

Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 15, The Black Church in America

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 15, Evangelicalism in the 19th century, Finney and Moody.

We just kind of reminded ourselves of the dates that we've got. So today and Wednesday, we lecture, but then you're on spring break, which doesn't seem possible. So, here we are, almost halfway through. Okay, I'm on page, I'm on page 15 of the syllabus.

We've come into part three of the course, Years of Mid-Passage, 1865 to 1918. And we talked about, we gave lecture number 11, The Black Church in America. And that's where we stopped the other day.

That's where the second hour of the exam stops. So that's, you have all the material you need now with lecture number 11. You've got all the material you need for the second-hour exam.

So, we're in pretty good shape. We're about two days ahead in the lecture, so that's a good thing. This is lecture number 12, Evangelicalism in the 19th century.

So that's where we are: 19th-century Evangelicalism. Just a word before we begin the lecture, and that is: there are a lot of ways you can approach the subject of Evangelicalism in the 19th century. There are a lot of ways that you could talk about it, maybe some characteristics of Evangelicalism, what Evangelicalism is, and so forth.

What I choose to do in the lecture, however, is do it biographically. I am choosing the two most important leaders in American Christianity, the shapers of American Christianity in the second half of the 19th century. They formed and shaped this movement, generally called Evangelicalism, which is the preaching of the gospel.

Both of them are important. Both of them are critical. So that's the way I choose to do it.

And I hope that looking at their life, their lives, and also what they kind of contributed to American Christianity, I hope that will help us to identify what we would label as Evangelicalism because it is seen through the life and ministry teachings preachings of these two people. So, we're going to start with Charles Grandison Finney. Now he's a person you've already read about a bit in your textbooks if you're up with the reading.

But we're going to begin with him, and then we'll move on to Dwight L. Moody. I don't think we'll finish this today, so this probably will spill over to Wednesday. So, beginning with Charles Grandison Finney on the right-hand side of the picture there, here are the dates of Charles Grandison Finney, 1792 to 1875.

So, what we're going to do is follow along his life and his ministry, his theology, and as that kind of unfolds, that in itself will be an explanation of Evangelicalism. And then, his ministry is built upon by Dwight L. Moody. So, Charles Grandison Finney.

Okay, let's begin. Finney was born in Warren, Connecticut, in 1792, as you can see here. So, Warren, Connecticut.

I don't know if any of you know where Warren, Connecticut, is if you're familiar with that. But there was the birthplace of Finney. And by the way, this is Finney on the right-hand side and Moody on the left-hand side here.

So, Warren, Connecticut. Now, what happened, and this is going to be very important for the course, happened when he was just a child, and the family moved to upper state New York, upstate New York. And they actually moved to a place called Adams, New York.

I have a little history with Adams, so I'll tell you that story in just a minute. But they moved to a place called Adams, New York, upstate New York. Now remember, we've given a label for upstate New York.

It's called the Burnt Over District. The reason for the Burnt Over District label is that so many groups began in upstate New York. And we've talked about the Mormons and the Shakers, and we've talked about kind of the Millerites and so forth.

Well, it will continue to have that label because of the Finneyite revival that started to take place in upper-state New York, upstate New York. So go to Adams, New York. Now, a couple of things happened in Adams, New York, and one is in 1818 when he trained for the law in Adams, New York.

Now in those days, you trained for the law to be a lawyer, not necessarily by going to law school, but you trained with another lawyer. And that's what happened to him in Adams, New York, trained to be a lawyer. And that's what he thought he was going to be for the rest of his life.

And just here's Finney on the right-hand side. I always picture all these pictures of Finney that you have. There he is, looking right at you.

How would you like to be his opponent in a court of law as he was, or how would you like to be questioned by Charles Grandison Finney? I mean, there he is. So, he's going to do law for the rest of his life as far as he is concerned. However, 1821 became a change date in his life.

Charles Grandison Finney, by his own admission, by his own biography, and by telling us his story, Charles Grandison Finney was converted. He came to the Lord, a very dramatic conversion for him. He really kind of gave himself to the Lord.

He tells a story about walking through the woods one day near Adams, New York, and the Lord came to him, spoke to him, and he responded. So, Charles Grandison Finney had a rather dramatic conversion experience. That experience changed the direction of his life because Charles Grandison Finney decided that he was going to become a minister and he's going to go into the ministry.

Now, he didn't have a formal theological education, but like law, it often was with ministry; you became a minister by learning from another minister. So, he decided he was going to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church. And so, he went and lived in the home of the Presbyterian minister in town and learned theology and learned preaching and so forth from that Presbyterian minister.

So, there was kind of a mentor-mentee relationship by which he then became a minister and actually was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry. So that's what he's going to do for the rest of his life. Interesting kind of account of, I've actually been to Adams, New York, and the experience was an interesting experience because it was the 200th anniversary, 1992, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Grandison Finney.

And people decided this was great. What we'll do is celebrate his 200th anniversary. We'll have a conference on Finney, but we'll celebrate it in Adams, New York. We'll celebrate it where he was a minister. And so I was asked to read a paper.

You're reading that paper for the final exam on Charles Grandison Finney's understanding of social ministry and so forth. So, I was invited to the conference. It was a very interesting conference, but there we were in Adams, New York, for three or four days.

It had one stoplight. I mean, that's all there was, one light there in the middle of town. The most exciting thing that happened in town was on a Saturday morning. The fireman had a pancake breakfast that we were able to go to.

So, it was quite exciting in Adams, New York, to go to the pancake breakfast. Well, you would love Adams, New York. So there's Adams, New York.

So, there we were. But it's very interesting. We one of the sessions was in the church, where he was then studying to be a minister.

So, we sat in that church. In another session, we took a tour through the town, and we actually didn't get into his law offices, but we were able to see his law offices on the second floor. One of the final sessions was interesting because the final, and there was a pretty good delegation there, but the final session was held as an open-air session right at the outside section of the woods where Charles Grandison Finney was converted, where he came to the Lord.

And so, we had an open-air session there, a beautiful day, and kind of reflected on the conversion of Charles Grandison Finney. And then all during the days then we were reading papers about Finney and having discussions about Finney. So, I've actually been to Adams, New York.

It was quite an experience to be there and to kind of absorb all this kind of Finney-ite stuff that happened to him in Adams, New York. So, Adams, New York, was very important for Charles Grandison Finney. What he does then pretty quickly is that he starts to set out not only to preach in local churches but also to preach in the neighborhood churches.

From there, he goes to other churches and so forth. So, what he begins to do is he begins to have an itinerant revivalistic ministry, or an itinerant evangelistic ministry, which became pretty successful pretty quickly in this ministry that he had. Now, what about that ministry? What about this evangelistic ministry? You, we can let the scholars kind of determine this, and it's nothing we have to solve.

The question we've already mentioned in class about the Finney-ite revivals is this: Was it the continuation of the second great awakening? Is this still the second great awakening that we're in? Or was there enough of a gap between the results of the second great awakening? So this is really a third great awakening. Is the Finney-ite revival a third great awakening in America? Or is it a continuation of the second great awakening? There are all kinds of reasons to believe either.

I personally believe there was enough of a gap between the second great awakening and the beginning of the ministry of Charles Grandison Finney that I believe there was enough of a gap that I would call a third great awakening, also called the Finney-ite revivals. So, this really took America by storm and was very, very, very important. Okay, another thing we want to take note of here with this first bullet is that he not only became famous in America, but Charles Grandison Finney had a two-year stint in England from 1857 to 1858.

He went over to England, and he was very, very popular in England. When he came back to America, he continued his revivalistic ministry there. Okay, so there's a label we put on this.

We call this, we call him a transatlantic revivalist, or we call this transatlantic revivalism. What happened in the 19th century, especially, was this tremendous movement of transatlantic revivalism between England and America. You've got a lot of American evangelists going to England, bringing revival in England.

We'll see this with Dwight L. Moody as well. But you also have British evangelists coming over to America and having great revivals in America. So this kind of cross-the-pond kind of evangelism becomes very important, and we label it as transatlantic revivalism.

Now, in a sense, the first person to do that was in the first Great Awakening, and that was George Whitefield. Because George Whitefield, British remember, British came over to conduct great evangelistic meetings here in America but then went back to Britain six times, remember. He died here on his last visit.

So that actually kind of started with Whitefield. But then, when you get to the 19th century, it really picks up. So transatlantic revivalism has become really, really important because of people like Finney and Moody.

Okay, here's another thing about Charles Grandison Finney we should take note of. Charles Grandison Finney in 1835, I'll put this at the very end, Charles Grandison Finney, 1835, he became the first professor of Oberlin College. He was a professor of theology.

And then, after a few years, I've probably got the dates here. Yeah, from 1851 to 1866. So, for a few years, he then became the president of Oberlin College.

So, we've already mentioned Oberlin College. Oberlin has kind of a lot of hallmarks in a sense, a lot of things to put it on the map. And so, this became a very kind of a hotbed place.

It was very, very, very important. Charles Finney was a nationally known figure, both as a professor of theology and as the president of Oberlin College. So, let's just say a few things about Oberlin College and why it was so important.

He started, as I said, right when it was founded in 1835. So, he's with them until near the end of his life. But okay, first of all, we've already said this.

So, we want to remember Oberlin College was founded as an abolitionist institution. It was founded as an anti-slavery institution, and it was founded for that purpose.

That was part of the mission of the college to teach and to preach an abolitionist doctrine.

It's the first college in America that was founded with the abolitionism of slavery as part of the mission, which is the kind of reason for the founding of the institution. So, it was really very important. Now that tells you something about Charles Grandison Finney.

That tells you that Finney was an abolitionist. Finney was a very, very devout abolitionist, very, very intense abolitionist, anti-slavery person. He was also heavily involved in the abolitionist movement.

And, of course, he was able to use Oberlin as a kind of headquarters for abolitionism. So that's one thing that Oberlin has become known for, and it's really important. And we'll say this a lot when we're talking about Finney.

We'll say this a lot. So maybe this is the first time, but we'll say it many times. With Charles Grandison Finney, there was no dichotomy between preaching the gospel and taking a social stand on slavery.

In other words, those are not two separate worlds as far as he's concerned, and they shouldn't be separated out. Preaching the gospel gave him the basis for his abolitionism as far as he was concerned. So, social ministry and preaching the gospel are all one for Finney.

They are never separated from him. And I try to make the case in the article that you're reading on Finney, but they never separated from him. Part of the problem 100 years later of evangelicalism is that they separate preaching the gospel from social ministry, and social ministry gets diminished in preaching the gospel.

People came along feeling that you can't do both. You can't both preach the gospel and have some kind of social ministry there. You shouldn't try to connect those two things.

Well, not so for Charles Grandison Finney. He was convinced that there is a very careful cohesion between preaching the gospel and preaching the fullness of the gospel and included social ministry. Okay, so that's Oberlin, first thing about Oberlin.

A second thing about Oberlin is that it became the first co-educational institution in America. The first place to accept women, the first college to accept women was Oberlin. So, it has a place of distinct... Oops, sorry about that.

Forget all this. I just want to get you a name here. So, forget that, forget that, forget that, forget that, and here we go.

So was the first woman to receive a degree from Oberlin College and a very important woman in American Christianity. If any of you are thinking of doing that paper, you might do the paper in Antoinette Brown. So she was the first female graduate from Oberlin College, and she received a degree in theology.

So, Antoinette Brown, Oberlin College, is co-educational, and here she is getting a degree in theology. Now, it was largely still a man's world when it came to the organized church. And so, it took her a long time to actually receive ordination, even though she got a degree in theology from Oberlin.

She finally was ordained, but she was ordained into the Unitarian Church because the Unitarians believed in the ordination of women, whereas the more mainline churches, like Presbyterians or Baptists, did not yet ordain women. So she takes on ordination and is an ordained Unitarian minister until the day she dies. This is a picture of Antoinette Brown.

But that's all because of Oberlin College. So, Oberlin College was the first abolitionist institution in America and the first co-educational institution in America. Okay, here are a few other things about Oberlin College. Oberlin College was also a college, a number three kind of distinction, maybe, but it was also a college that preached and taught revivalism.

And in a few minutes, we're going to see his famous book on revivalism. But it preached and taught revivalism theologically. So, part of the theological teaching at Oberlin College was the theology of revivalism.

Now, you don't get a lot of colleges in the 19th century that are teaching about revivalism, which maybe would happen in some seminaries, but Oberlin College was known for that. So that's very, very important. A fourth thing that Oberlin College was known for, which is kind of interesting, and so was Charles Grandison Finney as a matter of fact, and that was for the doctrine of sanctification or the doctrine of holiness.

Oberlin College was a holiness institution, a sanctification institution. Charles Grandison Finney preached a doctrine of sanctification. Okay, so what do we mean by sanctification? First of all, that comes from Wesley.

That's very 18th-century Wesleyan sanctification. Wesley took the doctrine of sanctification from the Bible. So, just to take a couple of minutes on sanctification.

Wesley taught that the first step in the Christian life, the first step of becoming a Christian and a believer, was salvation, the step of justification. That's step number one. But that's not where the Christian life ends.

That's not where the pilgrimage ends in this life. Because there is a second step that the Christian can take, and that step is the step of sanctification or holiness. So, John Wesley taught that there were these two great steps in the Christian pilgrimage.

Now, the second step of sanctification or holiness begins when one is justified or when one is saved. That's when it starts. And for John Wesley, that's called initial sanctification.

That's when it begins. But then Wesley taught sanctification and holiness as a process as well. The process is that the individual continues to grow in Christ.

The individual continues to conform more and more to the image of Christ so that the individual, the person, and the believer can be made holy in this life. So that's very Wesleyan, very John Wesley. And Wesley, when he talked about sanctification, tended to emphasize that the believer is sanctified, and that is demonstrated by purity of heart.

So that's demonstrated by a pure heart. So, the passage Wesley often used was Matthew chapter 22, love God and love your neighbor. Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself, Matthew chapter 22.

For him, that's kind of the essence of what holiness is all about. Okay, long story short, Charles Grandison Finney picks up on this. So, Charles Finney read Wesley.

He picked up on the doctrine of holiness and the doctrine of sanctification, and he began to preach that doctrine of the two works of grace in the heart of the believer. Now, a little bit of difference between Finney and Wesley, however. Finney tended to emphasize sanctification as empowerment.

That you are sanctified, you're empowered by God to preach the gospel or to live out the gospel. So, he tended to say that the accent was a little bit different from Wesley's accent. Wesley's accent was more about purity of heart.

The believer has a pure heart. Finney's accent was on empowerment for ministry. The Holy Spirit comes upon the believer, sanctifies the believer, and empowers the believer for the ministry that God has given him or her.

So, he preached the doctrine of sanctification, and Oberlin became known for this. So, I got a picture of Oberlin College. You wouldn't likely find this happening today on the campus of Oberlin College.

It's a little hard to see. I don't know if you can read that sign. I mean, here's Oberlin College, and Charles Grandison Finney used to pitch a tent right in the middle of

Oberlin College, and Charles Grandison Finney would have holiness meetings in that tent.

You can see what the sign says: holiness unto the Lord. He would have meetings on the campus of Oberlin College to teach and preach the biblical doctrine of sanctification. This is not likely going to happen on the campus of Oberlin College today.

If you enrolled at Oberlin for something, don't wait around. Don't ask anyone when they are going to pitch the tent or when we are going to have holiness meetings. They might not even know what you're talking about because there's no remnant of this at Oberlin today. But Oberlin began as a perfectionist institution.

So, okay, here's one more thing about Oberlin College. All these things about the college: this is an important place, and Finney is an important person. However, one more thing about Oberlin College was that it was concerned with health.

It taught matters of health and what to eat and exercise and so forth, but the health, the healthy individual. And so, it became a place that became accentuated as part of the life of Oberlin College. So, Oberlin College has become known for a lot of things, and I don't know if you've all heard about Oberlin College.

You probably have heard about it, but you may not recognize or realize the background of Oberlin College. This is a critical place in American Christianity and holds an important place in American Christianity. Okay, another thing about Charles Granison Finney, and this is the thing he's probably known best for, and that's all his revival meetings.

Okay, Finney wrote a book, a bestseller, a blockbuster. Are there any questions so far before I get into his book about where we are? And then all the things we've said become kind of hallmarks in a sense of what we are going to call evangelicalism, or they become kind of measures of evangelicalism. Yeah.

Yes. Yes, she did have an evolution in her own life where she believed in Unitarian theology, but that's a good question because there was a little pressure to believe in the theology because she's going to become ordained with them. But I think she actually came to the conclusion that Unitarianism was correct before she became ordained.

Yeah. Something else, Antoinette Brown, is a name to remember, by the way. Something else up to where we are now.

So, you're getting a sense of how important Finney is and how important Oberlin College is. Okay, he wrote a blockbuster book that we would call that today. It was called Lectures on Revivals of Religion.

People in America and England were picking up this book, reading it, and absorbing it, and they thought it was great. One of the persons I've written a biography on is Catherine Booth. Catherine Booth read this book, and she always advised people to read Finney.

He also wrote other books, but you have to read Charles Grandison Finney; very important that you read Finney. So she was always giving that counsel to people to read, be sure to read Finney. Well, if there's any one book that you would read by Finney, it was Lectures on Revivals of Religion.

Now, what he does in the book is lay out how to conduct revivals. He kind of tells people how to conduct revivals for the Lord. And this book becomes a blockbuster and a game changer in terms of revivalism.

So, the book underscores what are called new measures in revivalism. These are new things in terms of how to bring about revivalism and what is kind of in a sense of the theology of revivalism. So we're going to talk about some of these new measures because this is what Charles Grandison, Finney is remembered for, as well as for the other things we've talked about.

And this will mark evangelicalism in the 19th century, coming into the 20th century, and even into the 21st century. Okay, here are the new measures of revivalism. And I don't know why I put, if you can hear this or not, but I've got a clapping for each one.

I'm not sure what got into me. Was I just experimenting with sound or something like that? I'm a little foggy about this, but now I can't figure out how to get rid of it. So, you're going to do with the claps.

So, you don't have to clap yourself. But okay, the first one is very, very important. You will see this again in your lifetime.

I guarantee this. Setting up the conditions for revival to happen, a theology moving away now from Calvinism. Charles Grandison Finney, by his revival methods, is moving the theology of revivalism away from Calvinism, away from the first great awakening, and away from the theology of the second great awakening in the North.

Not the theology of the Second Great Awakening so much in the South, but certainly in the North. Because in the first great awakening and the second great awakening in the North, revivalism comes in God's timing. You pray for a revival, but you wait for a

revival to come because God, in his own timing and according to his own will, is going to bring a revival.

So, all those revivals, those four that we talked about in the first great awakening, and people like Timothy Dwight in the second great awakening would have been good Calvinists waiting for a revival to happen and trusting God. When it does happen, we want to be here to help with this work. Not so with Finney.

Finney is more Arminian. He has more free will. He says, no, what you have to do is you've got to set up all the conditions for a revival.

So, human beings have to do their part. And when they've done their part, then God is going to bring a revival. So, the theology is moving away from a Calvinistic understanding of revivalism to a more Arminian kind of free-will understanding of revivalism.

Everything else flows from that. But that theological foundation is really important. Okay.

So secondly, what he called unseasonable hours for religious services. Unseasonable hours for religious services. What do we mean by unseasonable hours for religious services? Well, what we mean by that is that most of his revivals took place in the cities of Boston, New York, Albany, and other places like that.

So, most of the revivals took place in the cities, and city people had different hours and so forth from people in the country. So unseasonable hours for revivalism for religious services meant you have the hours that are most helpful to people living in the city. So that might mean doing revival services at noontime when people in the city are let out of the factories for an hour or so for lunch.

Or it might mean doing revival services in the evenings after people get out of work, and on the way home from work, they stop at a revival meeting. But unseasonable hours meant you tailor the hours for revival according to an urban culture. So that was new.

Nobody had ever, we're not thinking in those terms. So that was another new measure. Okay.

Another new measure is what he called protracted meetings. One author said that by protracted meetings, this is the camp meeting brought to town. By protracted meetings, he meant meetings in the South in the Second Great Awakening.

He meant once you get together for a seven o'clock meeting in the evening, that meeting could go on eight o'clock, nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, midnight,

and so forth. So protracted meetings are like the old camp meetings in the South, but now you're bringing those protracted meetings into the city. So protracted meetings mean you're not looking at the clock.

You are just waiting for the work of God to take place in the lives of people, so you have the meeting for as long as you need to have it. So, it's kind of like the same thing that happened in the camp meetings in the South. He's brought that to the city.

So protracted meetings. Another one was the use of colloquial language. Charles Grandison Finney used colloquial language, the language of the people, to get the attention of the people.

In this regard he was probably very much like Whitefield. Whitefield also used colloquial language to get the attention of the people. Don't use highfalutin university language but try to get the attention of the folks.

So, he would do that. Sometimes, the language was pretty harsh, and I also remember that picture that we showed of Finney earlier. Sometimes, the language is very direct to the congregation.

He's looking at the congregation like a lawyer, and he's kind of arguing the case like a lawyer, the biblical case like a lawyer. And he's looking at you with those piercing eyes, you know, and the gospel is coming through. So, who could resist that? And by the way, he usually preached for about two hours.

So, if you're used to 20-minute sermons, no, you go to hear Finney; you're in for a good couple hours' sermon. So, he's arguing the case of the gospel for a couple of hours.

So colloquial language, the use of colloquial language. Here is something I'm not suggesting. Charles Grandison Finney uses it as a new measure in revivalism.

Then, that is the specific naming of individuals in prayers and sermons. So, if he found out that there were individuals in town who were particularly sinners, particularly known sinners and reprobates and rascals and so forth. Well, there's one way to get to these people.

We're going to name these people in our prayers and in the sermons. And he would name them even during the sermon if they happened to be there in the meeting. So, they would, you know, imagine Finney looking right at you during the sermon and naming you, you know, as a reprobate.

Oh, my word. So, I'm not sure this is the best of all worlds, but in any case, he thought it was a good thing to do. Take care of all those reprobates.

Then, there would be inquiry meetings, and inquiry meetings would follow after the sermon. People might, you know, have questions about the Christian gospel and so forth. So, there would be inquiry meetings, and there would be people who would be trained to speak with people about their souls, salvation, and so forth.

So, inquiry meetings were important. The use of what is called the anxious bench. If you're not, if you don't know anything about revivalism, I'd be interested to see if this sounds familiar to any of you.

Okay, what is the anxious bench? If he would if he were preaching in churches, which he often did, the first row, for example, the first pew, a row of pews in the church, would be called the anxious bench. And then people who were going to have an inquiry about the gospel and so forth after their, after the sermon, they would come down and they would sit in this anxious bench. They would sit here in this place, and then people would come and sit, and they would talk with them about their Christian experience and about knowing the Lord and so forth.

Now, Finney had an idea, though. And his idea was to take these benches, the anxious bench, and turn them around so that he started using the anxious bench as a place for people to come and kneel. So, people would come forward, and instead of sitting at an anxious bench, they would come and kneel at the anxious bench or the mercy seat, and people would come, and they would pray with them and so forth and inquiry and prayer and lead them to the Lord and so forth.

Now, I'm just curious, does this sound familiar to anyone in this room? Would anyone, do any of you come from a tradition where there would be a place in the, in the service at the end of the service, maybe where people might come and kneel and pray at a, at not, you might not call it the anxious bench, but maybe a mercy seat. Does anybody connect with anybody? Some people connect with that. If you come from a Pentecostal tradition, you certainly would have seen this.

or if you come from a Wesleyan holiness tradition, you certainly would have seen this: the anxious bench or the mercy seat or the penitent form or the place of prayer, whatever you call it. So, you wouldn't be surprised by this. If you don't come from that tradition, you might be a little surprised if you went into maybe a Pentecostal service or a Wesleyan holiness service because very likely at the end of the service, the end of the preaching, there's a call for come forward and kneel and pray and so forth.

So, well, who do we know who started all this? There were a couple of Methodists using this, but it was Finney who began this. This was a Finneyite revivalistic, kind of new measure. So, this is Finney's way of, you know, dealing with people who want to learn about the Lord and so forth.

So, the use of the anxious bench. I'll just finish this off before I give you a break and the use of women testifying and praying in public. This is new.

Now, Wesley has used this, but Finney also uses this, and this has become pretty important for Finney's meetings. These women are not ordained yet because denominations are not ordaining women, but Finney was convinced that women should have a place in public meetings in terms of preaching and praying. Now, this was a shock to many, many other Christians because they had never seen this before.

They had never witnessed this before; what are you doing allowing women to pray and pray, pray and speak in public? This new measure was really hard for a lot of people to take, but these are called his new measures of revivalism. No doubt.

This is one more here. And that is bands of workers visiting homes. Bands of workers would go out and visit homes after the revival meetings, and people would give their names and addresses, and so forth.

And that would be followed up the next day by people visiting homes and visiting the people who, you know, came to the Lord and talked with their families and so forth. You might be familiar with this as a means of revivalism, but this was a very important new measure for Finney and the Finneyite revival. So, new measures in revivalism, the first one theological, are very important because there's a massive theological change taking place in American Christianity now away from Calvinism toward Arminianism.

, and then all these things happened, , during the revivals. So, let me stop there for just a minute. The new measures of revivalism are lectures on revivals of religion.

Are there any questions about the new measures, about his lectures, about the impact? Any questions here at all? So yeah, they're part of his book. Yeah. Part of the book.

So, you could, you could, when you ever read the book, you'd see these. Yeah. I picked out the most important ones from the book.

Yeah. Something else. I got to give you a break on Monday morning.

So five-second break. We are going to journey on here. Okay.

We're still talking about Charles Grandison Finney. All right. Now, Charles Grandison Finney, we're still with him.

And then what we're doing is we're getting characteristics of, of evangelicalism by looking at his life and ministry. We're kind of figuring out what this thing called evangelicalism is all about by looking at it biographically. So you're with me on that.

So, okay. Another thing about Charles Grandison Finney. Charles Grandison Finney and others began what were called voluntary societies.

So, out of these revivals came voluntary societies. So, let me talk about voluntary societies, which also became characteristic of what we call evangelicalism. So, okay.

The first thing about voluntary societies could be coming together for missions, for example, because that was the greatest kind of aspect of voluntary societies in the 19th century. It could be coming together for other things, but coming together for missions, either home missions or foreign missions was really important. Okay.

Voluntary societies. Okay. The first thing about voluntary societies that really helped was that they brought Protestants together.

Protestants could feel a bit isolated in their own denominations. So, I'm a Baptist. This is my Baptist church.

And I don't, you know, I don't know any Presbyterians, or I don't know any Methodists, or I don't know any Adventists or whatever. What these voluntary societies did was they brought Protestants together, who were separated from each other. It brought them together for common causes.

Protestants began to learn that Protestantism is greater than just their denomination. A lesson I hope you've learned, any Protestants out there, I hope you have learned that the Christian church is greater than just your denomination. So, well, this brought people together in a really beautiful way.

Second, these emphasize preaching, and then, these voluntary societies emphasize the doctrine of what is called disinterested benevolence. The doctrine of disinterested benevolence. That's kind of the formal title that we give to the doctrine.

This became a standard doctrine among evangelicals or people who call themselves evangelicals. Okay. What does this doctrine mean? This doctrine means that after you're converted and come to the Lord, you move away from selfishness.

Selfishness for evangelicals in the great sins, living for yourself. So, you move away from selfishness to a life of selflessness, a life of serving others. So disinterested benevolence is just that, moving away from selfishness to selflessness.

Hopefully, that will manifest in every believer after the believer is converted. A third thing about voluntary societies is that they want to emphasize conversion or renewal or justification by faith, but they want to emphasize it as a transformed life. Conversion is a transformed life.

Conversion should have changed you completely so that you can live this life of disinterested benevolence. Now, the transformed life, the word we usually give for it, is the word that Finney would use, and that's the word sanctification or the word holiness. So, the voluntary societies emphasize by moving into disinterested benevolence, the voluntary societies emphasize the life of holiness, the life of sanctification.

Okay. I don't have this on a PowerPoint, but the greatest fear of Finney coming from Wesley, and then Finney picks up on this, Moody picks up on this, the greatest fear that they had was that people would come to Christ and then 30 years later, that's the life that people would still be living. That was their fear.

Thirty years later, 40 years later, 50 years later, people wouldn't know anything more about the gospel. They wouldn't know anything more about living a selfless life. They wouldn't know anything more about holiness.

They wouldn't know anything more about following Jesus. They wouldn't know anything more about the Bible or prayer or the church. And that was their greatest fear.

And they tried to keep telling people that when you become converted, this is not your life anymore. This is your life. You're moving toward something greater than yourself.

And you're moving toward establishing the image of Christ in your life and so forth. So that kind of interest in the transformed life was very, very important. Okay.

A fourth aspect of these voluntary societies that we've already talked about, and I said I would mention it a few times, but the work of the church is not just preaching or teaching. The work of the church also remade society. It's remaking.

It's bringing about a just order in the world in which we live. And if that means fighting for the emancipation of slaves, so be it. That's the work of the gospel as far as these voluntary societies are concerned.

If that means equality for women and men in education, so be it. That's the work of the gospel. So, these voluntary societies really emphasized that the work of the church is not only to preach and evangelize, but the work of the church is also to remake society and remake the social order.

So that really becomes important for what are called these voluntary societies. Okay. Now, one last thing that we want to mention is Finney and his life and ministry.

And that is, I'll just give a quotation, then I'll come back to it. Oh, and by the way, of course, he wrote a lot other than Lectures on Revival and Religion. So, he's known for his preaching, his teaching, his writing, his administration of Oberlin College, and so forth.

Here's a quotation just to give us a sense of his life. Finney is an immensely important man in American history by any standard of measure. His revivals were a powerful force in the rising antislavery impulse and in the rise of urban evangelism.

So, the importance of Finney. He really establishes evangelicalism. And by his life and ministry and theology, evangelicalism becomes known.

So, he's well-known in public. He's not just known by church people. He's known by the general public. And what he does is known by the general public.

He's kind of a public theologian. Let me just see if I've got anything else on him in terms of just this one thing. Yeah, I think, okay.

Okay, here's Charles Grandison Finney. Very, very, very important person. He might be almost the first on our list in American Christianity in terms of reshaping the church and the broader culture.

Well, certainly, he'd be in the top 10 or so. Okay, any word on Finney? Any word on him and who he is, what he does, why he does it? Are we okay with Finney? Bless your hearts. Okay.

Okay, let's do it; let's at least begin with Dwight L. Moody. Dwight L. Moody. I'd have to go through these again.

A little clapping, no problem. Disinterested benevolence, Oberlin College, Antwerp Emperor. Oops, Dwight L. Moody.

Okay, let's go to Dwight L. Moody. This is the second person who's going to shape evangelicalism in America. Sir, Carter.

Well, among the first 10, I'd say, if I were forced, if someone forced me to say, who are the ten most important people in this course? He'd have to be there. First of all, it is for reshaping theology in American culture and helping to restructure the work of the church as not just evangelism but social, restructuring the social order. I mean, he was all about that, including emancipation, equality of women, and so forth.

So, he accomplished a lot, I guess you could say. And he was very, very well known, just like Whitfield was so well known when he was around. Finney was very well known in the general culture.

Anything else about Finney? Okay, let's start. At least we'll get started with Dwight L. Moody. Okay, first of all, here are his dates and birthplace.

His birthplace is very important. So, you want to take note of this because it'll be important for his whole life. And it's in Northfield, Massachusetts.

So please take note of the birthplace of Moody, Northfield, Massachusetts. That's a place we want to remember in American Christian history. Okay, so there he is, 1837, Northfield, Massachusetts.

All right, tough life. His father died when he was only four. So, his mother was left with him, and I think he had eight other siblings if I remember correctly.

But it was a bit of a difficult life and left the family in a real kind of financial crisis. But the thing you want to take note of here is that his father and his mother were Unitarians. So, he was born, Dwight L. Moody, was born into a Unitarian family.

And up until his early teens or so, that's all he knew. He just knew the Unitarian religion. He didn't know anything about what we would call Orthodox Christianity or Evangelical Christianity.

So he had, in a sense, a couple of things when he was young, and he had to kind of overcome them. But one is a life with no father in the family and a struggling family financially. But also no knowledge of the gospel, no knowledge of Orthodox Christianity, no knowledge, just Unitarian, kind of a nominal Unitarian.

So that's what, that was the beginning of his life. That's how it all started. Okay, now another thing about Finney.

When Finney was 17, I'm not sure what prompted him to do this. It was just a time in his life. Finney decided that he was going to leave Northfield, leave the family, and move to Boston.

So, about the move to Boston, I'm sorry. Did I say Finney? Moody, Moody, Moody, Moody, Moody, Moody. Okay, Finney, we're done with Moody. Moody decides to move to Boston at the age of 17.

All right. He's got an uncle in Boston who runs a shoe shop. And the uncle had a man in the shoe shop named Edward Kimball working for him.

Okay, so long story short on Edward Kimball. Edward Kimball was a Sunday school teacher. Moody works for Moody's uncle, and Moody begins working at that shop.

Edward Kimball, this Sunday school teacher, by Moody's own admission, was Edward Kimball who led Moody to the Lord. It was Edward Kimball who introduced Moody to the Christian gospel, this faithful Sunday school teacher. So, Edward Kimball gets the word for that, in a sense, how important that was.

All right, now here's a plaque that people walk by in Boston every single day. I would say thousands of people walk by this plaque. Nobody ever stops to read it except my group.

When we walked through Boston, we stopped to read it. And then everybody around us wonders, what are we doing standing there blocking traffic and reading this plaque? Have any of you seen this plaque? You can confess if you... Have any of you seen this plaque? Do any of you know where this plaque is? Have you been to Boston, and you haven't seen this plaque? Bless your hearts. How could this be? How would this be possible? Look at what it says: D.L. Moody, Christian evangelist, friend of man, and founder of the Northfield Schools, we'll talk about that later, was converted to God in a shoe store on this site, April 21st, 1855.

So, here's a plaque that people walk by every day, including some of you who have walked by that plaque and not noticed. Well, you're going to notice this plaque because we're going to really point this out to you. So here it was, Boston, shoe shop, Edward Kimball, he comes to the Lord in the city of Boston.

The British State House is just up the street from the British State House. If you're walking the Freedom Trail, you come to where there's a very interesting store with a tea kettle hanging out off the store. Can you picture the tea kettle? That tea kettle was put out there about 1850 or so because it was a tea shop, and it wanted people to know that that was a tea shop.

That tea kettle still hangs there. Do you know where that tea kettle is? Okay. If you go to the right of the tea kettle on that side of the street, you're going to come to this plaque before you come to the British State House.

So, there it is. We're going to see it. Anyone who goes with me, we're going to see this.

You're going to take pictures of this very thing on our field trip because you don't want to miss this. It's very important. Okay.

So, there he goes. Now he's converted and so forth. So, he decides to join a church.

Now he's converted, he should join a church. Long story short, he has trouble joining the church, but we don't have time to get into that today. So, we'll get into that on Wednesday.

Okay. Have a good day. We'll see you on Wednesday.

And then the college gives you about a week and a half off because they feel so sorry for you.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 15, Evangelicalism in the 19th century, Finney and Moody.