Charles Simeon: A 19th Century Evangelical Response to Consumerism

Randall J. Gruendyke

It has been said that, 'England and America are two countries divided by a common language' and I assume the same is true of Scotland and America. Take for example the term, lunch. Here it usually begins at one o'clock. In the United States it commonly starts at noon. Or, consider that the usual description for beige coloured trousers in America is the same phrase used for soiled nappies in the UK! So, given our occasional differences in definitions, it would be wise to make sure that we share a common understanding of the term 'consumerism' in order that we know what it was to which nineteenth century Evangelicals in general and Charles Simeon in particular were responding. To do this, a definition of consumerism will be proposed. Then, historical consideration will be given to consumerism as a trend, with special attention being paid to it in the British book industry. Once this groundwork has been laid, an overview concerning the response of Charles Simeon and other notable nineteenth century Evangelicals to consumerism will be presented. The paper will conclude with three lessons for twenty-first century Evangelicals based on Simeon's nineteenth century example.

CONSUMERISM

What is Consumerism?

There was a time when one's social status was commonly assumed at birth. So, on the one hand, if a person was born into a high-ranking family, then he assumed and retained a high ranking status throughout his life. And, on the other hand, if a person was born into a low-ranking family, then he assumed and retained a low ranking status throughout his life. To change one's status was a societal exception. But in the years leading up to the Industrial Revolution that rule began to relax. Instead of one's status being assumed it could now be attained. And the attainment of a different social status, especially a higher one, was realized by the increased accumulation and consumption of personal possessions or, 'stuff.' Simply put, social status was now determined by stuff. A higher social status could be attained by accumulating and consuming either nicer stuff (e.g. nicer clothes) or more stuff (e.g. more land). Either way, stuff equalled status. And that is the basis for consumerism. Status, and all that comes with it,

whether real (e.g. wealth) or imagined (e.g. well-being), was now based on one's possessions rather than his person.[1]

Where did Consumerism come from?

The Georgian Era (1714-1837) in England was a time of profound change. This change was especially marked by the politicization,[2] militarization,[3] industrialization,[4] and commercialization[5] of the Empire. Industrialization and commercialization helped to foster the emergence of consumerization. Consider the history behind the department store. In the eighteenth century, heightened industrialization brought about the increasing availability and decreasing cost of basic materials, such as paper and fabric. Commercialization was enhanced and expanded when many craftsmen moved their retail space from the shop, where a consumer could see a product being made, to a dedicated showroom.[6] The showroom was designed to attract and retain consumers. The space was tastefully designed with products presented in glass cases and mirrors employed to enhance one's shopping experience.[7] Soon display windows were added which promoted a new and popular pastime known as 'window shopping.' By the early nineteenth century, shopping was a common, middle class, social activity for women.[8] In 1786 a Sophie Von La Roche described these early 'cathedrals of consumption' as containing 'such abundance of choice, as almost to make one greedy,' while in 1803 a Joanna Schopenhauer wondered over the 'brilliant displays of precious silverware, the beautiful draperies of muslin… behind large plate-glass windows, the fairy tale glitter of the

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1 The difference between an assumed status and an attained status is that the former is retained even if one's accumulations are lost. It has to do with one's person and not his possessions; who one is and not what he has.

2 E.g. The prominence of political parties such as the Whigs and Tories.

3 E.g. The merger of the English and Scottish armed forces to form the armed forces of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

4 E.g. The growth and development of steam powered engines.

5 E.g. The rise of the middle class, discretionary income and the creation of new commercial markets.

6 These showrooms were situated in retail spaces with premium addresses. In the late eighteenth century China merchant Wedgwood began renting an expensive Portland Family house. Drapers, Harding and Howell, moved into Schomberg House, 'the most distinguished private residence on Pall Mall,' while bookseller, James Lackington, secured a Finsbury Street mansion. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (eds), *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850-1939*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, p. 64.

7 Ibid., pp. 47-8.

8 Ibid., pp. 51-2, 58.

crystal shops, all this,' she said, 'bewitches the visitor.'[9] By 1830 the London-style department store was popping up throughout provincial England thereby making more stuff accessible to consumers and especially those of the middle class 'for whom goods increasingly played a role in self-definition.'[10]

If a middle class and especially lower class consumer could not accumulate more stuff he could at least acquire some nicer stuff. Consider the bourgeoning market of second hand clothes. While the financially well-endowed emptied their closets of old garments to make room for more and more new garments, those who made fifty pounds or less per year (i.e. most families in Britain), 'were not barred from participating in the round of consumerism that occupied the wealthier classes.'[11] They did this as they purchased the cast-off clothes of the upper classes and thereby afforded themselves the chance to 'wear clothes above their rank and beyond their means had the garments been new.'[12] The eighteenth century philosopher and satirist, Bernard Mandeville, responded to the superficial blessing of this consumerist trend by writing of places, 'especially in large and populous cities, where obscure men may hourly meet with fifty strangers to one acquaintance, and consequently have the Pleasure of being esteem'd by a vast Majority, not as what they are, but what they appear to be.'[13] Over time, consumerism in the British clothing trade was dictated by the experts of fashion thereby opening new consumer markets in other countries. For example, second hand liveries that were impossible to sell in London were in high demand in the Netherlands where their colours and crests had no meaning.[14] British-made leather breeches, which were eclipsed in the early nineteenth century by those made of corduroy and velvet, found a ready market in Ireland.[15] Not only did second hand clothes feed the consumer fashion frenzy but a greater

9 Ibid., p. 55.

10 Ibid., p. 65.

11 B. Lemire, 'Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Secondhand Clothes,' *Journal of British Studies* 27 (1988), p. 2.

12 Ibid., p. 4.

13 Lemire observed that the second hand consumer mentality was not limited to lower ranks. In 1830, even Lord Chesterfield bought a cloak from the closet of the late King George IV while 'many hundreds of buyers had the opportunity to pick up a pair of their sovereign's shoes for little more than five shillings a pair.' Ibid., p. 4.

14 Ibid., p. 17.

15 Ibid.

efficiency in manufacturing made more new products available to a wider number of consumers at a lower cost.[16]

How did Consumerism affect the book industry?

For many centuries throughout the Middle Ages there was neither time for book learning nor, as a result, a market for book selling.[17] That said, there were many monks who devoted their days to the service of book transcription and illustration. When institutions of higher learning were established,[18] a copyist class was created to provide for the needs of professors and scholars. This task was advanced by the invention of paper and led to the establishment of booksellers known as *stationarii*.[19] The first *stationarii* in England sold primers that taught such things as Paternosters, Graces and Amens, Aves and Creeds. In time, the primers led to the naming of the streets on which they were published such as Paternoster Row, Amen Corner and Ave Maria Lane, each of which remains extant today nearby and to the northwest of St. Paul's Cathedral in the City of London. These booksellers were an all-in-one operation. Not only did they trade in books but they printed and bound them, as well. It was not until the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century and the inauguration of the Reformation in the early-sixteenth century that the book industry began to flourish. When the Printing Act,[20] put into law by Charles II in 1662, was allowed to lapse in 1695, the printing industry moved from its limited places of production in London, Cambridge, Oxford and York to provincial and consumer filled locations throughout England. By the middle of the eighteenth century, 'a typical provincial town of any importance enjoyed the services of at least one printer, one newspaper and several booksellers.'[21] At that time booksellers, along with

16 Ibid., pp. 21-22. Here Lemire explains how muslin caps that were popular in the eighteenth century were no longer sold in retail shops or market stalls by 1850. This was the result of cheaper British muslin which lowered manufacturing costs and heightened availability throughout the country.

17 H. Curwen, *A History of Booksellers: The Old and the New* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1873), p. 13.

18 E.g. some of the first being the University of Bologna (1088), the University of Paris (c.1150) and the University of Oxford (1167).

19 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, pp. 13-14. The word *stationarii* could have meant ones who stationed themselves in the street at booths or stalls. It could have also come from the Latin, *statio*, meaning a depository, such as a place where private parties could sell their books.

20 Also known as the Licensing Act.

21 J. Hinks, 'Spreading the Word: Bookselling and Printing Before 1800,' www.historywm.com, p. 13. Accessed 1 February 2016.

assembly rooms[22] and theatres, as well as a police force and a department of public works, were numbered among the marks of a modern community.[23] Booksellers traded in a variety of reading materials. Edward Cave (1691-1754) published the first periodical in 1731[24] and Ralph Griffiths (c.1720-1803) pioneered the literary review in 1749.[25] A rising literacy rate among the common man, allowed even the lower classes to enjoy what were known as 'penny books' or 'cheap books.'[26] A consumer appetite for reading material was whetted by an increased amount of available information, as well as a wider variety of literature.

While the popularity of booksellers throughout the country spread, the power of booksellers in London increased. Benchmark names and accomplishments during this century include Jacob Tonson (1656-1736), the first well-known bookseller. Tonson was famous for peddling the works of Dryden, for popularizing *Paradise Lost*, and for being the first one to offer Shakespeare 'to the reading public.'[27] In time, Tonson was displaced by Robert Dodsley (1703-1764) who proposed that Samuel Johnson write what would become one of the most influential English language dictionaries. Thomas Cadell (1742-1802), was the protégé of Andrew Millar, a joint proprietor with Dodsley of Johnson's dictionary. In time, Cadell went into business with Scotsman, William Strahan (1715-1785) a fellow employee at Millar's. Together, Cadell and Strahan secured copyrights to the works of many well-known, late eighteenth century writers including the Englishman Edward Gibbon[28] and the Scotsman Adam Smith.[29] Cadell retired with 'an enormous fortune'[30] and left the business to his son, Thomas, Jr., who, in time, would secure the rights to all twenty-one volumes of Charles Simeon's magnum opus, *Horae Homileticae*.[31]

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22 Meeting places for men and women of the higher classes.

23 Hinks, 'Spreading the Word,' p. 13.

24 *The Gentleman's Magazine.*

25 *The Monthly Review.* 'A recent writer has said that its criticisms have been for the most part neither too brief nor too elaborate, giving a fair abstract of an author's productions, accompanied by a discriminating commentary on their excellencies and defects.' The Monthly Review: From January to May Inclusive. 1844. Vol. 1. London. G. Henderson, 2, Old Bailey. Web. Accessed 23 February 2016.

26 Hinks, 'Spreading the Word,' pp. 13-14.

27 Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 25.

28 Gibbon's most famous work is, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

29 Smith's most famous work is, *The Wealth of Nations.*

30 Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 62.

31 C. H. Timperley, *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* (London: H. Johnson, 1839), pp. 945-6. Web. Accessed 23 February 2016.

Eighteenth century booksellers largely sold the works of authors whom they corporately represented. One group of booksellers gathered in a London coffee house where together they determined the latest good books. 'When they say a good book, they do not mean to praise the style or sentiment, but the quick and extensive sale of it.'[32] Books that came out of the *Coffee House* sessions were called 'chapter books,' the most important being Johnson's, *Lives of the English Poets*.[33] By the end of the eighteenth century, other groups of booksellers were formed[34] thereby heightening the level of competition throughout the industry.

If the *Coffee House* and other such groups increased the commercial profile of the bookseller, then James Lackington (1746-1815) intensified the consumer climate. Lackington opened a store on Chiswell Street where his low priced, cash only approach to book sales afforded him the ability to maintain a high inventory. In time, Lackington moved his operation to a massive structure at the corner of Finsbury Square known as, 'The Temple of Muses.'[35] A sign hung outside the shop announced consumers were entering the 'Cheapest bookshop in the world' and once inside were met with another notice that declared, 'the lowest price is marked on every Book.'[36] Lackington was a savvy marketer, who enticed consumers in-store with promotional items[37] and attracted them by mail with a bulging catalogue of titles.[38] Lackington made a fortune. His motto, emblazoned on the side of his chariot, was, 'Small Profits do Great Things.'[39] Lackington recognized that the consumer book market was growing and that continuing to offer the highest quality at the lowest price was the best way to insure continued growth and profits. Lackington's consumer-focused strategy inspired John Bell (1745-1831), who sold modestly priced

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32 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 67.

33 Ibid., p. 68. Over time, sermons were added to the inventory of *Coffee House* books. Many sermons were kept in stock while others could be custom written.

34 One such group was *Associated Booksellers*, best known for their symbol, the beehive, and thus their nickname, *Associated Busy Bees*. History of Booksellers, pp. 68-9.

35 The Temple boasted 140 feet of frontage space and 'was one of the sights of London.' http://www.georgianindex.net/books/Hatchard.html. Accessed 24 February 2016.

36 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 74.

37 E.g. a promotional coin redeemable at the store http://www.georgianindex.net/books/Hatchard.html.

38 The catalogue boasted, 'Half-a-million volumes to be continually on sale.' Curwen, *A History of Booksellers*, p. 74.

39 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, p. 73.

pocket volumes of the English classics. These tomes undercut the more expensive editions marketed by the *Coffee House* and 'brought consternation into the trade.'[40] The Scotsman, Alexander Donaldson (1733-1794) was another consumer minded bookseller. At a time when copyrights expired only fourteen years after a book's initial publication, Donaldson produced cheap reprints of popular works that were sold at his shop in the Strand.[41]

The swell of consumer-driven sales continued rising at the turn of the nineteenth century. As the book industry modernized and literacy improved,[42] reading became a competitor in the new commercial leisure market.[43] As the demand for books increased, so did the demand for authors, thereby 'displacing the gentleman poet with the professional writer.'[44] Publishing and marketing were now being done on a world-wide scale.[45]

How did nineteenth century Evangelicals respond to Consumerism?

The Clapham Sect

The seat of Evangelical influence in nineteenth century England was located five miles southwest of St. Paul's Cathedral in a house on Clapham Common. The residence, known as Battersea Rise, belonged to the well-heeled Henry Thornton (1760-1815) who, in 1792, began sharing the address with his cousin and MP, William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Both men were committed to a Christianity that was theologically orthodox and liberally applied. Over the next forty years,[46] their conversations on everything from the abolition of slavery to the publication of books were enriched by the company of many other talented, influential and wealthy Evangelicals including their own next door neighbours. On one side of Battersea Rise lived the eminently-connected Edward Eliot (1758-1797),

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40 Ibid. pp. 75-6.

41 Ibid. pp. 76-7.

42 Ibid. pp. 124, 130-2. Printers, publishers and booksellers became separate industries while improvements in paper production, namely by the invention of a 'commercially viable' machine (powered first by water and later by steam) turned the paper industry from a decentralized network of many mills into a centralized one comprised of a few.

43 John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 93.

44 Ibid., p. 102.

45 http://eduscapes.com/bookhistory/commodity/5.htm. Accessed 22 March 2016.

46 "Clapham Sect". Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2016. Web. Accessed 25 February 2016.

the brother-in-law of Prime Minister William Pitt. On the other side of the house lived 'the most influential of the directors of the East India Company,' [47] Charles Grant (1746-1823). In time, this frequent gathering at Clapham, later known as the 'Clapham Sect,' included their parish minister, John Venn (1759-1813); the Governor of Sierra Leon, Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) and the Governor-General of India, Lord Teignmouth (1751-1834). These and other local members of the group were regularly joined in conversation by those who periodically travelled some distance including Hannah More (1745-1833) from Cheddar and Charles Simeon (1759-1836) from Cambridge. As historian Paul Johnson observed, 'The original members of the Clapham Sect were of the generation which reached maturity during the American War of Independence and were imbued with a strong sense that many things were fundamentally wrong with Britain and required reform.'[48] While the kings of consumerism were accumulating wealth and all its worldly trappings, the members of the Clapham Sect disbursed their fortunes for the sake of the Gospel. As Johnson put it concerning Wilberforce, 'He argued that anyone in a position of wealth, leisure or expertise owes the divine favour to all that he has and therefore lives with the burden of obligation placed upon him.'[49] It is no wonder then that, before their marriages, Wilberforce donated a quarter of his income to charity while his cousin, Thornton, gave away six-sevenths of his own![50] While the bold and creative benevolences of the Clapham Sect were deep-seated and wide-ranging at home as well as abroad, three members of the group became well-known authors. It is interesting to notice that the rising tide of consumerism helped each one to accrue a wide audience. It is also significant to see that the aim of each author ran contrary to the current of consumerism. That is, their common goal was to increase the influence of the gospel and not the size of his or her bank account. Each one was motivated by mission and not by money.

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47 "Clapham Sect". http://churchsociety.org/issues_new/history/wilberforce/iss_history_wilberforce_hennell-claphamsect.asp. Accessed 25 February 2016.

48 P. Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 323.

49 Ibid., pp. 54-5.

50 Ibid., pp. 57-8. The Clapham Sect's generosity was wide-ranging. Inglis regularly left his house with a bag of coins to be distributed throughout the day. Babbington ran a soup kitchen. Clarkson, who considered himself a 'slave to the slave,' assisted the family of the late King Henri Christophe of Haiti upon their arrival in London. Sharp and Macaulay were point men on the project to resettle free though impoverished blacks in London to Sierra Leon.

William Wilberforce

In the spring of 1797 two noteworthy events occurred in the life of William Wilberforce. First, the MP for Yorkshire married Barbara Spooner, the daughter of a Birmingham banker. Second, he published his one and only book, the success of which was epic. The title, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity*, was as provocative as its sales were surprising. Since religious books were not big sellers at the time, publishing magnate Thomas Cadell, suggested that Wilberforce issue only 500 copies[51] but within a few days of its release the book was sold out. In six months, 7,500 copies had been purchased. Over the next quarter century[52] fifteen editions of *A Practical View* were printed in Britain and twenty-five in the United States. It was translated into five languages. Months after its publication, English statesman Edmund Burke sought comfort in it during the last two days of his life. Thirteen years later, the Scottish scholar and churchman Thomas Chalmers was converted under its influence. Wilberforce straightforwardly stated that 'religion is the business of everyone' and that its 'advancement or decline' was integral to the wellbeing of a society, especially since, 'this present scene with all its gaieties, will soon be rolled away, and "we must stand before the judgement seat of Christ."'[53] Wilberforce appealed to his readers in this way according to the Bible and not some self-styled brand of high-minded moralism.[54] Wilberforce put pen to paper for neither fame nor fortune and his political incorrectness testified in part to his altruistic motives. Even Wilberforce's publisher was surprised that the MP attached his name to it![55] William Wilberforce is one example of an Evangelical who rode the rising tide of the consumer book market in an effort to make Christian converts and not money.

Hannah More

Another Claphamite whose gospel labours benefited from the burgeoning retail book market was Hannah More. While More's legacy currently languishes in a relative state of anonymity, she was even more popular in the early nineteenth century than her younger contemporary, Jane Austen.

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51 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 53.

52 I.e. by 1826.

53 William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity* (London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1798), pp. 3-4. Web. Accessed 26 February 2016.

54 Ibid., p. 5.

55 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 53.

In fact, Hannah More was the world's first million selling author.[56] In 1787 More was blessed with a vital faith in Christ through the ministry of erstwhile slave ship captain turned Evangelical minister, John Newton. In that same year, Hannah More met William Wilberforce and the pair became fast friends. In the summer of 1789, Wilberforce and one of his sisters was hosted by More and her sister, Martha, at their home, Cowslip Green, in Cheddar. At the end of his visit, Wilberforce challenged More to address Cheddar's impoverished population and underdeveloped economy. He concluded his charge with this promise, 'If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.'[57] Hannah More spent the rest of her life answering her friend's call. For the higher classes More produced her only full-length novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1808).[58] Among the many Evangelical ideals expressed in *Coelebs*,[59] the main character's mother understands that 'the "care of the poor" is the "profession" of a lady.'[60] That view inspired and empowered a generation of women to become anti-consumers – ones who donated rather than accumulated wealth. For the middle and lower classes, More wrote modestly priced tracts and pamphlets. These titles were reprinted by the wealthy and given away in the millions to servants, labourers and employees. As the sun was rising on the nineteenth century, More wrote fifty leaflets that were intended, among other things, to increase the morals of the middle class and decrease the power of Thomas Paine's revolutionary writing among the poor.[61] In Paul Johnson's estimation, 'the Hannah More phenomenon… indicates that Anglican Evangelicalism, intelligently presented and well backed by social leaders, could and did make more effective use of

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56 Ibid., p. 382.

57 Herbert Schlossberg, *The Silent Revolution and the Making of Victorian England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000), p. 66.

58 John Wolffe observes that *Coelebs* had, 'an initial popularity greatly exceeding that of Jane Austen's most commercially successful novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).' John Wolffe, *Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney*, Vol. 2, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2007), p. 137. Web (https://books.google.com/books). Accessed 16 March 2016.

59 More's theory of fiction and her commitment to Evangelical Christianity rigidly controlled the strategies she employed as a novelist. "Jane Austen, Hannah More, and the Novel of Education" by Jane Nardin. *In Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*. No. 20. 1988. p. 14. http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number20/nardin.pdf. Accessed 16 March 2016.

60 Wolffe, *Evangelicalism*, p. 137.

61 Nardin, "Austen," p. 15.

the cheap printing process now available than the secular radicals.'[62] By the end of her life, Hannah More had earned £30,000 by way of her pen, causing some to wonder how much more the author would have acquired if she had not given so much away. Hannah More is another example of an Evangelical who, first and foremost, leveraged the consumer book market to promote Christian truth and virtues for the good the society.

Charles Simeon

A third member of the Clapham Sect who capitalized on the growing consumer book market was Charles Simeon. Simeon was born west of London at Reading in 1759. When he was eight years old Simeon's father sent him to Eton and in 1779 on to King's College, Cambridge. During Simeon's first term at King's he came to faith in God through Christ and for a number of years thereafter was ostracized by the members of the University for his pronounced Evangelical Beliefs. In 1783, Simeon was named a fellow of King's College where he took up residence for the next fifty-four years in the Gibbs' Building. In that same year, the Bishop of Ely appointed Simeon to be the Perpetual Curate of Holy Trinity Church. Following twelve years of opposition to his appointment by a contingent of his congregation, Simeon settled into a tenure marked by ongoing ministerial innovation, denominational influence and societal sway.[63] Simeon remained at Holy Trinity until his death in 1836. Eight years after Simeon's funeral, fellow 'Claphamite,' Lord Macaulay, famously wrote to his sister, 'As to Simeon, if you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway in the Church was far greater than that of any Primate.'[64]

When it came to publishing books, Simeon, like Wilberforce and More, was highly motivated by a sense of mission over money. This drive was especially seen in three ways. First, Simeon was deeply committed to Bible distribution. In the opening sentence of a sermon on 2 Chronicles 34:27, Simeon stated,

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62 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 383.

63 Simeon's ministerial innovations include developing the forerunner to congregational small groups; his denominational influence involved introducing the Evangelical Revival to the Church of England; his societal sway was felt through his membership in the broadly influential Eclectic Society for ministers and Clapham Sect for social reformers.

64 Arthur Bennett, "Charles Simeon: Prince of Evangelicals." Churchman 102/2 1988, p. 1. http://www.churchsociety.org/churchman/documents/Cman_102_2_Bennett.pdf. Accessed 1 July 2013.

> It is scarcely to be conceived how great a benefit has arisen to the Christian cause from the invention of printing. The word of God is that whereby the work of salvation is principally carried on in the souls of men: and the multiplying of the copies of the Holy Scriptures, in such a form as to be conveniently portable, and at such a price as to be within reach of the poor, has tended more than any other thing to keep alive the interests of religion, both in the hearts of individuals, and the community at large.[65]

This level of conviction and commitment reveals why Simeon was an early and active supporter of the Bible Society.

Founded in 1804,[66] The Bible Society was initially viewed by the establishment with suspicion because of its interdenominational leadership.[67] That said, historian David McKitterick, asserts that the founding of the Bible Society marked 'the saving of (Cambridge University) Press.'[68] As McKitterick points out, the Bible Society brought much needed business to the Press at a time when all of Britain was in financial crisis.[69] But the Society also introduced a variety of dynamics that forced the Press to grow and develop in ways it might not have otherwise.

First, as a charitable rather than consumer-driven organization, the Society could provide Bibles at a reduced cost and even no cost. This created an 'annihilating threat'[70] of competition to the privileged presses (i.e. at Cambridge, Oxford and The King's Press). This looming risk compelled the big three publishers to develop among themselves a *'modus vivendi.'*[71] From this position of strength, the Bible Society regularly negotiated for lower prices, finer paper and better work among the three.

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65 Charles Simeon, "Outline No. 431: Josiah's Penitence" in *First of Chronicles to Job,* vol. IV of *Expository Outlines On the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 222.

66 M. H. Black, *Cambridge University Press 1584-1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 126. The Society was founded in response to a need for Bibles in the Welsh language. The Evangelical revival further heightened that need but the privation among the people required that the books be distributed without charge.

67 Ibid., pp. 125-6. The leadership was comprised of thirty-six members: fifteen members from Dissenting Churches, six from European Churches and the balance left to the Church of England.

68 David McKitterick, *A History of Cambridge University Press: Volume 2, Scholarship and Commerce 1698-1872* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 32.

69 Ibid., p. 245.

70 Black, *Cambridge University Press*, p. 126.

71 Ibid.

Second, the production demands of the Bible Society tested the latest breakthroughs in the printing industry. Beginning in the 1790s and on into the early nineteenth century, the production of Bibles at Cambridge University Press 'lagged behind demand and technical limitations prevented growth.'[72] But in 1803 Earl Stanhope addressed those problems on two counts. To begin, he alleviated the need to reset type for every new impression by developing a process called stereotyping. Stereotyping – which lessened lag time in production – made it possible for a cast to be taken from a typeset page. The cast was used to make a mould and the mould used to produce a plate from which an unlimited number of prints could be produced. The Bible Society immediately purchased the first stereotyped copy of Scripture produced by The Press. In time, Oxford as well as The King's Printer began using the stereotype method for printing and The Bible Society placed orders with them as well. Finally, Stanhope invented an iron printing press. Until the late eighteenth century, the printing press remained largely unchanged from the time of its invention.[73] Wooden, hand-operated presses required costly manpower and regular maintenance. Stanhope's iron press provided greater pressure and precision in the printing process.[74] This technical leap forward, along with the invention of the Fourdrinier machine that centralized the paper industry and boosted its production, allowed the Bible Society to order press runs that far exceeded the mechanical limitations of the wooden press. Now, orders of 5,000 to 10,000 to even 20,000[75] volumes were regularly placed as John Owen, secretary of the Bible Society, worked hard to keep the organization's demands ahead of the profit-driven publishers in London. From 1802 to 1806, Cambridge Press was 'transformed'[76] and in many ways, the Bible Society was responsible for it. So great was the Society's influence that by 1811, and thanks in part to Charles Simeon whose sermons the Press had published since the 1790s,[77] an auxiliary branch of the Bible Society was established in Cambridge. Concerning

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72 McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 255.

73 Curwen, *History of Booksellers*, pp. 130-1.

74 Black, *Cambridge University Press*, p. 128.

75 'By 1808 the Society was taking annually over 20,000 copies of the duodecimo brevier NT alone…' McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, p. 274.

76 McKitterick, *History of Cambridge University Press*, pp. 280-1.

77 Simeon's ally, Isaac Milner, President of Queens' College Cambridge, was also involved in establishing the Bible Society outpost in Cambridge. Black, *Cambridge University Press*, pp. 125-6.

the unlikely constitution of such an organization just a few years before, Charles Simeon declared, 'Truly God shows that He reigns in the Earth.'[78]

The second way in which Simeon's sense of mission versus money was seen is in the kind of books he published. Simeon published two kinds of books – his own and those which he especially liked written by others. Concerning those written by others, Simeon published two books. One was a devotional by British clergyman, Benjamin Jenks (1646-1724) that the Cambridge divine 'altered and improved.'[79] The second was a guide to sermon preparation by the French Protestant, Jean Claude (1619-1687) for which Simeon composed notes to replace the ponderous ones written by the translator, Robert Robinson (1735-1790). In both cases Simeon could have introduced new books to the market that bore his name alone. Instead, he shared the title page with the original authors, taking something good and making it better, without adding another title to the growing consumer landscape. As for his own books, Simeon published them without ever really writing one. That is to say, Simeon capitalized on his regular discipline of sermon composition by publishing his messages in multiple forms. Single sermons were sometimes printed as pamphlets while his series preached before the University, *The Excellency of the Liturgy*, was released as a single volume.[80] For Simeon, publishing was an extension of his pulpit ministry and especially a means of instructing younger ministers how to preach. This emphasis marks the third way in which Simeon's sense of mission especially dominated the kind of books he published.

Charles Simeon was well known for the Sunday sermon classes for undergraduates held in his rooms on the third floor of the Gibbs' Building. During these sessions, Simeon specifically instructed aspiring ministers in the task of Bible exposition. In 1796, and as a way to expand the scope of his tutelage, Simeon published Jean Claude's, *An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon*, to which he attached one hundred of his own sermon outlines for the purpose of further illustration and instruction.[81]

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78 Ibid., pp. 125-6.

79 Benjamin Jenks, *Offices of Devotion: For Families, And for Particular Persons, Upon Most Occasions*. A New Edition Altered and Improved by the Rev. Charles Simeon. (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1861).

80 Published by Cambridge Press in 1812 and again in 1816. Other sermon series were published posthumously. For a list see, *A Critical Dictionary of England Literature and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased*, Vol II, 1882, p. 2103.

81 McKitterick, p. 247. In that same year, bookseller John Botwell opened a shop directly across the street from Simeon's church on Trinity St. Could that daily

Five years and 7000 hours of work[82] later, Simeon republished Claude's *Essays* in five volumes but this time under the title, *Helps to Composition, or 600 Skeletons of Sermons*. Over the years, Simeon continued adding to his series, so that by the year 1819 there were eleven volumes of sermons in what was now entitled, *Horae Homileticae*.[83] During this point in its development, availability of *Horae* became limited. To one inquirer in search of a set, Simeon replied, 'An entire set of my *Horae* is not to be gotten for love or money – I have two or three incomplete sets, of about 9 volumes out of the 11 – And one of them shall be at your service…'[84] In 1827, Simeon wrote to his publisher, Thomas Cadell, that a delay in releasing the latest edition of *Horae* '…determined me to publish Claude by itself – it is so much in demand, that it will be wrong to keep it back.'[85] Cadell agreed. By 1828 *Horae* had grown to seventeen volumes and four years later, with the help of Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862)[86] as well as a staff of thirty-two full-time men working for sixteen months, *Horae* reached its final form of twenty-one volumes. In 1834 *Horae* was being marketed, not only as help for 'younger clergy in their preparations for the pulpit,' but also as a sound 'body of divinity' and suitable for 'family instruction.'[87] The demand for *Horae* was in no doubt due in part to the excellent reviews it received, at first, from Evangelicals and later from the Established Church.[88]

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reminder have motivated Simeon to employ the press in promoting his mission?

82 Hugh Evan Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 60.

83 Ibid., p. 60. A 'grand title' that was 'after the fashion of the time'.

84 Unpublished correspondence by Charles Simeon located in the author's private library.

85 Unpublished correspondence by Charles Simeon located in the author's private library. Charles Simeon to Thomas Cadell, June 30, 1827. The letter goes on to show Simeon's hard work and focused intent for the set as he writes, '(Claude) will also prove a good avant courier to the large work, to which I am adding daily with great labor and success. Every months delay enables me to add to it what will greatly increase its value –'.

86 Horne was an Anglican minister who, for a time, was a librarian and later on a staff member in the printed books department at the British Museum. Forty books on bibliography were authored by Horne.

87 Promotional publication by Holdsworth and Ball, Amen Corner, Paternoster Row, London. January 1834. pp. 1-4.

88 Hopkins, *Charles Simeon*, p. 62. The 1819 edition of the *Eclectic Review* gave *Horae* a good mark two years before Simeon's death (the high church publication, *The Christian Remembrancer*).

How can one be sure that Simeon's relentless effort to grow *Horae Homileticae* in size and scope was not the result of a self-serving consumeristic plan fuelled by his growing popularity and the expanding market of Evangelical ministers? For one, consider Simeon's hope for the work,

> If it leads the ignorant to preach the truth, and the indolent to exert themselves, and the weak to attain a facility for writing their own, and the busy and laborious to do more and with better effect than they otherwise could have done, I shall be richly repaid for my labour. My prayers for God's blessing on it will, I hope, ascend as long as I am able to pray at all.[89]

Furthermore, take into account Simeon's use of the money he made after selling *Horae's* copyright to his publisher, Thomas Cadell, for £5000. Instead of keeping all the proceeds for himself, Simeon gave £1000 to the Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. Another £1000 was gifted to the London Clerical Education Society and yet another £1000 was contributed to the Church Missionary Society. Simeon then took £250 pounds to bind twenty large paper copies of *Horae* that he then gave away to selected dignitaries and libraries throughout England and the Western World.[90] In a letter to his publisher, Simeon wrote how his royalties had become, 'the actual property of three societies. If God be honoured and my fellow-creatures benefited, it is all I want.'[91]

Over the years, Simeon's ability to remain mission-minded allowed him to thrive, even in the midst of the world's first modern financial crisis[92] which temporarily devastated the consumer driven publishing industry. On June 9, 1826, lawyer and well-known diarist, Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) wrote, 'The booksellers are in a deplorable condition. [Alaric] Watts [a young editor and publisher] says that, with the possible exception of Colburn and Longman, he doubts whether any of them are solvent.'[93] That same year, three giant publishers plummeted into bankruptcy while the world's wealthiest and most widely read author, Sir Walter Scott, was financially shattered, as well. Scott's lofty statue above Glasgow's George's Square, betrays the £100,000 in financial liabilities he assumed, the balance of which were not entirely paid until being posthumously assumed by Thomas Cadell,[94] the publisher of Simeon's, *Horae Homileticae*.

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89 Ibid., pp. 60-1.
90 *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature*, Volume II. p. 2103.
91 Hopkins, *Charles Simeon*, p. 60.
92 Johnson, *Birth of the Modern*, p. 891.
93 Ibid. Insertions are Johnson's.
94 Ibid., pp. 897-8.

While Evangelicals Charles Simeon, Hannah More and William Wilberforce certainly rode the rising tide of the consumer book market, they did so motivated by a mission to advance the gospel rather than their individual fame and fortune. Wilberforce did this with an eye to the last day, More to the present day and Simeon to the effective communication of both. What can be learned from their nineteenth century examples, and especially that of Charles Simeon, which would benefit Evangelicals today?

What can be learned from a nineteenth century Evangelical response to Consumerism?

What to write?

First, assume a mission-minded rather than market-driven approach to writing. When Simeon picked up his pen, it was always with the intention that his subject matter, whether commentary on world events or dedicatory remarks for a new building, point people to the gospel. As the wife of a preeminent New Testament scholar once told me, 'If my husband cannot preach on it, then he does not write on it.' For Simeon, as well as this professor, a mission-minded approach to writing assumes the gospel-centred agenda of Scripture[95] rather than the consumer-driven agenda of the Academy or the pew.[96]

What to publish?

Second, adopt a sustainable approach to publishing. Since 'of making many books there is no end' (Eccles. 12:12) Simeon's example of 'polishing-up' and republishing classic works is worthy of emulation. I'm grateful The Banner of Truth does this by publishing great books of the past and especially those of the Puritans. Christian Focus provides updated editions of Jonathan Edwards and John Owen along with attractive reprints by persons such as J.C. Ryle and C.H. Spurgeon. Crossway offers its Classic Commentary Series which includes reissued volumes by John Calvin, Charles Hodge and Thomas Manton. To be sure, there are always

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95 Jer. 6:16 c.f. Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:18; 15:3-4; Gal. 1:6.

96 Allan Fisher. "Christian Publishing." Table Talk. November 1, 2009. http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/christian-publishing/. Accessed 30 March 2016. 'Scripture makes clear than an appeal to the market can easily lead to the publication of half-truths, if not outright heresy. The apostle Paul warns Timothy that "the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Books by such teachers are eminently marketable today.'

topics that demand contemporary treatment from the Scripture. A current example is sexual orientation. But work on other up-to-date issues such as submission to authority, persecution of Christians and the reality of hell could each be expertly treated if a new edition of an old classic was circulated. This, of course, would require the efforts of someone like Simeon who was secure enough in his own skin to share cover space with another name!

What to finance?

Third, use profits to finance gospel projects. As already noted, Simeon used his *Horae* revenue to benefit a variety of such endeavours. John Stott, a twentieth century Simeon,[97] invested a substantial portion of his publishing royalties to further the gospel efforts of his Langham Partnership. Ken Taylor, author of the Living Bible, took no remuneration for his work on what became a best-selling volume.[98] Instead, Living Bible proceeds are used to finance The Tyndale House Foundation which is exclusively used for charity. Author, Francis Chan, has agreed that a portion of the proceeds from his best-selling book, *Crazy Love*, will go to support clubs that Chan created to help children in need.[99] Crossway Books, one of the best known Christian publishers in the United States, is not a for-profit corporation but a 'not-for-profit ministry' with clearly stated, gospel-centred goals.[100] To make sure Crossway remains true to its mission, the board has determined that, 'Any surplus that may arise shall be used solely to further the ministry and shall not inure to the benefit of any individual.'[101] Dedicating book profits to serve gospel causes is a way to encourage authors and publishers to remain mission-minded in their task.

CONCLUSION

In a world where status and worth are determined by how much stuff one has, it is refreshing to know that in God's economy, status and worth are determined by what one gives.

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97 http://markmeynell.net/blog/2016/02/simeon-and-stott-parallel-lives/. Accessed 1 February 2016.

98 The Living Bible was the best-selling book in America in 1972 and 1973. By the time it was given second billing to The New Living Bible in 1997, it had sold 40 million copies.

99 http://www.christiantoday.com/article/every.purchase.of.francis.chans.crazy.love.book.helps.support.kids.in.need/49703.htm

100 https://www.crossway.org/about/. Accessed 15 March 2016.

101 Ibid. Accessed 15 March 2016.

Because Jesus, 'gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age,'[102] the one who gives himself to Jesus can freely live in mission-minded, gospel service to others. In this way a Christian becomes 'rich toward God' (Luke 12:21) and reveals the reality of the well-travelled truth, 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.'[103]

[102] Gal. 1:4 c.f. 2:20; Eph. 5:2; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14.

[103] Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), p. 144. Web. Accessed 30 March 2016.