

His-Story

Church history and why it matters to me

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

(1800 - 1899)

I. I love Thy Kingdom, Lord

*I love thy kingdom, Lord,
the house of thine abode,
the church our blest Redeemer saved
with his own precious blood.*

*I love thy church, O God.
Her walls before thee stand,
dear as the apple of thine eye,
and graven on thy hand.*

*For her my tears shall fall;
for her my prayers ascend;
to her my cares and toils be given,
till toils and cares shall end.*

*Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways:
her sweet communion, solemn vows,
her hymns of love and praise.*

*Sure as thy truth shall last,
to Zion shall be given
the brightest glories earth can yield,
and brighter bliss of heaven.*

II. General time line (see page 2)

III. Between the Awakenings

- A. Revolutionary War (took a toll on religious life; by end of war about 10% of Americans were churchgoers)
- B. Influence of Deism
- C. Great migration to the frontier

IV. The Second Great Awakening

A. Colleges

- 1. Hampden-Sydney College, VA (1787)
 - a. Archibald Alexander visited H-S College and preached
 - b. Awakening spread from college to neighboring churches
- 2. Yale
 - a. Timothy Dwight preached scholarly, apologetic sermons
 - b. Spring of 1802 75 students converted

I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

1800

If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth— if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy. Psalm 137:5-6 (NKJV)

Those of us praying for a spiritual revival in America should remember the last two decades of the 1700s. It was a low-water mark for morality, especially on college campuses. The Rationalist movement, sweeping over classroom and dormitory, had turned most professors and students into infidels.

“During the last decade of the eighteenth century,” wrote J. Edwin Orr, “the typical Harvard student was atheist. Students at Williams College conducted a mock celebration of Holy Communion. When the Dean at Princeton opened the chapel Bible to read, a pack of playing cards fell out, some radical having cut a rectangle out of each page to fit the pack! Christians were so unpopular they met in secret and kept their minutes in code.”

Yale University in Hartford, Connecticut, was no exception. The college church was almost extinct, and Christian students—if there were any—were underground. But God was preparing a man named Timothy Dwight (grandson of Jonathan Edwards) to turn the tide.

As a child, Timothy had been precocious. He learned the alphabet in one lesson and read the Bible at an early age. Once when he didn't show up for dinner, his worried parents found him in the orchard teaching the catechism to a group of Native Americans. He was only four.

Timothy entered Yale at age thirteen, and was so devoted to his studies that he neglected exercise and sleep. He even limited himself to twelve mouthfuls of vegetables at meals, so as not to overeat and dull his mind. He went on to become a pastor and community leader. In 1795, he was elected president of Yale.

Soon he was debating upperclassmen on the subject: “Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the Word of God?” In small numbers, students began considering Christianity, and within a couple of years there were about a dozen believers on campus.

After seven years of preaching, teaching, and praying, Dwight saw a revival break out at Yale in which one-third of the student body was converted. This spiritual resurgence touched other colleges, too: Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, and many others. This “Second Great Awakening,” provided the spiritual leadership America needed for the next generation.

The spirit of revival permeates Dwight's “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord,” which is based on a portion of Psalm 137. It's the oldest American hymn in continual use.

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3. Princeton
 - a. Revival came (1815) by the influence of Daniel Baker, a student from Georgia
 - b. Baker and a few friends prayed secretly for an awakening
 - c. 45 to 50 students became believers (one of whom was Charles Hodge)

B. Camp meetings

1. Cane Ridge, Kentucky (1801)
 - a. Multi-day events
 - b. Tended to be more emotional
2. Rise of the Circuit Riders
 - a. Bishop Asbury (traveled on horse back over 207,000 miles)
 - b. Peter Cartright (strong preacher who was known to thresh hecklers)
3. Presbyterians gave up on camp meetings because of a lack of keeping order
4. Camp meetings taken over by the Methodists (Methodists grew in great numbers during this time)

C. Theological shifts

1. From Calvinistic to Armenian
 - a. Methodists already were anti-Calvinistic

When I was blind, I could not see,
The Calvinists deceived me;
They, by the Scripture, strive to show,
That sinners nothing had to do:
At length I heard another preach,
Whose ways of righteousness did teach:
He warned me of the Calvinist,
And how God's word they would resist
—*New Methodist Pocket Hymn Book*
 - b. Shift among Baptists
 - Early on were confessional and Calvinistic
 - 2nd Great Awakening caused them to forget their history and to abandon the Westminster Confession
2. Charles Finney's influence (1792-1875)
 - a. A lawyer turned evangelist
 - b. Adopted techniques that put pressure on the "sinner" and demanded immediate response
 - c. Armenian theology (bordered on Pelagianism)
 - d. Emphasized social reform: need to abandon social sins (slavery, abolition, etc.)

Time Line: 1800 - 1899 (from <http://www.churchtimeline.com>)

1800	First camp meeting (Kentucky) presided over by Calvinist James McGready
1801	William Carey's Bengali New Testament published
1801	Cane Ridge Revival (Kentucky) an early stirring of the 2 nd Great Awakening
1808	Henry Martyn publishes the New Testament in Hindustani
1809	Harvard having been lost to Unitarianism, Andover Seminary is founded
1812	Princeton Seminary founded
1812	b. James Henley Thornwell, the great Southern Presbyterian mind whose influence is still felt in the PCA (sadly, he defended slavery).
1813	b. David Livingston, missionary and explorer in Africa
1813	b. Soren Kierkegaard
1816	African Methodist Episcopal Church founded by Richard Allen, a freedman who had been the first black Methodist to be ordained as a deacon
1824	Charles Finney leads revivals from Wilmington to Boston. The Second Great Awakening is underway
1833-41	The Oxford Movement (or, Tractarian Movement), attempts to bring the Church of England closer to Catholicism. Tried to popularize the Via Media. Led by John Henry Newman
1834	d. William Carey, called "the Father of Modern Missions"
1834	b. C.H. Spurgeon
1835-37	Adoniram Judson translates the Bible into Burmese
1837	b. Abraham Kuyper
1837	Old School/New School controversy splits American Presbyterianism
1845	John Henry Newman converts to Roman Catholicism
1848	b. Mary Slessor, who was called "The Mother of All of Life" (by the Africans she would minister to)
1851	b. B.B. Warfield, Princeton theologian who would defend inerrancy
1852	b. Adolf Schlatter, a respected conservative voice in liberal Germany
1854	Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary
1857	Finney's Lectures to Professing Christians written to influence the practice of "Christian Perfection"
1859	<i>Origin of the Species</i> , Darwin
1860	<i>Essays & Reviews</i> published. A liberal manifesto by 7 Church of England priests
1861	Spurgeon moves to the Metropolitan Tabernacle (preaching to over 6,000 per week)
1864	Old School/New School schism healed in the South (healed in the North in 1869)
1870	Vatican I, and the declaration of Papal Infallibility when speaking ex cathedra
1874	The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation by Albrecht Rietschl reduces Christianity to a social gospel
1881	b. J. Gresham Machen
1886	Abraham Kuyper leads a major succession in the Dutch Reformed Church
1886	b. Karl Barth
1898	Kuyper's Stone Lectures urge the development of a Christian world view encompassing all of life

3. The Democratization of American Christianity
 - a. Shift from ecclesiastical authority to a more “frontier” mentality
 - b. The new attitude in American theology: every man to decide his own theology

D. Missions Expansions (also known as the “Great Century”)

1. Catholic missions into Americas
2. William Carey (1761-1834)
 - a. Born in England; a shoe cobbler who wanted to be a missionary (had a globe on his desk)
 - b. 1792: preached a sermon from Isaiah 54: Attempt Great Things for God; Expect Great Things from God
 - c. Went to India as a missionary with the Baptist Missionary Society
3. London Missionary Society (1795): Interdenominational missions board that sent our David Livingston to Africa (“Dr. Livingston I presume?”)
4. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810)
 - a. Began with the Haystack Prayer Meeting of 1806 (Williams College; a prayer meeting of young men pray about missions)
 - b. Ordination of the first American Foreign Missionaries: 1812 sent 5 men to India (one of which was Adoniram Judson)
5. “Faith Missions”
 - a. Approach to missions: pray and don’t ask for support (trust in God; not people)
 - b. Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission (1865)
 - c. George Muller and his orphanage in England

Desire of God: Frederick W. Faber (1814-1863)
 Oh for freedom, for freedom in worshipping God,
 For the mountain-top feeling of generous souls,
 For the health, for the air, of the hearts deep and broad,
 Where grace not in rills but in cataracts rolls!

Most good is the brisk wholesome service of fear,
 And the calm wise obedience of conscience is sweet;
 And good are all worships, all loyalties dear,
 All promptitudes fitting, all services meet.

But none honors God like the thirst of desire,
 Nor possesses the heart so completely with Him;
 For it burns the world out with the swift ease of fire,
 And fills life with good works till it runs o’er the brim.

Then pray for desire, for love’s wistfulest yearning,
 For the beautiful pining of holy desire;
 Yes, pray for a soul that is ceaselessly burning
 With the soft fragrant flames of this thrice happy fire.

For the heart only dwells, truly dwells with its treasure,
 And the langor of love captive hearts can unfetter;
 And they who love God cannot love Him by measure,
 For their love is but hunger to love Him still better.

Is it hard to serve God, timid soul? Hast thou found
 Gloomy forests, dark glens, mountain-tops on thy way?
 All the hard would be easy, all the tangles unwound,
 Wouldst thou only desire, as well as obey.

For the lack of desire is the ill of all ills;
 Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod,
 The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills
 Is a jubilant pining and longing for God.

’Tis a fire that will burn what thou canst not pass over;
 ’Tis a lightning that breaks away all bars to love;
 ’Tis a sunbeam the secrets of God to discover;
 ’Tis the wing David prayed for, the wing of the Dove.

I have seen living men—and their good angels know
 How they failed and fell short through the want of desire:
 Souls once almost saints have descended so low,
 ’Twill be much if their wings bear them over the fire.

I have seen dying men not so grand in their dying
 As our love would have wished,—and through lack of desire:
 Oh that we may die languishing, burning, and sighing;
 For God’s last grace and best is to die all on fire.

’Tis a great gift of God to live after our Lord,
 Yet the old Hebrew times they were ages of fire.
 When fainting souls fed on each dim figured word,
 And God called men He loved most—the Men of Desire.

Oh then wish more for God, burn more with desire,
 Covet more the dear sight of His marvelous Face;
 Pray louder, pray longer, for the sweet gift of fire
 To come down on thy heart with its whirlwinds of grace.

Yes, pine for thy God, fainting soul! ever pine;
 Oh languish mid all that life brings thee of mirth;
 Famished, thirsty, and restless,—let such life be thine,—
 For what sight is to heaven, desire is to earth.

God loves to be longed for, He loves to be sought,
 For He sought us Himself with such longing and love:
 He died for desire of us, marvelous thought!
 And He yearns for us now to be with Him above.