

Church History

The Second Great Awakening

HOW CAN WE BE SO POLARIZED ON SOMETHING SO APPARENT?

"In its simplest definition, discernment is nothing more than the ability to decide between truth and error, right and wrong. Discernment is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth. In other words, the ability to think with discernment is synonymous with an ability to think biblically. First Thessalonians 5:21-22 teaches that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be discerning: "But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil." The apostle John issues a similar warning when he says, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). According to the New Testament, discernment is not optional for the believer-it is required."¹

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit;

²⁰ do not despise prophetic utterances.

²¹ But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;

²² abstain from every form of evil.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes a sequel is better than the original. Think of movies where the sequel is better than the original.

- Toy Story 3
- The Bourne Ultimatum
- Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back
- Back to the Future Part II
- Terminator 2: Judgment Day
- The Godfather Part II

Sometimes a sequel is not so great. Most movies that were great at their inception and then bomb through sequel are not memorable movies.

Unfortunately, by calling the **Second Great Awakening** *second*, we assume it parallels and continues the first. Regrettably, such is not the case.

The **Second Great Awakening** is to the First Great Awakening that a poor sequel is to the original.

DEFINING OUR TERMS

One generation removed from the **First Great Awakening**.

- Conversion individually

A decisive moment when one is converted. We call it regeneration or conversion. In God's sovereignty, He pours out His saving grace in mass [I.e. the book of Acts, Pentecost].

- Revival

Lots of people, A revival

- Awakening Collectively

Occasionally, there are waves of revival, called an awakening.

WHEN WAS IT?

“The **Second Great Awakening** (1790–1840) was a **time of evangelical fervor** and revival in the newly formed nation of America. The British colonies were settled by many individuals who were looking for a place to worship their Christian religion free from persecution. As such, America arose as a religious nation. Part and parcel with these strong beliefs came a fear of secularism.”²

HOW WAS THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST?³

The **First Great Awakening** was a larger international movement vs. the **Second Great Awakening** that was primarily the USA.⁴

The Second Great Awakening is generally seen as a continuation of the first, but there are some **major differences**.

- Mainly, the First Great Awakening focused on the spread of Protestant religion itself,
 - while **the Second Great Awakening focused on universal salvation rather than predestination and personal responsibility.**
 - **The Second Great Awakening was also more politically minded.**
 - **Both are ‘fruits,’ but have very different ‘flavors.’**

THEOCAST notes in their podcast - The Failure of Revivalism - “The Subjectivation of Religion where we make the individual the subject of religion.”⁵

In the First Great Awakening, God had ascendancy and power. In the Second Great Awakening, humanity had ascendancy and power.

“The First Great Awakening was a period of religious revival that encouraged individuals to pursue the knowledge of God and self. On the other hand, the Second Great Awakening contradicted the assertion of the first great awakening during which the doctrine of predestination was introduced and taught.”⁶

Theologically – goes from Calvinism to Arminianism.

Educationally – “basement theology” prevails. There are no theological guardrails.

- As we will note, the Second Great Awakening will be anti-intellectual. And its ministers will be uneducated or formally trained.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR REVIVALISM

What led to or “birthed” the movement?

- Cultural changes between 1740-1790

“This fear of secularism had arisen during the Enlightenment, which resulted in the First Great Awakening (1720–1745). The ideas of social equality that came about with the advent of the new nation trickled down to religion, and the movement to be known as the Second Great Awakening began about 1790. Specifically, Methodists and Baptists began an effort to **democratize religion** [*congregational vs. hierarchical*]. Unlike the Episcopalian religion, ministers in these sects were typically uneducated. **Unlike the Calvinists, they believed and preached in salvation for all.**”⁷

- American **Revolution**
- The need to rebuild - **Reconstruction** [Industrial Revolution – more and more American individualism]
 - Began incorporating the business model into the church. The king of this shift was Charles G. Finney. The entire idea of a business pastor of a church reflects **Second Great Awakening** ideology.
- There was a staggering **Inflation** [30% {USA @6%}]
- The drive to populate the lands west of the Mississippi - Frontier **expansion** ("the land beyond the Sabbath") there were “no” churches west.
- In the 1790’s Church **membership**: 5-10% Spiritual dullness, apathy.
- The scholasticism of the North East “fed” the Second Great Awakening. The slow division between the North and the South.
- “The further you remove from the place of power the “naughtier” you can be.”⁸

We have so celebrated the priesthood of the believer and individual soul-liberty that we have forgotten the biblical order within the local church.

Heb. 13:17

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Ephesians 4:11-14

¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

As spiritual as it might sound to say one studies the Bible by themselves or in a small group separated from the church's oversight, biblical Christianity is lived in community under the oversight of Elders.

1Ti 5:17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Tit 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

THE THREE WAVES [phases] OF REVIVAL

The Second Great Awakening can be divided into three phases.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE AWAKENING (1810-25)

- The first and more **conservative phase** of the awakening (1810-25) centered in the Congregational churches of **New England** under the leadership of theologians Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Nathaniel W. Taylor, and Asahel Nettleton.

Grandson of Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight becomes president of Yale University. By 1795, there is almost no Christian presence at Yale.

"Timothy Dwight was the grandson of the great theologian of the Awakening, Jonathan Edwards. He believed there could be no national virtue without national religion, and these beliefs led to him being made the president of Yale College and bringing about religious revival there. The grandfather's mantle had descended on the grandson's shoulders."⁹

Limited primarily to the pews of the church.

The French enlightenment had an inroad at Yale. Deism denies supernatural element. Only a handful of students knew the gospel. President Dwight asked for a student to lead chapel, none would do it, so he did. Dwight preaches the gospel and 1/3 become Christian.

Dwight as President of Yale

After the death of Yale president Ezra Stiles in 1795, Dwight was duly installed as his successor. Lyman Beecher watched his fellow undergraduates greet Timothy Dwight's arrival with skepticism—but not for long.

They thought the faculty were afraid of free discussion, Beecher remembered. But when they handed Dr. Dwight a list of subjects for class disputation, to their surprise he selected "Is the Bible the word of God?" and told them to do their best. He heard all they had to say, answered them, and there was an end. He preached incessantly for six months on the subject, and all infidelity skulked and hid its head.

Religious Revival at Yale

From there, Dwight went on the offensive, denouncing unbelief as “the genuine source, the Vesuvius” of the French Revolution.

“There can be no halting between two opinions,” he demanded of the college. “Will you enthrone a Goddess of Reason before the table of Christ? Will you burn your Bibles? Will you crucify anew your Redeemer?”

In short order, Yale College was moved by an outbreak of religious revival that confirmed that the grandfather’s mantle had descended on the grandson’s shoulders.

“The whole college was shaken,” wrote Heman Humphrey, one of the College converts. “It seemed for a time as if the whole mass of the students would press into the kingdom. It was the Lord’s doing, and marvelous in all eyes. Oh, what a blessed change. It was a glorious reformation.” Another convert, Noah Porter, marveled that such triumphs of grace, none whose privilege it was to witness them, had ever before been seen.

So sudden and so great was the change in individuals, and in the general aspect of the college, that those who had been waiting for it were filled with wonder as well as joy. And those who knew not what it meant were awe-struck and amazed. Wherever students were found in their rooms, in the chapel, in the hall, in the college-yard, in their walks about the city, the reigning impression was, “Surely God is in this place.”¹⁰

Theologically conservative; even Calvinistic. The other two streams are not so good.

THE SECOND PHASE (1795-1810)

- The second phase (1795–1810) was associated with **frontier camp meetings** conducted by American preachers James McGready, John McGee, and Barton W. Stone in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Families would come for several days. Outdoor services preached from makeshift stages.

Logan county Kentucky, by 1800’s revival begins to break out. McGready was Scottish and Presbyterian. Had a tradition called **communion season**. Two or three days of instruction ending in communion. McGready begins camp meetings.

Stone attends a McGready seminar and takes it back to Cane Ridge and the meeting explodes.

“The Second Great Awakening is best known for its large camp meetings that led **extraordinary numbers** of people to convert through an **enthusiastic style of preaching and audience participation**. A young man who attended **the famous 20,000-person revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1802**, captures the spirit of these camp meetings activity: [nearly 10% of Kentucky’s population]

The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. I counted seven ministers, all preaching at one time, some on stumps, others on wagons ... Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy. A peculiarly strange sensation came over me. My heart beat

tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lips quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground.

This young man was so moved that he went on to become a Methodist minister. As this quotation suggests, evangelical ministers reached their audience at an emotional level that powerfully moved large crowds.”¹¹

“Filled the gap of an expanding country. Because they were not close to home, they came and ‘camped’ for several days. They had one goal – **conversion**.”¹²

“At the beginning of the Second Great Awakening, preachers brought their message to the people with **great fanfare and excitement in the form of a traveling revival**. The earliest of the tent revivals focused on the Appalachian frontier, but they quickly moved into the area of the original colonies. These revivals were social events where faith was renewed. The Baptists and Methodists often worked together in these revivals. Both religions believed in **free will with personal redemption**. The Baptists were **highly decentralized with no hierarchical structure** in place and preachers lived and worked among their congregation. The Methodists, on the other hand, had more of an **internal structure in place**. Individual preachers like the Methodist bishop Francis Asbury (1745–1816) and the “Backwoods Preacher” Peter Cartwright (1785–1872) would travel the frontier on horseback converting people to the Methodist faith. They were quite successful and **by the 1840s the Methodists were the largest Protestant group in America**. The revival meetings were not small affairs. Thousands would meet in camp meetings, and many times the event turned quite chaotic with impromptu singing or shouting, individuals speaking in tongues, and dancing in the aisles.”¹³

“At the start of the Revolution the largest denominations were **Congregationalists** (the 18th-century descendants of Puritan churches), **Anglicans** (known after the Revolution as Episcopalians), and **Quakers**. *But by 1800, Evangelical Methodism and Baptists*, were becoming the fastest-growing religions in the nation.”¹⁴

Uneducated, unruly, and things get out of hand quickly. Partying, drinking.

“As many souls were conceived as were converted.”

They are responding in very strange ways. Laughing, trembling, running in circles, others fell as if dead, others barking were barking at the devil. [SOUNDS similar to the **Toronto Blessing** in Canada].¹⁵

The Presbyterians saw this and freaked out. The Methodists and the Baptists loved it. Soon there were hundreds of such meetings taking place. Mostly south and west.

Methodist Circuit Riders.

- Francis Asbury [1745-1816].

His parents are followers of John Wesley. They grow quickly because they are willing to send out uneducated preachers. Came to America in 1771. Traveled 300K miles on horseback. He is committed to ministering to people who have no ministers. Riding from church to church.

When he came there were four churches with about 300 people. When he died in 1816, 2000 ministers and several thousands in Canada.

There was a popular saying at the time, "There is nothing out today but crows and Methodists."

- Peter Cartwright

Very burly and tough.

They did not have an elaborate ordination program. Most simply said, "I go."

Historically, Baptist theology was Calvinistic and Confessional. But [the Baptist church] spread too quickly and by the Civil War, the church became non-confessional and it became "the only creed but Christ and the only book but the Bible."

- The difference between being biblical [good] and biblicism [dangerous].
- I am skeptical of Christians quoting verses.

Nearly half of the men sent, died by the age of 30.
Men of courage who were not theologically adept.

THE THIRD AND FINAL PHASE (1825-35)

- The third and final phase (1825-35) stemmed from the activities of evangelist **Charles Grandison Finney**, who began his revivalism in small towns in **western New York** in the 1820s but eventually conducted revival meetings in the largest cities in the United States and Britain.

Absolutely the worst phase of the Second Great Awakening.

- 1st phase, largely theological and Calvinistic
- 2nd phase, theologically light and Arminian
- 3rd phase, anti-theologically and Pelagian.

"This awakening was unique in that it moved beyond the educated elite of New England to those who were less wealthy and less educated."¹⁶

Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1865): THE PROBLEM WITH FINNEYISM

"The most significant revivalist in this area was the Presbyterian minister Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) who was ordained in 1823. **One key change he made was in promoting mass conversions during revival meetings.** No longer were individuals converting alone. Instead, they were joined by neighbors, converting in masse. In 1839, Finney preached in Rochester and made an estimated 100,000 converts."¹⁷

"No single man is more responsible for **the distortion of Christian truth** in our age than Charles Grandison Finney. His "new measures" created a framework for modern decision theology and Evangelical Revivalism."¹⁸

"Irish statesman Edmund Burke is often misquoted as having said, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." Spanish philosopher George Santayana is credited with the aphorism, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," while British statesman Winston Churchill wrote, "**Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.**" Lessons from the past may not always ward off doom, but they can provide insights into the present and even the future."¹⁹

Because we have an aversion toward Church History and the development of Systematic Theology, we repeat the sins of Charles G. Finney.

Those who love Charles G. Finney love him because of his results, they are pragmatists. They do not love him because of what he believed. Those who identify him as a heretic, do so because of his theology.

MODERN DAY 'FINNEYISM'

"Jerry Falwell calls him "one of my heroes and a hero to many evangelicals, including Billy Graham." I recall wandering through the Billy Graham Center some years ago, observing the place of honor given to Charles Finney in the evangelical tradition, reinforced by the first class in theology I had at a Christian college, where Finney's work was required reading. The New York revivalist was the oft-quoted and celebrated champion of the Christian singer Keith Green and the Youth With A Mission organization. He is particularly esteemed among the leaders of the Christian Right and the Christian Left, by both Jerry Falwell and Jim Wallis (Sojourners' magazine), and his imprint can be seen in movements that appear to be diverse, but in reality, are merely heirs to Finney's legacy. From the Vineyard movement and the Church Growth Movement to the political and social crusades, televangelism, and the Promise Keepers movement, as a former Wheaton College president rather glowingly cheered, "Finney, lives on!" That is because Finney's moralistic impulse envisioned a church that was in large measure an agency of personal and social reform rather than the institution in which the means of grace, Word and Sacrament, are made available to believers who then take the Gospel to the world."²⁰

He was a heretic. "He denied every major doctrine of Christianity."²¹

- Legal career
- His "conversion" in October 1821. He immediately gave up the law and began ministry. He absolutely refuses to go to seminary. He despises Calvinism and the Westminster Confession.
- He promoted women and proactively involved them in a way previously not done. outnumbered men in overall converts.

"He was ordained by the Presbytery of Oneida, NY, in 1824, and began his rise to prominence as an itinerant revivalist preacher. In 1835 he was appointed Professor of Theology at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio; in 1837, abandoning Presbyterianism, he also became pastor of a Congregational church in the town. Almost single-handedly, he transformed revivalism in America. He popularized so-called 'new measures': 'protracted meetings' (with the cessation of non-religious activity over several days), the 'anxious bench', prayer meetings, public prayer for individuals by name, and a dramatic pulpit style. He became an opponent of Calvinism and predestination, espousing a theology of human responsibility and agency in conversion."²²

- Begins his ministry in the "burned over district" of NY
- Highly controversial - New measures: He was a pioneer of revivalism [not revival]
 - He began to develop **techniques** to draw people in.
 - theatrical preaching, coarse language, attacking other ministers by name, calling out congregants by name if he thought you needed to repent.
 - Anxious bench – early prelude to the altar call. Come forward and sit on the front row making it easier for them to come.
 - protracted meetings – go on all day, take a break at night, and pick up in the morning.
- Why? Break down the hearer psychologically. I.e. a captor keeping a prisoner up all night to break them down.
- But why? "a revival is the result of the right use of the appropriate means." (Finney)
- There a recipe to it. You follow the recipe and you get the result.
- "It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means..." (Finney)

If the preacher says the right words, has the right setting, the right technic, the right lights, the right etc., God is obligated to act. It is in this way, revivals can be planned. You can put it on the calendar.

Finney preached that one was to actively be involved in their faith. **Finney was the first to actively promote social activity.** First to mark attendance at his meetings.

Dr. Richard Belcher, who received his M.Div. at Covenant Theological Seminary and his Th.D. from Concordia Seminary. He is a retired professor of Bible, Theology, Greek, and Preaching at Columbia Bible College (now Columbia International University) in Columbia, South Carolina, wrote the following observation and article.

“In many cases today it is rather easy to summarize the position of a theologian in accordance with the various theological categories of the day and of history. This person is an Arminian. This person is a Calvinist. And on and on we could go. But to give a summary sentence placing Charles G. Finney in a certain category is not easy. He could be called a Pelagian in some areas. He could be called an Arminian in other areas. He could be labeled as one who holds to a Governmental or Moral Influence view of the atonement of Christ. But even some of Finney’s views would be so different, that some of these common labels we use to speak of one’s theology today, cannot be used of him. He could also be called a perfectionist, but again he differs from many of that viewpoint.

So what do we do with Finney? It seems we must put him in his own category, and then it is best to call him a theologian with the center of his theology being the Government of God and Man’s Moral Responsibility to obey God’s law as the way of salvation. Let me see if we can summarize rather briefly (understanding nothing is brief about Finney) his overall system of theological truth. But first let me remind us of the words of the apostle Paul, when he said in

Galatians 1:8-9

⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preaches any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

I am convinced that Finney, like some of the Galatians, held a theology that moved from the grace of Christ to another gospel, which is not another gospel, and therefore we are admonished to treat him accordingly.²³

Philippians 1:12-20

¹² Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. ¹⁵ **Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife,** but some also from good will; ¹⁶ the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷ **the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.** ¹⁸ What then? **Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,** ¹⁹ for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

The Theology of Charles Finney

ATONEMENT

- Finney's theory of atonement combines principles from different historical theories, notably the governmental and the moral influence theories, but can't be associated solely to one of them.²⁴
- What about substitutionary atonement?
 - If he [Christ] had obeyed the Law as our substitute, then why should our own return to personal obedience be insisted upon as a sine qua non of our salvation. (Finney) **Instead of seeing that we don't, he dismisses substitutionary atonement.**
 - "the atonement, of itself, does not secure the salvation of any one." (Finney)
 - If we do not inherit Adam's sin, neither do we inherit Christ's righteousness.
- A governmental view of the atonement: Christ's death was a demonstration of God's willingness to forgive sins rather than a payment for sin.
 - In the Moral Government view of the atonement, God is not an offended party regarding individual sins, nor is a debt owed to him due to individual sins, nor is there an equating of sin with death; and there is no correlation between debt and sin. Instead, God is a moral governor who oversees proper moral truth and action; and he reconciles people to himself without paying their legal debt on the cross. The cross, then, is an example of the horror of sin and a demonstration of its effect upon mankind as well as an exhibition of God's displeasure with sin. The cross is to motivate people to believe in Christ (by seeing the horror of the effect of sin on God in flesh) and moves the sinner, by his free will, to choose to believe in God and repent of his sins."²⁵
- Hamartiology affects soteriology which affects philosophy and practice!

FREEWILL

- A major theme of his preaching was the need for what he called conversion. He also focused on the responsibilities that converts had to dedicate themselves to disinterested benevolence and to work to build the kingdom of God on earth. Finney's eschatology was postmillennial, meaning he believed the Millennium (a thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth) would begin before Christ's Second Coming. Finney believed Christians could bring in the Millennium by ridding the world of "great and sore evils". Frances FitzGerald wrote, "In his preaching the emphasis was always on the ability of men to choose their own salvation, to work for the general welfare, and to build a new society."²⁶
- The will is bound by its greatest desires. – ME :-)
 - Augustine's view of the will vs. Pelagius
 - Pelagianism makes man the author of his salvation.
 - Finney = Pelagian: sinners weren't prevented by nature from coming to Christ, the only obstacle is personal reluctance and indifference. Therefore, the goal of the preacher is to overcome these psychological inhibitions and persuade the will by piling on enticements.
 - "Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts" (Finney)

- Rejected Calvinism and predestination and placed the salvation of an individual on the individual. **Steps to being saved.**
- What is conversion? The changing of choices.
 - "He believed sinners were in control of their redemption and were on the verge of eliminating sin from the world in preparation of Christ's return."²⁷
 - "It is not a change in substance of soul or body. If it were, sinners could not be required to affect it. Such a change would not constitute a change of moral character. No such change is needed, as the sinner has all the faculties and natural abilities requisite to render **perfect obedience** to God. All he needs is to be induced to use these powers and attributes as he ought." (Finney)

PERFECTIONISM

- Finney was an advocate of perfectionism, the doctrine that through complete faith in Christ believers could receive a "second blessing of the Holy Spirit" and reach Christian perfection, a higher level of sanctification. For Finney, that meant living in obedience to God's law and loving God and one's neighbors but was not a sinless perfection. For Finney, even sanctified Christians are susceptible to temptation and capable of sin. Finney believed that it is possible for Christians to backslide, even to the point of losing their salvation.²⁸
- Finney hates the idea of "while a sinner yet a saint." "The very heart of the gospel as he explains Martin Luther's Latin phrase, "**Simul Justus et Peccator**."²⁹
- For Finney, God demands absolute perfection. But not in us, but in Christ. For Finney, perfection is obtained by our free will.
- What about Justification? [or sanctification?]
 - For sinners to be forensically pronounced just is impossible and absurd...there can be no justification in a legal or forensic sense, but upon the ground of universal, perfect, and uninterrupted obedience to law. (Finney)
 - **The Christian, therefore, is justified no longer than he obeys**, and must be condemned when he disobeys...In these respects, then, the sinning Christian and the unconverted sinner are upon precisely the same ground. (Finney)
 - But can he be pardoned and accepted, and justified, in the gospel sense, while sin, any degree of sin, remains in him? Certainly not. (Finney)

REVIVALISM

- Finney was a New School Presbyterian, and his theology was similar to that of Nathaniel William Taylor. Finney departed strongly from traditional Calvinist theology by teaching that people have a completely free will to choose salvation. He taught that preachers had vital roles in producing revival, and wrote in 1835, "A revival is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means."³⁰
- Asahel Nettleton advocated for a "machinery-less evangelism!" Pro revival, but from a reformed position.

- John Williamson Nevin [wrote the book, the anxious bench]
 - Spurious revivals are common, and as the fruit of them, false conversions lamentably abound. An anxious bench may be crowded, where no divine influence whatever is felt...Hundreds may be carried through the process of anxious bench conversion, and yet their last state may be worse than the first. (John Williamson Nevin)

PRAGMATISM

- The controversies over Finneyism split the Presbyterian church: old side and new side.
 - “Many are also aware of the split in 1837 between the Old School and the New School (still to be featured in this series). Few, however, know much about the split between the Old Side and the New Side Presbyterians. That split occurred in 1741, only thirty-five years after the formation of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. It pitted the anti-revival Old Side against the pro-revival New Side.”³¹
- Finney’s Response: IT WORKS!

THE PROBLEM WITH PRAGMATISM

“Pragmatism is defined by Webster’s as “the doctrine that practical consequences are the criteria of knowledge and meaning and value.” In short, **truth is determined by consequences. Whether something is right or wrong, good or bad is dependent on results.** Since the time of the Reformation, Protestants have affirmed the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* which teaches that the Bible alone is to be our standard of morality and truth. This standard is rooted in the early church and, of course, in the Bible. It has always been a fundamental teaching of Protestantism. *Sola Scriptura* was the foundational doctrine of the Reformation – the doctrine that everything else depended on.”³²

“The obvious danger of pragmatism in the church is that we lose our focus on the absolute standard God has given us in His word. When we lose that focus the church is on the slippery slope to becoming like the world. When we discard of God’s standards we must depend on our own deeply flawed standards. We begin to trust in ourselves and lose our trust in God.”³³

FINNEY IS NO HERO, HE IS A HERETIC

“In Dr. G. P. Fisher’s recently issued History of Christian Doctrine there is a very suggestive passage in which he tells us how heresies usually originate, and gives us an insight into their nature. He says:

When Christianity is brought into contact with modes of thought and tenets originating elsewhere, either of two effects may follow. It may assimilate them, discarding whatever is at variance with the gospel, or the tables may be turned and the foreign elements may prevail. In the latter case there ensues a perversion of Christianity, an amalgamation with it of ideas

discordant with its nature. The product then is a heresy. But to fill out the conception, it seems necessary that error should be aggressive and should give rise to an effort to build up a party, and thus to divide the Church. In the Apostles' use of the term, "heresy" contains a factious element.

He then proceeds to remark that "'heresy' meant originally 'choice'; then an opinion that is the product of choice or of the will, instead of being drawn from the divine Word"; that it is, in a word, "a man-made opinion" as distinguished from a divinely taught doctrine."³⁴

- Benjamin B. Warfield, the great Princeton professor best summed up Finney's views when he observed that you could remove God from it and it would not change much of anything.
- "Charles Finney, the revivalist of the last century, is a patron saint for most evangelicals. And yet, he denied original sin, the substitutionary atonement, justification, and the need for regeneration by the Holy Spirit. In short, Finney was Pelagian." (Michael Horton)

WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Orthodoxy

Heterodoxy – Greek word occurs twice in the New Testament.

1Ti 1:3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they **teach no other doctrine**,

1Ti 6:3 **If any man teach otherwise**, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

HERESY

Ac 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

Ac 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Ac 24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

Ac 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

Ac 28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

Ga 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

2Pe 2:1 ¶ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Divisive Individual

Ro 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1Co 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1Co 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

Titus 3 - Heretic

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, ¹¹ knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

DOCTRINE MATTERS – SO, What’s the MATTER?

The University of Edinburgh, School of Divinity, in answering the question, “Why study Theology? Offers the following response.

“**Theology** offers the opportunity to focus on the Christian faith in detail [Systematic Theology] through the study of the Bible [Biblical Theology], the history of Christianity [Church History], its critical thinkers and its influence on ethical debates and the actions of its believers [Practical Theology].”³⁵

Paul, in the Pastoral Letters makes much of Doctrine.

1Ti 1:10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is **contrary to sound doctrine**;

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils**;

1Ti 4:6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, **nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine**, whereunto thou hast attained.

1Ti 4:13 **Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.**

1Ti 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

1Ti 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

1Ti 6:3 **If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words**, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and **is profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
Tit 1:9 **Holding fast the faithful word** as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. {as...: or, in teaching}
Tit 2:1 But speak thou the things which **become sound doctrine**:
Tit 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: **in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity**,
Tit 2:10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that **they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things**.

We have become a people of itching ears and misplaced priorities. As a consequence, we are tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

Ephesians 4:14

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

The false teacher | teaching starts “in” the church and moves outside the church.

Acts 20:28-31

²⁸ "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

1 John 2:18, 19

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF AWAKENING?³⁶

1. When evangelism [missions] becomes paramount, theological **differences almost disappear** among evangelical churches.

IF YOUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS SOUL WINNING, doctrinal studies take a backseat and the 'church' becomes theologically indifferent. This leads to theological doubt and ultimately, to denial of cardinal doctrines [think the movement of theological education]. This shift overemphasizes 'by whatever means necessary' in reaching the lost, leading to and overemphasis on 'social good' which becomes the 'social gospel' of THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM bringing us to POST MODERNISM where anything goes intellectually and culturally.

2. Moreover, under Finney's [guidance] a rationale for **carefully contrived revival techniques** evolved. After 1835, **an irregular corps of professional revival experts traveled** through the towns and cities of America and Britain organizing annual revival meetings at the invitation of local pastors who wanted to reinvigorate their churches. Although many American Protestants lost interest in revivalism in the first half of the 20th century, tent revivals as well as annual revivals in churches in the South and Midwest continued to be an important feature of Protestant church life.³⁷

The rise of the seeker movement and attractional ministries.

3. Many churches experienced a great increase in membership, particularly among Methodist and Baptist churches. Methodism went from being a child under Presbyterianism to becoming a peer.
4. "The evangelical impulse at the heart of the Second Great Awakening shared some of the egalitarian thrust of Revolutionary ideals. Evangelical churches generally **had a populist orientation that favored ordinary people over elites**. For instance, individual piety [of the minister] was seen as more important for salvation than the formal university training required for ministers in traditional Christian churches."³⁸

ANYONE who is willing can do it. The minister and ministry are not something learned or disciplined. The individual, rather than the corporate and community, becomes paramount.

There appears a dichotomy between . . .

- a. Clergy | Congregant Distinction
 - b. Formally Educated | Practical Experience
 - c. Orthodoxy [right thinking] | Orthopraxy [right doing] - Orthopathy [right feeling]
5. "The Second Great Awakening also included greater public roles for white women and much higher African-American participation in Christianity than ever before."³⁹

6. **Actual conversions.** Lot of fake and deceptive works, but people were saved. About 100K were converted.
7. A whole lot of societies or what we would today call **parachurch ministries are founded and social activism blossomed.** This is partial explainable due to Finney's adherence to the LAW and Perfectionism.
 - "Closely related to the Second Great Awakening were other reform movements such as temperance, abolition, and women's rights. The temperance movement encouraged people to abstain from consuming alcoholic drinks in order to preserve family order. The abolition movement fought to abolish slavery in the United States. The women's rights movement grew from female abolitionists who realized that they too could fight for their own political rights. In addition to these causes, reforms touched nearly every aspect of daily life, such as restricting the use of tobacco and dietary and dress reforms. The abolition movement emerged in the North from the wider Second Great Awakening 1800–1840."⁴⁰
 - The Second Great Awakening **made soul-winning the primary function of ministry** and stimulated several moral and philanthropic reforms, including temperance and the emancipation of women.⁴¹

The 1517 podcast notes, "Decadence and excess."⁴²

- Theologically, the Second Great Awakening is known for spreading the idea of **universal salvation and religious free will.**
- Socially, it set the stage for major social change by introducing ideas of abolition, feminism, and temperance.

The Benevolent Empire: a renewed interest in applying the gospel to social issues. "Through freewill there was an increasing emphasis on social activism."

- It pushed the idea of individual salvation and free will over predestination.
- The African Methodist Church was founded in Philadelphia.

By seeking to reach EVERYONE, both women, children, and African-Americans were equally reached.

- "Revival meetings were not restricted to the frontier or to white people. In many areas, particularly the south, Black people held separate revivals at the same time with the two groups joining together on the last day. "Black Harry" Hosier (1750–1906), the first African American Methodist preacher and a fabled orator despite being illiterate, was a crossover success in both Black and white revivals. His efforts and those of the ordained minister Richard Allen (1760–1831) led to the founding of **the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in 1794 [the most famous African-American church].**"⁴³

8. The dumbing down of Christianity. Historically, Christians were the leading thinkers. During the Second Great Awakening, Christianity becomes anti-intellectual. Heart over the head mentality.
9. The rise of revivalism. D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham. Any kind of sensationalism on the platform is coming out of the Second Great Awakening.
10. **The spread of Arminian theology.** Today, most American evangelicals would be different shades within an Arminian theology. During the Second Great Awakening, a preacher could get an amen by rebuking Satan and rebuking Calvin.
 - During the Second Great Awakening **revivalistic theology** in many denominations **shifted from Calvinism to a practical Arminianism** as preachers emphasized the ability of sinners to make an immediate decision for their salvation;⁴⁴
 - “The Second Great Awakening marked a fundamental transition in American religious life. Many early American religious groups in the Calvinist tradition had emphasized the deep depravity of human beings and believed they could only be saved through the grace of God. **The new evangelical movement, however, placed greater emphasis on humans' ability to change their situation for the better.** By stressing that individuals could assert their "free will" in choosing to be saved and by suggesting that salvation was open to all human beings, the Second Great Awakening embraced a more optimistic view of the human condition. The repeated and varied revivals of these several decades helped make the United States a much more deeply Protestant nation than it had been before.”⁴⁵
11. The Christianization of America. Much like Rome by Constantine in 325AD.
 - The democratization of Christianity. A movement away from creeds and confessions.
 - Choose your own biblical adventure. Highly individualism.

Being biblical considers the larger context of church history and systematic theology. Being biblical trends toward community and accountability.

Biblicism claims the doctrines of soul liberty and priesthood of the believer is all one needs to know the Bible. Biblicism trends away from community and accountability.

- Freedom from hierarchical tyranny is soul liberty.
- Personal access before God without earthly mediation through a priest is priesthood of the believer.
- Began incorporating **the business model into the church.** The king of this shift was Charles G. Finney. The entire idea of a business pastor of a church reflects **Second Great Awakening** ideology.

12. The split of denominations and the creation of new denominations. Barton Stone – Churches of Christ, the Disciples of Christ.
13. The rise of various cults. Mormonism, Jehovah Witness. **Once you remove creeds and confessions, you end up with A THEOLOGY WITHOUT BOUNDARIES.**

Remember, freedom of the will pushes away from oversight and accountability. You become your own priest and pastor. All cults are consequences of freewill theology, theological liberalism [the rise of human reason and denial of a completed canon] and post-modernism [where the individual becomes primary].

“One significant byproduct of the revival furor in the Burned-Over Districts was the founding of Mormonism. Joseph Smith (1805–1844) lived in upstate New York when he received visions in 1820. A few years later, he reported the discovery of the Book of Mormon, which he said was a lost section of the Bible. He soon founded his own church and began converting people to his faith. Soon persecuted for their beliefs, the group left New York moving first to Ohio, then Missouri, and finally Nauvoo, Illinois, where they lived for five years. At that time, an anti-Mormon lynch mob found and killed Joseph and his brother Hyrum Smith (1800–1844). Brigham Young (1801–1877) arose as Smith's successor and led the Mormons away to Utah, where they settled in Salt Lake City.”⁴⁶

NOW WHAT? – BUYER BEWARE!

Third and Fourth Great Awakenings - **The Third Great Awakening** in the 1850s–1900s was characterized by new denominations, active missionary work, Chautauquas, and the Social Gospel approach to social issues.^[4] The YMCA (founded in 1844) played a major role in fostering revivals in the cities in the 1858 Awakening and after. The revival of 1858 produced the leadership, such as that of Dwight L. Moody, out of which came religious work carried on in the armies during the civil war. The Christian and Sanitary Commissions and numerous Freedmen's Societies were also formed in the midst of the War.

The Fourth Great Awakening is a debated concept that has not received the acceptance of the first three. Advocates such as economist Robert Fogel say it happened in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Jesus Movement is one evidence of this awakening, and it created a shift in church music styles.”⁴⁷

FOOL ME ONCE

“**Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me** is a proverb that means if someone takes advantage of me twice, I only have myself to blame. Once someone has shown themselves untrustworthy, you should not be surprised when they betray you again.”⁴⁸

"The saying, Fool Me Once, Shame on You; Fool Me Twice, Shame on Me was first used in 1650 by politician **Anthony Weldon**. It's a witty way to say that you should learn from someone's tricks on you. If you don't, you're the only one to blame."⁴⁹

HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE PAST?

The resources listed are for educational purposes only. The use of the material does not require the distributor to agree on its content. It is only made available to educate the recipient. Should you have any questions as to its content, please feel free to ask the distributor.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/questions/QA138/what-is-biblical-discernment-and-why-is-it-important>

² Martin Kelly <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-great-awakening-104220> Updated on April 24, 2021.

³ <https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-second-great-awakening-charles-finney-and-religious-revival.html>

⁴ <https://www.civicsandcoffee.com/the-second-great-awakening/>

⁵ The Failure of Revivalism | Theocast Clips YouTube-Theocast - Rest in Christ-Mar 25, 2022

⁶ <https://schoolhistory.co.uk/industrial/the-first-second-great-awakening/>

⁷ Martin Kelly <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-great-awakening-104220> Updated on April 24, 2021.

⁸ <https://www.1517.org/podcast-overview/the-second-great-awakening-and-the-move-west>

⁹ <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/timothy-dwight-and-religious-revival/>

¹⁰ <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/timothy-dwight-and-religious-revival/>

¹¹ <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>

¹² <https://www.civicsandcoffee.com/the-second-great-awakening/>

¹³ Martin Kelly <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-great-awakening-104220> Updated on April 24, 2021.

¹⁴ <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>

¹⁵ See further <https://www.globalchristians.org/articles/toronto.htm>

¹⁶ <https://brewminate.com/the-four-great-awakenings-in-american-christian-history/>

¹⁷ Martin Kelly <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-great-awakening-104220> Updated on April 24, 2021.

¹⁸ <https://www.monergism.com/disturbing-legacy-charles-finney>

¹⁹ <https://liberalarts.vt.edu/magazine/2017/history-repeating.html>

²⁰ <https://www.monergism.com/disturbing-legacy-charles-finney>

²¹ <https://www.1517.org/podcast-overview/the-second-great-awakening-and-the-move-west>

²²

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095819326;jsessionid=D7651375DFDC458DF222893A83814BE5>

²³ <https://reformedbaptistblog.com/2009/07/22/charles-g-finney-heretic-or-man-of-god-part-i/>

²⁴ Todd 2020, p. 332. "On one hand, the Finneyite atonement combined the dramatic presence of Christus Victor, the satisfaction theme of Anselm, the substitutionary elements of penal substitution, the rectoral **[of or relating to God as governor or ruler of men]** framework of moral government, and the ethical focus of moral influence, all into one. On the other hand, Finney's version resembled none of these historical theories of the atonement."

²⁵ <https://carm.org/doctrine-and-theology/moral-government-view-of-the-atonement/>

²⁶ FitzGerald 2017, p. 37.

²⁷ <https://www.civicsandcoffee.com/the-second-great-awakening/>

²⁸ FitzGerald 2017, p. 44.

²⁹ <https://www.ligonier.org/posts/simul-justus-et-peccator>

³⁰ FitzGerald 2017, p. 36

³¹ https://www.opc.org/nh.html?article_id=46

³² <https://www.challies.com/articles/an-introduction-to-pragmatism/>

³³ <https://www.challies.com/articles/an-introduction-to-pragmatism/>

³⁴ <https://www.apuritansmind.com/historical-theology/heresy-concession-by-dr-benjamin-b-warfield/>

³⁵ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/undergraduate/why-study-here/why-study-trs>

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- ³⁶ <https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-second-great-awakening-charles-finney-and-religious-revival.html>
- ³⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Second-Great-Awakening>
- ³⁸ <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>
- ³⁹ <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp>
- ⁴⁰ <https://brewminate.com/the-four-great-awakenings-in-american-christian-history/>
- ⁴¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Second-Great-Awakening>
- ⁴² <https://www.1517.org/podcast-overview/the-second-great-awakening-and-the-move-west>
- ⁴³ Martin Kelly <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-second-great-awakening-104220> Updated on April 24, 2021.
- ⁴⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Second-Great-Awakening>
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- ⁴⁷ <https://brewminate.com/the-four-great-awakenings-in-american-christian-history/>
- ⁴⁸ <https://grammarist.com/proverb/fool-me-once-shame-on-you-fool-me-twice-shame-on-me/>
- ⁴⁹ <https://grammarist.com/proverb/fool-me-once-shame-on-you-fool-me-twice-shame-on-me/>