

A SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Week Eight: From 1801 - 1900

May 25, 2017

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

I. The 2nd Great Awakening (1800-1840)

- The 2nd Awakening came in several waves of revival just like the 1st Great Awakening.
- Conditions following the Revolutionary War were ripe for revival. Attendance at Christian churches had fallen dramatically. Crime, unwed pregnancy and drunkenness were rampant across America. Voltaire boasted that Christianity was dead in America!
- Many of the revival preachers held to a postmillennial view of the end times believing that Jesus would return after the church had brought about 1000 years of peace and justice. Therefore the church must work to not only evangelize people but also to change people and society for the better to speed the return of the Lord Jesus!
- Following the French Revolution and the collapse of Enlightenment religion there was an increasing desire for genuine emotion and experience in people's Christian faith.

III. Slavery abolished in Great Britain (1807)

- William Wilberforce & his ally John Newton
- Slavery is finally abolished in the entire British Empire in 1833

IV. The Kentucky Revivals (1797-1801)

- The Cumberland Revival was led by three Presbyterian pastors. They held their revival meetings in a large tent which became the origin of the tent meeting.
- The Cane Ridge Revivals in Kentucky (1801) were led by Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist pastors. It was marked by emotional outbursts and physical manifestations such as falling, running and jumping all thought to be marks of the Holy Spirit.
- The Cane Ridge and Cumberland Revivals led to a schism in the Presbyterian Church and the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Kentucky.
- The Restoration Movement emerged out of the Kentucky revivals which led to the founding of the Disciples of Christ in America (Christian Church) (1809).

V. The Finney Revivals in Upstate New York (1825-1835)

- The 2nd phase of the revivals of the 2nd Great Awakening was led by an itinerant Presbyterian pastor from New York named Charles G. Finney.
- Finney instituted what he called "New Measures" in his revival meetings. He had the anxious bench where potential converts sat and could receive prayer; the inquiry room where people could be prayed for and ask more questions. And he allowed women to pray in public in his church meetings and had mixed crowds at his revivals which went against standard practice. Basically his methods brought the excitement and emotionalism of the camp meeting into the churches!

VI. Camp Meetings on the frontier and the Circuit Riders

- There were large numbers of people moving west from the Eastern Seaboard to the frontier, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and into the Mississippi Valley at this time. Most of them were unchurched as there were few churches on the frontier. There was great concern for how to evangelize and disciple so many people.
- The Methodists and Baptists favored the circuit rider, a preacher who went from town to town or region to region on horseback preaching and teaching in each place. Since there were so few pastors the circuit rider had a "circuit" that he would travel to minister to the various people on the frontier.
- The favorite option to reach the people and evangelize them became the camp meeting. A place was secured and a large tent or several tents were erected. Several preachers would come for days and hold services, preaching, evangelizing and teaching.

VII. Plymouth Brethren founded in England by William Darby (1828)

- Darby taught a new system of Biblical interpretation called Dispensationalism
- Dispensationalism became the favored Scriptural interpretation among especially American Evangelicals by the 20th century, popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible. It sees several dispensations or phases of God's revelation to humanity. It separates God's prophetic promises to Israel from the church of the Lord Jesus. It sees the church as a parenthesis in the prophetic time clock. That clock is then started again when the Rapture occurs and the church is removed. The Tribulation then occurs and the Lord Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation to establish a literal millennial kingdom where God fulfills all his prophetic promises to Israel.
- The most well-known schools that teach a Dispensational interpretation today are Moody Bible Institute, The Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) and Dallas and Talbot Theological Seminaries.

VIII. Joseph Smith founds the Mormons and the Book of Mormon published (1830)

- Smith claimed a vision of God the Father that told him all the denominations were wrong and the true gospel would be revealed to him. The Angel Maroni visited Smith and led him to several golden plates buried on a hill in Palmyra

New York along with some magic glasses which allowed him to translate the plates. The content of the plates was the Book of Mormon.

- Smith claimed to be a prophet as did his successor Brigham Young who led the Mormons from Missouri to Salt Lake in Utah where they founded a permanent settlement.

IX. William Miller and the Adventists

- Miller claimed Jesus was to return in 1844 from calculations he made from prophecies in Daniel and Revelation.
- The Great Disappointment, October 22, 1844. Jesus failed to return as Miller predicted.
- Ellen G. White prophetess and the founding of the 7th Day Adventists (1863)

X. Founding of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (1847)

- German Lutherans from Saxony objected to the rationalist theology of German Lutherans and emigrate to Perry County Missouri.
- They are conservative confessing German Lutherans and form their own denomination as a result.

XI. Great social movements founded as a result of the 2nd Great Awakening

- Much of the theology of the Awakening was Postmillennial in outlook.
- Many national societies formed as a result of the Awakening to foster various causes such as: The American Education Society (1815), The American Bible Society (1816), The American Sunday School Union (1817), The American Tract Society (1826), The American Home Missionary Society (1826).
- Abolitionism (1830's)
- Women's Suffrage (1860's – 1900) led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Women's Christian Temperance Union (1873)
- Besides these movements, hospitals, orphanages, soup kitchens and various ministries to help the poor were also begun.
- There was also a concerted effort to found many Christian colleges, especially as the frontier moved west.

XII. Southern Baptist Convention formed (1845)

- The church was founded when it split from the Northern Baptists over the issue of slavery. Many other denominations suffered similar splits around this time before the Civil War.

XIII. Early Missionary Movements

- William Carey in India (1793)
- David Livingstone in Africa (1840) – Missionary Robert Moffat told him: *"I have seen a thousand campfires that have never heard the name of Christ."*
- Hudson Taylor in China (1854)

XIV. Bernadette Soubirous sees the first of 18 apparitions of Mary in Lourdes, France (1846)

- The Roman Catholic shrine at Lourdes celebrating Mary's apparition today receives some 6 million visitors a year.

XV. Soren Kierkegaard begins Christian Existentialism (1855)

- Existentialism stressed the individual's experience and relationship with God who is Love.
- Kierkegaard saw the Bible as the way God encounters us as individuals and not as a collection of "truths" outside of the reader. Faith then is subjective in nature and not objective truth.

XVI. The American Civil War (1861-1865)

- Both sides used the Bible to justify their positions.
- There were strong evangelical Christians in the South, like Stonewall Jackson.
- The war began as a way to preserve the union but morphed into a holy crusade to free the slaves. Songs like *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* express this sentiment.
- In the aftermath of the war denominational families remained divided between north and south. For instance, the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church did not unite with its northern neighbors until 1983.

XVII. William Booth, a Methodist preacher, founds the Salvation Army (1865)

- He vowed to bring the gospel into the streets to the most desperate and needy.

XVIII. Alternative Christian Movements

- Mary Baker Eddy founds the Church of Christ Scientists (1879)
- Charles Taze Russell founds the Bible Student Movement and began the Zion's Watchtower Tract Society (1884). His followers eventually became the Jehovah's Witnesses
- These movements expressed a growing interest and belief in a Premillennial view of the end times in contrast to the prevailing Postmillennial view of many in the churches.

XIX. The rise of Higher Criticism in Europe and America

- In the late 18th century in Germany scholars began to apply the principles used to interpret classical literature to the New Testament, called the grammatical historical method. They also applied rigorous historical methods to the New Testament documents including an a priori assumption that supernatural events are not historical but mythological or legendary and therefore are additions to any historical reporting in the Gospels.
- In the later 19th century these methods and ideas led to a radical re-evaluation of Scripture. A thorough skepticism of the historicity of the Bible was typical. The Gospels were seen as legendary in many ways and written long after Jesus'

death. The resurrection was obviously legendary and was the early church's attempt to validate Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah rather than a true event. A meticulous literary survey of the language of Paul's Epistles led to the conclusion that Paul only wrote Romans, Galatians and the Corinthian letters. All the other letters were written by later Pauline disciples because they use slightly different language. Old Testament studies concluded that Moses did not write the Torah but later editors used at least 4 and maybe 5 major sources for the first five books. They were probably compiled late in Israel's history maybe even in the exile. The exodus itself because it contains miraculous stories obviously did not happen but is a legend to explain the origins of the Jewish people.

- The Princeton Theology the mid to late 1800's of Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield developed as a response to Higher Criticism. Its main tenets were: devotion to the Bible and its historicity, concern for religious experience, sensitivity to the American experience, fidelity to the Westminster Confession, and the Scottish philosophy of Common Sense. Charles Hodge saw faithfulness to the Bible as the best defense against higher criticism as well as the overly experiential focus of Friedrich Schleiermacher.
- Almost all mainline denominational schools and seminaries teach the higher critical system of Biblical interpretation. All liberal Christians subscribe to this Biblical view. The Bible therefore is not the Word of God it is human words about God, expressing humanity's search for God and meaning in life. It is valuable to study and learn but it is not direct revelation from God and the very Word of God itself.

XXI. Moody Bible Institute founded (1886)

- Moody Bible Institute was begun by evangelist Dwight L. Moody as the Chicago Evangelization Society for the training of Christian workers, missionaries, pastors and teachers for the work of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- After Moody's death in 1899 it was renamed the Moody Bible Institute.
- It like many schools begun at the time by Conservative Evangelical Christians was formed as a counterbalance to the higher critical interpretation of liberal Christianity and some of the mainline denominational seminaries.

XXII. Gideon's International founded (1899)

- Founded by two traveling salesmen from Wisconsin, John H. Nicholson and Samuel E. Hill.
- The goal of their association was to unite traveling salesmen for evangelism and to distribute free Bibles.
- The Gideons began distributing Bibles in 1908, when the first Bibles were placed in the rooms of the Superior Hotel in Superior, Montana.