

**Church History, Lesson 12:
The Modern Church, Part 2:
The Age of Progress (1789 – 1914)**

35. Protestant Progress

a. Missions

i. Background:

1. Up until the 19th century, Protestant Christianity hardly existed outside of Europe and America.
2. But the 19th century marks the great era of missionary expansion. “Never had any other set of ideas, religious or secular, been propagated over so wide an area by so many professional agents maintained by the unconstrained donations of so many millions of individuals.”⁶⁹
3. Because there are so many prominent missionaries, we cannot list them all. Many are listed on the chart in Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 86.

ii. Causes:

1. The established church was dwindling. And in areas where no established church existed, the need for missions existed.
2. A desire to explore new areas and lands.
3. New lands opening up to missionaries, in part with the expansion of the British Empire.
4. The Evangelical Awakening in the 18th century in Germany, England, and America.
5. Reformation and Evangelical Awakening emphasis on individual conversion.

iii. William Carey (1761 – 1834): The Father of Modern Missions

⁶⁹ Kenneth Scott Latourette; quoted in: Shelley, *Church History In Plain Language*, 391.

1. Carey wasn't the first Protestant missionary. The Moravians were sending missionaries prior to Carey. Other missionaries were active (e.g., David Brainerd).
2. But Carey is called the Father of Modern Missions for these reasons:
 - a. He wanted to evangelize whole countries, not just segments of the population.
 - b. He believed in the establishment of local ministries in the area.
 - c. He believed that the gospel must be firmly rooted in the culture and traditions of the land in which it was propagated. This is the idea of contextualization.
3. In 1792 published *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen* in which he combated five objections to missions:
 - a. The distance
 - b. Their barbaric practices
 - c. The danger inherent in the mission
 - d. The difficulties of support
 - e. The language barrier
4. October 1792 formed the Baptist Missionary Society. The formation of the Society was initially based on need not a theological motif. It, however, forever altered the course of missions (e.g., missionary agencies).
5. Carey's determination for missions is summed up with his most famous line: "Attempt great things for God; expect great things for God."

iv. Results⁷⁰

⁷⁰ These results are adapted from: *Ibid.*, 398-99.

1. Voluntaryism. Missionary expansion happened through voluntaryism not compulsion. Since the time of Constantine, missionary expansion had been supported by rulers of the state.
2. Church-wide support. Unlike missions in prior centuries that were conducted by a select few monks or bishops, modern missionaries made the missionary movement a church-wide enterprise, appealing to the lay-man to go and support.
3. Humanitarianism. Humanitarian projects accompanied the spread of the gospel: schools and hospitals.
4. Summary:

In many respects, then, the missionary movement restored the gospel to its central place in Christianity. And in this important sense the movement recovered an element in the concept of the holy catholic church that the splintering of the Reformation had obscured.⁷¹

b. Revival⁷²

- i. Second Great Awakening (See Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 103, which contrast the First and Second Great Awakening)

1. Causes:

- a. The Second Great Awakening took place as the population of the United States spread west-ward.
- b. Romanticism: the artistic and intellectual reaction to the Enlightenment that emphasized emotion over reason.

2. Leaders of the Second Great Awakening:

- a. James McGready (1763 – 1817)
- b. Charles Grandison Finney (1792 – 1875)

Finney's influence on the American evangelical movement was profound. He was the first to ask converts to

⁷¹ Ibid., 399.

⁷² For more on the revivals in the United States, see: Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750 – 1858* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994).

“come forward” in evangelistic meetings to indicate their acceptance of Christ. He is the one who first applied the term “revival” to evangelistic campaigns. It was Finney who popularized the after-meeting for inquiries seeking salvation. He also left his mark on the American preaching style, encouraging young preachers to be extemporaneous, anecdotal, more conversational and less doctrinal than preachers traditionally had been. All of those ideas—pretty much standard far in evangelicalism today—were part of the “new measures” Finney introduced.⁷³

- ii. D. L. Moody (1837 – 1899): “The world [is] a wrecked vessel, God has given me a lifeboat and said, ‘Moody, save all you can.’”⁷⁴
- iii. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 – 1892)
 - 1. Committed to historic Reformed Protestantism. Edited a revised version of the 1689 London Baptist Confession.
 - 2. Preached to thousands at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.
 - 3. Rejected gospel compromise during the Downgrade Controversy.

c. Theological Liberalism

i. Description

- 1. Theological liberalism is an attempt to integrate modern thought, especially the sciences, with Christianity, while at the same time denying central tenants of the Christian faith.
- 2. H. Richard Niebuhr summarizes liberal Christian theology: “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.”⁷⁵

ii. Methods

- 1. Historical criticism: scientific investigation into the reliability of the Bible divorced from the authority and infallibility of the Bible.

⁷³ John F. MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1993), 233.

⁷⁴ Quoted in: Jones, *Church History Made Easy*, 162.

⁷⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1959 [orig. 1937]), 193; quoted in: Noll, *Turning Points*, 262.

2. Biblical criticism

- a. Lower criticism: focuses on identifying the original text of the Bible from various manuscripts.
- b. Higher criticism: focuses on the historical origins of the biblical documents by using source criticism and form criticism.

iii. Major proponents and works

1. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834), *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799). Rooted religion in the feeling of absolute dependence on a reality beyond oneself. Schleiermacher is considered the “Father of Modern Theology.”
2. Albrecht Ritschl (1822 – 1889), *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (1874). An argument for viewing Christianity through a social lens. The essence of Christianity is social.
3. Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882), *The Origin of the Species* (1859). The book revolutionized concepts of origins.
4. Adolf Von Harnack (1851 – 1930), *What is Christianity?* (1900). The Christian faith is not a matter of doctrine but a matter of life.

iv. Major opponents of theological liberalism

1. Charles Hodge (1797 – 1878)
2. A. A. Hodge (1823 – 1886)
3. B. B. Warfield (1851 – 1921)

d. Social Reform

i. Slavery

1. England: William Wilberforce (1759 – 1833), Emancipation Act (1833)

2. United States: Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865), Emancipation Proclamation (1863)

ii. Social work

1. Salvation Army (1865): William Booth (1829 – 1912)
2. Young Men's Christian Association (1844): George Williams (1821 – 1905)
3. Goodwill Industries (1905): Edgar J. Helms (1836 – 1942)
4. Care of orphans: George Muller (1805 – 1898)
5. Education of urban poor: Robert Raikes (1735 – 1811), popularized the Sunday school movement.

iii. Social gospel

1. The idea that Jesus primarily came to alleviate the poor and oppressed not to save them from their sins.
2. Major proponent: Walter Rauschenbusch (1861 – 1918), a German Baptist pastor in New York City, who struggled with urban problems. Wrote three major works:
 - a. *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907)
 - b. *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912)
 - c. *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917)

- e. Denominations: by the end of the 19th century, in the United States you have every major branch of Protestant denominations:

- i. Episcopal
- ii. Lutheran
- iii. Presbyterian/Reformed/Congregational
- iv. Pietist/Brethren
- v. Baptist

- vi. Methodist
- vii. Holiness
- viii. Christian and Restorationist
- ix. Adventist/Sabbatarian
- x. Pentecostal
- xi. Fundamentalist/Bible

36. Roman Catholic Progress: Papal Infallibility

- a. Background: after the political instability caused by the French Revolution, people looked to the church for stability. Infallibility became inevitable.
- b. Events leading to papal infallibility:
 - i. December 8, 1854, Pius IX declares Mary to have been conceived without the stain of original sin in view of the merits of Christ.
 - ii. December 8, 1869: First Vatican Council (Dec 8, 1869 – July 18, 1870). The Council confirmed two things:
 - 1. The Pope is the supreme head over the church in matters of faith, morals, discipline, and church administration.
 - 2. When making official pronouncements for the Church (*ex cathedra*) on matters of faith and morals, these are binding without the consent of the Church.