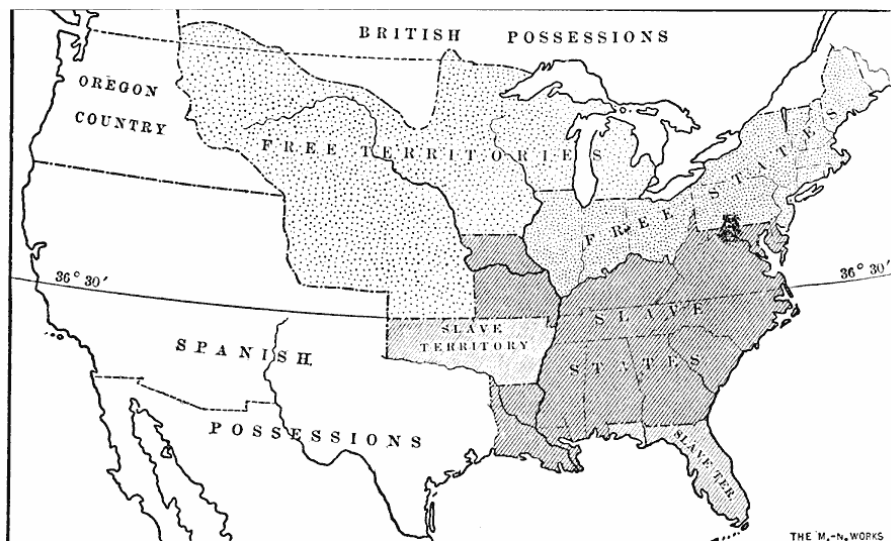


AMERICAN CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSIES OF THE MID-1800's

1820 - The Missouri Compromise limited the expansion of slavery to the "South."



1824 - Charles Finney (33 yrs) began his unique revivalist preaching in New York State.

1830 – Alexander Campbell (41 yrs) began publishing "The Millennial Harbinger." There were a couple of articles in this premiere issue of particular historical interest:

- (1) One from the "Wheeling Compiler," regarding the urgent need to end slavery.
- (2) One by Campbell, condemning the impending removal of Cherokees from Georgia.

----- Joseph Smith (24 yrs) published The Book of Mormon, which he claimed to have received in 1827 from the angel Moroni, who supposedly appeared to him first in 1823.

----- President Andrew Jackson (63 yrs) signed into law "The Indian Removal Act," which abrogated previous treaties made with native tribes & resulted in the forced relocation of tens of thousands of them, with many thousands of deaths during "The Trail of Tears."

----- In England, Charles Lyell (32 yrs) published his Principles of Geology, popularizing the "uniformitarianism" of James Hutton (first presented in 1785). Uniformitarianism rejected the Biblical idea of special creation & the Flood, insisting instead that the Earth was very old and that the "natural" processes by which the Earth came into existence can be ascertained by studying present processes. The Modern Era of Evolution began to take hold.

----- In December, Sidney Rigdon (38 yrs), an associate of Alexander Campbell since 1821, who had been preaching in Mentor, Ohio, but who had converted to Mormonism, visited Joseph Smith in Palmyra, New York. He quickly became Smith's right-hand man. He helped Smith begin work on a new translation of the Bible that would support Mormonism. He was also instrumental in relocating Smith & his followers to Kirtland, Ohio.

1831 - In America, Alexander Campbell (42 yrs) presented a detailed critique of the Book of Mormon. He also offered a personal comment on the defection of Sidney Rigdon.

“It was with mingled emotions of regret and surprize that we have learned that Sidney Rigdon has renounced the ancient gospel, and declared that he was not sincere in his profession of it: and that he has fallen into the snare of the Devil in joining the Mormonites. He has led away a number of disciples with him. His instability I was induced to ascribe to a peculiar mental and corporeal malady, to which he has been subject for some years. Fits of melancholy succeeded by fits of enthusiasm accompanied by some kind of nervous spasms and swoonings which he has, since his defection, interpreted into the agency of the Holy Spirit, or the recovery of spiritual gifts, produced a versatility in his genius and deportment which has been increasing for some time. I was willing to have ascribed his apostacy to this cause, and to a conceit which he cherished that within a few years, by some marvelous interposition, the long lost tribes of Israel were to be collected, had he not declared that he was hypocritical in his profession of the faith which he has for some time proclaimed. Perhaps this profession of hypocrisy may be attributed to the same cause. This is the only hope I have in his case.

“He acted in this instance more like one laboring under some morbid affection of mind, than like one compos mentis. He first believed in Smith's three witnesses, and then went to see Smith in pursuit of the evidence. He found ample evidence of Smith's honesty, and returned in the full assurance of faith that Smith is some prophet which was to come. 'Tis true he has not yet found that promise in the book of God which authorized the expectation of Joseph Smith the junior, as the restorer of the Jews and the founder of the New Jerusalem. Smith promised the Holy Spirit in its special gifts to all who have faith in his mission. He told them to pray to God and they should know whether he was divinely sent. While Sidney and Cowdery, the Magnus Apollo of Smith, were in conclave in this matter, Sidney yielded to the suggestion to pray. Whereupon one of his fits of swooning and sighing came upon him, he saw an angel and was converted.

“He who sets out to find signs and omens will soon find enough of them. He that expects visits from angels will find them as abundant as he who in the age of witchcraft found a witch in every unseemly old woman. I doubt not but that the irreverence and levity in speaking of the things of God, which have been too apparent in Sidney's public exhibitions for some time past, and which he has lately confessed, may yet be found to have been the cause of this abandonment to delusion. The Methodists, amongst whom it appeared so well to take, amongst whom it has recently so much prevailed, ought to be admonished against laying themselves open to such impressions in their swoonings, vociferous ejaculations, and notions about new visions and revelations of the Spirit. The Presbyterians, also, who are for physical operations, may learn the necessity of believing their own Confession of Faith which says that to the testimony of the Apostles and prophets "nothing is to be added, either by a new revelation from the Spirit, or the doctrines and commandments of men." The number of sceptics and nonprofessors which have believed in the delusions of Mormon, remind me of one of the sayings of Jesus -- "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me: "if another come in his own name him you will receive."

“Most of the disciples of Jesus Christ are in much need of being taught the foundations on which their faith should rest in the sacred writings; and as we are all learning in the school of experience. I trust that the incidents of this year will be useful to all, both teachers and taught, in inducing them to examine with more attention the reason of their faith and hope in God's word. The Apostles had to complain of some whose word, like a cancer, consumed the body of Christ, of some who subverted the faith of others, and it will be well for those who preach that faith if they have not to complain of more than one Phygellus and Hermogenes, of more than one Hymeneus and Philetus.

“Mr. Sedwick of Zanesville, and Messrs. Noel and the Chronicle, club of Kentucky, represented this defection as the legitimate result of their phantom "Campbellism." I would ask each of these gentlemen if individually and collectively they would give themselves up in their moral character, as a full specimen of the tendency of Calvinism and Fullerism!! So soon as they do this, we may test their system; and may then show that every person who receives the book of Mormon is an apostate from all that he ever professed, if, indeed, he ever professed to receive or value any thing we have ever spoken or written on the subject of Christianity.”

- 1833 - William Miller (51 yrs), a newly licensed Baptist minister in New England, revealed his long-held conviction (since about 1818) that Jesus' Second Advent would take place in 1843. Many of the congregations affiliated with the "Christian Connexion" defected into "Millerism" under the leadership of their ministers.
- 1835 - Charles Finney (44 yrs) began teaching at Oberlin College in Ohio. He (like so many at Oberlin) was an ardent abolitionist.
- The Doctrine & Covenants was published by the "Mormons."
- 1838/ 1839 Smith (32 yrs) & Rigdon (45 yrs) spent four month in jail at Liberty, Missouri, awaiting trial on charges of treason. Brigham Young (38 yrs) gained prominence during this time.
- 1839 - Joshua V. Himes (34 yrs), pastor of the First Christian Church in Boston since 1830, began supporting Miller by publishing "Signs of the Times."¹ [Himes eventually became a member of the Advent Christian Church (non-Sabbatarians) & moved to Buchanan, Michigan, where he published what became the "Advent Christian Times."]
- 1843 - James White (22 yrs), a recently ordained minister with the Christian Connexion, became a follower of Miller, persuading over a hundred others to join him in doing so. [White became the husband of Ellen G. White, the well-known "prophetess" of Seventh Day Adventism. He was also responsible for relocating the Seventh Day Adventists to Battle Creek, Michigan, & the founding what is now Andrews University.]
- Joseph Marsh (41 yrs), a Christian Connexion preacher since 1823, resigned his pastorate & began preaching Miller's doctrine. [Despite his renunciation of Millerism shortly before his death in 1863, his publications & work contributed to the development of several small Adventist groups.]
- 1844 Forced by his followers to make his teaching clear, Miller (62 yrs) said, "My principles in brief, are, that Jesus Christ will come again to this earth, cleanse, purify, and take possession of the same, with all the saints, sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844."
- After March 21, upon re-evaluation, the date was adjusted to April 18.
- After April 18, Miller wrote, "I confess my error, and acknowledge my disappointment; yet I still believe that the day of the Lord is near, even at the door."
- On June 27, Joseph Smith (38 yrs) was killed during a shoot-out at the Carthage, Illinois jail where he was being held on charges of treason.
- That summer, Samuel S. Snow presented a new calculation which terminated on October 22.
- After the October date, Henry Emmons wrote, "I waited all Tuesday [October 22] and dear Jesus did not come;- I waited all the forenoon of Wednesday, and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel faint, and before dark I needed someone to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for 2 days without any pain- sick with disappointment."

¹ In his "Signs of the Times," Himes heavily promoted the theories of Miller over against those of Campbell.

1845 - Sidney Rigdon (52 yrs) moved his "Latter Day Saints" to Pennsylvania.

1847 - Brigham Young (46 yrs) moved his "Latter Day Saints" to the Utah Territory.

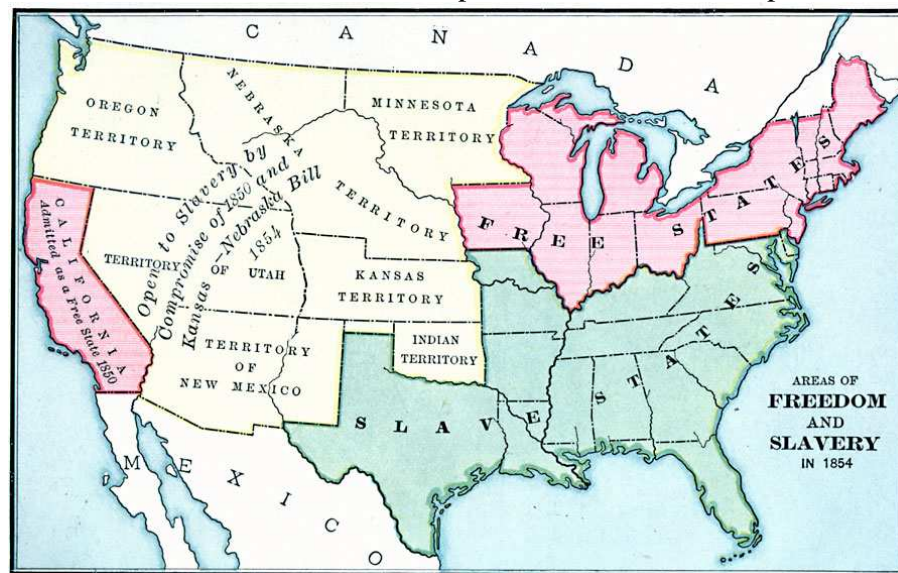
1848 - Alexander Campbell (60 yrs) wrote, "Our brethren of the Second Advent, for many of whom I cherish a very tender affection, like other theorists find too many proofs of their doctrine. I do not, indeed, at all feel any prejudice against these brethren because of their preparation to meet the Lord, nor because they are looking for his immediate return; nor do I call them 'Millerites,' nor 'Second Advent Folks,' out of any disrespect. They are designated by these names in this age of nicknames, sects, and parties. I merely so designate them to save time, because they are so called, and so call one another. They are, however, unfortunately encumbering their views by a revival of the antiquated notions usually called 'destructionism' – a theory wholly inoperative of good, and prejudicial to their cause and to their influence with the community. At least so I think; but I allow others to differ from me, as I claim the privilege of differing from others. These theories, if not dogmatically propounded for schismatical purposes, are not to be causes of alienation or excommunication. On the contrary, a free and unreserved discussion of them, in a Christian spirit, if they are to be discussed at all, can do no harm."

1849 - William Miller died at age 67, still believing the Second Advent was imminent.

1851 - Charles Finney (60 yrs) became President of Oberlin College, from which position he continued his abolitionist efforts.

1852 - Harriet Beecher Stowe (41 yrs) published Uncle Tom's Cabin; Life Among the Lowly.

1854 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820.



1857 - The Supreme Court majority issued its Dred Scott decision that Africans were not "citizens."

1859 – In England, Charles Darwin (50 yrs) published On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.