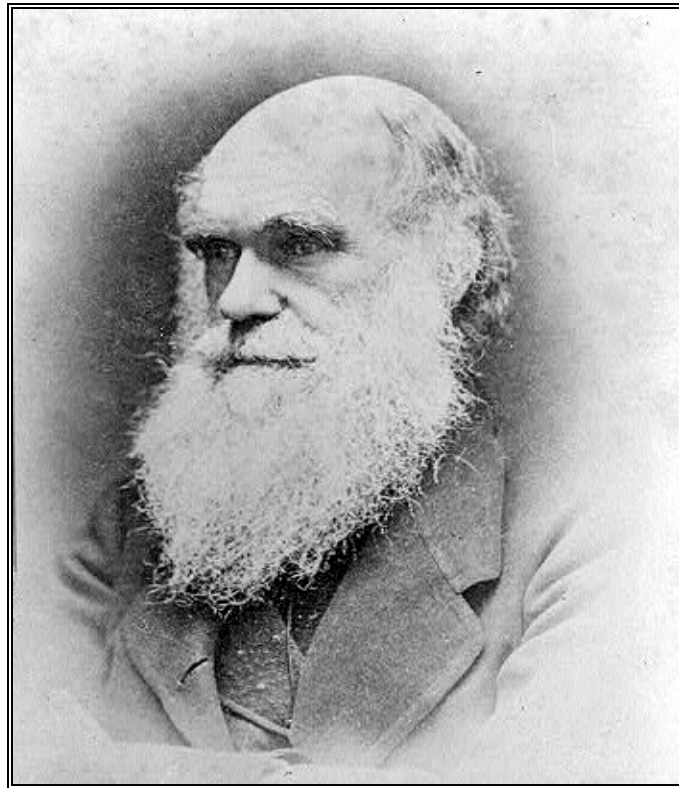


The Nineteenth Century

An Evolutionary Age of Progress and Change



Charles Darwin

1809 – 1882

“Darwin’s idea is the most powerful and the most comprehensive idea that has ever arisen on earth. It helps us understand our **origins**...We are part of a total **process**, made of the same **matter** and operating by the same **energy** as the rest of the **cosmos**, maintaining and reproducing by the same type of **mechanism** as the rest of life...”

~ Sir Julian Huxley

“*Origin of the Species* introduces a mode of thinking that was bound to transform the logic of **knowledge**, and hence the treatment of **morals, politics and religion**.”

~ John Dewey, *Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

1. We can study this century as an era that commenced in 1815 and ‘progressed’ until 1914.
2. Although still Eurocentric, we can now ‘go global’ as to our cultural critique. 🌐
3. The era was generally characterized by evolutionary belief in the inevitability of progress.
4. We will see some of the most radical philosophies yet, and extremely serious challenges to the ‘Christian worldview’ (to Judeo-Christian Biblical-Historic-Revelatory Ethical-Communal Monotheism.)

1. The chief characteristics of this era are cast chronologically between **1815 and 1914**...from the dismantling of the old regimes and the post-Napoleonic reconfiguration of Europe’s map...to the onset of the optimism-destroying horrors of the **First World War**.
2. Any discussion of philosophy and religion will now have to extend beyond the Imperial Seats of Europe and Britain and become “global” in scope. For the first time, **Christianity** becomes a world-missionary religion, and at the same time, **Eastern Thought** is finding open receptivity in **Western Minds**. Also, ideologies arise which are ‘**globalist**’ in their pretensions and goals.
3. It is impossible to attach one descriptive title to this tumultuous century. We can note the unprecedented cultural exchanges, the rapidly advancing technologies, industrialization, the world money-economy, and the resulting sociological **changes**. But here we will merely mention those things and put our focus on major **worldview issues**.

The contrasting dynamics of this century partly arise from: the *continuation of* Enlightenment Ideals (autonomous **reason** and the achievements of **science**) and fervent *reactions against* the Enlightenment. These reactions were embodied in the multi-faceted **Romantic Movement**. We are confronted, in studying this one century, with Rationality vs. Irrationality & everything between! This ‘thoroughly **modern**’ era contains such **conflicting** views as: (in no particular order)

Idealists, Realists, Atheists, Occultists, Secularists, Spiritualists, all-encompassing systematizers and defiant individualists!
Universalists, Pseudo-scientific Racists, Paganists, Fundamentalist vs. Liberal Theologians, Transcendentalists, Syncretists,
Socialists, Utopian Dreamers, “Volkists,” Early Women’s Liberationists, Orientalists, Theosophists...and much more!

So although it is impossible to summarize and encapsulate the “**spirit of this age**”...if we had to offer one prevailing worldview feature it would be the widespread belief in the inevitability of human progress. Naturalists and Super-naturalists alike conceived of reality in ‘**evolutionary**’ terms! Philosophers since Thales had tried to *explain* “change.” Now, “**change**” was the very goal!

4. Many of the important PHILOSOPHERS from this chapter of history had their greatest impact in the **20th century**. Likewise, many of the MOVEMENTS founded in the **19th century** flourished later and some are enjoying success even today.

That ‘*ideas have consequences*’ is obvious.

Not quite so obvious is how and when ‘**ideas become ideologies and ideologies become idolatries.**’

Has Christianity yet learned how to interpret its own revelatory worldview and live it redemptively in the face of such challenges? This overview is admittedly inadequate, but is offered as a start. We cannot understand, much less witness to, our own age unless we deal with the philosophical, religious, and socio-political ferment of the nineteenth century. Much of what we deal with in ministry today has spiritual ‘**roots**’ traceable to this era. And if we think academic philosophy is seriously fractured today, we might inquire whether this is the reason:

Many 20th century Worldviews were ‘built’ upon deeply fissured 19th c. foundations!

“I cannot imagine what theory there might be that would ignore the realities of nineteenth century history.”

~ G. C. Spivak



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MAJOR NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHERS

Radical Changes in Human Understanding and Existence!

Alas, Kant's Critiques of Reason did not put an end to philosophical speculation about the ultimate nature of reality. His belief that God, though *not* an object for human knowledge, *could* still 'inspire' our moral sense for practical-ethical reasons did NOT satisfy many post-Enlightenment thinkers. Kant had divided the world into the *noumenal* and the *phenomenal*, and we seem to have had a hard time thinking holistically ever since!

To overcome that problem, you will see some philosophers of the 19th c. become pure materialists or idealists. Then, focusing on the *alienated* individual, new collectivisms were devised. Then, shunning those *dehumanizing* approaches, proto-existentialists created daringly subjective (even subversive!) approaches to the human dilemma. Serious-minded rejections of Theism were not simply to 'deny God,' but to 'affirm the human' in an age that was rapidly redefining humanness! What *is* the relationship of God, Human and World?? Science had advanced and demoted us at the same time. Industrialization had both eased and disrupted our lives. The tumults of this era required a thorough re-evaluation of all of the basic questions along with bold repudiations of traditional answers! If there IS no Biblical God to 'save us,' we should be freed from that oppressive superstition so as to save ourselves. And even Christian thinkers offered widely divergent new approaches to the religious life, and redefinitions of faith. As you review the summaries of these few thinkers, take notice of the radical changes within the 19th c. philosophical enterprise. Their ideas gave shape to philosophies and principalities with which we still contend.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL (1770 — 1831)

Hegel created the grandiose metaphysical system of "**Absolute Idealism.**" Absolute 'Mind' is the totality of reality.

"The Real is the Rational and the Rational is the Real." "The finite has no genuine Being."

Kant had postulated that the human mind processes the 'appearances' of the phenomenal (experienced) world leaving the higher (noumenal) world as unknowable. But whereas Kant had said the mind 'structures' reality, Hegel said the mind IS reality...ALL of reality...so he isn't talking about a finite mind, he means the Infinite Mind. The 'Geist' (*Geist* = Mind/Spirit) can be considered divine. Such a 'God' isn't static or impassible; it is dynamic and always 'in process.' It manifests a physical world and 'works itself out' throughout the processes of history and culminates in absolute self-awareness. ***"Without the world God is not God."***

The **DIALECTIC** is *how* all thought and reality **moves**. Every **Thesis** contains its own **Antithesis** and that opposition resolves into a new **Synthesis**...which must then become a new **Thesis**...and on and on it goes! The epistemology dilemmas are resolved by 'internalizing' them in this dynamic all-embracing system. There is no subjective—objective bridge to cross when everything is ultimately One! The highest objective outworking of the Geist is the **State**. (We know the terror unleashed when later Germans enact that idea.)

This kind of **philosophical totalizing** tends toward **political totalitarianism**.

Applied in society, the 'right-wing' version of Hegelianism is Fascism and the 'left-wing' version is Communism.

Hegelianism is also extremely destructive in theology, because Christianity is merely one stage in the historical outworking of the Absolute. God is not a transcendent being in Hegel's system; He only *seems* to exist apart from us in his *self-alienation* which is being resolved in the whole process of reality. **Such a God will not conflict with science, for God is evolving with the world!** Kant had 'limited reason' and denied knowledge of the noumenal 'to make room for faith.' Hegel makes faith utterly irrelevant. Because Reason *can* achieve its goal! Rationality can become certain that that it *is* identical with the Absolute.

Hegelianism is also destructive to our worldview critique because NO one proposition about reality can ever be finally true. Any statement would contain its own negation. The most we theists could ever have is a Process Theism, if not sheer collapse into pantheism and self-deification. Hegel's influence is inestimable, and in so many ways it has been horrific.

***"Truth is the unity of the universal and the particular will...the universal is to be found in the State...
...the State is the divine Idea as it exists on earth."***

"Reason is the self-certainty of Consciousness that it is all reality."

Georg Hegel

Ludwig Andreas FEUERBACH (1804 — 1872)

A 'Leftist Hegelian' who reversed Hegel's assertion: "Man is God self-alienated" into "God is man self-alienated."

The traditional belief that God is a 'heavenly' being only alienates humans from achieving the fullness of our own ideal being, so such beliefs should be eradicated, according to Feuerbach.

"Christ' is merely the love of mankind for itself embodied in an image."

Ludwig Feuerbach

Karl MARX (1818 — 1883)

Like Feuerbach, Marx was influenced by the radical Hegelians, and turning 'idealism' to 'materialism' he developed the socio-economic-political doctrine that still bears his name. Marxism is essentially Dialectical Materialism.

The *Communist Manifesto* (1848) was a masterpiece of political propaganda. It rallied the working class to: "lose their chains, unite, and win the world!" Communist regimes may have failed in our lifetime but Marxist theories are still influential in political science. Hegel had implied that philosophy can only interpret the world, not change it...but Marx proclaimed:

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world...our task is to change it!"

Karl Marx

Arthur SCHOPENHAUER (1788 — 1860)

Schopenhauer despised his colleague Hegel, calling him a 'flat-headed, audacious charlatan who dished out crazy mystifying nonsense'! He considered almost all former philosophers as 'windbags' and admired Hinduism and Buddhism. In fact, Schopenhauer was the first major western philosopher to make connections between his own thought and Eastern religious philosophy.

But Schopenhauer saw Ultimate Reality as a wild seething force he called the **WILL** "representing" itself in the phenomenal world. Everything in the experiential world is a manifestation of that inexorable perverse Will in its voracious activities of creation and destruction. All human endeavor, art, law, science, philosophy, morality and even religion are mere sublimations still in bondage to that Will. Existence is **ultimately meaningless** in its ongoing desirous 'will' to exist...and we are trapped in that terrible bind! Unsatisfied desire is painful and satisfied desire is wretchedly boring. There is no remediation for this despair except momentary escape into the 'representation-less' and 'detached from the will' realm of aesthetic contemplation, especially of formal music. A permanent escape would have to be final cessation of the will to exist! It is easy to see why Schopenhauer has been called the **Supreme Pessimist**. How *utterly* hopeless is a philosophy that can't even recommend suicide? *At least the Stoics had said it is better to die well than to live badly.* But Schopenhauer said that a willful act of self-slaughter merely 'obeys' the brutal wolfish Will! What should we make of his extolling Nirvana-like **extinction** as the goal of a good life. If everything is the cunning Will and its illusions...how can we *ever* reach total Non-Will...and so why not suicide as a way to at least relieve one individual manifestation!? No wonder Nietzsche said that Schopenhauer, along with Platonism and Christianity, need not even be refuted, for an *Urbemensch* could just smell the decomposition.

*"In the sphere of thought, absurdity and perversity remain masters of the world,
and their dominion is suspended only for brief moments."*

Arthur Schopenhauer

Friedrich NIETZSCHE (1844 — 1900)

Nietzsche began his career as an academic classicist. However, his eccentric personality, his brilliant but subversive mind, and his poor health turned him to a solitary life which he spent authoring famously unconventional books.

These works have exerted tremendous influence on postmodern thought. *"There are no facts, only interpretations..."*

Nietzsche, of course, is very difficult to interpret! His thought is impossible to label or summarize, but some important 'themes' are: -- disgust for Christian morality, contempt for democratic ideals, scorn for Schopenhauer's Buddhist renunciation of the will, and the celebration of the heroic figure he called the *Urbemensch*. This 'superman' idea has been misunderstood. What Nietzsche presents is a human being who is able to 'overcome' meaninglessness, rise above the senseless flux, go *beyond good & evil*, and affirm a self-styled life free from all conventional constraints and 'herd-mentality.' Kant had said "Dare to Know" but Nietzsche would say "Dare to Create." Even, "Dare to Lie!" (For there is no truth to "know" as a bedrock fact about existence.) He said:

"You have your way, I have my way, as for the right, the correct, the only way...it does not exist."

Although he was radically individualistic, several movements have found their 'inspiration' in Nietzsche's thought:

-- the psychoanalytic school, atheistic existentialism, radical perspectivism & postmodern literary critics, and unfortunately, the Nazis—although they bastardized his '**triumph of the will-to-power**' for their grotesque agenda. (Nietzsche actually despised Germanic nationalism and antisemitism.) There is, however, nothing he offered that could have prevented such an "interpretation."

For us, Nietzsche is most famous for the "**God is Dead**" pronouncement. But what did he mean? That the Christian God has become 'unbelievable' was declared by others in this era, as we've seen. But Nietzsche seems to have concluded that we must become our own gods. We must look into the abyss of nothingness and re-create it in our own image! Nietzsche could see the nihilistic implications of Darwinism, but he considered Christianity ("Platonism for the masses") to be the worst nihilism of all. Because it pitifully sought answers *outside* reality! If God is 'dead' *humans* must 'redeem *humanity*.'

"The word Christianity is a misunderstanding. There was only one Christian and he died on a cross."

"What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"

Friedrich Nietzsche

Soren Aabye KIERKEGAARD (1813 — 1855)

Kierkegaard despised Hegel's overblown System, which he believed would swallow up the individual and annul human freedom and personhood. Whereas Hegel had equated Thought and Existence, Kierkegaard exclaimed: Existence is the one thing that cannot be 'thought,' it must be LIVED! Lived with shuddering dread...but lived! Thus, Kierkegaard is the **Father of Existentialism**. **Objective** uncertainty makes our **Subjective** decision-making that much more poignant and meaningful.

The anxiety of our broken existence can only be overcome by a **leap of faith**. Kierkegaard's religious philosophy was full of irony, paradox, and scathing contempt for institutionalized Christianity, but expressed such personal passion that it had powerful impact on **Neo-Orthodox Theology**. Especially after WWI when 19th c. optimism waned and there was a need to once again redefine Christian faith...and to rescue it from the rancorous battle between Liberals and Fundamentalists!

"Faith does not result from scholarly deliberation, nor does it come directly; on the contrary, in such objectivity one loses that infinite, personal, impassioned focus which is the condition of faith."

Soren Kierkegaard

The UTILITARIANS: Jeremy Bentham (1748—1832), James Mill (1773—1836) and John Stuart Mill (1808—1873) Bentham, and his 'students' James & his son John, applied empiricist-materialist philosophy to practical, political and ethical issues and their moral theories are known as types of "Utilitarianism." This defines good actions as those which produce the maximum benefit for everyone. J. S. Mill campaigned, with the help of his wife Harriet Taylor, for women's rights.

"Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure."

"Pain and pleasure are words which a man has no need to go to a lawyer to know the meaning of."

Jeremy Bentham

Other important thinkers of the 19th century:

Johann Gottlieb **Fichte** (1762—1814) He paved the way for Hegel's Absolute Idealism, and was also one of the first to espouse Germanic Nationalism/Totalitarianism. He was an antisemite who declared that Jews should be eliminated from the German State because even conversion to Christianity cannot change them.

Francis Herbert **Bradley** (1846—1924) He was another philosopher influenced by Hegel's Absolute Idealism. His metaphysical picture embraces Unity and 'Whole-ism' as attributes of the Real. Anything partial or divided (like thinking) is flawed. "Truth as formulated in language is always partial, and dependent upon categories that are themselves inadequate to describe the harmonious whole. Nevertheless, these contradictory elements somehow contribute to the Absolute, lying beyond categorization." (Simon Blackburn)

We will see a 'new realism' in the 20th century as a reaction against such idealism.

Thinkers whose work helped 'father' the 20th century world:

Friedrich Ernst Daniel **Schleiermacher** (1768 — 1834) "Father of Liberal Theology"

August **Comte** (1798 — 1857) "Father of Sociology"

Charles Sanders **Peirce** (1839 — 1914) "Father of American Pragmatism"

Gottlob **Frege** (1848 — 1925) "Father of Modern Logic"

Sigmund **Freud** (1856 — 1939) "Father of Psychoanalysis"



"We are not only mere animals, we are sick animals."



NINETEENTH CENTURY PUBLICATIONS



- 1807** *The Phenomenology of Mind* by Georg **Hegel**. Beyond mere phenomena, noumenal **reality-in-itself** can be known...as it ‘knows itself’ in consciousness...absolutely. (Hegel’s Absolute Mind as the basis for a system by which he can explain everything!)
- 1818** *The World as Will and Representation* by Arthur **Schopenhauer**. A revised edition was published in 1844.
- 1830** *The Christian Faith, 2nd ed.* by Friedrich **Schleiermacher**. Considered the most important theologian between Calvin and Barth, Schleiermacher has been called the ‘Father of Modern Protestant Theology’ and the ‘Father of **Liberalism**.’ He tried to rescue the Christian Faith from Enlightenment ‘cultured despisers,’ but he did so by making it compatible with Romanticism! He placed ‘**feeling**’ (deep awareness) as the essence of religion. (Our **feeling** of utter dependence on God.) Earlier, he suggested that the Canon, as well as doctrine, should be **open** to ‘new revelation’ based on feeling.
- ‘New Revelation’ is exactly what we were open to, and what we got in the 19th century:**
- 1830** *Book of Mormon* translated from the ‘golden tablets’ by the occultist **Joseph Smith** and the ‘angel *Moroni*.’ From this false prophet and his polytheistic-gnostic myths emerged one of the fastest growing religions in the world—one which deceptively claims to be Christian yet also to ‘complete’ Christianity!
- 1830** *Principles of Geology* by Charles **Lyell**. The earth is not only much older than the Bible says, but its features can all be explained naturalistically. Lyell’s work influenced Darwin.
- 1830** *The Positive Philosophy* by August **Comte**. Considered the founder of sociology, Comte was very much a 19th century thinker in trying to apply the *laws of social evolution* to all human knowledge and endeavor. Typical of the time, even *religion* was relegated to such ‘scientific’ study. In Comte’s vision, which Thomas Huxley dubbed “Catholicism minus Christianity,” humanity itself becomes the thing to be worshiped!
- 1835** *The Life of Jesus* by David F. **Strauss**. This massive landmark work scours the Gospels for their ‘mythical’ content, not their historical validity. Radical studies like this launched a new era in biblical scholarship. Supernatural stories and miracles simply *cannot* be taken literally in the Age of Darwin!
- See also:* Julius Wellhausen (d. 1918) and Ernst Renan (d. 1892). Radical Biblical Criticism was probably more responsible for shattering the faith of educated people than anything else. If a ‘new reading’ of Scripture launched the Reformation and the “Age of Belief”...you could say that the skeptical reading of scripture, from the Enlightenment on, launched modern secularism and the “Age of Disbelief”!
- 1848** *Communist Manifesto* by Karl **Marx**. With Friedrich Engels, Marx developed the modern philosophy of *scientific socialism*, or *dialectical-historical materialism* (based on Hegel’s thought.) All human history is- ‘of struggle between rulers and workers’ (exploiters and the exploited!) A global worker’s revolt will do away with private ownership of the means of production, and after a ‘brief’ dictatorship, the new social economy *by the people for the people* would create a productive yet egalitarian, utopian “classless society.” The *Manifesto* is the classic exposition of communist philosophy. Theoretical Communism is so ‘messianic’ it has been called a Christian heresy! *Das Kapital* (3 volumes published in **1867**, **’85**, & **’94**) is Marx’s greatest work and is a brilliant critical analysis, still quite relevant today, of Capitalism.
- 1851** *New Themes for the Protestant Clergy* by Stephen **Colwell**. Influenced by Comte, Colwell accused the Church of being a ‘bourgeois institution’ and offered a more radical application of the Gospel. A forerunner of “the Social Gospel.”
- 1853** *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* by Count Joseph Arthur de **Gobineau**. A purveyor of the new 19th c. *pseudo-scientific racism*, Gobineau misused the linguistic term **Aryan** to mean an original and superior white race. He believed that civilizations are determined by ‘race,’ and that “Aryans” held the key to human destiny.
- 1859** *The Origin of Species* by Charles **Darwin**. Whereas earlier thinkers had believed *that* evolution occurs, Darwin’s *Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection* explained *how* evolution occurs. This seminal work not only changed biology forever, but its totally mechanistic-naturalistic explanatory principle ‘inspired’ non-Biblical conceptions of reality to be espoused in *all other academic fields*. In **1871**, Darwin’s book *The Descent of Man* applied the evolutionary explanation to human origins *and* human character.
- 1860** *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* by Herbert **Spencer**. Like Comte, Spencer based his views of social history on the most ‘advanced science.’ Influenced by Darwin, he said that human progress results from stronger people triumphing over inferiors. He coined the phrase (**horrific** when applied to humans): “**Survival of the Fittest.**”

- 1864** *Syllabus of Errors* issued by Pope **Pius IX**. Bitter about Italian unification, Pius IX condemned all the main ideas of liberalism and modernism. Not only were atheism and modern biblical criticism condemned, but the Syllabus listed ‘freedom of religion’ and ‘separation of church and state’ as things Catholics should reject!
Pius IX also called “**Vatican I**” and promulgated the dogma of the ‘Infallibility of the Pope.’ (With the Church’s loss of its previous power over human society due to modern changes in society, it was deemed that Catholicism must have a powerful Papacy to retain its influence.)
- 1872** *The Birth of Tragedy* by Friedrich **Nietzsche**. Deliberate repudiation of rationality...man does *not* live by reason!
- 1875** *Science and Health: A Key to the Interpretation of Scripture* by **Mary Baker Eddy**. Presented as the only way to read the Bible, this book claims that God is *all* good, *all* that exists, and *all* ‘mind.’ Healing comes from understanding the true nature of reality...which is to know that matter doesn’t even exist! This is like Hindu spiritual monism wherein the ‘world’ is mere illusion, and Eddy’s “**The Church of Christ, Scientist**” (which had over 100,000 members by 1900) was one of many such “New Thought,” “Mind Science,” or “Mental Healing” movements that emerged in the 19th c. and turned the biblical person of Jesus into a symbol or a ‘spirit guide.’
- 1877** *Isis Unveiled: A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology* by Helena P. **Blavatsky**. This 2000 page compendium of anti-Jewish Gnosticism, Hinduism, Occultism, Mythology, *etc.* was “channeled” to Blavatsky by ascended spirits calling themselves “The Great White Brotherhood.” It is like ‘canonical scripture’ to neo-pagans. Blavatsky also founded the **Theosophical Society** from which innumerable **New Age** organizations have sprung...including the **Thule Society** which groomed Adolph Hitler for his rise to power!
- 1883** *The Science of Mechanics* by Ernst **Mach**. Mach was a physicist, mathematician and philosopher of science who heavily influenced Einstein and the founders of quantum mechanics. This will spell the end of the Newtonian model of the cosmos. Mach argued that all knowledge is based on sensation and scientific measurement depends on the observer’s perception. The impact on philosophy will be in the direction of positivism.
- 1883** *Thus Spake Zarathustra* by **Nietzsche**. Speaks of the death of God and man’s need to become his own god. Man must throw off weak, pathetic (Christian) morality and become the heroic **Übermensch**.
- 1891** *Rerum Novarum*, an encyclical from Pope **Leo XIII**. A condemnation of Marxism.
- 1893** *Evolution and Ethics* by Thomas H. **Huxley**. Although a defender of Darwin and ‘the advancement of science’ Huxley opposed “Social Darwinism” and tried to separate **human** civilization from the **cosmic** processes of natural evolution.
- 1896** *The Jewish State* by Theodor **Herzl**. Considered the founder of modern political Zionism, Herzl responded to the appalling rise of antisemitism all over Europe by calling for Jews to reorganize and restore their own nation.
- 1899** *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* by Houston Stuart **Chamberlain**. This exaltation of ‘pure’ **RACISM** had tremendous influence on **Nazi** ideologues. Chamberlain was Richard Wagner’s son-in-law.
- 1899** *The Riddle of the Universe* by Ernest **Haeckel**. Hails *science* as supreme in human knowledge and, taking Darwin’s *theories as facts*, abolishes any concept of Divine Design or ultimate purpose in the universe.
- 1900** *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund **Freud**. The famous study of the relationship between the ‘conscious’ and the ‘unconscious’ mind.
- 1901** *Cosmic Consciousness* by Dr. Richard **Bucke**. Promotes the idea that humanity is evolving into a divine species. Claims that the cosmic illumination that ‘all is one and all is divine’ has come to enlightened masters like Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and Ramakrishna throughout history, but now these ‘blissful’ experiences are accelerating and will become universal! This is essential **New Age** teaching being sold in bookstores today right alongside Christian bestsellers.
- 1904** *Varieties of Religious Experience* by William **James**. The famous pragmatist wrote this classic study on religion and gave the ‘Cosmic Consciousness’ experience respectability as a type of ‘mysticism.’
- 1905** *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by Max **Weber**. A sociological theory about rationalism’s impact in science and in politics. Also said that the enterprising spirit can be traced to the Calvinist Puritans who worked hard and accumulated wealth so as to ‘prove’ that they were God’s “elect”!
- 1906** *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* by Albert **Schweitzer**. An attempt to interpret Jesus *in historic context* (as a disappointed and self-sacrificing eschatological claimant) while at the same time rejecting the *actual historicity* of the Gospel events! Dr. Schweitzer was brilliant and radically liberal, yet so taken with the ‘spirituality’ of Jesus that he was a Nobel Prize winning humanitarian!
- 1910** *The Fundamentals*. A series of pamphlets were published and distributed to resist the onslaught of liberalism by ‘drawing the battle lines’ and defining the basic affirmations necessary for Biblical faith.

❧ THE NINETEENTH CENTURY ❧

AN ATTEMPT AT AN OVERVIEW

First, Some Definitions:

The nineteenth century saw the proliferation of “isms” and movements. Some were ‘groundbreaking’ and radical; others were ‘trench-digging’ and reactionary. Everyone from the anarchists to the ultra-conservatives tried to cope with the increasing speed, complexity and the volatile inter-connectedness of — ‘**THE MODERN WORLD!**’ Indeed, fast-paced changes, extreme cultural diversity and conflicting worldviews have become salient characteristics of modern times! This will not do justice to the rich variety of these movements, but some general definitions may be helpful. First of all, what do we mean by *Modernism*? [The definitions below are not in alphabetical or chronological order.]

Modernism

“Modern” comes from the Latin (*modo*) meaning “just now”! It means: ‘related to the present time; marked by up-to-date technologies; innovative; **In style or values, a departure from older traditions.**’

In the sense of being “just now” *every* era would be “modern”! But if you examine the inventions and trends of the 19th century, you can see the so-called Modern World rapidly taking shape...with new opportunities and new crises.

New styles, new values, and completely different paradigms for human understanding.

In part, **Modernism** can be seen as a continuation of Enlightenment rejection of Medieval Church Authority. Faith was subordinated to Reason until Reason became autonomous. Science and Reason had prevailed! Many 19th century thinkers revel in that victory while others recoil from it. It is instructive to follow the ‘Faith and Reason’ nexus into the modern context:

If Revelation is no longer primary, something else will be. If **human reason** is a law unto itself, the trend will be toward humanism. If **faith** is to continue in the wake of these **departures from older traditions**, it may try to ‘modernize’ its content. With Biblical Revelation rejected as an absolute, or retained in a diluted form, the result will be either irreligious **secularization** or non-theistic **spiritualization**. All these options flourish in this era.

These departures were accompanied by the idea that PROGRESS was inevitable and humans could solve all their problems. (Postmodernism can partly be understood as a rejection of this vain ‘modern’ hope.)

If we want to define Modernism specific to the ARTS, it refers to the late 19th c. / early 20th c. ‘anti-genre’ experimentalism which reacted against the perceived arbitrariness of traditional standards and gave expression to the ANGST engendered by the upheavals. Examples would be: nihilistic Dada, Surrealism, Cubism, Absurdism, and musical dissonance. Journey with *Ulysses* (Joyce) through the *Wasteland* (T.S. Eliot). See a Picasso exhibit or an Ionesco play. Listen, if you can, to Arnold Schoenberg’s dodecaphony..... and you might end up looking like Munch’s *The Scream*. “I stood there trembling...I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature.”
~ Edvard Munch, 1893

Here we will continue with some of the ‘isms’ associated with the optimist belief in **Progress**:

Darwinism, Evolutionism and Social Darwinism

The **Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection** presented an alternative explanation for the origins of life...even human life. Darwin’s theory also moved the Science vs. Religion debate from academia to the common people. Everyone can comprehend the **implications** of evolution: God did *not* create the world in seven days and we humans are *not* special creations...so the Bible must be a mere myth. There are fully natural explanations for everything in the world, including us. Optimism so prevailed that we should define Darwinism and Evolutionism as: “Blind FAITH in the theory of blind natural forces!”

“Darwin’s work put the world of life into the realm of natural law. Animals, plants, and man himself have become what they are by natural causes as blind and automatic as those which mold the shape of a mountain or make the planets move ‘round the sun. The blind struggle for existence, the blind process of heredity, automatically result in the selection of the best adapted types, and a steady evolution in the direction of progress. Darwin has enabled us to see the position of man and civilization in a truer light. Man is not a finished product incapable of further progress. He has a long history behind him, and it is **not of a fall**, but of **an ascent**.”

He has the possibility of further evolution ahead of him...and we can be patient when the astronomers assure us of at least another thousand million years in which to carry evolution to new heights.” ~ Julian Huxley in *Evolutionary Humanism*

Evolutionism means to base worldview beliefs upon on the presumed ‘facts’ of evolution. In this 19th c. context it involves these ‘progressive’ views of change, competition, and even war as a ‘natural process.’ The belief was that not only organisms, but ‘human civilization’ itself (individuals, cultures and even certain **races!**) were *intrinsically bound* to improve.

“Social Darwinism” interpreted **human societies** *via* the same biological laws of nature, and saw social advancement as dependent on our adaptation to environment. It was believed by some theorists that the Western societies had developed more rapidly due to *inherently* superior traits. Here you can detect a terrible “Us being *more evolved* than Them” ideology.

Herbert Spencer (1820—1903) was an extreme political libertarian, author, and the leading proponent of **Social Darwinism**. He based his entire philosophy on Darwinian evolution, applying its principles to education, psychology, sociology and ethics. His phrase **‘survival of the fittest’** seems to reduce us to animals and justify cruelty, but he stressed human freedom and believed that the competition would produce prosperity and liberty! (The full dire implications of the naturalistic-evolutionist worldview are *not* always drawn out consistently by its adherents.) Having an evolutionist foundation for a social theory or an ethical system does, however, have dire implications. Aggression and war were justified as the “natural struggle for existence” was glorified.

When Social Darwinism was linked with Nationalism and Racism, humanity ‘progressed’ to the most unspeakable inhumanity.

Add Neo-Paganism, Romanticist Germanic ideology and antisemitism and you have the most diabolical mix imaginable.

Here we will continue with some more of the ‘isms’ and technological advances linked with the optimist belief in **Progress**:

Industrialization and Urbanization

Here we discuss the impact of the “**19th c. Industrial Revolution.**” Some historians consider it comparable to the Neolithic Revolution! (Like the shift from nomadic wandering to farming....*this* era saw a shift **‘from farm to factory’**!) It was a gradual, not abrupt, change yet it was called a ‘revolution’ during the era. Engels called it a **‘revolution which changed the whole of civil society.’** We can not examine all the details of manufacturing, trade, and economics; rather, we paint with broad strokes to provide a backdrop for the social issues and philosophical responses. Generally, the **I. R.** started in England and spread to Europe and North America. Advances in the textile industry, steel production, fuel-sources, transportation, and global communication ‘revolutionized’ agrarian communities and created modern mechanistic and inter-connected societies.

Even this **short list** of inventions & developments can let us see the **I. R.** as part of the *modernization* of civilization:

The power loom, the cotton mill, the blast furnace, the electric motor and generator, electric lighting, tunnels, canals, photography and cinematography, the steamship, the locomotive and railway system, steel production and reinforced concrete (will impact architecture), petroleum refinery (gasoline), the Singer sewing machine, Alfred Nobel produces dynamite, the Remington typewriter, Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone, Edison’s phonograph, the microphone, X-rays discovered, wireless telegraph, the first skyscraper built in Chicago, the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Eiffel Tower, the machine gun, the internal combustion engine & automobiles (Daimler 1886, Diesel, 1892) ...In 1900 the first Zeppelin was built. By 1904 the Wright Brothers take to the skies, and by 1910, Henry Ford’s assembly lines can mass produce an affordable motorcar.

[Not to mention: Internationally cooperating Postal Services, The Department Store, the Fountain Pen, Aspirin, and Flush Toilets!]

For our purposes, there are important points to make about all these developments in “transmission of people, goods and ideas.”

First, aren’t you glad about the aspirin...no, seriously: We are discussing 19th c. Industrialization as a continuation and ‘practical application’ of the 18th c. **Scientific Revolution**. Francis Bacon’s **“Knowledge is Power”** was literally implemented! Not only productivity and travel increased, but now even the power of the printing press could be ‘industrial strength’!

Of more interest to us than the technological achievement is its cultural impact. How drastically did society change? What did all the **mechanization** do to human beings? How do different worldviews interpret and respond to such rapid “progress”?

Two things the **I. R.** brought with it: **Population Increase and Urbanization.**

Due to increase in agricultural & industrial productivity and advances in medical science...more people survived to reproductive age.

Most of the world’s population was rural until this era. (From 1750 to 1930, the world population went from about 700 Million to 2 Billion!

Around 1800, there were scarcely 25 European cities having populations of more than 100,000 people. By 1900, there were more than 150.)

Increased and urban-concentrated populations experience many crises: epidemics, famines, pollution, sanitation problems, poverty, exploitation of the working class, slums, disintegration of families...long hours, low wages, child labor, a dangerous Dickensian life!

Urbanization intensifies social problems while at the same time destroying the naturally humane way of dealing with them...which is “family and community”! All this “progress” and yet there seems to be an unnatural depersonalization of life that happens in modern machine-driven societies.

Christians are supposed to ‘minister’ in tangible ways, but established churches could hardly keep pace with these changes

...especially these needy new masses. Worse, sometimes the clergy were seen as associated with the privileged classes and

unsympathetic to the hardships! Consider that all this was occurring at a time when the Church had *already* lost its direct authority and influence over society, and you see why this era has been deemed to be one of secularization if not ‘dechristianization’!

Losing the respect of the educated classes due to ‘science,’ and now even alienating the working class, **“the notion of Christian Community was finally exposed for the fiction many had long suspected it to be.”**¹

Anyone who would want ‘Christian Community’ to be truly manifest might have to be as radical as the social changes of this era!

¹ *Atlas of the Christian Church*, Henry Chadwick, editor. Equinox Oxford Books, 1989. p. 140.

Liberalism

Political liberalism emerged to champion the rights of the **individual**. This is in continuity with the loftiest Enlightenment ideals. They fought for the very freedoms we now take for granted, against the tyranny of authoritarian regimes, both religious and political. Freedom of thought, speech, action, ownership, mobility and worship...against Monarchical Absolutism, inherent class privileges of the Aristocracy, and religious behavior being coerced and enforced, *etc.* So in this context **Liberalism is a good 'ism'!** Liberalism carries *tensions within it* that are seen when these high ideals are implemented in society. One tension is between **individualism** and **collectivism**. (Between the individual as a lone agent and the person as a responsible member of society.) The challenge: how to create stable and just societies that can constrain disruption *and* guarantee personal freedom at the same time! It is interesting that Liberals can be attacked from the **'Right'** as being too disrespectful of settled institutions and traditions...yet be attacked from the **'Left'** for being too *free-market* with no defense against the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few. As the 19th c. progressed, liberals who had originally promoted 'free trade and limited government' committed themselves to more radical social reforms and welfare legislation. (Rather than limit government, it would have to intervene to overcome the rampant injustices.) By the 20th c. Classic Liberalism was largely overtaken by Socialism. (We will discuss **Liberal Theology** under religious responses.)

Socialism

There was a 'striking' realization, amidst all the industrialization, that socio-economic relations **determine** the opportunities for people. In other words, the dynamics of power, property & productivity can enhance *or* impede personal human potential. Unbridled capitalism had created gross inequality, misery and conflict. Socialists sought ways to insure a better life for all individuals. Some socialists believe revolution is necessary to bring about a just society, while others believe it can be achieved within a democratic political system and even a free-market economic structure.

Utopianism

The word utopia comes from the Greek for "no-place" *or* good place! As a name for an idealized land it goes back to Sir Thomas More's book *Utopia* and has been a theme for fiction writers. [William Morris' *News from Nowhere*, 1891; Aldous Huxley, *etc.*] As an **'ism'** it refers to any political philosophy that prescribes an ideal future state, or any movement that attempts to implement an ideal community. By this definition, such otherwise disparate entities as: radical collectivisms, communism, anarchism, and even Christian post-millennialists can be seen as being tainted with an unrealistic 'utopianism.' [*We* must fully establish the Kingdom of God!] The attempt to create 'heaven on earth' by *our own efforts* and *on our own terms* is a disastrous urge...and it inevitably **fails!!** But in the 19th century, when *success* was seen as inevitable, there were several attempts to form utopian social arrangements. [For example: **Brooks Farm**; **Owenism** at New Harmony, Indiana, *etc.* It is interesting that the utopian socialist Robert Owen opted for Spiritualism in his later years. Such a turn makes a point about 'what people look to' when disillusioned.]

Imperialism

There have been great empires in certain parts of the world throughout world history, but here we are defining the so-called **"New Imperialism"** of the late **19th c. (1880 to 1914)** when England and several European powers sought to "extend" their power and prestige around the globe. By 1914, the British Empire was the largest the world had ever seen, and France & Germany were in a frenzy to keep up. Through far-reaching empire-building, these nations (and Spain, Portugal, Italy, *etc.*) had unprecedented influence around the world, 'owning' much of Asia and most of Africa. This aggressive competition also set the stage for WWI. Some historians interpret this very complex phenomenon primarily in **economic** terms. Vladimir Lenin had seen imperialism as the **'final stage' of capitalism**, and Marxist-leaning historians have '*monopolized*' with this myopic view, pardon the pun. Although imperialism in this era *is* linked with industrialism (the exploitation of resources and cheap labor forces while obtaining new markets for products) these 'capitalistic' motives *were* mingled with other factors: impulses that were *deeper and ultimately more significant*. Noting that this era brought humanity to a new global vision, and that Social Darwinism was being applied to international relations, we must take other factors into consideration. (Neither the tensions of human social existence nor the complexities of the modern world can be adequately explained by monotone theories.)

The **New Imperialism** was motivated by an intricate compound of interests and forces that were: *Besides* commercial... scientific, journalistic, power-strategic, nationalistic, racist, religious...*and* even some genuinely humanitarian!

A fact we must not ignore is that 19th c. **Christian Missionary expansion** was often linked with these already mixed motives! Another interesting question is whether 'imperialist' motives persist even though the term has become obsolete.

[See: Neo-Colonialism; Indirect Rule; "Super-Power-Politics"; Globalization, or "Pan-anything-ism"!]

The 'spirit of imperialism' is alive and well whenever *any* powerful entity exploits a less powerful one, whatever the real or alleged motives. Avarice is a more obvious sin than arrogance. The perennial impulse for geo-political-ideological hegemony ("world domination") *especially* when it is covered in self-righteousness, is one of the most destructive forces in human history.

Romanticism

Historians and critics have bickered over how to categorize and define this “ism” and we will not solve the difficulties in a brief overview! Not even the self-conscious Romantics of the era would all have accepted the *same* definition...if *any*! In fact, any given individual might have changed his beliefs several times over the course of his lifetime. This was, after all, the age of changes! Romantics might have been found across many spectra from conservative to liberal, religious to atheist, misfit to aristocrat, revolutionary to reactionary...so if they don't comprise a single-minded faction, and they don't coincide exactly with any one of the 'isms' you've already defined...then who were they?

What is “Romanticism”?

This “ism” does not signify one political, religious, philosophical or artistic school, but a powerfully felt **mood** that influenced all of those human endeavors. Romanticism wasn't a system but a constellation of attitudes and preferences. Not a position, but a **disposition**. It was revulsion for most of what characterized our last chapter...an era they reviled as “that razor-ridden age”! (James R. Lowell) As we learned, the **Enlightenment** had been obsessed with objective knowledge, the uniformity of natural laws, mechanistic science, and of course—the preeminence of **Reason!** Even its Deity had been characterized as a rationally and morally necessary Architect. Boring! Romantics considered Medieval awe and mystery preferable to that cold dispassionate “clockwork” worldview! (Interesting that the first “Gothic” novels came from the Romantic Era!)

Thus, in deliberate disdain for Enlightenment rationalism, **Romanticism** meant to extol the instinctive and the intuitive. Against the Enlightenment preoccupation with trying to think objectively about thinking, Romanticism was to give over to pure subjective **feeling** and passion.

Against the mathematically predictable yet detached and colorless view of the cosmos, Romanticism celebrated the wildly diverse and organic nature of nature. We simply do not experience the world *described* by Newton and Kant; we experience it as *expressed* by Wordsworth and Keats! Science and Philosophy can not reveal the highest truth to us, but poetic genius does...for it reveals *us*. The Imaginative Muse is better than the Inductive Method. The following quotes express the general abhorrence for rationalism:

[In this context and elsewhere, **rationalism** means the 18th c. enthronement of reason and science, not the 'rationalists' as vs. the 'empiricists.']

✂ **Jean Jacques Rousseau** (1712–1778) one of the ‘Fathers’ of Romanticism, wrote:

“Thank heaven we have now got rid of philosophy.” “To exist is to feel.” “What I feel to be right is right...”
(He also fathered five illegitimate children and abandoned them to an orphanage.)

✂ **Johann Gottfried Herder** (1744–1803) a critic of Kant, and a theologian turned Romantic philosopher of history, wrote:

“Light does not nourish men.” “I am unable to comprehend how reason can be presented so universally as the single summit of human culture.”

✂ **Johann Cristoph Friedrich Schiller** (1759–1805) poet and aesthete, surpassed the Enlightenment epistemologies with:

“Only through beauty's gate can you penetrate the land of knowledge.”

✂ **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749–1832) a scientist, courtier, aesthete, and literary superstar (whose poetry was often inspired by love affairs) also opined:

“All theory is grey, but the golden tree of actual life springs ever green.”
“We are pantheists when we study nature, polytheists when we write poetry, monotheists in our morality.”
(Goethe himself chose and championed a paganistic pantheism.)

✂ **Friedrich Holderlin** (1770–1843) poet and philosophical novelist who studied with Schelling and Hegel, had one of his fictional heroes express the intense desire to:

“...Be one with All that lives, to return in blessed self-forgetfulness into the All of nature!”
Hear the characteristic Romantic yearning for the unity they believed dissective science ‘had spoilt’—
“All that is divided will find itself again.” --*Hyperion*

✂ **Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling** (1775–1854) leading Romantic philosopher and colleague of Hegel and Fichte. He believed that though the world can be shown to be rational in its content, we cannot give any rational account of WHY it exists (why there IS something rather than nothing.) He is worth mention here as a transition to our discussion of religious reactions in the 19th century.

On **Schelling**: “The finite world originates from God not by a rational, comprehensible process but by a *leap*, a free (timeless) fall of ideas from God into finite actuality. Nature’s essence strives to return to God, and this return is history. Man’s development is parallel to God’s. Schelling seeks knowledge of God from the history of *all* religions. Schelling’s God is both the ‘will to power’ and the existentialist human.”²

We can see that the fusion of ideas found in this important philosopher would have far-reaching impact on the religious views of the 19th century...views that we are grappling with as we study the shift from Theism to Pantheism and the New Age Movement.

The English Romantic poets expressed the same preference for feeling and imagination over rational analysis:

✂ **John Keats** (1795–1821)

“O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!”

“I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart’s affections and the truth of imagination—what the imagination seizes as beauty must be the truth, whether it existed before or not.” (Letter to B. Bailey, 1817)

“Do not all charms fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy?” “Philosophy will clip an Angel’s wings.” -- Lamia

“Beauty is Truth, truth beauty—that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know.” --Ode on a Grecian Urn

✂ **Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792–1822)

“The great instrument of moral good is the imagination...Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration...the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” -- Defence of Poetry

✂ **William Wordsworth** (1770–1850)

“Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.” -- Lyrical Ballads

“Our meddling intellect mis-shapes the beauteous forms—we murder to dissect.” --The Tables Turned

“One impulse from a vernal wood may teach you more of man, of moral evil and of good, than all the sages can.”

“Imagination, which in truth, Is but another name for absolute power And clearest insight, amplitude of mind, And Reason, in her most exalted mood.” -- The Prelude

Romanticism is deeply related to the 19th century’s resurgence of paganism and widespread openness to pantheistic monism.

As we have seen, the Enlightenment had left a **spiritual hunger** that Deism could not fill. Humans also have **aesthetic needs** that math and science cannot meet. Without the true relationship between God and World (found *only* in Judeo-Christian Biblical Theism) humans seem to waver between ~ seeing ourselves as ‘world-like’ or seeing the world as ‘person-like’! In other words, we have opted for Naturalism (man is a machine) or Pantheism (Nature is Divine.) When the true Creator is rejected, we turn rather creatively to creation and creature. The poetic ‘personification’ of nature and the reverence for its power opens us up to nature-worship.

In the next portion of the overview, we will discuss an array of religious and ‘spiritual’ responses to the changes and challenges in the nineteenth century world...the world that had banished its Creator.

For Further Study and perhaps even Fun: “The Romantic Era in the Arts” 🖼️🎵📖❤️

In **Art**—Look for evidence of Romanticism’s influence in paintings from this era. Notice the extended subject matter (exotica, horror, orientalism, cultic nostalgia, fascination with animals, and the glorification of nature) and feel the awe and emotion being expressed. View paintings by J.M.W. Turner, John Constable, Casper David Friedrich, John Singer Sargent, etc.

In **Music**— Notice the precedence of lyricism over formalism, and appreciate the more expressive genres (rhapsodies, nocturnes, overtures!) and ‘new improved’ instruments. Technology enabled the development of musical instruments that were stronger and could go from loud to soft exquisitely...especially in the hands of a virtuoso. This era saw the development of the modern symphony orchestra and the expansion of operatic themes.

Listen to any Prelude & Fugue from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach...then immediately switch to the Piano Sonata in F minor Opus 57, no. 23 “*The Appassionata*” by the tempestuous Ludwig von Beethoven...and you’ll get the point. Better yet, listen to an entire piano concerto.

In **Literature**—Writers unleashed their imaginations and liberated their feelings from the shackles of reason. Read Keats, Shelley, Byron, Wordsworth, Goethe, Herder, Heine, Schiller, or even William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving and Edgar Allen Poe.

² *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Ted Honderich, Editor. Oxford University Press, 2005. p.844.

Religious Responses in the Nineteenth Century

An **outline** of a more comprehensive overview of ‘spiritual developments’ in the 19th century would look *something* like this:

I. CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

- A. Roman Catholic
- B. Protestant
 - 1. Liberal -- The *Social Gospel*
 - 2. Traditional
 - a. Fundamentalists
 - b. Para-Church Organizations (The Salvation Army; Sunday School Union; WCTU; YMCA)
 - c. Revivalism
 - 3. New Denominations (Seventh Day Adventists; Jehovah’s Witnesses, Christadelphians, *etc.*)
 - 4. Theological Trends: (Millennial Positions, *etc.*)
- C. Eastern Orthodox Communion (Greek Orthodox; Russian Orthodox, *etc.*)
- D. World Missions
- E. The Ecumenical Movement (Unfortunately *ecumenism* can compromise truth and accommodate to pluralism and universalism)

II. NON-CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

- A. Eastern Influences (The *Ramakrishna Missions* in the west, *etc.*)
- B. The Revival of Paganism and Occultism
 - 1. German Idealism and Aryan Destiny Cults; Richard Wagner
 - 2. The Theosophical Society
 - 3. Occultic Racism / Antisemitism in *horrific new mutations*
- C. New Religions and Religious Syncretism
 - 1. Bahai
 - 2. Joseph Smith and Mormonism
 - 3. Transcendentalism
 - 4. A Host of Others.....
- D. “New Thought” and “Mind Science”
 - 1. Mary Baker Eddy and the Church of Christian Science
 - 2. The Unity School of Christianity
 - 3. A Host of Others: (“The Church of Religious Science”.....)
- E. Spiritualism

III. JUDAISM

- A. Post-Enlightenment Orthodox and Reform Movements
- B. Modern Zionism — (“*Aliyah* in the 1800s”)
 - 1. **Christian Biblical Support for Zionism** — The vast majority of Christians missed this point, but some did not!

IV. THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL from AGE TO AGE...BLESSSED BE HIS NAME...HIS TRUTH ENDURES FOREVER

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We will now devote several sections to each point and several pages for each sub-point. (And that would *still* be a barebones summary.) Obviously, we are *not* going to do that. But it is just as important to study the above Religious Responses (various spiritual reactions, new movements, and theological developments) as it is to study the famous philosophers/philosophies of this era:

The Hegelians, Feuerbach, Marxists, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Darwinists (Herbert Spencer, Huxley) Nietzsche, Bentham and Mill...and... Johann Fichte, and a great number of thinkers whose thoughts impacted the *next* century. Just review them for a minute and you’ll get a feeling for the extreme challenges of this era. Only one Christian on the list, one whose ‘voice’ wasn’t widely heard until the Church had failed on all sides.

In the previous portion we saw that the Romantic Movement expressed revulsion for Enlightenment rationalism and its continuation in science, technology and industrialization. People longed for spiritual fulfillment. We would be mistaken to suppose that Victorian social mores and the institutional Churches met these needs. An amazing feature of the ‘Victorian Age’ (19<sup>th</sup> c!) was a widespread fascination with ancient mythologies, esoterica, fairy tales, folklore, and even the occult. Right in the midst of this century of modern science...there arose an interest in science fiction! And, people still sought satisfying answers to worldview questions in their rapidly changing world. What *is* the connection between Nature, Ourselves, and the Divine? What constitutes civilization? If they are *in struggle*...which will prevail? Where do we find our deepest sense of identity and destiny? What should religion be based upon when the Bible has been ‘proven’ to be wrong? Can Jesus Christ be our brother and guide without being an exclusive Savior? What is the most essential core of religion? Does it need Special Revelation from a Transcendent God? Can Christianity be radically redefined and remain relevant in the light of all these challenges? Do we need no revelation or New Revelation?

In this very brief sketch, we will see Christianity *on the defensive* throughout the all the upheavals. The problem was HOW to ‘defend’ it. Some would capitulate to modernism, and some would build thicker fortresses against it. Others would claim new interpretations of Scripture. In the next few pages we won’t be able to flesh out the entire outline, but we will note some rather interesting responses to these challenges.

## Christian Responses in the Modern Era

A *sweeping* over-generalization will be made before touching on a few of the outline points. **Roman Catholicism** responded to **modernism** by condemning it and strengthening the Papacy. **Protestants**, having no 'single' pope, divided even more deeply among themselves. **Liberal** factions kept the Enlightenment program of 'Higher Biblical Criticism' going, while sincerely trying to address grave social problems. Others attacked the Liberals and hammered out the '**Fundamentals**' of Christian belief. Para-church organizations, like the **Salvation Army**, were founded to meet the dire needs of real people while the theologians did their thing. **Revivalists** tried to win souls (and thereby society) with 'Great Awakening' style mass meetings.

New denominations were founded with their own unique interpretations of Scripture and '*new & improved* true church' claims.

During this era, **missionary organizations** were established in all denominations. Missionaries imported their competitive denominational divisiveness to foreign fields where it made no sense. An **ecumenical movement** attempted to resolve some of those problems and foster cooperation...and ideally to restore the unity of the body of Christ.

### Roman Catholicism

In 1854, Pius IX (Pope from 1846-78) without convening a council, declared a new dogma: **The Immaculate Conception of Mary**. (This means that Mary was free from the taint of original sin!) In 1864, the "Syllabus of Errors" was issued to condemn modernism and communism, but *also* religious liberty, Bible societies and the separation of church and state. The pope wanted to reassert the Church's authority over civic affairs.

In 1870, the Vatican I Council declared the "**Infallibility of the Pope**." This means the pope is infallible when he speaks 'ex cathedra' (from his supreme office) on matters of faith and doctrine, and his pronouncements are to be 'preserved holy.' Such absolutism did engender some cries for more freedom, but Pius X rebuffed such voices. In 1910, all Catholic theologians were made to take an "anti-modernist" oath before receiving a church office. This was not abrogated until Vatican II in 1967. (When Mel Gibson boasts about being a *pre*-Vatican II Catholic, is this what he has in mind?)

### Protestantism

#### Liberal Theology

Liberal Theology arose out of modernism's rejection of traditional dogmas, and was an attempt to reconstruct Christianity in the light of the new cultural situations. Modern Protestants were sincerely trying to keep the *faith relevant* and the *Church useful* in light of the new worldview.

There was great variety of thought as to *how* Christianity should be reconstructed, but they all deemed it necessary.

"We cannot go on preaching things that are no longer believable, or we will appeal only to the uneducated and the superstitious."

— A modern liberal preacher might have said!

The variegated liberal responses range from the most radical theologians who rejected anything supernatural...to theologians who simply downplayed classic doctrines like the unique deity of Christ. A few general tendencies can be mentioned—

Liberal Theology *tends* to:

- Emphasize the *immanence of God*—NOT His transcendence. (This can lead to pantheism.)
- Stress *morality and social responsibility* over doctrine. ("Social Gospel." Please note that the Gospel was never meant *not* to be social!)
- Try to base 'essential' Christianity on some grounding *other than doctrinal orthodoxy*...such as feeling or awe.
- Apply '*higher critical method*' to Biblical scholarship. (This continues the skeptical and critical approaches of Enlightenment thinkers.)
- *Ignore sin, evil, God's wrath & judgment*. (This will lead to the teaching of universal salvation.)

A classic liberal non-creedal credo might say: We believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, and the infinite worth of the Human Soul.

**Friedrich Schleiermacher** has been called the Father of Liberal Theology. He did try to make the Christian faith relevant to its "cultured despisers," but he did so by appealing to Romanticist interests and experiential yearnings. He realized their intense desire to 'feel at one with nature' and tried to show them that what they feel most intensely is what religion calls "God."

No wonder that H. Richard Niebuhr summed up Liberal Theology this way:

"...a God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

#### Fundamentalism

Rather than discuss all the unfortunate connotations of this term, we are defining it in its original context. As a movement Fundamentalism was the *reactionary response* to the many frightening threats to the Christian belief system. Its roots go back to the Bible and Prophecy Conferences being held in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. [Niagara, 1895, for example.] In 1910, the first of a series of booklets called "**The Fundamentals**" was published.

It is understandable why the need was so strongly felt to define the non-negotiable tenets of Christianity. [The Virgin Birth, Deity, Substitutionary Atonement, Resurrection and Second Coming of Christ; and the Inerrancy of Scripture...to name a few.] But the movement was also characterized by a 'siege mentality' against the world, and by a lack of love amongst its own leaders. Its chief failure was turning its face from the real plight of real people...their social and their intellectual problems. That is why they had so little world-changing impact.

The great scholar Carl F. H. Henry has reminded us of our need to engage culture. He said that the Fundamentalists had not presented Christianity as a worldview! Let us take up that challenge.

This era presented our forefathers with a stupendous challenge to rethink what the authentic role of the Church *is* in human history! Now, studying the cultural history together with the philosophical, theological and ecclesiastical developments of Modernity, we find ourselves presented with an opportunity to rethink what it means to be an authentic disciple of Christ in a world now postmodern, and **Post-Christian**. "The contrast between the forces working *AGAINST* Christianity and the vitality inherent *IN* the Christian faith did not appear for the first time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century nor was it to end there. That contrast was present from the beginning."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette. *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, Vol. III, Zondervan, 1969. p. 495.

## Non-Christian Responses

Four trends which are exceptionally inimical to Biblical truth were growing and coalescing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century:  
(These overlapping trends go way beyond the usual challenge from secularism!)

1. A melding of Ancient and Modern... (Blending spiritual wisdom and scientific concepts. An example would be the belief in “spiritual evolution.”)
2. A merging of East and West... (In religion, philosophy *and* in popular culture, Pantheistic Monism seems more tempting than Naturalism.)
3. A revival of Paganism... (There was a wild proliferation of cults and proclaimed ‘replacements for’ Biblical Christianity. Many were virulently antisemitic.)
4. A blatant rejection of the Judeo-Christian Biblical concept of God... (The Transcendence, Holiness, and “only-ness” of our God was repudiated.)

**A. Eastern Influences** – The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the ‘reversal of the flow’ of missionaries and the beginning of the ‘*Hinduization*’ of the West.

Although ‘universalizing’ and ‘syncretizing’ trends in religion can be seen in some Renaissance thinkers such as Pico della Mirandola, the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a significant influx of Eastern ideas. From the earliest incursions *via* the New England Transcendentalists...through Schopenhauer’s infatuation with Nirvana... academic Orientalist studies ...up through Theosophy’s syncretism...the **East** had come **West!** Swami Vivekananda’s charismatic efforts comprise a landmark event with enduring impact. The Ramakrishna Missions & Vedanta Societies established by Vivekanada after his stunning success at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions *paved the way* for:

Paramahansa Yogananda’s SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION; Bhaktivedanta Swami’s HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT; Maharaj-ji’s DIVINE LIGHT MISSIONS; and the Bhagwan Shri Rashneesh Cult...just to mention the most popular ones.

Eastern influence on American & European worldview formation is incalculable. Hindu concepts are found in most ‘new religious movements.’ Pantheistic Monism resides wherever ‘spirituality’ is being embraced apart from essential Biblical--Theistic foundations. Emerson, Blavatsky and Vivekanada would be pleased today.

**B. Paganism and Occultism** – Late Romantic Era decadence (with its *worship* of life-forces & natural impulses) produced an astonishingly widespread revival of paganist and occult activity...even blatant **Satanism**.

**1. German Idealism and Aryan Destiny Cults** — Hegel had glorified the Germanic state as a manifestation of the Absolute. Fichte had taught that above all people, Germans possess the ‘germ’ of perfectibility and had to *take the lead* in human evolution lest mankind perish. Such idolatrous nationalism and barbarous racial destiny myths led to the proliferation of **paganist cults** that were diabolical beyond belief.

One self-appointed prophet of the paganist cause was the famous composer Richard Wagner. His operas were metaphors for the titanic struggle between Jewish impurities (and their monotheism) and pure Germanic Idealism and nature religion. His home became a center for mystic racists, and his family kept the cult going even after Wagner died. Wagnerian paganism was the soul and sinew of Hitler’s worldview. Wagner provided doctrine *and* the liturgical music for a religion of mass-destruction. To *absolutize* relative things (state, nationality, race) and to *relativize* absolutes (The One true God, the sanctity of life) is to wreak hell on earth.

**2. Theosophy** — “Divine Wisdom” – Considered to combine the spiritual truth of all religions with up-to-date science and occult powers.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by the spirit-medium Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. She wrote (channeled) *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. Blavatsky’s “theosophy” was a blend of Hinduism, mysticism, spiritual evolutionism, Gnostic anti-Jewish Christianity, mythology, and ‘occult mysteries revealed.’ A significant feature of Blavatsky’s teaching that most Christian critics miss is her ‘spiritual racism.’ We need to see that when the God of the Jews is rejected and an alternative ‘redemption plan’ is espoused by cultists of *any* kind...antisemitism will be part of the agenda. Jewish existence is the very antithesis of the pagan impulse to usurp God’s place. Several cults came out of Theosophy, one of which was the Thule Society which helped Hitler to achieve success as an orator and political leader. It should concern us deeply that Theosophical teachings are considered to be of ‘divine’ origin and are foundational to New Age ideology today.

**3. Racism and Antisemitism** —

**Racism** combined Genetic Determinism with Social Darwinism as the key to understanding all human civilization! (See: H. S. Chamberlain’s “*Foundations...*”) Needing a sense of identity and destiny in the midst of upheavals—some chose RACE! People can change their philosophical outlook. Their political persuasion. Their nationality or citizenship. Their religion even! But they cannot change their race! So that gives a ‘fixed point of reference’ for some 19<sup>th</sup> c. theorists to interpret ALL of history as not just *class* struggle...but *racial* conflict! Race is the one key to understanding the rise and fall of civilizations! Thus the obsession to maintain racial purity. When this political *Biocracy* type of racism was combined with the above-mentioned ‘spiritualized’ form...on top of the centuries of Christian anti-Jewish teachings and sentiment...a diabolical force was unleashed.

See: Guido von List- (who yearned for a Fuhrer to arise and lead the Aryans in a merciless apocalyptic race war.) Lanz von Liebenfels- (*The Ostara Cult*) and Theodore Fritsch- (who composed a new Ten Commandments and an *Anti-Semite’s Catechism!*)

Some pagans rejected Christianity because it *was* Jewish! Others wanted to keep an “Aryan Christ.” Sadly, Christians in large numbers joined antisemitic organizations. Wagner said that if Christianity could be severed from its Jewish roots, it could be completely paganized. Fichte actually hoped that ‘Christianity may yet find a way to completely break away from the tribal religion of the Old Testament.’

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the paganization of Christianity *and* many moves toward a new world religion to repudiate the God of Israel...were well underway.

At the very same time, although it went unnoticed by the vast majority of Christians, our God was moving His Chosen People back to their covenantal homeland. The modern Zionist movement and the beginnings of the restoration of Israel began at this time.

**C. New Religions and Religious Syncretism** – “Toward a One World Religious System”

**1. Bahai** — [*Bahai = Glory (of God)* in Arabic/Persian]

Founded by an Iranian follower of a 19<sup>th</sup> c. Shi’ite ‘messianic’ sect (*Babism*) which expected a divinely appointed spiritual leader to appear. Around 1852-63, Mirza Husayn Ali had mystical experiences and proclaimed himself to be “*BAHA ULLAH*”- the one for whom the Babists sought, and called himself “He whom God Shall Manifest.” Bahai is a supersessionist universal religion with about 5 million members. Growing rapidly, they claim to be the second-most geographically widespread religion after Christianity. A motto is — The Light of Unity will Illumine the World.

This worldwide faith has some interesting teachings: (Can you detect any worldview inconsistencies?)

God is completely unknowable but manifests himself variously. Creation is an eternal process. All Religions teach the same truth yet *BAHAI* is superior as it is the latest dispensation—the start of a new prophetic cycle most suitable for the scientific age! The history of religions is the evolution toward ever higher realizations of truth. All religions are One and progressively unfolding toward ‘One Truth’ yet there is *no final revelation* or end to the process. Heaven and Hell are only allegorical symbols of man’s spiritual progress or lack thereof! Bahai advocates pacifism and the formation of a harmonious global society, but this can be established pragmatically through a world government and international tribunal. They even advocate an international language.

**2. Mormonism** — The “church” founded by the *false prophet* Joseph Smith in 1830 holds such a fantastic (and contradictory!) mixture of cosmic-mythology, Gnostic-esoterica, polytheism, occult ritualism, exalted patriarchalism, and biblical misinterpretations & ‘revelatory’ additions...that we will even not attempt to ‘summarize’ it here. Just note: Although Mormons may claim to be ‘of *Jesus Christ*’ and the only wholly true *church* on earth today, we have categorized it under New Religions and *not* as a new Christian denomination! A religion that teaches Jesus was a ‘spirit child’ whose brother is Lucifer does not qualify as “Christian.”

**3. Transcendentalism** — [From Latin *transcendere*— to climb beyond; to go beyond the limits.]

In theology, to say that ‘God is transcendent’ means that ‘God exists *apart from* the cosmos.’ Therefore, this mid-19<sup>th</sup> century movement should not have been called “Transcendentalism.” They embraced divine “immanence” but *not* God’s transcendence as in classic theism. They were called Transcendentalists simply because they stressed the spiritual over the material. A good worldview critique can see that their religious philosophy was definitely not theistic but was a diluted ‘pantheistic’ blend of: Idealism, Romanticism, Gnostic mysticism, Neo-Platonism and even Hinduism... held together with characteristic optimism about ‘spiritual evolution.’ The New England Transcendentalists were a loosely-knit group with no one founder or leader, but their most prominent spokesman was Ralph Waldo Emerson. His 1836 publication of *Nature* inspired their cause tremendously. That same year they formed the Transcendental Club in Boston. They, like other Romantics, stressed the spiritual-organic unity of the cosmos and a preference for intuition over reason as a source of knowledge. Like other ‘utopian-minded’ groups, they attempted communal living experiments. [Such as Brook Farm, which naturally failed.] They may not have endured as an organization, but their thinking has deeply infiltrated our own. The *idea* that all nature and each individual is infused with the same divine force is virtually omnipresent! T was the “first marked attempt in American history to retain the spiritual experience and potential of Christian faith without any of the substance of its belief. By claiming an essential innocence for man, by substituting a direct intuition of God for revelation, and by foreseeing a future of...certain glory for mankind, T paved the way for many romantic notions about human destiny.”<sup>4</sup> Thus we can understand T as a significant forerunner of the New Age Movement. If ‘God’ is not the personal, distinct, transcendent God of the Bible, there need be no restriction as to how such divinity is encountered. Rejection of JCBT will always lead to pantheism and paganism. As Emerson said: “I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me. I am part or particle of God.”

**D. “New Thought”** — A number of teachings arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that combined ‘Christianity’ with varieties of mental / spiritual Monisms.

The Enlightenment had *elevated* human reason and what followed was its *enthronement*. Rejecting revelation from a transcendent source, the Human Mind itself was now revered as the source of all healing, truth and power. New Thought includes a number of “mind science” and “divine science” purveyors, all preaching a ‘new gospel of health, wealth and success’ based on principles derived from spiritual monism. Several different advocates of these basically self-deifying trends formed the **New Thought Alliance** in 1914. They officially endorse the “Divinity of Man” and his unlimited possibilities through the power of creative thought. Their website welcomes you with: “We honor and bring together the common thread of all inspired thought. We believe in the essential goodness of the individual...and will help you discover and draw upon the power of God within...so as to fully live.”

**1. Christian Science** —

Mary Baker Eddy (1821—1910) wrote *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* in 1875 and about that same time established the Church of Christian Science. She claimed to know better than the disciples who wrote the New Testament what metaphysical ‘science’ Jesus really taught. But to Mrs. Eddy, Jesus was just ‘idea.’ “If there had ever existed such a person as the Galilean prophet, it would make no difference to me.” What does exist? “All is Mind, Spirit is Truth; Matter is error.” She repudiated the Judaic Biblical concept of a transcendent-personal Creator God and taught that the One Divine Mind was the *all in all*, and matter does not exist. “We cannot afford to remain in the fetters of a personal sense of God. We cannot proceed without the recognition of God, Good, as All.” [*Science and Health*] Since all is Mind and there is only One...there can be no disease or death...only wrong thinking. Evil is not real, it is merely a mistaken belief in illusory matter. (As to who or what exactly is doing that grossly mistaken thinking, if only One Infinite Mind exists, is never explained.)

**2. The Unity School of Christianity** —

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore had studied “Christian Science” and “New Thought,” and around 1889 they started this organization which now has a worldwide ‘ministry.’ Unity teaches that ‘God’ is a spiritual principle which Jesus expressed perfectly. Man is a ‘trinity’ of spirit, soul and body, and attains salvation via a series of reincarnations. Personal problems can be overcome through correct thought, and all humans will eventually become like ‘Christ’...as we allow the only Mind that exists to ‘live and think’ its ‘life and thought’ through us! (“God is Mind. The Mind of God thinks itself...it thinks itself as you. It thinks you.”) Claiming to follow more closely the teachings and legacy of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore is the new “World Federation of Practical Christianity.”

**3. Others:** [See also—Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815) from whom we get the word “mesmerize”! Phineas Quimby (1802-1866) who influenced Mary Baker Eddy.

And, Ralph Waldo Trine (1866-1958) who wrote the best-seller: *In Tune with the Infinite: Fullness of Peace, Power and Plenty* in 1897. Another off-shoot organization that confuses Christian ideas with ‘mind science’ is Ernest Holmes’ - “The United Church of Religious Science” whose website welcomes you with: “We communicate New Thought and Ancient Wisdom through the teachings of Science of Mind and Spirit. We are committed to Universal Spirituality. We envision the emergence of a Global heart to...guide the further evolution of humanity.” Notice how perfectly these groups serve a New Age agenda. It is my opinion that all types of New Thought comprise a ‘way’ out of true Christianity and into deception and apostasy. Sadly, the Positive Thinking Movement (Norman Vincent Peale, *etc.*) and even today’s Prosperity preachers have more in common with New Thought than they do with Biblical Theism. The Community Church of New Thought in Mesa (AZ) claims “We are a Judeo-Christian based non-denominational ministry emphasizing what is right with the world and humanity. We teach the principles of practical Christianity similar to Unity, Religious Science and Divine Science.” The fact that people cannot even tell the difference between Judeo-Christian Theism and Spiritual-Mental Monism means that we must continue with these tiresome overviews!

**E. Spiritualism**

Belief in communicating with ‘the departed’ and other spirit beings (*via* mediums, shamans, adepts, *etc.*) As this belief is found in all animistic religions, spiritualists claim to practice the world’s oldest religion! A ‘modern era revival of spiritualism’ began in upstate New York in the 1840-50s and swept the western world. Spiritualist Churches exist, complete with prayer, healings, and altar sacraments. Jesus is considered to have been a ‘medium’ and the resurrection means that ‘spirits live on.’ Merging former groups, the National Spiritualist Alliance of the USA was founded in Massachusetts in 1913. Their tenets sound like vague Deism plus reincarnation plus spiritual and even moral evolution...along with “communication between the spiritual & physical world.”

<sup>4</sup> *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter Elwell, ed. Baker Books, 1984. p. 1107. I have placed T in this part of the outline not just because it was *syncretistic* but because they truly wanted a ‘new improved’ civil religion to replace the old one! Emerson had been a Unitarian and even it was too ‘Christian’ for him! Thoreau said that it was not man’s sin but his boredom that go back to Adam, and the ‘America Adam’ needs to be free from bondage to tradition!

## A THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUIZ ON A 'PROGRESSIVE' CENTURY

1. Why do historians put the fateful years **1914~1918** as the '**end**' of the 1800s?
2. Up to that time, what **general mood** or spirit characterized the 19<sup>th</sup> c.? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Give some concrete examples of **Enlightenment** aspirations/achievements **continuing** apace in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.
4. What was the general cultural movement that expressed **revulsion for** the **Enlightenment** mentality?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the term for **evolutionism** applied to human societies? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe one of the many spiritual, ideological or intellectual **CONTRASTS** of this rapidly changing era.
7. Give an important example of a '**global**' **WV exchange**.
8. Name a movement, philosophy or theology that was deeply influenced by **Hegel's "Absolute Idealism."**
9. Who do we probably the two most radical "**Individualists**" of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.?
  - A. A religious one: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. An anti-religious one: \_\_\_\_\_
10. List several movements/organizations that would complete *this* thought—  
**"The Increasing Secularization of Society left a vacuum rapidly filled by: ....."**
11. As to **Christianity's** spectrum of **responses** to the threatening **challenges** of this era...
  - A. Give an example of a positive or effective response: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Give an example of a poor response: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Identify three distinct **20<sup>th</sup> c.** movements with roots traceable directly to the **19<sup>th</sup> c.** and name the root!
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_ is traceable to: \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ is traceable to: \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ is traceable to: \_\_\_\_\_