

14. THE 1800S: GOSPEL IMPACT... & LONGLASTING ERRORS

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”*

1. THE IMPACT OF THE REVIVALS ON EVERYDAY LIFE IN ENGLAND

(a) The abolition of the slave trade and other reforms

- Wilberforce:
1785 William Wilberforce converted
1807 Slave Trade Act: bans sale and purchase of slaves
1833 Slave Abolition Acts: begins emancipation

“When people say we should think more of the soul and less of the body, my answer is that the same God who made the soul made the body also [...] I maintain that God is worshipped not only by the spiritual but by the material creation. Our bodies, the temples of the Holy Ghost, ought not to be corrupted by preventable disease, degraded by avoidable filth, and disabled for his service by unnecessary suffering.” (Lord Shaftesbury)

- Shaftesbury:
Reform of lunatic asylums, factory workers, miners, sweeps, Ragged Schools, Bible Society, Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews
- In the 1800 ¼ of all charities were Christian

(b) Social stability and moral transformation

- The reformation of morals / shared moral attributes
- French Revolution:
1789 revolution... Jacobin Terror of Marat & Robespierre...
Revolt against ALL authority... 1794 Cult of the Supreme Being... assault on Catholic church

- But NO political/social revolution in England, despite change and misery of the Industrial revolution

Industrial Rev:

From 1770, hand labour replaced by steam-powered machines.
Suffering, injustice, slums: accentuated psychological misery

Change of occupation:

In late 1600s = 20% of people in England were non-agricultural labourers.
In late 1700s = over 50%. By 1831 = 70%

Urbanisation:

In 1750 small minority = lived in cities of more than 5,000
In 1801 = third. By 1851 = half.

Population growth:

In 1818 = 9m people in England.
In 1851 there were 16m.

2. THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN THE 1800S

(a) The growth of non-conformism

- Church of England hampered by parish system. Nonconformists reacted more quickly to societal change:
1851 = Church of England attendance = 5.25m
= Non-conformist attendance = 4.5m

(b) Evangelicalism in the Church of England

- Growing numbers of clergy
In 1785 = 100 evangelical clergy in England.
By 1803 = 500
By 1853 = 6,500 = 1/3 of all ministers
- Influence of Charles Simeon (Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge)
Training young ministers
Simeon Trust (patronage / clergy appointments)

(c) Growth of world missions

- Mission societies:
 - 1792 Baptist Missionary Society
 - 1799 Church Missionary Society
 - 1804 Bible Society
 - 1865 China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship)
- William Carey:
 - “Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.”
- Adoniram and Ann Judson in Burma
- Hudson Taylor in China
- Problems: evangelism... or civilising... or colonialism???
- Charles (C.T.) Studd

“How could I spend the best hours of my life in working for myself and for the honour and pleasure of this world while thousands of souls are perishing every day without having heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, going down to Christless and hopeless graves.” C.T. Studd

3. CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH

(a) The challenge of evolution

- Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* in 1859
- Christian opinion divided... no intellectual engagement

(b) The Oxford Movement / Tractarianism / Anglo-Catholicism

- Oriel College, Oxford 1820s:
 - John Keble, John Henry Newman, Edward Pusey
- Distinctives:
 1. CofE = purer church than the non-conformists or Rome
 2. CofE must be protected from state interference
 3. Liberalism is bad
 4. ** Catholicised theology and ritualised worship/buildings **
 - Esp. Newman’s Tract 90 (1841)
- Legacy:
 - Three parties in CofE – evangelicals, liberals and Anglo-Catholics
 - Local churches that appear extreme Roman Catholic

(c) The growing challenge of Liberal Protestantism

- Essence:
Liberal Protestants trying to RESCUE the church...
Revising Christian teaching to make it more acceptable.
** Accommodation to culture **
- Origins:
 1. French Revolutionary ideology rejects all authority
 2. Enlightenment philosophy: Kant (d.1804) and Hegel (d.1831)
 3. Romanticism: emphasis on the individual / irrational side of man.
- The fathers of liberal theology:
Friedrich Schleiermacher (d.1834) and the Tubingen School.

God was left unknowable, the miraculous was rejected, human religious activity was the only evidence for God, and increasingly individual preferences were all that mattered.
Revelation is abandoned, there is no sin or saviour, man is good and getting better.

CONCLUSION

The 1800s deeply mixed, from a gospel perspective

- Church/chapel attendance v high
- World Evangelisation
- CofE outside of evangelical control
- "Anti-intellectualism" of many evangelicals

Next week: to the 21st century!