



St John's Lent Course
Session 4 March 20th 2022
1850-1950 A Century of Change

Introduction

- Continue our journey through 2000 years of church history, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles; uncovering the deliberations and influence of the Church Fathers; travelling the road to the reformation through the dark and middle ages and last week looking at the legacy of the Reformation in the work of the Reformers; the Romans; the Radicals and the Revivalists- individuals who changed the spiritual landscape of the West.
- **The Victorian Period 1850-1900**
- **AT HOME-** industrialization; urbanisation; population growth; developments in medicine; increased social mobility; wider education; advances in transport technology; the growth of the railways etc
- Behind the scenes there was real poverty- the emergence of the class system in the industrial north- the East End phenomenon which linked London as a world trade centre to the poverty of the dockland communities etc-
- **AND ABROAD** The British Empire and colonization
- **Africa, India and SE Asia** were opened up like never before
- **David Livingstone died in 1873** His mission was to bring commerce and Christianity to central Africa and missionary endeavours at this time were seen in this way "Colonialism and Christian Mission" went hand in hand

1. A POSITIVE CENTURY

(a) The Oxford or Tractarian Movement

- A surge of spirituality based on the notion that an equation could be made between the position of Rome and that of the Church of England.

(b) Revivals break out!

The Great Awakening

Moody and Sankey

Azusa Street LA

Wales

Ruanda

The Hebrides



(c) Social Reform and Mission

Tom Barnardo
William Booth
Elizabeth Fry
Kier Hardie
Robert Raikes

(d) Global Missionary Expansion

- The first missionary societies were established before this period with both Catholic and Protestant missionary endeavours.
- They were generally denominationally based and centrally funded
- The emergence of Faith Missions eg China Inland Mission (1865)- Hudson Taylor

(e) Improved Biblical Literacy and Preaching

The expectation was that the new century would herald the universal advance of the Gospel but over those Victorian years other challenges to faith had arisen.

2 A NEGATIVE CENTURY

1. The Emergence of the Cults- Mormons/JW's/Christian science/Christadelphians/ Spiritualists – most from the Atlantic seaboard of the USA- based around “Christology” and Eschatology (end times)-

2. Doctrinal shifts in the RC Church

(a) Doctrine of Mary 1854 “immaculate conception”

(b) Ex cathedra papal infallibility 1870 (1950 used for the first time- “bodily assumption”

This maryology with her elevation to “Co redemptrix” with Christ would drive a further wedge between Catholicism and Protestantism that exists to this day!

3. Science and Darwin

1859 Origin of Species

Darwin was a Deist and he said this

“There is a grandeur in the river of life as originally breathed by the creator”

Note -Darwin lost his faith NOT because of the theory of Evolution but because of the death of his daughter Annie



4. Rationalism; The Age of Reason; earlier known as the Enlightenment-atheism or agnosticism

Rationalism invaded the church – liberal criticism - deconstruct the miraculous because under the new god of science, these things just don't happen.

The churches response to this was an emasculated form of the Gospel called liberalism whereby the virgin birth, the miracles and the supremely the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ were challenged, reinterpreted or even discarded.

And so to the 20th Century and into our life times!

A shift in the intellectual , cultural and philosophical landscape in which we find ourselves.

It can be summed up in this statement

The Collapse of the Progress Myth and the Rise of Post Modernism

. There are three very obvious trends arising from a shift from a God-centred world view to a man centred world view-

(a) **The status of science**

(b) **God is dead!**

(c) **Man is now autonomous and independent-**

"My head is bloody but unbowed Amid the bludgeoning of circumstance.

For I am the Master of my Fate and I am the Captain of my Soul"

Or "I did it my way"

The dream of the Enlightenment was a Brave New World of Broad sunlight uplands where man could fulfil his glorious potential.. As the years of the 20th rolled by something else happened- World Wars/ Genocide/ the Holocaust /Ethnic Cleansing/Famine/ accelerating crime and violence/the breakdown of law and order/ the disintegration of the family- the death of the Progress Myth that education and man's advancement would solve our problems-

The result is a further shift into what we call post modernism-

Even in the rationalist world there was a big story of progress and direction- now there is no big story

"TO BE CONTINUED.....!"

So what happened ! Come back next week and see!



Discussion Questions

(a) **Mission and Social Reform-** Matt 28.16-20 is well known as the Great Commission- to do what? How did the early church augment or develop its mission in the New Testament

eg Acts 2 42-47 and 4.32-35 : Eph 6.5-9; 1 Tim 5 9-16 How radical was all this stuff?

(b) **Faith and Reason-** Look at Hebrews 11 1- 6 esp v1,2,6 What guidance do these verses give us about understanding our place in the universe?

(c) Talk about your understanding of science and faith and listen to one another!

Matthew 28: 16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Acts 2: 42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



Acts 4: 32-35

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there was no needy person among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Ephesians 6: 5-9

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him.

1 Timothy 5: 9-16

⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

¹¹ As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹² Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³ Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.



¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

Hebrews 11: 1- 6

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴ By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: 'He could not be found, because God had taken him away.'^[a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.