IAN MILLER

Evangelicalism and the Early Vegetarian Movement in Britain c.1847–1860

This article aims to fully explore the complex interrelationship between evangelicalism and the formation of an organised vegetarian movement in Britain in the period 1847–1860. As well as adding insight into existing historical research into the diet, I aim to comment on the potential of evangelicalism influence to reach into various areas of society, a claim that has often been contested in the historiography. I explore the manner in which religious influence encapsulated themes related to medico-scientific views pertaining to diet, the role of food within family life, education, and the role of biblical discourse were expressed via established forms of public persuasion in order to promote the apparent benefits of a meat-free diet.

The extent to which the mid-nineteenth-century British Evangelical movement was influential in shaping its wider social environment has long been a hotly debated topic. While it seems clear that Evangelical emphases were peculiarly well suited to the exigencies of an emergent complex industrial society, conflict of opinion has persisted surrounding its impact in shaping trends permeating British society. Notably, in 1961 Ford Keeler Brown dismissed its social role as pernicious.¹ Eleven years later, William Reginald Ward was to identify the movement more as a product of its environment than one which acted as a direct stimulus for social change.² However, alternative viewpoints have proven persistent, such as that suggested by Kathleen Heasman in 1962, who pointed instead to the extensiveness of its social influence, in particular its benefit in terms of philanthropic activity.³ Ian Bradley, too, writing in 1976, positioned evangelicalism, at least before 1860, as a dynamic movement which exerted a mostly positive influence upon British society.⁴ Recent accounts, especially


Dr Ian Miller is a Lecturer at University College, Dublin.

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those contained within John Wolffe's edited volume, *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal* (1995), have also detailed a wide range of important social contributions made by evangelicalism since the late eighteenth century. Within this, Brian Dickey noted that scholars have shared a tendency to underestimate the importance of evangelicalism's social impact in the mid-Victorian period.

John Wolffe's edited volume *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal* (1995) was also useful. These essays focused on contributions made to important areas such as education and business. It is clearly shown that the influence of evangelicalism stretched even further than these more obvious spheres, helping to expand the arena of religion in terms of both personal belief and social behaviour. For instance, Evangelicals persistently concerned themselves with causes that were not initially central to their faith, such as abstinence from alcohol, in order to further their social ideas. David Bebbington has claimed that avoidance of drink, gambling, and debt were the hallmarks of a disciplined life with upward social mobility being the reward of prudence, ideas that proved particularly attractive to Evangelicals. One aspect of temperate lifestyles has remained unexplored, namely abstinence from meat. Historians have identified a peak in Evangelical influence around the 1850s. The formation and active years of the Vegetarian Society in Britain fit neatly within this period, which employed national networks and highly articulate yet accessible publications to express its concepts. Vegetarianism was to become particularly strong in industrialised areas of northern and midland England. There emerged numerous local societies and branches with it perhaps being in these areas where there was high literacy as well a corresponding strong belief in self-improvement which was able to find institutional expression in the form of friendly societies and mutual improvement schemes. Furthermore, and equally notable, the decline of Evangelical fervour broadly corresponds with the dwindling of membership of the Vegetarian Society during the early 1860s, which was to decrease to only 125 members by 1870.

10. The most detailed account of this is Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians*.
I argue in this article that the impact of evangelicalism within the formation of British vegetarian ideology during the late 1840s and 1850s reveals the ability of the denomination’s concepts to reach even into non-mainstream ideologies, as well as countering subsequent assertions that it acted principally as a passive product of its environment. This apparent connection between vegetarianism and wider social trends is perhaps not too unusual, given that ethical and aesthetical choices made to avoid eating meat are rarely simply a product of individual decision-making but are fundamentally related to the wider religious, socio-historical, and intellectual contexts with which that decision interacts at any given time. Resolutions to abstain from a food that might well be more nourishing than its meat-free alternatives are almost always inevitably encouraged by wider social factors that place pressure upon the individual to avoid them. In this case, I shall maintain that evangelicalism contributed an underlying philosophy that encouraged the evolution of a movement intent on shaping, and in their opinion helping to contribute to progression of, the society surrounding it.

Today, Christianity and vegetarianism are not commonly perceived as necessarily intertwined, although occasional claims are made that Jesus, and even God, are definitely vegetarians. In fact, the diet is far more commonly associated with religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, or Hinduism. Yet the urban Vegetarian movement that emerged in Britain in the earlier period of the nineteenth century had incorporated a variety of Christian denominations, most notably the Bible Christians who had hoped to create a new form of Christian church with its unique rituals and dietary regulations. For the adherents to this group, meat eating was conceived of as the most vivid symbol of man’s fall from grace, as well as being a source of social evil. William Cowherd (1763–1816) ran the Bible Christian chapel at King Street, Salford, attracting a large following of working-class people, who were encouraged not

14. This point has been expanded upon by S. Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), 302.
least by offers of hot vegetable soup, medical help, and a free burial ground.  
Yet while Cowherd’s contribution to vegetarian ideology is well documented, 
existing historiography of the movement after this period tend to underestimate 
the role of religion, which is often presented as having declined by mid- 
century, to be revived once again from the 1890s onwards.  
Where Christianity’s influence has been allowed for in this period, it has tended to be associated 
less with mainstream Christianity with the vegetarianism of the 1850s, having 
been identified by historians more with non-conformism and Protestant sects 
such as the White Quakers.

I propose in this essay that mainstream evangelicalism played a far more 
dominant role within the mid-nineteenth-century vegetarian movement than 
has been allowed for. It is worth noting at this point that evangelicalism has 
proven to be a tricky term to define, but broadly speaking, it can be defined as 
 a Protestant movement which began in Britain in the 1730s, characterised by a 
belief in the need for personal conversion, an expression of the gospel in effort, 
a high regard for Biblical authority, and an emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus (or, using David Bebbington’s terminology, conversionism, 
activism, Biblicalism, and crucicentrism). It has never been equated with any 
single Christian denomination. In fact, it influenced many churches, acting, for 
instance, as a vital force in the development of Methodism, as well as transforming the Church of England. However, one benefit of this predicament is 
that this has provided evangelicalism the potential to reach into a wide range of 
social areas while simultaneously ensuring that it was not restricted by an 
exclusive association with any particular denomination or movement.

By exploring the linkage between evangelicalism and mid-century vegetarianism, I do not intend to isolate this as being of prime importance or to risk 
denyng possibilities of the existence of other motivating factors. In fact, there 
are often multiple, interwoven motivating factors. Notably, Anita Guerrini has 
recently suggested that there were three main motivations for the emergence of 
urban vegetarianism in the late eighteenth century: religious, medical, and 
moral. There can certainly be found a variety of potential factors lurking in the 
mid-nineteenth-century public consciousness which were highly likely to have

19. See, for instance, Samantha Calvert’s chronology in S. J. Calvert, “A Taste of Eden: Modern 
20. Gregory, Of Victorians and Vegetarians, 101–102. Berkman has noted that religion and 
nutrition seemed to have traditionally shared close connections, as persistently expressed through 
practices such as fasting, the Communion, table prayers, dietary taboos, and regulations. The 
fulfilment of the primary need of nutrition was deeply intertwined with the moral concepts of any 
community as food and meals can act as a mode of social communication, expressing loyalty to the 
group to which one belongs. However, Catholicism has seemed less willing to engage with a 
moral-centric view of abstinence from meat. See J. Berkman “The Consumption of Animals and the 
21. See Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. See also D. W. Bebbington, The Domi- 
nance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2005).  
22. Problems with defining Evangelicalism has been outlined in E. Royle, “Evangelicals and 
Education,” in Evangelical Faith, ed. Woolfe, 117 and Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern 
Britain, 1–2.  
23. Evangelicalism’s wider impact has been discussed in particular detail in Wolffe, Evangelical 
Faith.
contributed to vegetarian ideology. For instance, aspects of the philosophy that dwelled upon kindness to animals seems highly likely to have proven appealing, particularly as medical science began to turn towards laboratory experimentation on animals, sparking controversies related to animal cruelty.24 Certainly, vegetarianism proved popular with those concerned with man’s moral responsibility towards animals, so that its advocates often attracted campaigners who believed that zoos and pet keeping were degrading or that vivisection was a form of cruelty.25 Health considerations might well have played a crucial factor too. For instance, the formation of the Vegetarian Society in Britain coincided with the publication of A Treatise on the Falseficiations of Food (1848), which heightened public awareness of excessive competition between bakers, publicans, and grocers that led to adulterated food being supplied to workhouses, barracks, and schools, thereby encouraging abstinence from meat for health reasons.26

The early writings of the Vegetarian Society feature an irrefutably prominent religious influence.27 In many ways, this argument about the significance of religion might seem surprising, given that the study of food and its effects upon digestion had been gradually subsumed within a firmer medico-scientific background during the early 1800s.28 For instance, the English chemist and physician William Prout (1785–1850) proposed the classifications of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins in the 1830s.29 Digestion itself was a central facet of the nineteenth-century medical imagination, with organs such as the stomach having been prioritised and analysed. For instance, the early nineteenth-century St Bartholomew’s surgeon John Abernethy (1764–1831) had positioned the


stomach as a central organ within a wide network of sympathetic interactions within the nervous system. In America, meanwhile, William Beaumont (1785–1853) had experimented on the living human stomach for the first time via an open fistula in his patient Alexis St Martin (1794–1880) and disseminated his findings internationally. Furthermore, medical advice given on maintaining a healthy stomach seems to have reached a demanding audience, with a wide range of texts being published, particularly in the 1850s, intended for a popular audience intended to teach people how to maintain a healthy digestion.

We should not assume that the introduction of scientific discourse necessarily involved severing the physiological aspects of food from its moral or cultural aspects by diminishing it simply to its chemical components. Nineteenth-century health reform movements, which were themselves often influenced by scientific ideals, remained not exclusively interested in amending the physical or material but were also heavily concerned with the spiritual. In such a context, health itself might act as the basis for moral, social, and political reform. Certainly, the aims of contemporary groups, such as those promoting abstinence from alcohol, were often intertwined with a vast array of reform interests other than temperance from alcohol. For instance, James Simpson, the first president of the Vegetarian Society, held up vegetarianism as his most prominent cause, yet he was also a member of the teetotal United Kingdom Alliance, the peace movement, and movements in favour of anti-capital punishment, phonetics, and the allotment movement.

Religious aspects undoubtedly permeate the early publications of the Vegetarian Society, many of whose writers expressed a sharp desire to emphasise the moral and spiritual benefits and/or justification for abstaining from meat consumption. Tellingly, in 1849, The Vegetarian Messenger, the main organ for the Vegetarian Society, claimed that “our system has been well based upon Christian grounds; and in thus seeking to arouse by attention and zealous activity... we think it highly important that this principle should be fully

35. For more on this, see B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815–1872 (London: Faber, 1971).
36. Gregory, Of Victorians and Vegetarians, 32–33.
understood, and faithfully remembered.” 37 For the anonymous author of an article that followed in the same publication in 1850, abstinence from meat appeared to supply man with important pre-conditions for the perception, understanding, application, and obeying of the teachings of Christ while removing some of the difficulties which lie in the way of the carnal man’s submission to his rule and governance. 38 Vegetarianism alone, it seemed, could not bring about a more spiritual outlook by itself but could at least act as a starting point given that the individual was situated within the right conditions. Yet this was a mainstream form of Christianity, as well as being one which encapsulates evangelicalism’s ability to influence a vast array of aspects of the society within which they operated. In particular, I shall explore the following Evangelical concepts: its emphasis on the Bible as the main source of spiritual authority, the primacy of the family, and a desire to educate and convert.

As already noted, one of the most distinctive characteristics of Evangelical groups was a willingness to stress the authority of the Bible as the primary source of spiritual truth and authority. Evangelicals generally believed that contemporary Tractarian publications de-emphasised the authority of Scripture, and revalued this tradition. Instead, they perceived their own faith as acting more in line with the church of the apostolic ages and what they perceived to be the original doctrines of Christ. 39 A belief that man could best accomplish his desires and live to his full moral, spiritual, and physical potential by living in accordance with the original constitution of nature and abstaining from flesh eating were arguments where justification was persistently sought from scripture. The vegetarian movement regularly used Biblical quotes and texts in order to justify, as well as to promote, their belief system. Tellingly, the centrality of Biblical text was expressed in Reverend John Booth Strettles, officiating minister of Christ Church, Salford, Manchester who, at the first meeting of the Vegetarian Society in 1848, expressed his belief, based upon Biblical scripture, that the first law given to mankind was one respecting dietary regulation, quoting Genesis 1.29 which stated: “Behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding fruit to you, it shall be for meat.” For Strettles, the production of the earth alone had been described as an adequate source of food in itself and that God considered this to be fully sufficient to feed man, concluding by asking “and who shall presume to be wiser than the Omniscient?” 40

Certainly, vegetarians, as well as potential adherents to the diet, were encouraged to draw ideas and practices from figures in order to reinforce their beliefs, including Chrysostom (347–407), Jerome (347–420), and Cassian (d. 363), who were all interpreted as having preached that a meat-free diet was central to

the embodiment of the Edenic state, not least because the original sin of Adam and Eve seemed to be gluttony. In such accounts, dietary renunciation appeared to be a suitable means of redressing this situation.41 The idea of a return to Eden outlined in the bible proved persistent. Tellingly, James Simpson suggested in 1850 that “if they would live as near the Creator of Creation as might be, they might adhere to the teachings of the system first established by the Creator himself.”42 In fact, the early writings of the vegetarian movement regularly emphasised a vegetarian world that had existed prior to the Fall that was to be restored following the end of the present age of spiritual and social progress, a view in line with Evangelical’s post-millennial outlook which, it has been claimed, acted as a spur to vigorous endeavours to improve society either in the hope of softening the forthcoming divine judgement or in attaining the preaching of the gospel which would ensure a period of prosperity for the church, following which, Christ would come again.43

A furious debate emerged in the Darwen Examiner in 1855, when a reader, known only as W. G. B., asked whether:

Vegetarians wish to live as Adam lived in paradise, thinking that to be the most natural mode of living? Then alter the name of the Association; let it be called “Vegetarian and Go-Naked Society” we know that our first parents when Paradise went naked; we do not know, for a certainty, that they did not eat flesh — so the Go-Naked part of the Society would have the better argument.44

A response followed, as part of what turned out to be a long-running discussion in the letter pages of the local newspaper, which argued:

Now I do not think so, because before Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise it is related, “Unto Adam and to his wife did the lord God make coats of skin and clothed them”; so the Go Naked parts of the Society would be as bare of argument as of clothing, if they were to try such an argument.45

A willingness to interpret biblical scripture as advocating a meat-free diet therefore seems to have exerted a heavy influence on British vegetarian ideology in the period in question and was used as the prime source of spiritual authority to justify a contested form of dietary regulation.

Evangelical belief in the primacy of the family was another crucial influence in the construction of a mid-nineteenth-century vegetarian ideology. It has been claimed that evangelicalism was the religion of the home as well as of the heart, enabling family and faith to reinforce one another while seeking to spread itself through institutions outside of the church.46 Notably, studies such as Pat Jalland’s *Death in the Victorian Family* (1996) have provided strong evidence for the success of the movement in establishing values and patterns of

43. For more on Evangelical pre-millennialism and postmillennialism, see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 62–63 and 81–82.
44. As reported in “Letter to Darwen Examiner,” *The Vegetarian Messenger* 6 (1855): 47.
46. As stated in Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 129.
family life, even among those who were not necessarily avowedly Evangelical, as shown by its influence in the shaping of attitudes towards particular forms of death within the middle-class Victorian family. The encouragement of these strong values also seemed to have helped to shape the myriad forms which education regarding vegetarianism took.

The maintenance of a Christian home, education of children, and the sustenance of a Christian husband, it has been claimed, were considered as the most important gender-defined social role for Evangelical women, and this is reflected in the vegetarian propaganda of the time. Concepts of social improvement within the ideas of both movements meant that promotion of the proper feeding of young children by their mothers would help to ensure that a new generation of children would appear, having excellent spiritual and physical health, as part of a step forward towards the envisioned future age laid down in the Bible. Regular tips were provided for mothers to improve their child’s health in vegetarian publications, incorporating other Evangelical concerns such as abstinence from alcohol. For instance, in 1854, *The Vegetarian Messenger* suggested that:

> The feverish action of alcoholic liquors, and animal food, will account for many restless nights, troublesome days, and much of the pain and distress both parent and child have to endure, but with due attention to diet and the laws of health, the quality of that bland and nutritious fluid which nature has provided for the sustenance of the babe, will be such as will assist in rearing a healthy and stalwart race.

Moral tales also acted as an expression of Evangelical family values within the vegetarian movement. Stories were published which contained details of healthy families, such as the following account of a conversation:

> “But how about your family, are you bringing them all up in the same way?” “Yes! I am, they are all as healthy and cheerful as children can possibly be.” “How many children have you in family now?” “Seven, and I am happy to say that five of that number have never tasted flesh meat.”

Yet influence in the sphere of family life was not just restricted to the parent–child relationships, as it became apparent that young people choosing to adopt a meat-free diet were often faced with opposition from other members of the family. *The Vegetarian Messenger* printed a letter from a fourteen-year-old showing ways he had discovered around this problem, claiming that “I practice it under my father’s roof, whilst not only is he against it, but my mother, my brothers, my sisters, yea, and almost all my friends are against it: in fact I have now the general name of ‘fool’ because I agree with this ‘tomfoolerly.’ ” The letter also encouraged that should a parent refuse to make vegetarian meals, then the meat-free part of that meal should only be eaten. The principles of

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Evangelical family life therefore appear particularly suited to the needs of a movement such as vegetarianism, as the provision of food inevitably acts as one of the most important tasks for a family.

Education was a further central element of Evangelical practice, being intertwined with conversionism, one of the primary emphases of the movement. Evangelicals, shifting the emphasis of the Puritans on issues such as predestination, preached instead that lives needed to be changed. Conversions were seen as the ultimate goal of personal effort, as well as the collective aims of churches, with preaching the gospel seeming to be the most effective way of winning converts.52 Certainly, many members of the Vegetarian movement seem to have been concerned with the impact which they might potentially have upon public attention. Inspired by the effectiveness of Evangelical practices of open air preaching, it was claimed that “there is no more direct way of laying hold of the convictions of the public mind, than that of going direct to the truth... (and that) the spirit of progression is preparing the way for the reception of truth in every direction.”53

Unsurprisingly, reference to the validity of ideas concerning the necessity of public education was found in the Scriptures, with advice being given on how to educate the public drawing upon scripture. For instance, the story of Daniel was frequently referred to as, when he was in Babylon, he had requested a diet of pulse and water rather than the “king’s meat.” According to Scripture, after ten days the king found them to be healthier and stronger, while after three years he found them ten times wiser than even the most learned in the kingdom. The Bible reported that Daniel had suggested to those wary of the diet that they should give it a trial period, or a “fair test,” as Daniel claimed to have done when he said to Melazar, “Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink.”54 Vegetarians were encouraged to perceive themselves, like Daniel, as “practical philosophers” who were “able to guide both medical men and all others... upon the subject of feeding he body in accordance with the principles of wisdom and the greatest social happiness” as they had “ultimately arrived at the practice of a higher and happier system of living above the condition of man as an animal of prey.”55 Accordingly, the movement did not just look back to the Bible for confirmation of its validity but discussed figures such as Plato and John Wesley, who were “the educators of our society.”56

Yet conversionism seemed just as necessary inside of Christianity as well as outside, with them seemingly being thousands of sincere Christians who did

54. Dan. 1.12, as recounted in “Daniel the Prophet,” The Vegetarian Advocate 8, 1 August 1849, 57.
not yet possess the knowledge of the validity of adopting a diet free from meat despite appearing true to their religious convictions. Accordingly, tracts were produced and disseminated for both Christians and non-Christians alike. These were complemented by open-air preaching and lectures. According to *The Vegetarian Messenger* in 1852, “the general effects of these meetings was to convert the curious or idle interest of the least careful of the hearers, to gravity, subsequently to deep interest, and lastly, to those results which not only convince the undertaking but touch the heart in relation to the Vegetarian system.”

Methods were remarkably similar. Evangelicals were mostly unwilling to wait for people to arrive at their place of worship but instead went to the public, concerning themselves in particular with working-class communities. Their education programmes offered members of the working classes the opportunity to be able to read publications and tracts. As with the Vegetarian movement, there existed a large and heterogeneous machinery of organisations with supported local efforts, often involving working with the growing nineteenth-century problems associated with neglected inner city areas. The Vegetarian movement was quick to rejoice in what they believed to be their moral obligation to people of all classes, believing that “there is today a consideration in widespread classes of our country, as well as a respectful notice secured for our principles in a literary point of view, which, considering our short term as an organisation, are not less than astonishing.” As with evangelicalism, many vegetarians were eager to appeal to the lower sections of society, who they believed to include those most in need of improvement. Tellingly, like many other movements, its publications regularly printed success stories of stereotypical working-class men or women whose life at home had been dramatically improved since the adoption of the diet, such as that of Timothy Crompton of Hulme, Manchester, who wrote in 1848 that “every step I take in self-denial, adds both to my health and wealth. I am morally, intellectually and physically better. I enjoy such a flow of freedom in my spirits as the man of appetite is a stranger too.”

The methods of local branches of the Vegetarian Society in convincing members of their local communities to abstain from meat were varied and included inducing working-class families to try some of their meat-free recipes while pointing out the economy of the diet. Self-congratulatory success stories of families converted to the diet because of such missionary work were an important part of vegetarian publications. Local members would write into *The Vegetarian Messenger* with the results of their work, with typical success stories including “one man, with a wife and four children, says they can now live better than before, and on from four to five shillings less money. The

59. See *The Vegetarian Messenger* 3 (1852): 3.

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children never ask for bread now, they have crowdie, potato pies, barley puddings, etc. . . . 64 In order to show how effective such work could be, letters were published by somewhat articulate labourers, such as a blacksmith, who claimed:

I have been a vegetarian for eleven years, and for that time, I have never had a doctor in my house. . . . My home is comfortable and happy, and my family such as a working man might be proud of, and I have reason to thank God that I became a Vegetarian; for to this I attribute all this harmonising and elevating state of this. 65

Furthermore, the conversion of a working man might occur by a steady introduction to vegetarian literature or by gentle persuasion by a friend. The spiritual benefit of this remained of crucial importance throughout the 1850s, as revealed by a working man who wrote to the Vegetarian Messenger in 1855 stating that after an introduction to the diet, he liked “Vegetarianism because it aids me in my thought-hours — regulates, refines, and elevates — fosters all that is beautiful, benevolent, and lovely within us; while the life-destroying, animal-eating customs violates and darkens all that would remind us of Heaven or of God.” 66 Such writing intended to provide examples of ways in which fellow vegetarians could promote their ideas among working-class society, combining an eagerness to reduce poverty via abstinence with faith in the future kingdom of heaven.

**Conclusions**

The influence of evangelicalism upon movements such as vegetarianism was clearly much stronger than is often assumed. The movement exploited similar methods and drew from remarkably similar sources of authority while shaping a dietary ideology that aimed to produce dietetic reform via scientific discourse, forcing us to question narratives of movements such as abstinence in the mid-nineteenth century. It is important to bear in mind that a failure of Evangelical faith to ultimately produce amelioration, improvement, and rescue through their good works does not underestimate its validity and social influence throughout the 1850s. 67 A decline of Evangelical influence can be observed from the 1860s onwards for reasons that are much debated. Perhaps it was the case that scientific arguments for abstinence from meat proved easier to assert than those based primarily upon spiritual benefits once the influence of evangelicalism lessened. The Vegetarian Messenger merged with the Dietetic Reformer in 1861, stating that while it would refrain “from all questions of a sectarian character, our pages will from time to time, contain articles written in a religious spirit.” 68 The spiritual aspect of abstinence from meat appears to have been largely restricted to the period where evangelicalism had reached a peak, revealing much about its far-reaching social influence. It was only as late as 1888 that such concerns were revived when a new magazine, 64. “Local Operations: Hull,” The Vegetarian Messenger Supplement 6 (1855): 12.

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entitled *The Vegetarian*, criticised the Vegetarian Society’s narrow scope of dietary reform, revisiting concepts of progress popular in the late 1840s and early 1850s that culminated in the final redemption of the world and salvation of man through a return to God’s intended diet.69

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