 'Kingsley's stuttering Christian manliness' (2008), Markus, *Froude* (2005), Nicholls, 'Scientific Literary Criticism' (2011).

history.

Puritanism represented an extreme religious Nationalism that, while spiritually and politically untenable in the nineteenth century, had helped to provide Britain with the vision that had enabled it to become great. The freedom of thought and freedom from religious institutionalism that Puritanism represented had helped, our historians would have argued, to lay the emotional groundwork for the explosions of scientific thought and discovery and the new waves of liberalism and free trade. As such, by the time history began to be professionalised, Puritanism's advocates had completed their polemic work, and Puritanism no longer really needed recovering.

So where does this leave Gardiner's 'scientific' historical writing, and his positive presentation of Puritanism that we saw in Chapter One? Nixon's monograph is very helpful here. Challenging us to move beyond a reductive view of Gardiner and his work, Nixon presents Gardiner as living under the influence of the German Idealism of the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century, and his 'scientific' history as very much a development of this in the broad sense of *Wissenschaft*. Gardiner, for Nixon, and unlike Freeman and Stubbs, was far removed from any attempt to be empirical, but better described as an Idealist.<sup>708</sup> As such, his philosophical understanding of history, Nixon argues, was much better developed than that of the other historians of his day. Nixon's presentation of Gardiner seems to combine the two warring factions from Hesketh's *Science of History*. Gardiner argued for a scientific history in a Leibnizian/Fichtean sense, in which the boundaries between sciences and humanities are allowed to be blurred as they become conversant with each other. For Nixon, Gardiner's science would now be more accurately translated as 'systematic intellectual inquiry' in Anglo-American language.<sup>709</sup>

Gardiner's criticism of Ranke for being unscientific was really, Nixon insisted, for lacking the warmth and structure of a narrative form. For Gardiner, the use of the imagination is absolutely crucial for the construction of any 'scientific' history: 'the historian does the research, then s/he writes it up'. In order to 'write it up', Gardiner argued, the historian needs to construct a causal sequence of historical knowledge, which will not be available in the historical sources and is essentially an (albeit informed) imaginative exercise. In this sense, 'the historian's task [is] much

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<sup>708</sup> Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011), 103.

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

more than the recording of the facts of the past'. Gardiner, like Froude, emphasised the importance of the historian's role in constructing an essentially subjective narrative. Nixon argued that, given his Idealist view of science as *Wissenschaft*, this was not contradictory to his view of scientific history.<sup>710</sup>

Although Gardiner himself has never been credited with great drama or soaring prose, he knew and accepted that history needed to be a story: by consciously asserting the need for a narrative developed by and infused with the historian's imagination, he moved beyond the archetype that Freeman and Stubbs wanted to call 'scientific' and presented a new form of academic history-writing. Even so, the focus of this story, for Gardiner, would begin and end with the historical evidence from historical research, not with a teleological message, even if that would have meant historical revisionism or correction of past misinterpretations, such as in the recovery of Puritanism. Gardiner's positive view of Puritanism may have been connected to his Gladstonian political leanings and his Nonconformist background, but he would have balked at the suggestion that the subjective and imaginative statement that expressed his positive presentation of the Puritans, for instance, was a result of anything other than historical research.

Our historians who supported Puritanism, while often enthusiastic about the developments in scientific research, were also influenced by Romanticism and the attraction of character studies of heroes and great men. Froude in particular was determined to retain a dramatic and stylistic element in the writing of history. In these emphases of Froude, the passion and the emotion, we can see something of the Puritan zeal seeping out. And yet, in his insistence that history and science (as *Naturwissenschaft*) should not be combined, we also hear echoes of the great warning from the Puritans. The Puritans saw their own experience of God and their theological understanding as objective, and it led them into dark places and cruelty, as in the Cromwellian campaigns in Ireland. For Froude, history, with its moral imperatives, was a similar sort of discipline to theology, and attempts to objectivise it risked losing its very soul.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Strict morality had always been one of the defining characteristics of Puritanism, but it had also been the subject of much mockery ever since the Restoration. Even

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<sup>710</sup> Ibid., 31.

though Macaulay spearheaded the political recovery of Puritanism, it was hard for him to move beyond 'judging' the extremism of their morality. As time went by, however, and the recovery of Puritanism became more consolidated, the historians' admiration of the Puritans grew, and their social outlook and impact was revisited, often in ways that had a surprisingly personal impact on the historians themselves.

Our Evangelical historians, both inside and outside the Church of England, saw in the Puritans models of morality and sincerity that they wanted to emulate. They wanted to trace both of these traits of Puritanism back to Puritan theology, with which they felt they could also identify. Ryle's suggestion of reading-lists based on Puritan texts is particularly notable here, as is Anderson's systematic presentation of idealised female roles. In all, the recovery of the Puritans meant that Evangelicals could identify with a theological and moral ancestry that was also intrinsically British, patriotic, and positive in its influence on national development. The concurrent movement of widening access to historical sources also further enabled the Evangelicals to feel more in touch with Puritanism. They looked to the republication of the Puritans' writings and sermons for inspiration and increasingly embraced their supposedly Puritan heritage.

The notion that the Puritans might have something to teach people in the nineteenth century spread into wider society. As long as Puritanism represented a distinctively English or British movement, it was to be seen favourably. Kingsley tried to demonstrate the relevance and immediacy of Puritanism to Victorian society through a series of sweeping cultural caricatures, comparing Puritan and Victorian attitudes to dress, the theatre and art. His perspective, too, was about affirming his nation and helping provide its attitudes with a historical voice and perspective. Of course, Kingsley's view of his nation's attitudes, like anyone else's, was from a very limited angle. His quest to see nineteenth-century England as shaped by the Puritan era was undoubtedly linked to his own jumpiness about what he saw in the 1870s as a Catholic, or at least Anglo-Catholic, threat to both the Church of England and the heart of English society. Kingsley placed the Puritans' taste and manners in stark contrast to the effete Royalism they had opposed, and argued that it was the Puritans who were the legitimate ancestors of nineteenth-century English society.

These positive social interpretations of Puritanism can all be linked to distinct teleological perspectives. It took a change in attitudes to history to move beyond this sort of teleology and to begin to take an interest in the social aspects of Puritanism in their original contexts. In this respect, Froude seems an unlikely candidate as our

hero, especially given his deep admiration for Carlyle. But his work did represent a significant change in tone for our historians, as he was the first to successfully encourage his readers to observe, rather than, in Macaulay's old term, to judge. The stark contrast that Froude drew between the Puritans and nineteenth-century Evangelicalism was meant to be at least as much a historical as a theological comment. His point was that the nature of both people and beliefs change over time, and that attempting to impose something from the past upon the present day would be misguided.

We have also learnt in this chapter that the recovery of Puritanism had an impact on Victorian society, beyond presenting models for emulation in personal or religious life. Matthew Arnold's staunch and continued criticism of Puritanism (especially in the form of Evangelical Dissent) helps us to frame its impact and relevance on nineteenth-century society. The prevalence of Puritanism seems to have deeply concerned this highly intelligent public intellectual, and this suggests to us that it was genuinely significant. For Arnold, as for our historians, the energy and passion of Puritanism came to represent an entire outlook on life. Puritanism, and its recovery in the nineteenth century, Arnold argued, represented Philistinism at its most pronounced: an unaesthetic judgment, manly and muscular, popular only because of low tastes revolving around British brashness and lust for action, romantically ignorant, intellectually uninformed, and theologically uncompromising. Perhaps, after all, neither the historians nor even the Puritans themselves need have been too displeased with Arnold's criticism.

Of course, the recovery of Puritanism altered considerably between 1825 and 1880. As the recovery of Puritanism was solidified in the 1860s and 1870s, it had also moved further away from being a support for political reform: Macaulay and those who followed him had made their point successfully. As the century developed, our historians still presented seventeenth-century Puritanism as helping make Britain great, but their focus shifted to how Puritans lived, and what they could represent socially for nineteenth-century readers. The ineluctable optimism of the mid-century gave way to doubt and self-questioning, and the personal and sensitive affirmation and encouragement that our more teleological historians provided to their readers can be seen as a response to this.

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, history itself was attempting to find its feet, being defined and re-defined, in part as a response to new methods and breakthroughs in the physical and biological sciences. The new wave of

professional historians, including Stubbs, Freeman, and Seeley, wanted history to be a science, and to be as objective and empirical as it could. Froude was seen as a grand opponent to this, and his response that history could not be objective because it was a study of the past echoed the way that he had separated Puritanism from nineteenth-century Evangelicalism. Froude espoused an articulate historiography that valued detailed research and primary sources (even if the odd mistake was made) but also believed in narrative, voice and drama.

We can see from this that Gardiner, as a historian committed to *Wissenschaft* and yet acknowledging the necessity of subjective narrative, was cast in the mould of Froude as much as of Stubbs or Freeman. Their strengths obviously lay in different places, but their sympathies were both with Puritanism.

## **Conclusion**

Nineteenth-century Britain witnessed many great transformations in religious, political, social and intellectual life. We have observed these changes at many levels: in society as a whole, in the developing understandings of history, and most specifically in the presentation of Puritanism. The focus of this thesis on Puritanism provides a microcosm of the broader changes that were occurring, both informing and interacting with them.

### **5.1 The breadth of the recovery of Puritanism**

#### **5.1.1 A complex recovery**

The recovery of Puritanism in the nineteenth century was obviously related to the changing attitudes to politics and religion. However, the increasingly positive attitude of many people towards Britain's Puritan heritage cannot simply be equated with an increasing acceptance of religious Nonconformity in mainstream society. Nor can it be reduced to the power of Carlyle's soaring rhetoric. While Lang's *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* was not specifically reductive in its treatment of this issue, his apparently simplistic arguments have sparked a fierce reaction from several historians who feel that Puritanism's recovery is more complex and its chief characters more diverse than he has acknowledged.<sup>711</sup> To be sure, even the contrast between Carlyle's hero-worship and Nonconformist Evangelicalism, both of which are acknowledged by Lang, is enough to show us that a far more complex movement, or series of movements, was brewing. Worden recognised this in his *Roundhead Reputations*, and began to explore 'nineteenth-century Cromwellianism' as 'a coalition of enthusiasms', admitting that 'by the end of the nineteenth century the establishment had more or less come to terms with Cromwell'. However, he still saw the main force behind the recovery of Puritanism as being anti-establishment's ability to 'gain a breadth of social appeal'.<sup>712</sup> Roger Howell Jr., however, has presented Cromwell as transmuting by the end of the nineteenth century into a conservative or establishment hero, and becoming representative to the working class

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<sup>711</sup> Lang, *Victorian and the Stuart Heritage* (1993), 20. See also Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011), 24.

<sup>712</sup> Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 243.

of the oppressive bourgeoisie as they sought for new heroes.<sup>713</sup> We have traced these shifting moods and currents through the lens of our historians, and we have seen how they communicated and used the more positive views of Cromwell and Puritanism for their own, varied purposes.

### **5.1.2 Language and attraction**

In this study, we delved further into this complexity and tried to get to grips with the different ways in which our historians recovered Puritanism in the nineteenth century, and how their histories contrasted and interlinked with each other.

The result has been a complex account of differing attitudes to history. We have seen something of the broad range of understandings and definitions of Puritanism. Puritanism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain had its own dramatic narrative, from persecuted minority to religious warriors to visionary political leaders to stagnation and back to persecuted minority again. Our historians approached the Puritans at various points on this timeline; the single term ‘Puritan’, with hindsight, could refer to the persecuted and the warrior, the leader and the visionary opponent. Likewise, ecclesiologically speaking, the single term was variously applied to the low church group within the Church of England, early separatists, Independents, Presbyterians, Protestant divines and theologians of many different backgrounds, theocratic extremists, and moderates with a strong Protestant faith and practice. This linguistic diversity is partly what led to the strange contrasts in the way the Puritans were presented: strictly speaking, there was no single group of Puritans. However, all of the historians who wrote about the Puritans positively saw some attractive quality in them that they wanted to present to their readers.

The term ‘Puritan’ was largely neglected in the eighteenth century, but when it was used, it was generally in a condemnatory sense.<sup>714</sup> By the second half of the nineteenth century, it still meant very different things to different groups of people, but the term was no longer neglected, and nor were the people it represented. Samuel referred to the ‘startling reversals’ in the treatment of Puritanism during the nineteenth century, and we have seen something of this in the paradoxes that surrounded people’s ideas of what Puritanism represented.<sup>715</sup> From being regarded as

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<sup>713</sup> Roger Howell Jr., ‘Who needs another Cromwell? The nineteenth-century image of Oliver Cromwell’, in Richardson (ed.), *Images of Oliver Cromwell* (1993).

<sup>714</sup> See, for instance, the discussion of Hume’s references to the terms ‘Puritan’ and ‘Puritanism’ in Chapter One.

<sup>715</sup> Samuel, ‘The Discovery of Puritanism’ (1993), 201.

rebels and fanatics, Puritans became viewed by many as the most loyal of English subjects, who had risked their lives at sea to promote England's greatness, or who had abandoned England in search of a better life in the New World. It stood both for those who were most resistant to and those who were most passionate in defence of the established Church of England. It stood for those who pioneered religious and political toleration, and also for those who were prejudiced, closed-minded and intolerant, especially in their violent opposition to Roman Catholicism.

### 5.1.3 Macaulay and Carlyle

Macaulay produced a new narrative of English history that saw the Glorious Revolution of 1688 as its great turning-point; for him, 1688 represented the triumph of the British rule of law and the constitutional monarchy. He presented to Britain both a new history and a new set of political and historical ideals.

Macaulay saw certain social aspects of Puritanism as comical and bizarre, but we should not think, as Lang seems to argue, that he was attempting to promote a middle ground that combined the Puritans' desire for political reform with the Cavaliers' 'elegant tastes' and 'graces of private life'.<sup>716</sup> Rather, as Dudley Edwards has convincingly pointed out, Macaulay's political and historical views were deeply influenced by his Evangelical upbringing: the anti-establishment and Celtic echoes he experienced in childhood probably drew him to the Puritans from an early age.<sup>717</sup> Even before Carlyle, Macaulay saw the Puritans as mysterious heroes, and, as Worden has noted, he identified them as playing a crucial role in Britain's history and paving the way for the political freedom that would allow the Glorious Revolution to take place. Macaulay brought Puritanism back into the political and intellectual mainstream and enabled it to be seen as representative of Britishness – inspiring a generation of Evangelicals and Imperialists to see Puritanism as a vital part of England's and Britain's past. Beyond this, himself inspired by Scott's novels, he brought the character of the individual Puritan – including his nasal twang – back into the public imagination as a historical, as well as a literary, figure.

Carlyle's contribution to the recovery of Puritanism has been well-documented.<sup>718</sup> He saw in the Puritans a sort of mystical power that transcended their

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<sup>716</sup> Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage* (1995), 61.

<sup>717</sup> See Dudley Edwards, *Macaulay* (1988), 22, 74.

<sup>718</sup> See in particular Harrison's editorial notes in *The Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9); Karsten, *Patriot Heroes in England and America* (1978), Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (1985), and Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001).

historical context. For Carlyle, the Puritans represented ‘a confused struggle towards God’s eternal Verity – wherein and not elsewhere lies the foundation of all blessedness for England and me and all nations and men’. He also described it as ‘the last of all our Heroisms’.<sup>719</sup> Carlyle’s reference to ‘blessedness for England’ is interesting: perhaps this was a rhetorical way of gaining the attention of his patriotic readership, or perhaps he was self-consciously contrasting his interpretation to Macaulay’s. While Macaulay saw the Puritans as a blessing for England because of their political achievements and toleration of the other, Carlyle had little time for tolerance, seeing it more as a sign of weakness than of development. For Carlyle, the ‘blessing’ that Puritanism provided was its ‘Calvinistic Stoicism’ which gave England a faith that reached beyond national self-interest.<sup>720</sup>

In a strange sort of contradiction, Carlyle’s work represented an important step in the project of bringing historical documents – in this case Oliver Cromwell’s *Letters and Speeches* – into the public sphere, while at the same time his prose style achieved new heights of subjective and idealised historical eulogy. While his approach reflected certain important philosophical and sociological insights, his historical writing was far removed from what was soon to become a defined academic discipline.

Although both were popular and influential authors, Macaulay and Carlyle had vastly different aims and audiences. It is unlikely that either of them conceived that they were entering into a shared project. As we have seen, even their achievements in reviving popular interest in Puritanism, and specifically the life and work of Cromwell, had divergent results. Macaulay’s account was intended to help England enhance its political stability and ultimately its status as a great world power in the mid-nineteenth century, whereas Carlyle bemoaned the loss of soul, passion and sincerity that had occurred between the seventeenth century and his own time.<sup>721</sup>

Until now, scholars who have recognised the importance of these two figures in the recovery of Puritanism have tended to emphasise their Whig middle-class and Radical working-class influences.<sup>722</sup> But these two forms of Puritanism’s recovery found considerable overlap, and Macaulay and Carlyle both had a widespread influence on mid-nineteenth-century society.<sup>723</sup> Both were acknowledged best-selling

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<sup>719</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches* ([1898]), 35; *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 2.

<sup>720</sup> Carlyle, *Historical Sketches* ([1898]), 163, 35.

<sup>721</sup> Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1, 70–71.

<sup>722</sup> See Worden, *Roundhead Reputations* (2001), 247.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

authors, with broad readerships and formidable reputations. In the minds of our other historians, the seeds sown by both Macaulay and Carlyle hybridise in a fascinating way. It was not simply, as Matthew suggested in an article in the *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project*, that each historian who expressed positive views about Puritanism was using it as a vehicle for their pre-existing agenda.<sup>724</sup> Rather, the historians we have considered in this thesis expressed a real excitement that something new, or at least long-hidden, was being revealed. Several of our historians, alongside many others in nineteenth-century public life, admitted to changing their outlooks, not only about Puritanism but also about their nation's history, as a direct result of Macaulay and Carlyle's influence.<sup>725</sup>

#### **5.1.4 The Puritans, Evangelicals, and the Church of England**

Some Evangelical historians, such as Vaughan, would have considered themselves part of a long line of direct descendants of those Puritans who were finally ejected from the Church of England by the 1662 Act of Uniformity.<sup>726</sup> This Dissenting minority had a positive view of Puritanism long before Macaulay's early essays.

The historians we have selected were not from this group. Anderson was Scottish, and while his Reformed theological background would have led him to an affinity with the Puritan theology, his location in Scotland afforded him some distance from their political controversies, and his focus on Puritan women gave him an original angle. Stoughton was a Congregationalist, but by choice rather than descent. While his personal ecclesiology was of course informed by Protestantism, he insisted that his Congregationalism was related to his understanding of the New Testament and Patristics rather than a specific affinity to Puritan Nonconformity.<sup>727</sup> However, we can see his long interest in Church History, and particularly the seventeenth century, alongside his consciousness of his own place as a Nonconforming minister.

All of the Evangelicals amongst our historians claimed a theological connection to Puritanism, and most of them made explicit references to the Puritans' role in their Christian lineage. This was perhaps most complex and most interesting

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<sup>724</sup> See Matthew, 'Oliver Cromwell's Statue, Lord Rosebury, and Imperialism' in *Nineteenth-Century Cromwell Project* (c.1968–9), 260.

<sup>725</sup> See for instance Ryle, 'Baxter' (1853), 37; Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 1 (1862), 19.

<sup>726</sup> See for instance Robert Vaughan, *English Nonconformity* (1862). Daniel Neal, whose *History of the Puritans* was published in installments from 1732, was seen by many as the forefather of this movement, and was known simply as 'The Puritan historian'.

<sup>727</sup> Stoughton, *Recollections of a Long Life* (1894), 14.

in the cases of Ryle and Marsden, who were both Evangelicals within the Church of England. Marsden's *Early Puritans* provides a detailed account of Puritan Nonconformity within the Church of England in the late sixteenth century. It was this ability to provide a critique of the Church of England from within that Marsden saw as the true heart of Puritanism, and seemed to resonate with him personally.<sup>728</sup> Ryle also chose to emphasise elements of Puritanism that involved pastoral care and were within the established church (as with his focus on Baxter), rather than focus on politics or separatist extremism. With this in mind, the movement as a whole held a special place in Ryle's understanding of Church history. In particular, he placed the Puritans alongside the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers and the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revivalists as his spiritual ancestors.<sup>729</sup> In the 1850s, Evangelicals saw the Puritans as having an ongoing doctrinal relevance, providing their Evangelical faith with historical validity, and challenging it with a depth of theological understanding that some felt was missing from contemporary Evangelicalism.<sup>730</sup> Since the 1820s, as a result of the impact of Macaulay and Carlyle, the Puritans had gained a degree of public respect and an improved status in society, and were even seen as political role models. In this changed environment, it had become much more palatable for our historians to promote religious and theological positions akin to Puritanism. Just as the Puritans had been pioneers of political freedom and religious toleration, their argument went, so too had they been pioneers of 'Evangelical' theology in Britain. While the Reformed and Evangelical theologies were indisputably connected within Protestantism, they also have distinct historical roots and different emphases. Where these differed from their own backgrounds or emphases, our historians either looked at them or presented the differences positively, as challenges from which their readers could learn or change.<sup>731</sup>

As the century progressed, and Britain's self-confidence began to wane, our historians reflected the changing mood in different ways. The Evangelicals, particularly Anderson, Ryle and Stoughton, all focused on the Puritans as everyday people, stripping away the sometimes comical, sometimes romantic caricatures provided by Macaulay and replacing them with a more human and sympathetic

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<sup>728</sup> See Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 285, 285–386.

<sup>729</sup> See for instance Ryle, 'Facts and Men' (1882), 15.

<sup>730</sup> See Ryle, 'An Estimate of Manton' (1870), xvi; *Principles for Churchmen* (1884), 261.

<sup>731</sup> See Anderson, *Memorable Women*, Vol. 2, 186–187.

image.<sup>732</sup> They encouraged their readers to take the Puritans seriously as theological forbears. This focus on the ‘everyman’ replaced Macaulay’s caricatures with another romantic trope, this time of Carlylean descent: that of the passionate hero. By turning Carlyle’s Puritan hero into a potential everyman, the Evangelicals (and also the Broad Churchman Kingsley) were dressing models for their readers to emulate.<sup>733</sup> This figure of the Puritan as an idealised individual living a moral and religious life within civil society was an important feature of the Evangelical presentation of Puritanism and, in turn, of Evangelicalism’s construction of its own religious identity and narrative.

The Evangelicals’ adoption of Carlyle’s hero trope raises another fascinating contradiction. One of the main premises of Carlyle’s hero-worship was precisely that it was removed from the present day, and was not cut from the same cloth as nineteenth-century Evangelicalism.<sup>734</sup> But the Evangelicals were not only impressed by Carlyle’s positive estimations of the Puritans. They were also inspired by his republication of Cromwell’s letters and papers, which they saw it as a precedent for republishing other historical documents and papers, including lengthy theological works by such Puritan divines as John Owen and Thomas Manton.<sup>735</sup> These theological works were to be used didactically to cultivate the understanding both of Evangelical preachers (within and outside the Church of England) and educated laymen. Through this textual route, the Evangelicals sought to re-create Puritan theology and spirituality, which was just what Carlyle had insisted could not be done.

### 5.1.5 Froude and Kingsley

The increased critical attention that both Froude and Kingsley have been receiving recently is most welcome.<sup>736</sup> They both had significant roles in the recovery of interest in Puritanism, but, despite their similar career patterns and their familial relationship, they differed in fundamental ways and it is important not to conflate

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<sup>732</sup> See Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), 25–26.

<sup>733</sup> See Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 68.

<sup>734</sup> See Carlyle, *Cromwell*, Vol. 1 (1845), 18.

<sup>735</sup> The second half of the nineteenth century saw huge numbers of publications of collected works from the seventeenth century. For instance, a major 16-volume edition of John Owen’s (1616–1683) works was published in 1850–1853 (ed. William Gould, London: Johnstone and Hunter); Thomas Manton’s (1620–1677) works were republished in 22 volumes in 1870–75 (ed. William Harris); including an essay by J. C. Ryle).

<sup>736</sup> See for instance Markus, *Froude* (2005), Hesketh, *Science of History* (2011), Lee, ‘Kingsley’s Stuttering Christian Manliness’ (2008), Conlin, ‘An Illiberal Descent’ (2011), Brady, *Froude* (2013).

them. Both Kingsley and Froude, like Carlyle and Macaulay, were men of letters; although both held positions as academic historians in their later lives, history was not a driving and singular pursuit, as it was for Gardiner. Rather, they were both on the edge of the emergence of the new profession of the historian. Likewise, both were the recipients of negative critical attention in their own time, and can ultimately be seen as idiosyncratic writers, representative of themselves only rather than any particular movement of thought.

Of the two, it was Froude, the author of a multi-volume *History of England*, whose views of history were more matured, and who is still commands respect as a historian.<sup>737</sup> Froude was a long-term admirer of Puritanism. Hesketh describes his late *English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century* as a nod to the important role the sixteenth-century Puritans had played in shaping his historical outlook and his decision to move to history-writing. Brady relates how Carlyle, too, had a substantial impact on Froude's decision to write history: 'Carlyle taught him that the problems with which he had been grappling were not to be resolved in books but by engagement with 'present facts, and the world in which I lived and breathed'.<sup>738</sup> For Froude, his vocation as a historian was combined with that of moral prophet, and he identified strongly with the urgency, sincerity, and life of the Puritan movement, retaining his priority of 'persistent demand for active engagement over detached speculation' even when his writing appeared to espouse inconsistent or contradictory values.<sup>739</sup>

While these ideals of sincerity and action remained important to Froude throughout his life, he none the less saw it as very important to distinguish between past and present, being careful to emphasise that 'the fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us' and that 'The power of Calvinism has waned... Systems have been invented to explain the inexplicable... Metaphors have been translated into formulas, and paradoxes unintelligible to emotion have been thrust upon the acceptance of reason'.<sup>740</sup> For Froude, as for Carlyle, Evangelicalism's claim to be the heir of Puritanism was not convincing, for whatever theological similarities the two groups may have had, the world itself had changed beyond recognition. The power of Calvinism, he argued, was rooted in its inexplicability, in its metaphors,

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<sup>737</sup> See Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 153.

<sup>738</sup> Brady, *Froude* (2013), 92.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, 450–451.

<sup>740</sup> Froude, *Bunyan* (188), 171, 'Calvinism' (1871), 57.

and in its paradoxes, which catalysed strong emotions. For Froude, the very codification of Evangelical religion had taken away its mysterious power.

Brady has described Froude's late *English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century* as framed dramatically, and reading in parts more like an adventure story than a historical lecture series.<sup>741</sup> Kingsley's dominant form of history-writing was even more explicit historical adventure in the form of novels. He aimed to present Protestantism as the only truly English form of religion. While his novel *Westward Ho!* explored the eccentric extremism of the religious Puritan, the character Salvation Yeo ended up being the surprise hero of the novel, one who taught the central character Amyas important lessons about bravery and religious faith. Unnervingly, Yeo's violently anti-Catholic tendencies were proved right by the continuing deceit and trickery of all the Roman Catholic characters in the story.<sup>742</sup>

In his late essay 'Plays and Puritans', Kingsley continued to present Puritanism as an extreme movement that he thought represented the best of Britishness. Here, he made the contentious claim that the strict Puritan tastes in fashion, cultural activities and social lifestyles had been validated by history and that, by the 1870s when he was writing, they had been generally accepted as preferable to their alternatives. Kingsley saw the strict morality of the Puritans as a necessary background for an engaged social conscience, and this conscience as the best means to the social reform about which he was so passionate. For Kingsley, then, the Puritans laid the foundations for the morality that underpinned the success of nineteenth century Britain.<sup>743</sup>

### **5.1.6 Learning from paradoxes**

We have seen many contradictions emerge in the different nineteenth-century revivals of interest in Puritanism, and we have observed our historians either engaging with or avoiding these contradictions in various ways. Essentially, they all seem to have realised that Puritanism and its influence on Britain were too broad and diverse to fit easily into any one 'grand narrative', whether Evangelicalism, British Imperial supremacy, or liberalism. The paradoxes of the revived interest in Puritanism cannot be resolved, but they do effectively illustrate the metamorphosis that was occurring within the discipline of history itself.

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<sup>741</sup> Brady, *Froude* (2013), 448–449.

<sup>742</sup> Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (1855).

<sup>743</sup> Kingsley, 'Plays and Puritans' (1873), 73–75.

## 5.2 The recovery of Puritanism and the development of history

During the second two quarters of the nineteenth century, while the ‘recovery of Puritanism’ was underway, huge shifts were occurring in the way people approached history. On the one hand, this meant new attitudes to history, with a greater reverence towards sources and a greater awareness of philosophical and historiographical subjectivities. On the other hand, this also meant that history-writing was becoming more specifically and exclusively the domain of the professional historian.

Heyck’s authoritative *Transformation of intellectual life in Victorian England* explored these themes in detail in the 1980s. Heyck described in broad terms how, ‘By the 1870s and 1880s, the three forces of natural science, the university reform movement and the tradition of cultural criticism had worked major changes in the economic, social and conceptual conditions of English intellectual life’.<sup>744</sup> We have seen in this thesis how each of these informed our historians’ changing approaches to their work. Heyck also drew on history as a ‘prime example of a discipline which became distinct from general literature in a process of becoming scientific and professional’.<sup>745</sup> This thesis can function as a case study of the development of this distinction. In particular, we can see various ways in which the process of history gaining its distinctiveness impacted upon our historians.

### 5.2.1 Developments for individual historians

Marsden and Stoughton are excellent examples of amateur historians whose work and style changed markedly during the course of their writing. We know that Marsden’s in-depth engagement with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history challenged his Evangelical pre-conceptions and led to a palpable shift in mood during the course of writing his *Later Puritans*.<sup>746</sup> His *Puritans* often focuses on connections between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and attempts to present the Puritans as pioneers of his own ideals of toleration, civil liberties, and mission work. However, Marsden consistently presented his subject with an even hand: he was willing to criticise Puritan attitudes and actions much more openly than the other Evangelical historians we have studied.<sup>747</sup> While he ‘judged’ them by his

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<sup>744</sup> Heyck, *Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (1982), 221.

<sup>745</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>746</sup> See Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 323–325.

<sup>747</sup> See Marsden, *Early Puritans* (1850), 6, 421; *Later Puritans* (1852), 401.

own nineteenth-century standards, he always seems to have tried to present his subject fairly rather than with his own preconceptions or biases.<sup>748</sup>

In an 1860 review of Froude's *History of England* in the *Christian Observer*, which Marsden edited, the reviewer expressed deep concern over the prospect of passion and 'rhetorical artifice' overtaking truth, and he even described the 'ancient gait' of 'cold and stately' history as preferable to Carlyle's highly emotive language.<sup>749</sup> Although Marsden acknowledged the influence of Carlyle's *Cromwell* and the idea of the 'great man' on his own views of the Puritans, he had always been wary of allowing hero-worship to preclude fact.<sup>750</sup> While he acknowledged that his insistence on truth in history was conservative, it also reflected his increasing reverence for his sources. We have seen how Marsden's referencing style changed between his *Early Puritans* (1850) and *Later Puritans* (1852) as he began to treat his sources more responsibly and broaden the scope of his research. This, more than anything, shows an honest historian who was attempting to present a credible history.

Stoughton, too, developed as a historian during his long career. His early *Spiritual Heroes* (1848) was steeped in anti-Catholic polemic, and reads as an Evangelical synthesis of the ideals of heroism that Carlyle was instilling into the British imagination. But his tone softened and his work, while still undoubtedly reflecting an Evangelical perspective, became more balanced, even impressing the broad churchman, Matthew Arnold.<sup>751</sup> Simply glancing at the titles of and references provided in Stoughton's *Spiritual Heroes* (1848) and *Lights of the World* (1852) and comparing them to *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago* (1862), *Ecclesiastical History of England* (5 volumes, 1867–1864) and *Religion in England* (4 volumes, 1878–1884) tells an important story.

While Stoughton's change in attitude could be connected to his maturing as an author, he was writing during a period in which great shifts in intellectual life were taking place. As Stoughton's reputation and confidence in his own ability grew, he developed from a writer of a semi-partisan history meant for Evangelicals and Nonconformists into a serious amateur historian with a multi-volume ecclesiastical history to his name. The sense of connection with ordinary people that had been evident from his early works gradually developed into a new emphasis, as he stated:

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<sup>748</sup> Incidentally, this may help to explain why he became so confused in his attempts to define Puritanism.

<sup>749</sup> 'Froude's History of England', *The Christian Observer*, August 1860, 539–555.

<sup>750</sup> Marsden, *Later Puritans* (1852), 170–171.

<sup>751</sup> See Robbins, *Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold* (1959), 150.

‘the individual, domestic, and social condition of the people has been too much overlooked; public ecclesiastical affairs have been allowed almost completely to overshadow private religious customs and habits’.<sup>752</sup> Stoughton moved from being an anti-Catholic and primary Evangelical historian to being a serious social historian. Like Marsden, he attempted to present a balanced picture of the different religious groups, especially in his later work. He acknowledged that ‘a passionless neutrality is absolutely impossible’, but he then went on to observe that ‘At the same time, a student is chargeable with injustice who does not carefully strive to ascertain the defects of his own party; and he also is wanting in charity if he be not ever ready to acknowledge the moral and spiritual excellencies of persons, whose opinions were different from those which he himself entertains’.<sup>753</sup> Stoughton’s was still a history of sides and parties, but he acknowledged that it was necessary for the serious historian to transcend party loyalties and acknowledge good and bad on both sides.

In his article, ‘The Church, the Universities and Learning in Late Victorian England’ (1986), A. C. L. Haig explored the growing disjunction between the Church and the world of learning in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>754</sup> The private study of a church minister was no longer seen as the bastion of a town’s intellectual life. Our historians had taken on the study of Church History as amateurs, but as professionalism took hold, being a minister was no longer deemed adequate qualification for producing historical works. This did not directly affect the reputation of our Evangelical historians. But we have seen, both Marsden and Stoughton began to show in their later work an increasing consciousness of their subjectivity within the world of history-writing. And while Stoughton defended this subjectivity as normative – ‘neutrality is absolutely impossible’ – they were beginning to feel at least some measure of discomfort in their role as subjective amateurs in an increasingly professional field with growing importance being placed on the goal of objectivity.

### **5.2.2 Developing critical accountability and discipline towards sources**

As Heyck has noted, the new discipline of history ‘regarded only qualified experts as privileged to judge work in the field’.<sup>755</sup> The polymath man of letters was gradually

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<sup>752</sup> Stoughton, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 2 (1867), 371.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

<sup>754</sup> A. C. L. Haig, ‘The Church, the Universities and Learning in Later Victorian England’, *The Historical Journal* 29(1), 1986, 187–201, 1.

<sup>755</sup> Heyck, *Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (1982), 22

becoming a figure of the past. As the century developed, those historians who were deemed to be professional were placed under significant critical scrutiny and held accountable for the accuracy and quality of their analysis. We have seen that Froude and Kingsley in particular suffered from the enhanced criticism of their peers.<sup>756</sup> Kingsley's 'subjective and artistic method' was seen to be 'in diametrical opposition to that of Stubbs and the nascent historical profession', and he was accused of being more interested 'in making friends with the dead than in providing his students with a training in the study of particular facts'. Unsurprisingly, his appointment to the Chair of Modern History at Cambridge (1860) was deemed a travesty by many more serious historians.<sup>757</sup> Hesketh also explored Froude's refusal to submit to the stringency of a profession that called for objectivity – 'Froude made history out to be a highly subjective discipline' – and noted how Froude's professorship at Oxford (he was appointed to the regius chair of modern history in 1892, when he was 74 years of age), like Kingsley's at Cambridge many years earlier, was deemed to be politically motivated and was not supported by the historical profession.<sup>758</sup> Brady has noted that Froude's poor reputation in critical circles was partly a result of his self-appointed role as a 'prophet' and his determination to 'explicitly defend [...] the moral elitism of his heroes' conduct'. While most historians were endeavouring to present balanced portrayals of historical figures, Froude tended to reflect Carlyle's methods of hero-worship for a new generation.<sup>759</sup> Hesketh explains how Froude saw his role as a 'dramatist', but that many of his contemporaries mistook this for an excuse to introduce falsehoods into the historical record.<sup>760</sup> In truth, it was not possible for any sound historian to be entirely free of subjective considerations and the concerns of his or her own time. As Nixon has outlined, the need for historical narrative to be connected to an underlying understanding, rooted in contemporary social concerns, and for it to have a coherent dramatic narrative, were also central tenets of Gardiner's own historiography.<sup>761</sup> Froude's insistence on the inevitability of the subjective, like that of Stoughton, can now be recognised as realistic, but at the time Freeman, Stubbs, and many of the other new historians saw it as jeopardising the integrity of history as an emerging science.<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>756</sup> Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 62, 86.

<sup>757</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 62.

<sup>758</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>759</sup> Brady, *Froude* (2013), x–xi; 450–451.

<sup>760</sup> Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 156.

<sup>761</sup> Nixon, *Gardiner* (2011), 30–31, 40.

<sup>762</sup> Hesketh, *The Science of History* (2011), 81, 86.

None the less, the criticism that Froude and Kingsley received was evidence that the study of history was developing more rigorous methodologies and gaining a more determinate critical voice. History-writing would remain varied and broad, but history itself was now a discipline with the capacity to hold its adherents to account.<sup>763</sup>

For all of the criticism that they received, several of our historians, including Froude, were pioneers in their use of close source work and textual analysis.<sup>764</sup> Gardiner represented the culmination of this, but we have seen the differences in our historians' work from the 1850s onwards as the Calendars of State Papers and other primary sources became more readily available, and many writings from the seventeenth century were re-discovered and re-printed. There was no longer either a need to turn to the authors of the eighteenth century for reference, or a belief that to do so was acceptable practice.

We can also see the changing attitudes of our historians in the third quarter of the nineteenth century reflected in their reluctance to pronounce moral judgments on their subjects. For Froude, this reluctance to criticise his protagonists may have been a sort of hero-worship. But there was an increasing view that it was not appropriate to judge seventeenth-century people by nineteenth-century standards. This was, perhaps, indicative of the acknowledgement that there was an unsurpassable gap between the two eras.

### **5.3 Achievements and limitations of this study**

Our study has provided some fascinating insights into the shape, breadth and depth of the nineteenth-century recovery of Puritanism. In it, we have seen categorisations blurred: the distinctions between Whig and more conservative histories, or between religious and national histories, or between amateur and professional historians, or even between teleology and objectivity, are all far from concrete. We have seen something of the joint impact of Macaulay and Carlyle on a whole generation of historians, and considered the works of our selected historians in the context of the huge changes that were occurring both in historical writing and in society as a whole. We have also seen Puritanism as a complex idea, representative of a way of life and

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<sup>763</sup> Hesketh describes the 'growing cohesion, strength and consensus of the historical community': *The Science of History* (2011), 154.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, 68, 86.

a political and religious attitude, but remaining impossible to define fully, and so broad that different supporters of the idea could have quite contradictory attitudes.

For all of its achievements, this project also has its limits. In exploring a complex intellectual movement through analysis of a representative, but inevitably limited, sample of texts, we cannot claim to provide a complete picture of the recovery of interest in Puritanism. We have, moreover, only been able to give brief attention to the opponents of the effort to revive interest in Puritanism, and we have barely touched on the social composition of the readership of our historians or of the impact of the revived interest in Puritanism upon the everyday lives of the people it affected. We also have encountered a double-edged problem. On one side of this double edge, it must be admitted that any project which takes analysis of individual texts as a starting point for the diffusion of wider ideas can be accused of over-generalisation. However, in order to address its larger aims, this thesis needed a certain breadth, which meant that even textual analysis of the individual historians' work has not been as detailed or contextual as it might have been. On the other side of our double edge, we have not been able to allocate equal analysis to all of our historians' works, because our focus has been on their treatment of Puritanism. For Froude and Macaulay in particular, the so-called Puritan era of the mid-seventeenth century was not their main historical concern, and their accounts of Puritanism could be described as marginal to their larger body of work. However, as my thesis has shown, their attitudes towards Puritanism were in truth very important to their larger vision of British history, and their respective presentations of Puritanism provided context for their wider historical contributions.

So while we acknowledge the limitations of this thesis, we also maintain that a project of this scope needs to be a balancing act, and that the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis is one of its strengths. While avoiding theoretical categorisation, we have attempted to offer an original, wide-ranging account of the Victorian recovery of Puritanism within its broad cultural context.

#### **5.4 Ways ahead**

This study has explored the breadth and diversity of Puritanism's recovery, and how it reached into many different areas of nineteenth-century thought and life. Further, more focused studies of individual historians or historical works could help us to understand better the different nineteenth-century approaches to Puritanism and how these approaches contributed to the development of Victorian religious life and the

emerging historical profession. There will always be a need for greater understanding of the developments of language and the way that both individual words and broader writing styles develop in meaning and use over time. This can be applied to our historians' and their contemporaries' varying uses of our key terms such as 'Puritanism'. It can also be applied to the contrasting works of our historians over time, including the developments within, for instance, the corpuses of Marsden and Stoughton. Philosophically and historiographically speaking, it may help to investigate further the influences on both our historians and others involved in Puritanism's recovery. The way that the increasing availability of primary sources in the mid-nineteenth century transformed amateur history-writing is another important angle that needs more of our attention.

The recent resurgence of interest in several of our historians is most welcome. As Nixon stated, 'Gardiner is not the only historian to have been calumniated by the contextualist approach, misunderstood by historians not comfortable with the Victorian intellectual milieu, or subject to comment by those who have not bothered to read him'. Nixon's recent book on Gardiner is the first monograph focusing on the indisputably great historian, and his work has yet to receive much attention. More work is certainly needed on Gardiner. Froude and Kingsley in particular are also fascinating characters who have left broad written legacies. Although, as we have seen, both have attracted more attention recently, including the superb and well received biography of Froude by Ciaran Brady, both historians deserve further exploration and have more to teach us about religious and intellectual life in the nineteenth century.

While the Evangelicals of the nineteenth century have been receiving valuable attention from David Bebbington, John Wolffe, Mark Smith, Donald Lewis and others, J. C. Ryle, as a prominent Evangelical Anglican Bishop, historian and public intellectual, has still to receive a major biographical study and such a study would reveal much about Evangelicalism as a cultural movement in the later nineteenth century. Stoughton has been mentioned by several historians, but has been widely misunderstood.<sup>765</sup> He left behind him a wealth of historical writing. As both a Dissenting minister and a historian, he was active for a broad portion of the century, and lived and wrote through huge social, political and intellectual changes. We have considered the shift in his approach to his sources and in his teleological outlook. He

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<sup>765</sup> See the J. M. Rigg and H. C. G. Matthew article on Stoughton in Oxford DNB.

also commanded respect from a wide variety of people, and further studies on his life, work, and influence could be most interesting. Likewise, Marsden and Anderson would both benefit from more critical attention. For Marsden, this could focus on his interest in the relationship between Christianity and pacifism, within the context of his conceptions of Puritanism. Anderson's presentation of women would also bear further study, especially the question of whether he was promulgating already outdated stereotypes, or was saying something new about femininity.

There is certainly considerable scope for examining the contrasts within the recovery of interest in Puritanism, including the respective working-class and middle-class perceptions Puritanism, and the views of Puritanism among those within and outside the Church of England. Another idea that needs exploring further is how admiration for Puritanism became part of a whole outlook on life: something that encompassed a political, social and Nationalistic conception 'Protestantism'. It would also be valuable to investigate the extent to which the promotion of Puritanism was bound up with the continuing anti-Catholic polemic, and how this might have contributed to negative views of the whole Victorian project of reviving interest in Puritanism.

We have explored in this project how various historians saw Protestantism in general, and Puritanism in particular, as shaping Britain in the nineteenth century: including its political and religious freedom, Imperial strength, and social conscience. As we continue our quest to understand nineteenth-century Britain, we need to emphasise that religion was an integral part of nineteenth-century British culture – impossible to disentangle completely from political or social views. With this in mind, there is a need for more critical work on what nineteenth century Britons perceived to be the cultural background to the profound scientific, industrial, and economic developments that they were experiencing.

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