



CAPITOL ministries®

INSIDE

PUBLIC SERVANT QUOTE

Keith Hill
*Local Government Ministry
Leader, Austin, TX*..... 2

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Luke 3:8..... 3

FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

John Quincy Adams..... 4
Samuel Adams..... 5
Josiah Bartlett 6

ABOUT

Capitol Ministries® 8



PUBLISHED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



✿ PART 2 OF 3

Societal Deterioration and the Epochal Analysis of a Bungling Church



Last week we examined the first in a three-part series of Bible studies that evaluate evangelism and discipleship as the primary calling of the institution of the Church and its obedience to that primary calling relative to each epoch of American Church history.

The second key word in the title of this study is *epoch*, which *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines as “a period of time in history or a person’s life, typically one marked by notable events or particular characteristics.”

Continued on next page

BIBLE STUDY SPONSORS

SENATORS

- Marsba Blackburn: TN*
- Bill Cassidy: LA*
- Kevin Cramer: ND*
- Steven Daines: MT*
- Joni Ernst: IA*
- Cindy Hyde-Smith: MS*
- James Lankford: OK*
- Mike Rounds: SD*
- Tim Scott: SC*
- John Thune: SD*

REPRESENTATIVES

- Robert Aderholt: AL*
- Rick Allen: GA*
- Don Bacon: NE*
- Michael Bost: IL*
- Ted Budd: NC*
- Michael Conaway: TX*
- Rick Crawford: AR*
- Ron Estes: KA*
- Louie Gohmert: TX*
- Tom Graves: GA*
- Glenn Grothman: WI*
- Kevin Hern: OK*
- Bill Huizenga: MI*
- Bill Johnson: OH*
- Dusty Johnson: SD*
- Jim Jordan: OH*
- Doug Lamborn: CO*
- Kevin McCarthy: CA*
- Gary Palmer: AL*
- Bill Posey: FL*
- Cathy McMorris Rodgers: WA*
- David Rouzer: NC*
- John Rutherford: FL*
- Glenn Thompson: PA*
- Tim Walberg: MI*
- Jackie Walorski: IN*
- Randy Weber: TX*
- Daniel Webster: FL*
- Bruce Westerman: AR*
- Roger Williams: TX*
- Joe Wilson: SC*
- Rob Wittman: VA*
- Steve Womack: AR*
- Rob Woodall: GA*
- Ted Yoho: FL*

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff:* Wednesdays 7am, Zoom.
- Senate Members:* Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
- House Members:* Thursdays 8am, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.



★ MINISTRY LEADER QUOTE

Keith Hill

Local Government
Ministry Leader
Austin, Texas



“I am leading a Local Government Ministries Bible study in the greater Austin, Texas area, and in the first several months God had raised up faithful leaders in Lockhart, Texas.

“We are encouraged and motivated to be reading the same Bible studies at the same time they are being taught to our leaders in Washington, D.C.

“Seeing our local public servants wrestle with local issues through the lens of the Bible is quite rewarding. Isaiah 55:11 promises that His Word will accomplish what He desires.

“I am looking forward to seeing what He will do in the coming decades as we unleash the Word of God to local government leaders throughout our nation.”

— KEITH HILL

Societal Deterioration and the Epochal Analysis of a Bungling Church – Part 2

Last week’s study dealt with an introduction to this subject. In Part 2 this week, we will examine the first two of those five epochs. I think you will find what follows most helpful in your understanding of the current spiritual fabric of our nation and stimulating to your personal spiritual growth.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

I. 1776: THE PURITAN PULPIT SHAPES AMERICAN CULTURE

Postmillennialism was the prevailing eschatological point of view of the American Church from the Puritan era all the way through to the Civil War. Postmillennialism is the Christian view that Christ will return at the end of the millennial period that is described in the book of Revelation—in this case, after which time believers would have Christianized the world and prepared the way for Him. It was the dominant *singular motivation* why Evangelicals were involved in society during this earliest period of American Church history. Postmillennialism was promoted through this period of the Great Awakening by such preachers as Jonathan Edwards.

In this context, the Church was largely motivated by a prophetic determinism as it pertained to societal change; accordingly, the Postmillennial-driven

Church directly attached itself to culture and politics.

Such involvement was essential to ushering in the Kingdom: This is only logical in that, per the tenets of Postmillennialism, Christ will only return when believers have prepared the way by Christianizing all the nations of the world. In Postmillennial thought, Christianizing the world is “the believer’s side of the bargain” that must be achieved in order to enact Christ’s Second Coming. To illustrate the tangential fervor of this American Postmillennial belief in early America, Church historian George Marsden summarizes what was widely believed at that time:

“America has a special place in God’s plans and will be the center for the great spiritual and moral reform that will lead to the golden age or ‘millennium’ of Christian civilization. Moral reform accordingly is crucial for hastening this spiritual millennium.”¹



♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

Luke 3:8*“Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.”*

Theological liberals do not believe Christ is a savior, or that man’s soul is in need of saving.

The Puritans believed that Christ’s Kingdom will grow out of the spiritual and moral progress gained by and through the believer’s efforts at reforming politics and culture in the present age. That belief is held today by Postmillennialists who are also known as Dominion Theologians or Theonomists or Christian Reconstructionists and also by the latest media title, “Christian Nationalism” (See my Bible study at capmin.org, “Better Understanding the Fallacy of Christian Nationalism.”) But importantly, notice that reforming is not necessarily equated with soul winning, i.e., the simple formula and result of Luke, chapter 3 evangelism. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, a leading Postmillennialist who stated, “The kingdom of God is not a kingdom lying in another world beyond the skies but established here and now,” illustrates further the summation of this belief.² Accordingly, missionary progress was measured during the Puritan period not only in terms of evangelistic crusades, revival, and church planting, but in terms of cultural advancement. Cultural successes pertaining to slavery, abolition, and technological achievement were just as much measurements of the Christianization of America as anything else.

The point is that before Theological Modernism intruded into the Church after the Civil War, (the next epoch we will examine) most Christians actively engaged in the culture and in politics to prepare the world for Christ’s second coming. This thinking characterized Postmillenni-

alism and was the singular prevailing theological impetus that motivated, wedded, and justified the Church’s emphasis and direct involvement in the politics and culture of the country. Whether this is a model that today’s Evangelical Church should employ for similar success depends upon a careful exegetical examination to determine whether Postmillennialism eschatology is scriptural.

In fact, Postmillennialism is not exegetically popular today; it has been roundly discounted by leading conservative Evangelical theologians. In the late 20th and now 21st century the dominant eschatology in the American Church is Premillennialism. In vast contrast to Postmillennialism, this predominant eschatological camp believes that Christ’s Second Coming will occur at the start of the millennial period in order to save the world from its own demise and tragedy. Most of the leading national Evangelical expository preachers that you hear on the radio today are Premillennialists. This argument is biblically defensible but arguing for this viewpoint herein is beyond the scope of this study.³ Accordingly:

Postmillennialism is in no position to be the *tour de force* that it once was so as to be a leading impetus and motivation for cultural change today.

From an interpretive/exegetical standpoint in want of biblical accuracy, that is a good thing because there is no Scripture to support the idea that Christ’s Second Coming depends on



John Quincy Adams



“My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the Gospel of Christ and I cannot cavil or quibble away [evade or object to].... the whole tenor of His conduct by which He sometimes positively asserted and at others countenances [permits] His disciples in asserting that He was God.”

— John Quincy Adams, sixth U.S. President, diplomat, Secretary of State, U.S. Senator, U.S Representative.

John Adams and John Quincy Adams, *The Selected Writings of John and John Quincy Adams*, Adrienne Koch and William Peden, editors (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 292, John Quincy Adams to John Adams, January 3, 1817.

contained in this week’s passage of Luke, chapter 3.

It follows that for the Church today to be motivated in ways similar, it would have to re-adopt a faulty eschatology that it already rejected.⁴

II. 1877: THE ENCROACHMENT OF THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM

The period in American Church history that immediately followed Puritanism was the rise of Modernism, or better, Theological Liberalism. This changing of the guard was a dominant (but not entire) metamorphosis that occurred over a period of time from approximately 1865 to 1915. It predominantly transformed Postmillennial-driven Puritanism into liberal Protestantism and ushered in what is commonly referred to as the emergence of a Social Gospel form of “Christianity.” During this period of American Church history, there can be no doubt as to the accelerating involvement of the American “Church” into the political/social arena as depicted by the synonymous name “the Social Gospel.” The more pertinent question however is: “Was the Social Gospel form of Christianity a biblical Christianity as well—or for that matter, was it Christianity at all?” said resoundingly, “No it is not.” After his book *Christianity & Liberalism* was published in 1923, Machen became the chief spokesmen against what had become a thoroughly established liberal Protestantism. Machen (from whose primer I learned the Greek language) had

the Church “Christianizing” culture beforehand. Postmillennialism, also known as “prophetic determinism,” is a convenient, pragmatic motivational way to engage believers in culture, but it is woefully lacking in terms of exegetical/biblical underpinnings.

In other words, any basis for the Church’s social involvement must depend upon it being biblically substantiated. (A theological discussion pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of Postmillennialism warrants its own Bible study at another time.) To be clear, if the premise of Postmillennialism is built on faulty eschatology, and by the way, it was rejected by the American Church by the conclusion of WWII, then it stands to reason that what motivated Puritan cultural involvement is non-sustainable and incapable of being the vehicle to involve the Church in politics and culture today.

To summarize this first epoch of American Church history as it pertains to the preeminence of saving faith to societal change (the emphasis of Luke, chapter 3, Ephesians 2 and 5, and the four parallel passages listed in the endnotes in Part 1), the impetus and formula that served to engage the early American Church in a mission to change society was motivated by Postmillennial eschatology more than simple evangelism.

The Puritan motivation to change culture was based on a very pragmatic, but exegetically faulty eschatology more than the simple evangelism formula



J. Gresham Machen

been a New Testament professor at Princeton Theological Seminary before the liberal Presbyterians wrested control of the institution. Machen and his theologically conservative cohorts then left the school to found Westminster Seminary. Importantly and accurately, he insisted that liberal Protestantism was “another religion, since it proposed an entirely new view of Jesus and a scheme of salvation other than Christianity had ever taught before.”⁵ Accordingly, Machen was accurate, and I summarize his thinking here:

Modernist Christianity possessed no scriptural basis for political/social involvement because it was not a legitimate depiction of Christianity to begin with!

Liberal Protestantism had escaped the confines of Christianity’s irreducible minimums. The core heresy

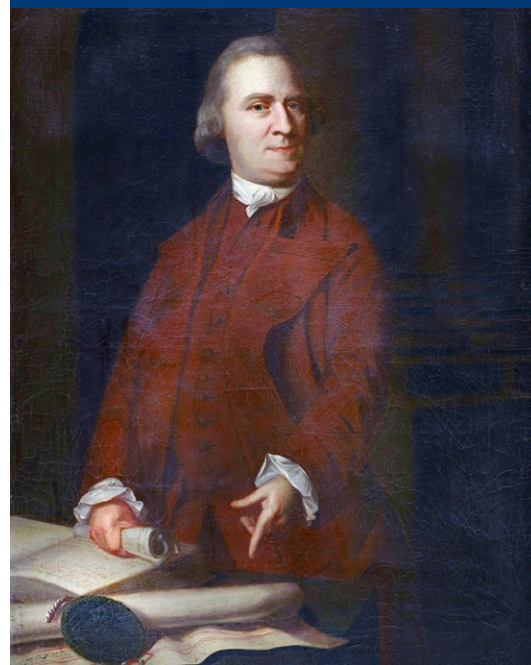
of Liberal Theology continues to be this: Jesus is not our Savior, He is merely a humble, humanitarian role model worthy of personal exemplification—as if that is all that Jesus is about! Herein is a satanic stripping away, a denuding of the power of the cross of Christ. Theological liberals do not believe Christ is a savior, or that man’s soul is in need of saving.

Modernism represented a not-so-subtle convergence of four concussory confluences on Puritan Christianity. Briefly, it was composed of Naturalism or Darwinism, which raised doubt as to the supernatural and scientific accuracy of Scripture. Secondly:

Modernism contained within it the presupposition of human rationalism. That is to say that man’s reasoning was deemed superior to God’s revelation in Scripture.

Therefore whatever in Scripture could not be understood through man’s reasoning (which is finite and fallen, I might add) was viewed with suspicion. Thirdly, Historical Criticism was imported from the Tubingen School in Germany. This criticism had many forms with the intellectual intent of casting doubt, among other things, on the accuracy of the Synoptic gospels, which are the Gospels written from a similar point of view by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It asked the question, could the believer trust what Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote? It questioned whether the

Samuel Adams



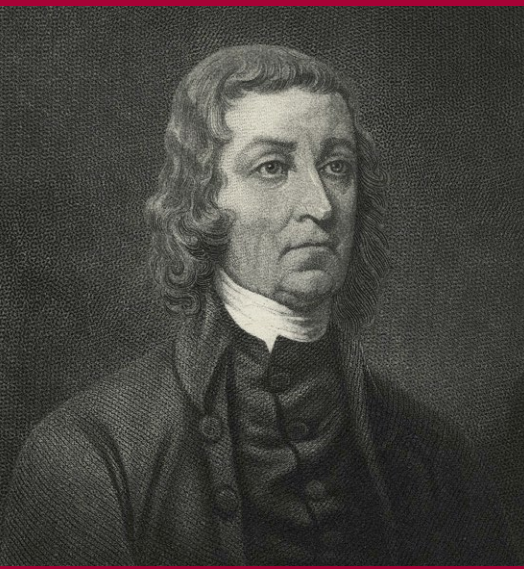
“I conceive we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world ... that the confusions that are and have been among the nations may be overruled by the promoting and speedily bringing in the holy and happy period when the kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and the people willingly bow to the scepter of Him who is the Prince of Peace.”

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, Father of the American Revolution, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, Governor of Massachusetts.

From a Fast Day Proclamation issued by Governor Samuel Adams, Massachusetts, March 20, 1797; see also Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, editor (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1908), Vol. IV, 407, from his proclamation of March 20, 1797.



Josiah Bartlett



Called on the people of New Hampshire

“... to confess before God their aggravated transgressions and to implore His pardon and forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ ... [t]hat the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be made known to all nations, pure and undefiled religion universally prevail, and the earth be fill with the glory of the Lord.”

— Josiah Bartlett, military officer, signer of the Declaration of Independence, judge, governor of New Hampshire.

Josiah Bartlett, *Proclamation for a Day of Fasting and Prayer*, March 17, 1792.

Societal Deterioration and the Epochal Analysis of a Bungling Church – Part 2

historical Jesus was different from the “Christian” Jesus that the gospel writers had portrayed and embellished. In this sense, the Scriptures were tainted with theoretical plausible doubt through both Naturalism and Historical Criticism, which is the science of codifying the ancient manuscript evidence in the manufacture of the Bible.

Add to that the fourth confluence of the encroaching Social Gospel as invented by Kant, Schleiermacher, and Beecher, and “Christianity” had degenerated into nothing more than a moral code for people to live by. Liberal Protestantism was—and remains—a far cry from biblical Christianity. As an aside, this explains why so many who say they are “Christians” in the capitol, but who in fact are embedded in the false “christianity” of Theological Liberalism, reason differently on policy issues. As Machen quipped:

“They may wear the name “Christian” on their shirtsleeve—but they are part of another religion!”⁶

During this period of what we’ll call, “American Church theological transformation” there was very little defense of the true biblically based Christian faith by traditional theologians. The lionhearted rhetoric of William F. Warren, the president of Boston University, provides insight to the fact that conservative Christian leaders were pridefully asleep at the wheel. Notice this in his words:

“Toward the middle of the last

century came the fullness of God’s time for generating a new Christian nationality.... [Now] all these threatening surges of Antichristian thought have come to us from European seas; not one arose in our own hemisphere....”

Conservative Christian leadership of that time either possessed few apologists of learning, or they made little of the threat until it was too late. They were reluctant to justifiably **“Be angry”** (Ephesians 4:26) in the sense of appropriate righteous indignation and mount an aggressive rejection of encroaching false doctrine. This attitude is descriptive of the great evangelist D.L. Moody. He was opposed to controversy itself. Whereas the New Testament writer Jude preempted his soteriological emphasis in order to earnestly defend the faith from apostasy (Jude 3), Moody, who possessed the platform and the influence to do so in the American Church as a leading evangelist, had no part in such activities. He was known as a theological pragmatist and “often tested doctrines relative to their suitability for evangelism.”⁷ He always sought peace and avoided controversy, seeking a “religion of the heart, versus a religion of the mind.”⁸ He often dialogued with theological liberals, giving them grace with the hope that they would eventually come around and embrace biblical views. But such was not the case, and in part, as a result, Modernism became well-rooted, the primary theology and cultural force in America at that time.



When all was said and done, the Social Gospel had eclipsed the Puritan pulpit as the major influence in American Culture.

The “Church” was now—for certain—engaged in societal change but was far from being the true Church of the New Testament. The above four concussory confluences now had similar weight if not greater prominence than did singular, simple biblical exegesis. Now with the emergence of Theological Liberalism, the Bible was not the only source that informed Christian belief.

It therefore follows that the Modernists’ justification for social action by citing Scripture is largely illegitimate. This is because they truncate the basic doctrines of biblical Christianity in order to achieve their Social Gospel ends. The historic doctrines of the faith were reworked and modified into a counterfeit foundation for social aims. Theological liberals are Scripture twisters. Make no mistake: Scripture does not justify the Social Gospel, as much of it is the replacement of Scripture. Therefore Scripture does not validate the political/social direction of Modernism because the Social Gospel is not a substantiated manifestation of biblical Christianity to begin with! More importantly, it is antithetical to it! Eisegetical means “to read one’s opinions into.” Modernism was founded upon a self-styled eisegetical epistemology which seeks to morph and twist Scripture in order to use it to support preconceived liberal social views. This contrasts greatly with the

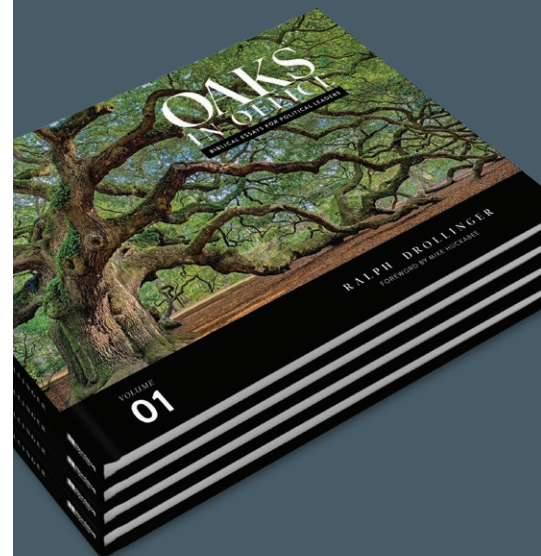
objective use of Scripture which is motivated by a desire to extract from it and apply its timeless, immutable precepts.

Accordingly, this period of Church history does not have a legitimate, extracted-from-Scripture, theological treatise to biblically justify its social expression. Therefore, Christian involvement in the political arena through this epoch of American Church history is found wanting of an accurate biblically and theological underpinning. The formula for cultural change as presented in Luke, chapter 3 was far from its agenda because Theological Liberalism was about social moralism, not personal evangelism. In fact:

The “church” of the Social Gospel changes Scripture in order to change culture.

For example, nowhere in the New Testament is there a command for the institution of the State to take care of the poor. In a careful study of Scripture relative to this politically divisive issue, the stewardship responsibility lies at the feet of the individual, the family, and the institution of the Church in that order of priority. (See, “God’s Institutions and Their Roles on Earth,” January 14, 2020 at capmin.org) Social Gospellers would have you think otherwise. Based on Scripture, this is faulty theology.

What about the coming Fundamentalist period? Would it be characterized by the primacy of saving faith to create societal change? We’ll look at that next in Part 3.



**OAKS
IN OFFICE**
BIBLICAL ESSAYS FOR POLITICAL LEADERS

Oaks in Office: Biblical Essays for Political Leaders will help mold your character as a Christian public servant. These fifty-two Bible studies are selected specifically for discipleship to deeply root you in God’s Word, help you stand strong in the face of adversity, and be bold and unwavering in the faith as you grow in Christlikeness. This beautiful four-volume set is available for purchase at capmin.org.

With each purchase, you may download the book’s fifty-two chapters for free in PDF form so you may use them with your own Bible study group. Study and leader questions are offered at the end of each chapter.



Download our
FREE APP
at the App Store



Bible studies
and updates
at your fingertips



Making Disciples of Jesus Christ
in the Political Arena
Throughout the World



Capitol Ministries® provides Bible studies, evangelism and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, we have started ongoing ministries in over forty U.S. state capitols and dozens of foreign federal capitols.

Capitol Ministries®

Mail Processing Center
Post Office 30994
Phoenix, AZ 85046
661.288.2622
capmin.org

© 2021 Capitol Ministries®
All rights reserved.



[/capitolministries](https://www.facebook.com/capitolministries)

MINISTRIES ESTABLISHED & BUILDING

UNITED STATES

Albany, New York
Annapolis, Maryland
Atlanta, Georgia
Augusta, Maine
Austin, Texas
Bismarck, North Dakota
Boise, Idaho
Boston, Massachusetts
Denver, Colorado
Dover, Delaware
Carson City, Nevada
Charleston, West Virginia
Cheyenne, Wyoming
Columbia, South Carolina
Columbus, Ohio
Concord, New Hampshire
Des Moines, Iowa
Hartford, Connecticut
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Helena, Montana
Honolulu, Hawaii
Jefferson City, Missouri
Lansing, Michigan
Lincoln, Nebraska
Little Rock, Arkansas
Madison, Wisconsin
Montpelier, Vermont
Nashville, Tennessee
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Olympia, Washington
Phoenix, Arizona
Providence, Rhode Island
Raleigh, North Carolina
Richmond, Virginia
Sacramento, California
Salem, Oregon
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Springfield, Illinois
Topeka, Kansas
Trenton, New Jersey

INTERNATIONAL

Abuja, Nigeria
Accra, Ghana
Antananarivo, Madagascar
Asunción, Paraguay
Bangui, Central African Republic
Brasilia, Brazil
Bucharest, Romania
Bujumbura, Burundi
Dodoma, Tanzania
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Georgetown, Guyana
Kiev, Ukraine
Kigali, Rwanda
Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Libreville, Gabon
Lomé, Togo
Lusaka, Zambia
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea
Maputo, Mozambique
Mexico City, Mexico
Monrovia, Liberia
Montevideo, Uruguay
Nairobi, Kenya
N'Djamena, Chad
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
Porto-Novo, Benin
Quito, Ecuador
Riga, Latvia
San Jose, Costa Rica
Suva, Fiji
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Vilnius, Lithuania
Warsaw, Poland
Yaoundé, Cameroon

1. George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
2. Arthur Cushman McGiffert quoted in G. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 50.
3. For two of the best exegetical defenses of *Premillennialism* see: (1) Michael Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Sun Valley, Calif.: Theological Studies Press, 2015) and (2) Matt Wayment, *Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate* (Woodlands, Tex.: Kress Publications, 2004).
4. See Brian Stanley, editor, *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Nashville: Abingdon, Routledge Press, 2015) In this excellent series that traces world missions, it is evident that postmillennial eschatology as exported by missionaries did not work as a compelling force for evangelization of nations that were not inherently European/Christian based already. Postmillennial eschatology was not a tour de force for evangelistic endeavor because the objective of creating a Christian nation in a nation that is inherently otherwise is unrealistic. In an Islamic- or Hindu-based country (examples among many), a postmillennial eschatological motivation would make no sense as a means of compelling individual conversions.
5. J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923), 156.
6. “What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires.” (J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Culture*, Princeton Theological Review 11 [1913], 7). The Religious Right movement emphasized policy change to such a heightened degree that evangelism of souls in the capital community was eclipsed.
7. Stanley Gundry, *Love Them in: The Life and Theology of D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Northfield Publishers, 1999).
8. Ibid.