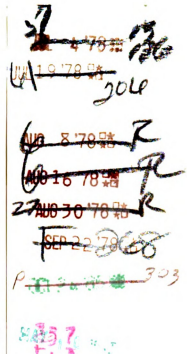

ABSTRACT

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE: THE WORLDS OF AN EMERGING EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT FUNDAMENTALISM IN AMERICA, 1890-1920

By

Nelson Hodges Hart

Scholarly treatment of fundamentalism, primarily from historical and sociological perspectives, tends to treat it as some form of aberrant behavior. Few of these scholars have personally accepted fundamentalist religious views; although perhaps some, like the present author, were reared within that tradition. This study was an attempt, not to justify the fundamentalist tradition, but to examine the legitimations which were used by early fundamentalists to explain their world views. Just how did they explain their worlds, and how were those worlds maintained in the face of the passing of the nineteenth-century evangelical American world order?

Several conservative evangelical journals, some weekly, others monthly or quarterly, were examined for articles, editorials or statements which appeared to have served the purpose of legitimating or maintaining their worlds. Several issues and themes permeated the literature. These included discussions on Biblical authority, millenarian expectations, the missionary enterprise, the destiny of Christian civilization, the negative effects of "higher criticism", the problem

of church union, and the difficulties presented by the social gospelers. Once these themes were established as useful for further study, all consequent examination of the material was focused upon them.

In brief, this study has shown that during the late nineteenth-century, social unrest also exacerbated the social reality of rival theological legitimations within evangelical Protestantism. This culminated in the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920's. Yet this study has shown that those persons who can now be seen as forerunners to fundamentalism, during the period roughly 1890-1920, were not promoting schism, but were aggressively promoting Christian unity around concepts of "fundamental" Christianity.

By 1910, these emerging fundamentalists perceived that their expectations were being characterized as incompatible with contemporary views of social reform and social service. Therefore, they maintained with renewed emphasis that no religious worlds were to be seen as legitimate unless they were built upon the theology and practice of individual salvation, made possible only by the work of God. Thus "true worlds" were those in which entrance was open only to those who understood divine personal redemption. And "false worlds" were those which admitted of other means to human salvation, and especially the means of "Christian" social service.

The work of these early discussants in more clearly delineating a practical, personal, evangelistic theology made possible the survival

of fundamentalism. Their intense efforts to teach and to practice soul-winning served to make the totality of the individual's life more subjectively meaningful in the face of social and religious upheaval. Furthermore, the totality of the institutional order came to make more sense to those who understood that careful distinctions needed to be made between those who were redeemed and those who were not. Fundamentalists, by 1920, without hesitation were determined to specify as <u>infidelity</u> any religious world which did not openly declare a message of a supernaturally inspired personal redemption.

THE TRUE AND THE FALSE: THE WORLDS OF AN EMERGING EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT FUNDAMENTALISM IN AMERICA, 1890-1920

By

Nelson Hodges Hart

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Studies Program

1976

To
Carl,
my father, and
David,
my son

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Among all who have encouraged and helped in this study, the pride of place belongs to my wife, Peggy. My mother, Barbara, read the original draft with a critical eye, and much of what is grammatically good can be attributed to her suggestions.

Enthusiastic academic guidance came from this study's advisor, Mary L. Schneider. Douglas T. Miller gave advice that was essential toward improving the original draft which needed "tightening". James B. McKee gave support to my sociological thinking. And Robert T. Anderson affirmed my continued efforts toward the goal of completing this study sooner rather than later.

Research help came from the Interlibrary Loan Library at Michigan State University; Walter W. Burinski and his staff found plenty of materials with which to keep me busy--and often surprised me with materials which I thought were unavailable. A special note of gratitude must be given to Edward C. Starr, long-time curator of the American Baptist Historical Society Library in Rochester, New York. His secretary, Mrs. Roger K. Powell, and he helped me to sift through volumes of pertinent journals. My thanks go also to Joanne W. Oliver, who managed to copy much of the material which I found there.

Finally, I wish to thank especially the administrations of both Taylor University and Spring Arbor College for their financial support of this project. My teaching colleagues have been most helpful in providing much-needed emotional support when teaching loads seemed oppressive. In addition, in the beginning, Ernest R. Sandeen took the time to write several suggestions for the study of fundamentalism. Even though I chose not to follow them directly, he certainly encouraged me to proceed with some study of the movement. And at the end George M. Marsden read the dissertation with a critical eye, which greatly aided me in preparation for its defense.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS--continued

TABLE OF CONTENTS--continued

PREFACE

American Protestantism's most conservative religious movement gave itself the label "Fundamentalism" in 1920. The label stuck; and since then it has been used to refer to any number of extremely conservative or reactionary religious stances. Popular concepts of religious fundamentalism have included concurrent social and political conservatism or reactionism. To categorize a religious fundamentalist is to categorize, in the minds of many, a fiscal, social and political "fundamentalist"; it is to categorize also a rurally oriented, lower middle class viewpoint.[1]

Moreover, scholars of fundamentalism seem to have viewed it as some form of aberrant behavior. Fundamentalism has presented several problems for interpretation, chief of which are the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920's. The most dramatic manifestation of these controversies, the Scopes "monkey" Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, July 10-21, 1925, seemed to indicate that evolution was the central issue. However, the broader conflict was very complex. Although evolution was an important concern, it was not central to the controversies. Of greater concern to the fundamentalists were the issues of personal

---

[1]For an introduction to fundamentalism, see Louis Gasper's The Fundamentalist Movement (The Hague: Mouton, 1963) or Ernest R. Sandeen's The Roots or Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

salvation, of biblical authority and of right living. Modernists' support of evolution was symptomatic of the deeper problems which their views presented: fundamentalists believed that evolutionists trusted more in man's rational scientific ability to create a better world than in God's ability to transform men, that evolutionary perspectives on creation attacked fundamentalists' views of divine revelation, and that belief in evolution was symbolic of modernism's negative influence upon evangelical piety.[2]

Yet, during these controversies fundamentalists succumbed too often to crass generalizations. In response their opponents generated popular views which have identified fundamentalists as intolerant obscurantists. This phenomenon inevitably has influenced any interpretation of the movement; one cannot escape the reality that repeated, public inane comments helped to generate negative stereotypes. Furthermore, scholarly research into the controversies has identified an anti-intellectual character of the fundamentalist side, despite evidence that their intolerant attitudes and behavior often were matched by the modernist side.[3] And whenever anti-intellectual attitudes can be documented, scholars tend to develop some form of disdain for the social movements which have supported those attitudes.

---

[2]For an extended analysis of this phenomenon, see the introduction to Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., ed., Controversies in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), pp. 3-46.

[3]Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 117-136.

Internal support for this position of disdain can come, moreover, when the scholar himself has wrestled with his own fundamentalist training, and consequently for himself has rejected that label. He may still hold orthodox Protestant tenets, and may continue to support evangelical endeavor, but he may not appreciate evidence of bigotry, ignorance or stupidity. However, the nagging question remains: did fundamentalists always appear so obscurantist? This study has kept that question in mind.

The fundamentalist tradition, especially to whatever extent it matches its negative stereotypes, cannot be justified. This study has not attempted to do so. It has, however, sought to clarify fundamentalist's world views which existed before the controversies of the 1920's. How can fundamentalism be characterized before certain negative stereotypes came to dominate? How did early fundamentalists legitimate their world views? How did they explain their perspectives to their constituents? How were their world views maintained in the face of a rapidly changing America? How did they see and understand manifest changes in the nineteenth-century evangelical Protestant American social order? With these and similar questions in mind, this study examined early fundamentalist attempts to justify their positions.

The evidence from which this dissertation is derived came primarily from conservative Protestant journals and magazines, such as The Sunday School Times, of the period roughly 1890-1920. These were examined for articles, editorials or statements which seemed to serve the purpose of legitimating or maintaining conservative evangelical world

views. Certain issues dominated the many themes which were encountered. This study focused on discussions of Biblical authority, premillennial expectations, the missionary enterprise, the destiny of Christian civilization, the negative effects of higher criticism, the problems of church union, and the difficulties which the social gospelers presented.

The development of evolutionary theory after the 1860's had included a two pronged attack upon orthodox Protestant views of the nature of creation and of revelation. Evolutionists presented alternate views to orthodox notions that man and his world suddenly had been created *ex nihilo* approximately six thousand years ago. The orthodox believer understood that his view of divine revelation could not withstand, if such alternate evolutionary views were to prevail. Therefore, many theologians took sharp issue with evolutionists. Notable among these were the "Princeton school," led by the indefatigable Charles H. Hodge (1798-1878). In 1874 he published What is Evolution? with his famous answer, "It is [virtually] atheism." The Princeton school battled specifically the rationalistic perspectives which supported evolutionism. They knew that continental theologians had begun to use these perspectives to examine critically biblical origins and documents. Among the new biblical interpretations were those associated with the German theologian, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), who rapidly was treated as foremost among the "higher critics." In response, the Princeton school by 1890 had developed a well-conceived theology of biblical authority. Its chief protagonist, B. B. Warfield (1851-1921), had studied extensively the theologies of his predecessors Archibald

Alexander (1772-1851) and Charles Hodge. In 1882 he wrote The Divine Origin of the Bible and in 1886 he published his widely used handbook, Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament. In 1890 he founded and edited until 1902 The Presbyterian and Reformed Review. After the 1890's, most conservative evangelical assertions concerning inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, and authority of the scriptures relied on these Princeton formulations.

Meanwhile, a group of conservative preachers and teachers presented millenarian views of redemptive history at Bible and prophecy conferences. Premillennialism (as they called their views) had received its greatest stimulus in the United States when John Nelson Darby, the English founder of the small sect known as the "Plymouth Brethren", had visited North America several times during the 1860's and 1870's.[4] The most influential institution for the spread of premillennial views was the summer conference for concentrated Bible study, which met at Niagara on the Lake, Ontario, during 1883-97. Most other prophetic, millennial and Bible conferences of this period were a direct outgrowth of the Niagara meetings.[5] Among many notable spokesmen in this group were James H. Brookes (1830-1897), Presbyterian pastor and editor of The Truth (St. Louis, 1874-1897), and A. J. Gordon (1836-1895), Baptist pastor and editor of The Watchword (Boston, 1878-1897). Later

---

[4]Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism.

[5]Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," Church History, 36 (Mar., 1967), 66-83.

millenarian leaders included the dean of Moody Bible Institute, James M. Gray (1851-1935), and the dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), R. A. Torrey (1856-1928), who also edited his school's journal, The King's Business. Other millennialists included Robert Cameron (1860?-1921) who was the only editor of the journal, Watchword and Truth (1897-1921), which he combined after the deaths of Brooks and Gordon; A. C. Dixon (1854-1925), a Baptist preacher and teacher who from 1909-1911 took the editorial responsibilities for The Fundamentals pamphlet series (1909-1914); and Minneapolis pastor William Bell Riley (1861-1947), who founded the Northwestern Bible Training School and was editor of its paper, Christian Fundamentals in School and Church (1918-1926). Charles G. Trumbull (1872-1941), who in 1903 succeeded his father Henry Clay Trumbull (1830-1903) as editor of the prestigious Sunday School Times (1858-), became a vociferous supporter of premillennialism after his conversion to that perspective in 1914.

As Ernest R. Sandeen clearly has shown in his studies of fundamentalism, the movement received much impetus from both Princeton theology and millenarian teachings. Not all fundamentalists were (or are) premillennialists or Calvinists, yet prophetic messages, dispensational teachings and literal interpretations pervaded the conservative evangelical literature at the turn of the twentieth century. The "Blessed Hope" of Christ's second advent received much attention. Many, if not most, of the interdenominational gatherings of conservative evangelicals after 1900 studied prophetic themes, after the pattern which had been established by the "Niagara" Bible conference meetings.

By this time, the evangelical Protestant missionary enterprise had enjoyed nearly a century of progress. Each religious denomination had its own missionary board and societies. Local churches regularly received missionary news via the ubiquitous publications of their boards. Interdenominational activities focused on the promotion of the missionary enterprise. In 1888, A. T. Pierson (1837-1911) launched the new series of the analytic monthly Missionary Review of the World. He had been a Presbyterian pastor in Detroit, then in Philadelphia. Although he embraced a premillennial theology, his review seldom published any material which might have indicated this as his theological position: the journal focused on missions. It was truly interdenominational in character; it relied almost exclusively on voluntary field reports from each church group's mission. Pierson published articles by conservative theologians and pastors, who presented many theological and liturtigal distinctives. Early fundamentalists always claimed their broad evangelical heritage and actively supported the missionary enterprise. For example, A. J. Gordon early had taught his congregation the importance of missionary giving, and was proud to relate that over fifty percent of his church's income was given to missions.

Although strict millenarian views could not support social efforts towards human progress, early fundamentalists could not shake their heritage of evangelical conceptions of Christian civilization. They believed that in its essence, Western civilization was nearly Christian even if not fully so. They invariably saw social change as potentially disturbing to the already established moral fiber of America.

This peril had been articulated by earlier evangelicals, such as in Josiah Strong's Our Country (1885) and in Samuel L. Loomis' Modern Cities (1887). They showed that efforts toward purifying a Christian America were hampered by the continually intrusive realities of industrialization and urbanization which were fed by massive immigration. Evangelicals found it increasingly more difficult to escape the negative implications of these phenomena.[6]

Yet from within evangelical Protestantism's own ranks other forces plagued conservative evangelical efforts. The growth of liberalism in the churches indicated that a Christian America was conceived in more then one way. Growing theological differences challenged popular notions that a single, broad religious base existed for the maintenance of a Christian civilization. However, and in spite of these challenges, evangelical goals for a Christian America and world were upheld. Not only the vast missionary enterprise supported these goals, but so did also the urban revivalistic techniques which had been so well established by 1840 by Charles J. Finney (1792-1875). D. L. Moody (1837-1899) in the 1870's and 1880's effectively was supported by evangelicals of many persuasions. They were concerned to show that the cities, which were experiencing very rapid population increases, needed a spiritual dramatic force to stem the tide of irreligion. Many early fundamentalists did not lose their forefathers' visions of preserving and

---

[6]Robert T. Handy has an extended discussion of these issues in his A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

purifying a civilization which they perceived as potentially, if not actually, Christian.

But cultural divergencies which were stimulated by rapid population growth continued to be paralleled by religious divergencies. These were precipitated by a rapid influx of broader intellectual responses to religionists' failures to perceive adequately the nature of the social ferment. Early nineteenth-century evangelical efforts toward social reform had been institutionalized in agencies such as the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society. Evangelicals had been active promoters of abolition, and were beginning similarly to deal with temperance and prohibition. But support of such reform activity depended on concepts of a theological individualism which said, at heart, that no reform was possible without a divinely generated individual transformation. The new religious liberalism, which was directly influenced by rationalism and higher criticism, was suggesting that social reform required a collective human effort. Liberal concepts of God's immanence indicated that any human goodness reflected divine attributes, and that collective acts of goodness were to be seen as evidence of God's immanent regenerative activity.

Yet several religious periodicals, such as the Baptist weekly, The Watchman (1819-1913), showed little indication of these theological divergences. George E. Horr (1856-1927) its editor at the turn of the century, showed no theological partisanship as he printed only general denominational news and theological discussion which was untouched by the developing controversies. Horr seemed glad to comment on diplomatic

and political controversies which had religious overtones, such as the inadvisability of seating Brigham H. Roberts as representative to Congress from the new State of Utah, on grounds that he was a polygamist--"free silver is better than free love."[7] But, in an apparent effort to maintain circulation, Horr ignored the growing conflict over theological stances. Only after The Watchman's 1913 merger with The Examiner (1824-1913) did its new editor, Curtis Lee Laws, promulgate specifically the views of the conservative side in the controversies.

Nor were conservatives biased totally against scientific inquiry. They were intrigued especially with the work of prominent archeologists such as G. Frederick Wright (1838-1921) of Oberlin. His archeological discussions of biblical lands were prominent in The Sunday School Times. And for many years Wright edited Oberlin's Bibliotheca Sacra (1844-), a journal of biblical studies which was purchased in 1934 by the fundamentalist Dallas Theological Seminary. Conservatives seemed intent on using archeological discoveries as their first line of defense against extravagant claims by biblical critics that most Old Testament records were mythological in character.

In sum, these discussants who early promoted a conservative evangelical Protestantism faced the reality that their views could be seen no longer as dominant. Yet they continued to argue for a unified Christianity. They expected that with their increased efforts, an evangelical Protestantism could be restored to unity around concepts of "fundamental" Christianity. They rejected faith in human progress, in

---

[7](Editorial) vol. 80, #1 (Jan. 5, 1899), 4.

modern knowledge and in the optimism of the progressive era. Fundamental Christianity, in its doctrinal orthodoxy, identified itself as having no faith except in a saving God. Early fundamentalists believed that continuing social unrest would prove that they were right, that man could not save himself. The negative consequences of the abandonment of orthodoxy by their antagonists could be rectified only by the return of the wayward to the fold.

By 1920, conservative evangelicals could argue that humanism had failed. The World War, subsequent radicalism and the labor turmoil of 1919 had generated disillusionment within progressivism. The fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920's were sparked by beliefs that social salvation was more necessary then ever. Each side was more willing to fight for its version of saving mankind and the Republic from anarchy, atheism and immorality. Conservatives, now called fundamentalists, were most willing to militate against views which they perceived as contributing to the general lack of moral and religious character in American culture.

Yet, in spite of their antagonists' religious and intellectual beliefs that fundamentalism would die out quickly after the controversies, it had remained. Since the 1950's, extremely conservative and fundamentalistic Protestantism has shown renewed vitality, even in the face of its sectarian character. What did the early fundamentalists contribute to this ongoing vitality? This dissertation maintains that the bifurcation of American Protestanism developed principally over salvation theology. Nineteenth-century evangelical pietism had culminated

in the revivalistic crusades of D. L. Moody. But urban problems remained. With the labor unrest of the 1870's and 1880's came evidence that new emphases in practical theology were needed. Liberals turned to theologies of social salvation which would uplift individuals; whereas, conservatives sought to regain a theology of individual salvation which would prove to be sufficient for the task of social regeneration.

The thesis of this study is that fundamentalism's forebearers more clearly delineated a practical, personal, evangelistic theology. They taught and practiced soul-winning with new vigor, with lesser emphasis on other social activities which had heretofore characterized their interests. They worked primarily through this reemphasis, to make the individual believer's life more subjectively meaningful in the face of social and religious upheaval. Instead of only religiously supporting societies which did all their evangelistic work for them (such as the Bible and Tract Societies), they taught and practiced individual evangelism in their Bible conferences and training schools. They personalized more specifically the Christian mandate to proclaim the gospel of God. Americans could no longer be seen as generally Christian; careful distinctions needed to be made between those who were redeemed and those who were not--even if such distinctions reached into the pulpit!

The survival of fundamentalism, and with it the survival of a conservative evangelicalism in a modern age, was in large part dependent on this newly developed and reasserted practical theology. The movement

truly was conservative, as Sandeen had argued.[8] But it was more than conservative, in that personal piety was to be more than right living; it intentionally and specifically declared an orthodox creed, and also was to be tested at the point of one's ability to win souls. This, then, was the essence of fundamentalism as conceived by its early discussants.

After the controversies had subsided, and in the first issue of The Christian Fundamentalist, July, 1927, William Bell Riley lamented the fact that to his knowledge not one fundamentalist ever during the controversies had been asked to define the movement. He declared that if he had been asked to do so, he would have replied as follows:

> [1] "It is the Christian Creed" based on "the Greater Christian doctrines.... Fundamentalism is forever the antithesis of modernist critical theology."
>
> [2] "It is the Christian Character," taught especially in the educational enterprise. "The proofs of fundamentalism, then, are not in words, but in deeds.... The future of fundamentalism is not with claims, but with conquests."
>
> [3] "It is the Christian Commission," not to be outdone by social service. "That commission is to make disciples and not denominationalists." (Italics his)

He summarized with "My Brethren are those who believe in a personal God, in an inspired Book, and in a redeeming Christ."[9]

This understanding of early fundamentalism, based on the protagonists' own conceptions, underlies this dissertation. Its title was taken

---

[8] "Fundamentalism and American Identity." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 387 (Jan., 1970), 56-65.

[9] "What is Fundamentalism?" Vol. 1, #1, pp. 5-14.

from A. C. Dixon's first book, The True and the False, published in 1890 in Baltimore by Wharton, Barron & Co. Although Dixon's topic was the comparison of Protestant and Catholic views of Jesus, the book itself reflects the character of what was later known as fundamentalism. Dixon was concerned to "confirm the faith of many." He criticised the role of reason in current theology as being "controlled largely by the affections." He asserted again the "facts" of orthodox Christianity, and proclaimed that "rationalism is irrationalism pure and simple," if it denied such verities.[10] In this dissertation, the "true worlds" (Part II) are those which clearly upheld these conservative evangelical Protestant ideals. The "false worlds" (Part III) are those that admitted of non-orthodox rationalistic means to human salvation, including so-called Christian social service.

By 1920, fundamentalists were ready, openly and without hesitation, to proclaim as false any religious world which did not declare a message of a supernaturally inspired personal redemption. They took this militant stance into the controversies, and they brought it out more firmly grasped. Their opponents decried this position, but the fundamentalists' tenacity was unbroken in spite of the cultural effort to ridicule the movement. In short, the controversies, in which liberals assumed that they had won, served only to solidify the work of early fundamentalists. When individual soul-winning is successfully practiced, what more powerful legitimator of their movement was needed?

---

[10]Preface, pp. 44 and 48.

PART I

A WORLD WITHOUT

CHAPTER ONE

"NATIONAL PERILS AND OPPORTUNITIES"--AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BROAD WORLD OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTISM, c. 1890

> Thoughtful men are convinced that the closing years of the nineteenth century constitute a momentous crisis in the history of the nation. There is a march of events which will not tarry. The necessity of planting Christian institutions in the formative West, and of strengthening them in older states, the duty of overtaking the rapid growth of our cities with adequate church provision, the importance of closing the wide chasm between the church and the multitude, and of bringing the regenerative power of the gospel to bear upon every character and life, demand the instant attention of the Christian church and the full exercise of all its energies.
>
> The Evangelical Alliance, October, 1887
> (Josiah Strong, General Secretary)[1]

A World of Social Crisis

Massive doses of culture shock helped to initiate the American nation into its second century. The 1877 labor uprisings challenged the prevalent gospel of wealth which had been scarcely daunted by the Civil War. Americans feared the masses of immigrants who seemingly were being dumped on eastern cities, whose urbanity never had been so seriously threatened. Slums seemed more rapidly to overtake once

---

[1]"Call for the Washington Conference: To the Christian Public," in National Perils and Opportunities (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1888).

respectable neighborhoods while suburbs burgeoned. The rise in the production of agricultural machinery served to make the lot of the poor yeoman farmer seem even poorer. Dense factory smoke symbolized progress, yet personal safety was seldom known--and regularly railroad hands suffered maiming or fatal injuries. Reported excesses in behavior on the western frontier violated the sensibilities of eastern homebodies. All of these examples, and more, serve as pictures of one nation's shocking self-indulgences.

In short, the incongruities of progress forced themselves into national awareness. The nation wondered how such could have happened. Commentators saw impending crisis. They could not maintain their hopes for an utopian society which was seen now as only a possibility, not a probability. From among these voices rang out Josiah Strong's, whose Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis was first published in 1885.[2] Two years later Samuel Lane Loomis' Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems was "respectfully offered to the public in the hope that it may contribute to the general information and deepen the general interest in the great subject with which it deals."[3] Cities enhanced the national "perils" of wealth, congestion, anarchism, lawlessness, intemperance, immigration, and (not least) "a superstitious Christianity."[4] Both Strong and Loomis supported evangelical

---

[2]Josiah Strong, Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1885).

[3]Samuel Lane Loomis, Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems (New York: The Baker & Taylor Company, 1887).

[4]Strong, op. cit., p. 6.

Protestantism, but were shocked at their discovery that in 1887 the paucity of churches had reached the ratio of one to four thousand persons in New York City.[5] But their cries of dismay, combined with many others, finally stimulated American evangelicalism to express its concern.

But, in its response to perceived social crisis, evangelical Protestantism precipitated a concomitant crisis of its own. The theological movement which eventually took rough form in the 1920's as fundamentalism, was a consequence of, and a generator of, social and religious crisis. By 1890, many evangelical Protestants saw the larger social crisis. But the subsequent internal religious and political crisis led to the well-known modernist-fundamentalist controversies more than three decades later. By then, the term "evangelical" had lost its broad sense as applying to mainstream nineteenth-century Protestantism, and had been "seized", as Martin E. Marty has so aptly put it, by the party most closely identified with the fundamentalist side of the controversies.[6] From fundamentalist perspectives, they remained evangelical, while the "modernists" had lost all claim to the use of that term.

However, evangelical Protestantism of 1890 cannot be characterized in categories similar to evangelical Protestant fundamentalism of 1920

---

[5] Ibid., p. 11.

[6] Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 179.

and following years. Nineteenth-century evangelicalism was as diverse and pluralistic as one could imagine. William G. McLoughlin has summarized quite saliently this important issue:

> Evangelicalism was not consistent either in its theology or in its social theory. It was neither Calvinistic nor Arminian and often it verged on Pelagianism. It advocated an individualistic conception of conversion which it promoted by mass revivalistic machinery. Its doctrine of manifest Christian destiny was an ill-defined amalgam of conservative fears and radical perfectionist hopes. Even its avowed belief in voluntarism was belied by its readiness to use the power of the state to enforce its Christian principles of morality upon unbelievers.[7]

And yet Henry May is surely most correct in having shown that "in 1876 Protestantism presented a massive, almost unbroken front in its defense of the social status quo."[8] In 1890 that front, though weakened and challenged by the "earthquakes" of labor unrest, still stood.

Sidney Mead helpfully has explained this possible paradox.[9] How could a diverse pluralistic Protestantism have some sort of social solidarity? Nineteenth-century Protestant dominance involved identification with bourgeois values and with a social system based on free enterprise.[10] The idea of progress was foundational,[11] manifest by

---

[7]William G. McLoughlin, The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), p. 26.

[88]Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper Brothers, Publishers, 1949), p. 91.

[9]Sidney Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963).

[10]Ibid., p. 142.

[11]Ibid., p. 145.

patterns of competition and cooperation among and between groups, all of which believed in this idea[12] (irrespective of some lamentable consequences of competition). Thus the solidarity of front was to be found in twofold fashion: 1) evangelical patterns of associational interaction were distinctly American,[13] i.e., organizationally, characterized by Mead as a "historyless" voluntariam whose mission was propagandized by revivalistic means,[14] and 2) a common transformation of personal religious impulses to pietism as evangelicals joined the early nineteenth-century "flight from reason".[15] Evangelical churches lost most of the nation's intellectuals, which fact Mead saw as the consequence of earlier events:

> When at the close of the Revolutionary era evangelical Protestantism parted company with the intellectual currents of the modern world, an ever-widening chasm grew between "religion" and "intelligence".[16]

Americans could choose from among (competing) religious organizations, and irrespective of church polity, they could practice a form of piety which would be recognized by all as fitting, more or less, evangelical ideas. In similar light, Stow Persons has characterized pietism as

---

[12] Ibid., p. 131.

[13] Ibid., pp. 135ff.

[14] Ibid., pp. 108-126.

[15] Ibid., pp. 127ff.

[16] Ibid., p. 129.

"the central element" of "democratic theology", and as such it was very supportive of revivalistic means to growth.[17]

The social crisis, then, to which evangelicalism addressed itself, was seen as a challenge, not so much to Christian theology, but to concepts of Christian social morality, Christian individualism and Christian destiny. The close identification of this threefold concern to concurrent notions of American democracy cannot be overemphasized. For example, Ralph Henry Gabriel has well characterized nineteenth-century Americanism as having focused on 1) an absolute, immutable natural law of society, that maintenance of order and a strain toward justice resulted in a "natural" tendency toward moral progress, 2) a free and responsible individual, influenced minimally by government interference and 3) a democracy whose destiny was that of a manifestly clear superiority, upheld by basic Christian principles of brotherhood.[18]

If, therefore, social morality was deteriorating, if socialistic influences threatened individualism and if a nation's manifest destiny appeared to be at a stalemate (or worse, that democracy's demise was seen as possible), then the term "social crisis" was quite appropriately applied. Further, the period was filled with doubt, bewilderment and

---

[17]Stow Persons, American Minds: A History of Ideas (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), pp. 172-173.

[18]Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (2nd ed.; New York: Ronald Press, 1956), chapters 2, 3, pp. 12-39. See also Sidney Fine, Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, The University of Michigan Press, 1956).

confusion, as Henry Steele Commager has shown.[19] In short, life in America in 1890 was seen as potentially drastically different from what the American experience had heretofore shown. Evangelical Protestants, like all Americans, faced a task which constrained them to manage a destiny, not only their own, but "to a considerable degree, to determine the destiny of the world."[20] How then, did they perceive the world which they believed that they were to manage?

"National Perils ..."

In October, 1887, a call was issued "to the Christian public" to send representatives to a "General Conference of all Evanglical Christians in the United States, to be held under the auspices and direction of the Evangelical Alliance for the United States, in the city of Washington, December the 7th, 8th and 9th 1887." The conference was to discuss "present perils and opportunities of the Christian church and of the country," and to deliberate whether a "hearty co-operation of all Evangelical Christians" could best "serve the welfare of the whole church." The call was signed by eighty-six prominent church and civic leaders, including eleven college and university presidents.[21] From this conference's published proceedings, National Perils and Opportunities, comes excellent material for a description of an evangelical

---

[19]Henry Steele Cammager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

[20]R. S. MacArthur, "The Saloon," in National Perils and Opportunities (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1888), p. 154.

[21]National Perils, pp. viff.

Protestant world view, c. 1890.

The conference speakers specified many issues of morality in terms of great peril, including the indomitable "Saloon issue". But Samuel L. Loomis, author of Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems, put the issue of social morality in far more comprehensive fashion when he said that "every man whose morality or intelligence, especially whose morality is below the average morality of the community in which he dwells, is, in his measure, a peril to that community." Therefore, "the city is a peril to the modern State, because its average citizen, in morality and education and intelligence, is below the average morality and intelligence of the inhabitants of our land."[22] Urban problems were also national.

National moral problems were to have national solutions: national in priority, national in support and national in execution. Such was the suggestion of R. S. MacArthur, pastor of Manhattan's Calvary Church. He explained that fulfillment of the nation's destiny required, for example, a commitment such that "the nation which slew and buried the monster, Slavery ... [could] slay and bury the twin monster, Intemperance."[23] He explained that alcohol was enslaving people, and that failure to solve this and other problems might well have indicated the end—the failure of mankind. America represented, not only "opportunity", but also "a last effort of the Divine Providence in behalf of the human

---

[22]Loomis, in National Perils, p. 48.

[23]MacArthur, in National Perils, p. 154.

race."[24] To fight successfully national problems with full social co-operation was grandly to maintain the world's trust. Failure represented "the grave in which the hopes of the world" were to be entombed.[25]

Moral issues could not be solved institutionally, however, if immorality pervaded family life. Evangelicals explained that no social order could be successful which did not, in actively promoting family integrity, protect children from immoral influences and their parents from indiscriminate divorces. Samuel W. Dike, secretary of the National Divorce Reform League, noted that the safety of the church and the nation depended on systematic efforts, via tracts, essays, investigative reports and the pulpit, to keep people aware of disintegrating influences on family life.[26] He noted with irony, for instance, that "the legal protection of property is infinitely superior to that of the family." Even individuals had far more legal protection than did families; family law had not changed in fifty years, in spite of the technological revolution.[27]

Social order, therefore, rested on family moral integrity. As Col. J. L. Greene of Hartford, Connecticut, re-emphasized, the home was "the very citadel of morals."[28] But a dilemma existed. Support of

---

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Samuel W. Dike, "Perils to the Family," in National Perils, pp. 180-81.

[27] Ibid., pp. 173-74.

[28] Col. J. L. Greene, in National Perils, p. 184.

other valued institutions opened the door of the home to an encroaching moral turpitude. For example, Greene noted that "never an effort is made to extirpate or defend against the evil influence that are as rife [in schools] as fungi in a swamp."[29] Sensational newspapers introduced moral deprivation into families, and scandalous novels added to the burden of depravity. Even the church had de-emphasized family values as it increasingly promoted Sunday Schools and institutional service. Dike cautiously noted that the church had failed to meet family needs at home. The church's neglect would encourage these other influences; moral turpitude would reign.[30] In brief, the nation was careless in the way it regarded the family, according to the summary given by Simeon E. Baldwin of the Yale Law School.[31]

The evangelicals gathered at this conference believed that Christian individualism was threatened by the misuse of wealth and by lawlessness, unemployment, pauperism and other manifestations of the "Capital and Labor Question." Any hold that an individual had on his own destiny was being weakened by continued pressure for organized influence and intervention in economic affairs. The problem was one of power. As Merrill E. Gates, President of Rutgers, noted, wealth conferred the power to command labor. For him, "Wealth is power."[32]

---

[29] Ibid., p. 187.

[30] Dike, op. cit., p. 177.

[31] Simeon E. Baldwin, in National Perils, p. 194.

[32] Merrill E. Gates, "The Misuse of Wealth," in National Perils, p. 81.

And a devotion to money-getting opened one up to a "host of misuses," with all forms of immorality, including gambling, licentiousness, drunkenness, as well as corruption, bribery and "fictitious trusts." But the "most common" misuse of wealth was "refusing to make any use of it," thereby exacerbating the lot of the powerless.[33] No wonder that anarchy flourished when wealth remained alienated from poverty. Although "indiscriminate alms-giving" and "communistic views of property" were not to be practiced, the right use of wealth focused on producing a new wealth of the highest values, namely intelligence, morality and conscience.[34] Gates explained that individualistic values were promoted when moneys were given to schools, to philanthropic enterprises and to pulpit-sharing.[35]

The church was to be wary of attacking either labor or capital, said James McCosh, President of Princeton: "We should not by arbitrary enactment hinder any man from bettering his condition."[36] McCosh supported individualistic values as necessary for the church's survival as a mediator, "to soften the oppressor, and to cheer the oppressed."[37] Yet the reality for the church's ministry was that both the poor and the rich were on its periphery. For the American church, as noted by

---

[33] Ibid., p. 87.

[34] Ibid., p. 89.

[35] Ibid.

[36] James McCosh, "Relation of the Church to the Capital and Labor Question," in National Perils, p. 217.

[37] Ibid.

McCosh, was largely middle class.[38] McCosh's message was simple. The peril presented by labor unrest could be mitigated best by personal ministries among the working class. It was shameful that almost three quarter's of the country's population was scarcely represented in evangelical congregations. Many evangelicals estimated that the working class made up little more than one-twentieth of their fellowship.[39]

However, Seth Low of Brooklyn emphasized another serious threat to individualism. America had failed to understand the "era of combination."[40] Combination, if fully applied throughout society would serve to maintain individual freedom, especially if each person was concerned that justice prevail for all. Society was making a dreadful mistake in encouraging competitive antagonism between organized capital and organized labor. Loss of individualism came when one side forced itself on the other in an utterly selfish manner. The church was to accept the challenge to make organized labor and capital unselfish. "The church must teach all [individuals and organizations] to be just, to be generous, to be upright." Let the church preach "her old lesson of individual responsibility," to all alike, to those within or without corporate positions.[41]

---

[38] Ibid., p. 219.

[39] Ibid., p. 221

[40] Seth Low, "Relation of the Church to the Capital and Labor Question," in National Perils, p. 227.

[41] Ibid., p. 232.

Furthermore, external influences were seen as threatening the nation's ability to control its destiny. Evangelicals saw immigration restriction as a national imperative. They gave all the standard well-known arguments for restriction. Professor H. H. Boyeson of Columbia College re-emphasized Josiah Strong's analysis that immigrants in the American schools "unduly stimulate a child's ambition, and foster to an unhealthy degree its sense of independence."[42] The issue was "a spirit of irresponsible independence," stimulated primarily by associates, text-books and politics. "Unworthy" persons (intellectually and morally) maintained an "excessive sense of dignity." And the peril was "a question, not of sentiment, but of self-preservation."[43] Evangelicals asserted that natural law was being violated by continued introduction into society of those incapable of maintaining social order and Anglo-Saxon forms of justice. In short, continued excessive immigration seriously challenged self-government.

Evangelical Americans saw the question of immigration, therefore, not as whether continued immigration was feasible, but to what extent. The peril lay in a too rapid influx, where assimilation processes were inadequate to teach republicanism. And they saw republicanism as the nation's cohering force. Thus, as Boyeson, who himself was an immigrant, stated, "when assimilation ceases, the coherences, nay, the very

---

[42] H. H. Boyeson, "Immigration," in National Perils, p. 63.

[43] Ibid., p. 64.

existence, of the nation is in peril."[44] Yet it was manifestly unfair to restrict immigration arbitrarily by excluding specific nations or races. For both Boyeson and S. L. Baldwin of Boston, the Chinese exclusions and restrictions were unjustifiable.[45] It was unconscionable to exclude any immigrant who already conformed to "our Christian civilization."[46] Americans had a right to exclude idolaters, but not "God's creatures." As J. M. Foster maintained, "Chinamen, as God's creatures, have a right to come to God's America," as long as they leave their "idolatrous customs" home: idolatry violated God's law.[47] Ultimately, then, immigration restriction presented a dilemma: if America was God's nation, and if that nation had become a great power by immigration, then its "glorious future" depended on continued immigration. This was God's law of blessing, so that Christian immigration restrictions should depend on allowing only God fearing (democracy respecting) aliens, i.e., those who were alien only in national origin, not in spirit.

Evangelicals saw also that control of the national destiny was threatened at home by a twofold religious problem: on the one hand alleged non-religiousness of the working and lower classes, and on the other hand the ultramontanist philosophies of especially Jesuit Roman Catholics. A. T. Pierson, who later edited The Missionary Review of the

---

[44] Ibid., p. 72.

[45] Ibid., p. 75.

[46] Ibid.

[47] J. M. Foster, in National Perils, p. 79.

World, saw the first as ultimately a class problem.[48] The crisis was not so much that the poor did not attend church, but that the church neglected their condition. For Pierson, "society had a way of avenging herself for the wrongs committed on the lowest of all her members."[49] The poor could not be blamed for the crisis when wealthy churches, lavishly furnished and with well paid ministers, ignored the problems of the dispossessed. The churches simply exhibited a caste spirit, evidenced by continued relocation of prominent congregations to more pretentious communities. As Pierson suggested, "our churches are becoming the quarters of a monopoly."[50] Thus, control of Christian destinies was not being taken away as much as given away. The "communion of respectability" had displaced the "communion of saintliness."[51] The church could practice the American (Christian) ideals of benevolence, cordiality and democracy. In so doing, churches could be instruments of overcoming class alienation.

Jesuit "Ultramontane" doctrine presented a threat on the opposite side of non-religiousness. If primary allegiance to the pope was essential to ultramontanist perspectives, then supporters could never be Americans. So said Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe of Buffalo.[52] The issue

---

[48] A. T. Pierson, "Estrangement of the Masses from the Church," in National Perils, pp. 112-123.

[49] Ibid., p. 116

[50] Ibid., p. 118.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Bishop A. Cleveland Coxe, "Ultramontanism," in National Perils, p. 127.

was American "Home Rule", and not Romanism. The Evangelical Alliance at all times was quite careful not to assault Roman Catholicism in terms of the Christian faith of its adherents. Catholicism was to be opposed on political grounds whenever any tendency to "wed" the church and state appeared. Rev. James M. King stated that he had lobbied hard in the New York legislature to make sure that republicanism prevailed in the face of Jesuit pressures to the contrary.[53] This and other similar evangelical anti-catholic activities were based on the assumption that Protestantism was much more clearly supportive of democracy than was Romanism. No chance for foreign power influence was to be allowed. They believed that maintenance of equal rights could not survive the political influences of a foreign dominated religious power.[54]

To summarize at this point, the Evangelical Alliance saw itself, as A. T. Pierson said, "not only verging on a crisis, but ... in the crisis."[55] Perils were many and diverse, but most could be seen as threatening either a Christian morality, a Christian individualism or a Christian destiny. The world of social crisis was all-encompassing for the American evangelical.

---

[53] Ibid., p. 136.

[54] Ibid., p. 137.

[55] Pierson, op. cit., p. 116.

"... and Opportunities"

Yet "Christian resources" and opportunities for "cooperation in Christian Work" needed clear exposition. If the perils were to be seen as national, so also were the resources. The evangelical perspective saw America, under God, as manifestly morally superior. The nation, under democracy, was destined for greatness. The key to understanding the opportunities which evangelicals perceived was in their concept of "free Christianity in America."[56] It was a force, a power given by God. This force generated national greatness, as summarized by J. M. King: "Christian conceptions of God, of man, of man's duty toward God, of man's duty to man in politics and society, and the duties of nations toward each other, are the germs from which spring all the beneficent powers of the highest civilization."[57] This was the destiny of Christianity. If any nation was to be called Christian, then its destiny was subsumed within the destiny of Christianity. Christian resources and opportunities were also opportunities for the nation, if that nation was Christian.

It was therefore quite acceptable for J. M. King to include among his Christian resources national morality and justice, the spread of "the Christian ideas" of liberty and benevolence, Christian control of higher education and the public schools, and freedom of the press.[58]

---

[56] J. M. King, "The Christian Resources of Our Country," in National Perils, p. 263.

[57] Ibid., p. 265.

[58] Ibid., pp. 259-276.

Daniel C. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins University, said that universities were "the children of the church."[59] He quoted Isaac Taylor when he stated that "Christianity had attached a sovereign importance to TRUTH, as furnishing the only solid support for the motives of self-government, purity and charity."[60] Universities furnished the nation with Christian ministers (but more were needed). In short, as General Joseph Hawley, U. S. Senator from Connecticut, noted, there was no room for Christian pessimism. He said that the scriptures taught "the future glory and absolute, final, magnificent triumph of our institutions," and that "given a new, unoccupied continent, with a free school, a free press, free religion and a free ballot, in the end the truth, justice and wisdom of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will win the fight."[61] (The recording secretary to this convention noted that this statement received "great applause".)

Evangelicals saw these opportunities primarily to the extent that they understood the necessity of Christian cooperation. Opportunities had little prospect of coming to fruition unless supported by massive concerted activity. "The crisis" was simply too great to be attacked in piecemeal fashion. For some, the "attempt to make good conquer evil" was "almost hopeless from the beginning."[62] The question was how

---

[59]Daniel C. Gilman, "The Christian Resources of Our Country," in National Perils, p. 278.

[60]Ibid., p. 284.

[61]General Joseph Hawley, in National Perils, pp. 295-296.

[62]R. S. Storrs, "Necessity of Co-operation in Christian Work," in National Perils, p. 299.

to summon effectively the forces inherent within Christendom in order to remove the crisis. R. S. Storrs' response was unambiguous: "It is to be done by bringing the scattered resources and energies which in their dispersion are relatively powerless, are certainly insufficient for the effect, into harmonious co-operation, making them interact on each other, while acting together to maintain the intelligence, the virtue, the religion, in which has been always, and must be hereafter as heretofore, the security and power of our civilization."[63] Cooperation of this sort, of course, did not require organic union. But only through co-operation would come "such opportunity and power for good."[64]

Even evangelicals saw cooperation as an opportunity to defend and preserve Christianity, and specifically American Christian civilization, they understood that the crisis which they faced was social. Evangelical civilization was threatened. Yet it was not God's responsibility to keep and defend it. That responsibility had been given to man, and could be accomplished only through cooperation.[65] But their concern was not sectarian, it was not political; it was more profound than either. It was religious; and it was "religious co-operation--that kind of co-operation which shall best set forward the interests of evangelical Christianity in our land."[66] It was cooperation "in the defense of the

---

[63] Ibid., p. 300.

[64] Ibid., p. 302.

[65] Bishop Samuel Harris, "Necessity of Co-operation in Christian Work," in National Perils, pp. 303-314.

[66] Ibid., p. 309.

eternal truth' of evangelical Protestantism.[67] It was cooperation "in order to fulfill the mind of Christ and to convert the world."[68] The social crisis which they perceived was a threat to the social existence of Chrisianity as they knew and experienced it. Social existence of Christianity was possible, in the face of social disintegrative forces, only by religious cooperation towards survival.

A Christian response to this social threat required, according to Washington Gladden, "the hearty recognition of one simple principle--that of the equality of all Christian churches."[69] The Golden Rule had to apply "to churches as well as to individuals."[70] By way of a practical suggestion several of the conference speakers had anticipated Gladden's point that Protestants needed to think seriously about setting themselves up in a parish system. This would displace the prevalent competition in which several groups fought for church membership in a common area.

Evangelicals, therefore, predicated their opportunities upon a non-competitive mutual cooperation. Unity of spirit was necessary. Help and support were to be reciprocal. All Christians were to be consecrated to the ministry of meeting the needs of men. For them,

---

[67] Ibid., p. 312.

[68] Ibid., p. 313.

[69] Washington Gladden, "Necessity of Co-operation in Christian Work," in National Perils, p. 319.

[70] Ibid., p. 320.

Christ, the Master, had called each to serve, with each person committed to victory over social crises.

The World That Was Not To Be

Broad-based evangelicalism until this time showed little of the character which three decades later typified evangelical fundamentalism. Late nineteenth-century evangelicals, in agencies like the Evangelical Alliance, had charted an essentially secularized course through the storms of social upheaval. They tried to be modern; they tried to make Christianity fit the times. But especially after 1890, not all evangelicals responded favorably to these broad proposals. From within the broader world of evangelicalism came a division in ranks. Millenarians already had established through their teachings pessimistic views, not only of cultural conditions, but of the church itself. And liberal scholars had begun to challenge orthodox Protestant views on the nature of man, of the scriptures, of Christ and of the church: they were optimistic about human possibilities. Conflicts between these two views of human possibilities, one pessimistic and the other optimistic, came to dominate evangelical interaction. By 1920, the conflict was about to erupt into full scale hostilities.

Opportunities for combating national perils did not materialize across the broad world of evangelicalism which the Evangelical Alliance represented. Seldom again would a A. J. Gordon and a Washington Gladden so enthusiastically share the same platform. Gordon's successors saw too many false worlds within mainstream Protestantism. Gladden's compatriots rejected rigid dogma as they sought fresh means of making

Christianity meaningful to larger masses of humanity. The middle-of-the-road evangelical of 1890 became lost in the developing conflict--but many felt forced to choose one party or the other as the 1920's approached.

The Evangelical Alliance had described a chaotic, novel world. But their response was characteristic of the old nineteenth-century forms of evangelical piety. In this sense, the 1887 meeting of the Evangelical Alliance was the last significant gathering from the entire evangelical spectrum. From that time forth, two world views fought for the allegiance of evangelicals. The liberals, on one side, struggled to develop a consistent social Christianity, unencumbered with any dogma that might suggest man's inherent sinfulness. The conservatives, on the other side, struggled to maintain orthodox faith in God, Christ, the Bible and in doctrine. They wished to counter modern views of inherent human goodness. Whereas the liberal side continued their efforts to combat social perils, the conservative side saw new perils--perils to faith and doctrine. Liberals fought to save Christianity; conservatives fought to save Biblical authority. In short, liberals confronted social upheaval; conservatives confronted religious upheaval.

This dissertation describes, from emerging fundamentalist perspectives, the nature of religious worlds which they knew and experienced. "True Worlds" are those constructions of reality which they saw as real (in common-sense and workaday terms) and legitimate. "False Worlds" are other constructions of reality which they saw as inimical

to their own, and which they chose to delineate and assault.[71]

This dissertation therefore begins with the premise that the emerging fundamentalism represented one side of the evangelical world which in its totality had attempted to respond to the late nineteenth-century "social crisis". The plea for Christian cooperation among all evangelicals never was fruitful. The distinct parties, to use Marty's term, did cooperate among themselves; for example, in 1908 came the organization known as the Federal Council of Churches (FCC) a group primarily of evangelical liberals. And during this time (1890-1920) fundamentalism cannot be seen in essence as a sectarion movement. It was a loosely cooperative group of somewhat diverse adherents to a literal biblicism and an apolemtic conservative theology. At first they were undergirded by nineteenth-century evangelical ideals of Christian morality, individuality and destiny. By 1920 those ideals were forgotten, as full-fledged battles for a hearing within American Protestantism drew near.[72]

---

[71]Cf. chapter 2; see also, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1966).

[72]George M. Marsden's definition of fundamentalism best presents the multivariate nature of the movement: "'fundamentalism' refers to a twentieth-century movement closely tied to the revivalist tradition of mainstream evangelical Protestantism that militantly opposed modernist theology and associated cultural change. Fundamentalism shares traits with many other movements to which it has been related (such as pietism, evangelicalism, revivalism, conservatism, confessionalism, millenarianism, and the holiness and pentecostal movements), but it has been distinguished most clearly from these by its militancy in opposition to modernism. This militancy has typically been expressed in terms of certain characteristic theological or intellectual emphases: whereas modernism or liberal theology tended to explain life and much of religion in terms of natural developments, fundamentalists accentuated the

supernatural. Accordingly their most distinctive doctrines (although not all held by everyone in the movement) were the divinely guaranteed verbal inerrancy of Scripture, divine creation as opposed to biological evolution, and a dispensational-premillennial scheme that explained historical change in terms of divine control. In America, where fundamentalism originated, adherence to the first of these teachings became a test for the purity of denominations, the second a symbol for the effort to preserve the Christian character of the culture, and the third a basis for fellowship among fundamentalists themselves." In "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism" (unpublished manuscript, 1976).

CHAPTER TWO

LEGITIMATING A WORLD--THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

> Man's world ... is an open world. That is, it is a world that must be fashioned by man's own activity.... Man must make a world for himself.
>
> Peter L. Berger, 1967[1]

Legitimation as a Social Process

The abrupt social changes in late nineteenth-century America produced questions as to whether the American experience would continue in essence as before. For evangelicals, these questions pointed to the nature of Christianity as they had known it. Would their religious experiences continue to make sense? Their questions must be understood broadly, that is, that the alleged social crisis had definite and specific religious implications. In other words, evangelicals readily defined social perils as also attacks on Christianity.

In following Peter L. Berger one can show, by way of example, that restoration of the evangelical tradition in response to attacks upon it mandated explanations and justifications of its salient elements.[2]

---

[1]Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 5.

[2]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 92-93.

In sociological terminology, "legitimation" is this process of explanation which justifies the tradition. Ultimately, "a whole world is created,"[3] in which the tradition is "located", and which "provides order to ... experience."[4] Everything is put "in its right place."[5] Life's discrepancies can be integrated by continued reference to this world so created. In addition, these processes of legitimation provide an individual with a subjective identity within the context of the world. The individual is sheltered from "the horror of aloneness" as he locates himself within his world.[6] In sum, legitimation processes serve to maintain social (including religious) worlds, as well as one's "location" within them.[7]

Consequently, when, in the face of social upheaval, Christianity was seen as being under attack, various definitions of <u>that</u> reality emerged. The crisis within evangelicalism was, in part, a consequence of clashes of definition as to the nature of the religious changes in American culture. In following Berger, then, resolution of these conflicting definitions depended "more on the power than on the theoretical ingenuity" of the legitimators--those who explained and justified their worlds.[8] Thus, the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920's

---

[3] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 96. My discussion is based on Berger's discussion of legitimation, pp. 92-128.

[4] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 97.

[5] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 98.

[6] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 102.

[7] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 105.

[8] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 109.

can be explained as a power struggle. To quote Berger, "he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality."[9] Definitions of social (or religious) realities vie for commitment, not so much based on their inherent qualities, but on their abilities to command allegiance.

Furthermore, there are "different conceptual machineries" of world maintenance, such as mythology, theology, philosophy and science.[10] The problem with these machineries of legitimation is that they can rely on knowledge not generally available. As Berger explained, for example, the "populace may remain relatively unaffected by the sophisticated universe-maintaining theories concocted by the theological specialists."[11] Scientific knowledge provides a more extreme case, from which even many theological specialists are excluded. Thus various experts preside over disparate portions of the societal stock of knowledge, and according to <u>their</u> knowledge create worlds of meanings which need legitimation.

In this light, rival theological definitions of reality compete in a larger social world. The outcomes of this competition depend, not on the relative merits of the various explanations and justifications, but on extra-theoretical interests. These are primarily social. In Berger's words, "rival definitions of reality are thus decided upon in

---

[9] <u>Ibid</u>.

[10] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 110.

[11] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 111-112.

the sphere of rival social interests whose rivalry is in turn 'translated' into theoretical terms."[12] If social interests are dominated by concrete power interests, then those interests also attach their particular definitions of reality. For example, if mid-nineteenth-century American life can be seen as being dominated by Anglo-American definitions of democracy, then those who control that democracy attached also their evangelical definitions of reality. The pluralistic nature of that society was taken for granted, and in the churches especially. But, and again following Berger, pluralism accelerated social change: pluralism "encourages both skepticism and innovation and is thus inherently subversive of the taken-for-granted reality of the traditional status quo."[13]

In this perspective then, the perceived social upheaval of late nineteenth-century American contributed to change in religious definitions of reality. But that change in religious definitions was a consequence primarily of social rivalries, which incorporated also theological rivalries. However, in providing explanations, evangelicals perforce "translated" the rivalries into theological terms. This is not to say that various theological definitions of reality did not influence the social rivalries. On the contrary, emerging theological rivalries were used as legitimations for various social perspectives. In other words, the process was not cumulative, but dialectic: a social definition of

---

[12] Ibid., p. 120.

[13] Ibid., p. 125.

reality may well require also theological legitimation. Furthermore, in a world of competing realities, as they clash and traditional definitions compete, new realities emerge which may require religious legitimation by those living them. This living dialectic was well summarized by Berger:

> It is correct to say that theories are concocted in order to legitimate already existing social institutions. But it also happens that social institutions are changed in order to bring them into conformity with already existing theories, that is, to make them more legitimate.[14]

It is the thesis of this dissertation that the social changes of the last decades of the nineteenth century in America also exacerbated the social reality of rival theological legitimations within evangelical Protestantism. Pleas for evangelical cooperation were attempts to smother smoldering passions for heated conflict. Rival religious legitimations were beginning to jockey for power positions within various Protestant denominations. (The fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1920's were clear manifestations of these earlier processes.) Fundamentalism, as a set of legitimations, represented one side of the evangelical world--the conservative side. From this perspective, fundamentalists were doing exactly what other evangelicals were, namely, trying to make the church "more legitimate." The church was for them the dominant institution in their world. Their explanations were an attempt to bring their church into conformity with their perceptions of the evangelical tradition. Other evangelicals attempted to bring the church into conformity with other perceptions of that same tradition.

---

[14] Ibid., p. 128.

Always, as was noted in chapter one, within evangelical Protestantism, perceptions had varied as to the meaning of traditional dogma and practice. But legitimations varied more noticeably so in the face of perceived social crisis; and the emerging conflicts centered on these alleged differences in theological legitimations.

Yet few fundamentalist explanations were unique--they borrowed primarily from their evangelical tradition, as did other evangelicals. This fact makes it more difficult to define the movement with any measure of precision. By studying evangelical Protestant legitimations in their variety and complexity, one begins to understand that these emerging fundamentalists were not members of a monolithic mind set. Neither did they agree on many items of practical theology, nor of doctrine; for example, they differed in their views on eschatology. Yet the set of worlds which fundamentalism represented did have one common legitimation, which was shared by most conservative evangelicals. This was their explanation of the locus of religious authority.

But the uniqueness of fundamentalism was not to be found in its legitimations, common or otherwise, per se; its uniqueness is to be seen in the way those explanations were presented and responded to. The distinctiveness of evangelical fundamentalism is a matter of location within a social milieu, an "attitude" (using this term in its technical sense) vis a vis others, whose legitimations may have been quite similar, or quite diverse. Fundamentalists appeared to take defensive positions; yet they called themselves "aggressive conservatives." They saw themselves as combatants or militants, needing to

save Christianity; yet their antagonists saw them as destroying the Christian message of a loving God.

Fundamentalist worlds were many, three of which are described in Part II as "True Worlds." These may have some mutual contradictions, but each clearly contributed to the movement which engaged in open conflict in the 1920's. Other worlds within evangelicalism they both described and rejected, three of which are described in Part III as "False Worlds." In these they found serious threats to their worlds, yet all of which had some legitimations with which they agreed or could have found useful. In Part IV is a description of fundamentalism in 1920 and its problems of survival. Here, in conclusion to Part I, is described the problem of religious authority as the fundamental issue in the legitimation process. This problem is described from an emerging fundamentalist perspective.

The Problem of Religious Authority

Christian tradition had understood its ultimate authority to rest in its scriptures as "The word of God." But within the tradition, the institutional reality of the church has generated its own authority, inherent within its official structure. Christians have viewed this "external" authority in various ways, ranging from pure historical data on the one hand to ultimate guidance for faith on the other. Yet, in contrast, the tradition also has seen reason, or conscience, as the means whereby men reach religious convictions.

Protestants always have assumed that they brought the Bible back into prominence as the authority for their faith. Their complaint to

the Roman tradition was that it had supplanted the Bible with the church as the ultimate locus of authority. American evangelical Protestants have recognized the place of reason or conscience in moral decision-making. But they have resisted attempts by Deists, Universalists and others to supplant the scriptures with individual reason as the ultimate religious authority in matters of faith and life.

During the 1890's, evangelicals faced the acute reality that the Bible had become the cause celèbre of Christianity. The Sunday School Times maintained that "never before was the Bible itself such a center of interest in the world." It was "the study of scholars, the theme of thinkers, and the object of attention by the common people, all the world over, as at no former time."[15] In 1890, however, H. Clay Trumbull, editor of that weekly journal, had asserted that "the chief point of attack on Christianity is the authenticity and integrity of the Bible itself."[16] This theme was being reiterated on every hand, in both denominational and non-denominational literature. Fear had been aroused, as William Alexander of San Francisco noted in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, when he said that "there is in some quarters a rationalistic trend of increasing boldness, in regard to the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures."[17] The secular press also understood

---

[15]H. Clay Trumbull, ed., The Sunday School Times, vol. 32 (Mar. 15, 1890), p. 161.

[16]Ibid., (Jan. 18, 1890), p. 33. The Sunday School Times is hereafter called S.S. Times.

[17]William Alexander, "The Reformation We Need," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, vol. 1 (April, 1890), p. 305.

the impending crisis. In commenting on one of Dr. Moody's sermons, The Chicago Tribune of Tuesday, January 21, 1890, declared that "there is danger in departing from the literal meanings, for once out of moorings there is no telling where a man may bring up! Brother Moody is firmly anchored among his Bible texts, accepts them literally, and thus gains added grace and enthusiasm."[18]

Statements by conservative evangelicals as to the nature of the attack on the Bible were as diverse as can be imagined, but certain terms reflecting their stances recur, such as plenary inspiration, inerrancy, literalism, infallibility, truth, trustworthy, credible, and supremacy of the Bible. At stake was whether the scriptures remained credible in an age of scientific investigation and rationalistic speculation. The so-called "higher criticism" was the culprit. As Lefferts Loetscher has specified, the "negative conclusions of Biblical criticism" had, by 1890, generated a struggle within Protestantism that clearly was antecedent to twentieth-century fundamentalism.[19] Science had tackled the scriptures, and conservative evangelicals struggled with its conclusions.

Careful conservatives, such as members of the faculty at Princeton Seminary and other supporters of traditional Calvinism, noted that

---

[18]The Chicago Tribune, Editorial, Second ed., Vol. 50, p. 4, col. 1, also quoted in The Watchword 12 (May, 1890), p. 113.

[19]Lefferts Loetscher, The Broadening Church (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), p. 91.

biblical criticism was "legitimate and necessary."[20] Explanations in several journals had distinguished between "lower" and "higher criticism." Lower criticism referred primarily to textual matters both in manuscript investigation and translation methods. Higher criticism inquired "into the origin, history, genuineness and authenticity of literary documents."[21] If radical higher critics disputed the authenticity of biblical documents, then the authority which men placed in them would be challenged, which might well destroy their faith in "an infallible, incarnate Christ who is God."[22] Therefore, as Dunlop Moore, another Calvinist, stated, "It is no trivial question whether we have an inerrant Bible...."[23] Could it remain as a credible and trustworthy guide to truth? As B. B. Warfield, Princeton's guiding light, so clearly put it, "The real problem ..., in its deepest essence ... is whether we can still trust the Bible as a guide in doctrine, as a teacher of truth."[24] And further, he argued,

> It is specifically whether the results proclaimed by a special school of Biblical criticism—which are of such a character as is now admitted by all, as to necessitate, if adopted, a new view of the Bible and of its inspiration--rest on a basis of evidence strong enough to meet and overcome the weight of

---

[20]Cf. Charles A. Aiken, "The Bible and Criticism," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 3 (October, 1892), pp. 687-708.

[21]Ibid., p. 689.

[22]S. H. Kellogg, "A Tendency of the Times," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 1 (January, 1890), p. 54.

[23]Dunlop Moore, "Calvin's Doctrine of Holy Scriptures," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 4 (January, 1893), p. 63.

[24]B. B. Warfield, "The Real Problem of Inspiration," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 4 (April, 1893), p. 220.

> evidence, whatever that may be in kind and amount, which goes to show that the Biblical writers are trustworthy as teachers of doctrine.[25]

To repeat, the issue was not whether "Higher Criticism" was a useful tool in scholarship. William Henry Green in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review specifically noted that "it is a serious mistake to reject a valuable instrument because it has been misapplied. The Higher Criticism is simply a scientific method of inquiring into and ascertaining the facts respecting the books of the Bible. If proper methods are pursued right results will be reached."[26] It was perceived misuse of critical methods that had generated prejudice against "the Higher Criticism itself, as though it were essentially rationalistic, and antagonistic to the truth of Scripture and to evangelical religion."[27] For Green, "The cause of the Bible" could not "be damaged by the frank acceptance of the truth in criticism, or in any other branch of scientific inquiry."[28]

But evangelicals perceived the attack on Scripture as an attack on truth, since not only did the Bible contain doctrinal truth, but as the word of God it was truth in essence. However, the doctrine of inspiration which specified inerrancy was not to be understood as "the most fundamental of Christian doctrine," according to B. B. Warfield.

---

[25] Ibid.

[26] William Henry Green, "Dr. Briggs' Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch Examined," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 4 (October, 1893), p. 552.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 553.

Warfield was "far from contending that without inspiration there could be no Christianity."[29] Put simply, one was not to understand that Biblical infallibility was the ground of the whole Christian faith. Yet, if one's faith was based on what the scriptures taught, and the scriptues were accepted as true, doubts about the Bible's authenticity challenged also one's authority for faith. For evangelicals, this authority was defined in terms of the truth inherent in the Bible in its entirety--i.e., as the rule of faith.

And just what was to be treated as fundamental truth in Christian doctrine? A. J. Gordon, editor of The Watchword, briefly and succinctly specified "ruin and redemption ... man fallen and Christ risen...."[30] Gordon's successor as editor of Watchword and Truth, Robert Cameron, amplified by stating that "The Deity and sacrifice of Christ, and the forgiveness and regeneration of man, are absolutely essential to Christianity."[31] Therefore any nineteenth-century statements which challenged the veracity of these truths were seen as challenging the whole of Christianity, including any belief in the infallibility of the scriptures as a guide to truth. In other words, if one adhered to such challenges, authority for truth would be lost.

This attitude, then, which came to characterize later fundamentalists, found its germ as evangelicals sought to defend their source of

---

[29]Warfield, op. cit., p. 209.

[30]A. J. Gordon, ed., "What is to be Treated as Fundamental in Christian Doctrine?" The Watchword 14 (March, 1892), p. 58.

[31]Robert Cameron, "Is Christianity Advancing?" Watchword and Truth 22 (May, 1900), p. 135.

truth. In 1892, A. Gosman, a New Jersey Calvinist, explained the problem at length in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review.[32] If the church was "losing its hold upon distinctive and vital truths," then the church (the defenders of truth) must generate conflict. For him, "controversy which grows out of a love for the truth, is every way healthy and praiseworthy, ... and that those who defend the truth, if they do it in love, are worthy of all commendation."[33] The "very citadel of the faith" had been assaulted.[34] Truth had to be defended as the source of freedom and charity. For one could not emphasize charity at the expense of truth--in fact, it simply was not charitable to let the truth be lost. In a stinging indictment of his times, Gosman showed this attitude quite clearly:

> The tendency to lower our estimate of the value of the truth under the plea of charity, broad-mindedness, liberty, falls in with the spirit of the age. This sides largely with the looser views. It chafes at restraint. It charges narrow-mindedness and prejudice upon those who oppose it. It boasts of its liberalism. It has burst the shackles in which opinion and faith have been bound. It has little respect for creeds. It has outgrown the necessity for them. They are rusty and smell of the ages. They are an anaconda which gripes them in its fold. They choke and suffocate the free spirit.[35]

It was an age which could not

> waste its time in controversies, even though they touch the vitals, ... as if time could have better use than to bring the truth in its completeness and power to the consciences of men.... Yet there is need that the church should guard its own--that

---

[32] A. Gosman, "The Present Aspect of Our Religious Life," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 3 (October, 1892), pp. 665-686.

[33] Ibid., p. 677.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., pp. 677-678.

> while opening its heart gladly and fully to all the pleas coming from the ills of society and responding to them, it should not fail to recognize that its power to bless men lies in the truth, taught as it is revealed in the Word and applied by the energy of the Holy Ghost.[36]

Any tendency to leave out of view distinctive truths served to make "the piety of the church deficient in its character as a witness for the truth."[37] Furthermore, "a failure to state the truth explicitly and in its right relations, both to other truths and to the practical lives of men, renders the testimony insufficient and powerless; so that the spiritual life of men hinges upon this testimony."[38] Thus, in this perspective, "the truth is indispensable,"[39] and "nothing will be gained by concessions.... Nothing is ever settled by concessions when the truth is at stake."[40]

Acceptance of this attitude, however, had much larger social implications. For "the truth can never be held by itself.... It must flow out into the practical life of men."[41] The church, in utilizing truth had "the only adequate solution" to social problems, the "remedy for all human ills."[42] If society is fraught with strife and other "fruit of sin," then "the church can solve these problems because it has

---

[36] Ibid., p. 678.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 679.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 680.

[41] Ibid., p. 681.

[42] Ibid.

the truth and the spirit of God."[43] If ills were not removed, "it is because the Church has not applied its principles or used the powers which Christ has given it."[44] The "best method" for applying these principles was to bring "life and salvation" to individuals--i.e., to bring truth to men, the "twin truths" of sin and salvation, of the law and the gospel.[45]

The perceived reason, then, for the failure of the church to respond adequately to social problems centered on its failure to maintain its own authority for truth. In 1892, Charles Aiken had issued a call to the church "to take a warm interest and an effective part in the study, discussion and solution" of social problems.[46] But he recognized that the church was "ill at ease in view of the social situation."[47]

And this was because it had "come short even of the endeavor to do her whole duty," namely, to defend fully the truth.[48] Others had agreed with Talbot Chambers when he had noted earlier in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review that the church was being challenged by a movement which sought to "relax the demands of the Christian faith."[49]

---

[43] Ibid., p. 682.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., pp. 681, 683.

[46] Charles Aiken, "Christianity and Social Problems," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 3 (January, 1892), p. 65.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., p. 66.

[49] Talbot Chambers, "The Inaugural Address of Professor Briggs," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 2 (July, 1891), p. 493.

By the turn of the century, evangelicals saw all of Protestantism in danger. In 1904, Robert Cameron, in an editorial in Watchword and Truth, expressed fear that "man's judgment" had become "the supreme authority."[50] To explain his statement, he set up a tautology, as follows:

> Then comes the puzzling question, which man's judgment? The answer of course would be, "The judgment of the Christian man." Then would come another question, How does he become a Christian? By submission to the Lord Jesus Christ you say. Very well, but how is anyone led to trust in Christ? Upon what authority? Where does he find a record of the teachings, of the life, and the death of Christ? There can be but one answer. "In the word of God." But Protestantism is loose from its moorings and does not appeal to the word of God now. The supremacy of the Bible is no longer maintained....[51]

Conservative evangelical Protestants understood that this issue of authority, so stated, was vital to their religion. By questioning the authenticity of Biblical documents, higher critics had challenged their authority. Yet the critics (as was recognized by charitable conservatives) had acted as lovers of truth, men of progress, scholarship and thought. But conservative evangelicals, in expressing their perspectives on the dangers to Christianity which emanated from the critics' statements, suffered under the critics' opprobrium. The conservatives were treated, not as lovers of truth, but as narrow-minded. Therefore they felt that their spirit was misunderstood and misrepresented by critics.

With this in view, Robert Cameron had sought to set the record straight. In the May 1903 issue of Watchword and Truth he asked of the

---

[50]Robert Cameron, "Editorial," Watchword and Truth, 26 (March, 1904), p. 69.

[51]Ibid.

critics "a patient hearing." He specified three areas of clarification of the evangelical view of higher criticism, and noted carefully two areas of protest.[52]

Cameron favored: 1) "the fullest and most untrammeled freedom in the pursuit of truth." However, any human formulation of truth must be tested by some "infallible rule," outside of either any Christian dogma and creed or any "scientific speculations"; in other words, no human tradition, sacred or secular, was to have supreme authority in testing truth; of course, the Bible was seen as this infalliable rule; 2) "the most exhaustive and searching study into the origin, the contents and the meaning of ... the Bible." He emphasized that there was "nothing to fear in this respect," and "the more searching the study the better." The natural result of such study would be a more complete adoration of God; and 3) "the fullest and most exhaustive search after facts in the history of the race, or in the constitution of men, or of this material universe." If God was both the author of the Bible and the creator of man and universe, then there could be no contradiction.[53] Cameron believed that there was nothing to fear, and everything to gain by scientific investigation. The Bible, simply, did "not contradict any well ascertained fact of science or history."[54]

---

[52]Cameron, "Narrow or Broad," Watchword and Truth 25 (May, 1903), pp. 132-134.

[53]Ibid., pp. 132-133.

[54]Ibid., p. 133.

Cameron protested, on the other hand: 1) "against the rash conclusions pushed out into public notice, by half baked professors in college, and irreverent occupants of pulpits--conclusions that rest on no valid foundations whatever--against the cosmology, the history, and the revelation of the Bible." The protest was against inferior and mediocre scholars setting themselves up as "infallible teachers in the professed church of God." He protested against this "unblushing effrontery"; and 2) "against the attitude of mind seen in these men, "that of constant carping, criticising, fault-finding, and the raking of heaven and earth" against the scriptures.[55] Persons who unabashedly worked to support the scriptures as inerrant particularly felt this negative attitude. Cameron's indictment was essentially that the higher critics were narrow-minded, because they brought in a verdict before all the facts were known. It was not questioning attitudes, but negative attitudes which were scored--thus the evangelical opprobrium on higher criticism as "Negative Criticism" or "Destructive Criticism." Again, it was not a question of method. Charles Aiken in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review earlier had agreed that "criticism must be suspicious rather than indolently credulous."[56] Conservative evangelicals believed that a critical search for truth must assume the full credibility of known truth. One did not start his search by first establishing negative attitudes toward the truth which was already established.

---

[55] Ibid., pp. 133-134.

[56] Aiken, "The Bible and Criticism," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 3 (October, 1892), pp. 689-690.

The analogy which conservatives used most often was the "foundations" picture. One could not build up truth unless he were building on truth. This picture was used as they responded to liberals' demands for them to be tolerant. A. T. Pierson, for example, said that such demands required a response which clarified that the need was for, instead of toleration, "far more to examine anew our foundations...."[57] To be sure, maintenance of foundational truth required more care in scholarship. Apparent discrepancies needed further study. But nothing could be built on truth which did not square with truth. One could not declare anything as truth which did not measure up to an infallible rule--the Holy Scriptures.

In this manner, conservative evangelical Protestants understood the nature of fundamental truth, to whatever extent any of them might agree. Emerging fundamentalist explanations of their worlds all agreed on this perspective of the problem of authority. There were various descriptions as to exactly how the Bible had come from God to man, as well as various dogmatic and creedal formulations as to the exact processes of divine redemption. In whatever manner fundamentalists can be described prior to 1920, they tried to make the church more legitimate in similar ways, and their identity emerged as others responded to this fact. Fundamentalists placed themselves and were placed by others within their milieu in such a way as to be understood as needing to save the very foundations of Christianity. For this they fought, while

---

[57] A. T. Pierson, "The Cry for Toleration," Watchword and Truth 25 (August, 1903), p. 234.

others, not unmindful of the fundamentalist position, fought to remodel the superstructure of Christianity in the face of social change.

PART II

TRUE WORLDS

CHAPTER THREE

THE BLESSED HOPE IN A WORSENING WORLD

> We believe that the world will not be converted during the present dispensation, but is fast ripening for judgment, while there will be a fearful apostacy in the professing Christian body; and hence that the Lord Jesus will come in person to introduce the millennial age, when Israel shall be restored to their own land, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and that this personal and pre-millennial advent is the blessed hope set before us in the gospel for which we should be constantly looking....
>
> The Truth, 1878[1]

Premillennial Theology and the Blessed Hope

As a distinctive theological perspective premillennialism has been closely identified with dispensationalism. Even though dispensationalists are always premillennialists, the converse is not true.[2]

---

[1] James H. Brookes, ed., vol. 4 (Sept., 1878), p. 458. This quote is the last of fourteen articles of fellowship for the Believer's Meeting for Bible Study, otherwise known as the Niagara Conferences. The statement of these articles in The Truth was introduced by the following, p. 452:

> So many in these latter times have departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; so many have turned away their ears from the truth, and turned into fables; so many are busily engaged in scattering broadcast the seeds of fatal error, directly affecting the honor of our Lord and the destiny of the soul, we are constrained by fidelity to Him to make the following declaration of our doctrinal belief, and to present it as the bond of union with those who wish to be connected with the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study.

[2] Charles Caldwell Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 156-161.

Evangelical Protestant theology has included several millenarian interpretations of the future, only some of which are amenable to dispensationalism. To speak, therefore, of premillennialism is not necessarily to refer to dispensational theology. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century premillennialists seldom agreed on the particulars in their theology, but all agreed that the "Blessed Hope" was in "the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ before the predicted thousand years of holiness and happiness on the earth."[3]

Premillennialists saw the millennium as a literal one-thousand-year period, soon to break upon world history. This period was to be marked by an unparalleled dispensation of God's grace. His providence over all creation would be highlighted by a hithertofore incredible natural beauty, such that "the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose"; but more importantly, that the period would experience universal peace among men. The primary indicator of this peace, however, was to be seen in God's redemption and restoration of Israel. All mankind would know that God had made his peace with Israel, not only as they observed Israel's restoration (which premillennialists saw in the Palestinian movement), but also as Jews converted en masse to Christ, then to be seen as the Jewish Messiah.[4] The end of this thousand year period of "God's reign" would be marked by a brief period of the final fling of the pent-up forces of evil. The spirit of godlessness would take its

---

[3]Brookes, "Outline of Pre-millennialism," op. cit., p. 34.

[4]Ibid., p. 36.

last gasps before being forever extinguished in hell, after God's final judgment.

By way of general explanation of certain issues, the following is noted. Christians agree that the scriptures speak of Christ's return to earth before God's final judgment in which the forces of godlessness are finally and forever overcome. Thus most have believed that this "second coming" is to be seen as the signal of impending judgment. Those known as postmillennialists (as well as those known as amillennialists) have taken that judgment to be God's final judgment, therefore after the millennium, or more specifically after the conversion of the world (amillennialists do not refer to a literal millennium, but do refer to God's increased blessing upon mankind, indicated by increased conversions). For a postmillennialist, it is not necessary to believe in a literal biblical interpretation, but only that massive doses, as it were, of God's grace represent the phenomenon. Even though premillennialists regularly insist on literal interpretations, both post- and premillennialists agree on the general nature of the phenomenon of God's increased grace to man, and especially to the Jews.

However, premillennialists have seen Christ's return (literally), not as the signal of the impending final judgment, but as marking a massive world upheaval known as "the Tribulation." They explain this distress, symbolized by the workings of the "anti-Christ," however, as a judgment from God upon the world in which he frees the forces of the devil and the spirit of godlessness to wreak whatever harm they will. In other words, until that point in time (Christ's return), believers

are to understand that though the spirit of godlessness has dominated the world, it has not yet been brought to its final ruin. The force of the spirit of the anti-Christ has been limited by God. He has not permitted it full power; he has effectively throttled it down. The tribulation, therefore, allows the anti-Christ to act, in judgment, by giving these forces a brief period of almost unlimited influence.

Premillennialists thus have insisted that their view determined a radically different perspective on the world's movement in history. The postmillennialist expected to see the world getting better, especially as Christianity continued to spread its influence. Christ would "return" after the world was thoroughly converted and ready to submit to him. On the other hand, the premillennialist believed that the world would and could not be converted until after massive distress came upon all mankind (the tribulation). They saw the world as worsening, and expected it to continue to worsen until Christ's return. Premillennialists insisted that the church especially would participate in this worsening condition. It would become apostate, "filled with formality, infidelity and worldliness."[5] The believer, furthermore, was called to separate himself from this apostacy by focusing on and awaiting expectantly "the blessed hope," and "second coming of Christ."

Premillennialists, all of whom emphasized this second advent, did disagree as to its timing relative to "the tribulation." Some were "any moment" theorists, believing that the coming preceded the tribulation (thus, "pretribulationists"). This position was (and is)

---

[5] Ibid., p. 35.

characteristic within the dispensationalist movement.[6] Others expected Christ's coming after the tribulation (yet clearly before the millennium; thus, "posttribulationists"). This position is characteristics of many non-dispensationalist premillennialists. In spite of these differences of interpretation of the chronology of Christ's coming relative to the tribulation, premillennialists did agree that the time of the second coming itself was unknown, and would come as a surprise to all. Thus the continued exhortations to be ready always.

All of this doctrine was predicated on the principle of hermaneutics which premillennialists have characterized as literal interpretation, i.e., that the normal meaning of words is to be determined by accepted (grammatical and historical) usage.[7] Consistent with literalism is a philosophy of history which requires prophesied events to have definite, concrete significance.[8] Premillennialists expected a literal, bodily, visible appearance of Christ at a definite historical moment. Since one could not know when this moment might occur, ever-readiness was required. Evidence of such readiness included repeated training in and assertion of these theological distinctives. Identification of specific instances of apostasy in the church was necessary so that other believers might remain aware of any traps (set by the devil) of the spirit of godlessness--which prevented readiness.

---

[6]Ryrie, op. cit., p. 159.

[7]Ibid., p. 86.

[8]Ibid., p. 34.

In keeping with these distinctives, a literal interpretation of scriptures required a belief in Jewish restoration to "their land." Premillennialists consequently took special notice of the late nineteenth-century Jewish problems of persecution in Europe, consequential emigration, and movement toward Palestine. The Zionist movement especially was seen as "the most remarkable thing on the surface of human history today."[9] It was clear that Russia showed much bitter anti-semitism and that only England in all Europe provided a "good asylum" for Jews. Premillennialists saw the Russian depression and famine of 1891-92 as directly attributable to Czarist persecution of Jews. To this point A. J. Gordon's journal, The Watchword, quoted from The Western Recorder (n.d.), "It does seem as though the curse of Heaven rests upon Russia; and who will say that this is not at all connected with the fierce persecutions."[10] In short, premillennialists believed that all activities involving Jews pointed in one direction, namely, the fulfillment of scriptural prophecies concerning their restoration to Palestine.

Premillennialist excitement over Jewish emigration was so intense that they were "scarcely able to report intelligently concerning the situation, so rapidly [were] events developing along the line of the evident fulfillment of the scriptures bearing on the affairs of Israel."[11]

---

[9]Robert Cameron, ed., Watchword and Truth 20 (May, 1898), p. 131.

[10]A. J. Gordon, ed., Watchword 14 (Feb., 1892), p. 54. (See Footnote 2).

[11]Ibid., 14 (June 1892), p. 106.

Agricultural increases, installation of telephone and telegraph lines and the building of railroads in the holy land, as well as an ever-increasing number of immigrant Jewish colonies in Palestine served to convince premillennialists that "the restoration of Israel" was imminent. For example, A. Ben Oliel, a converted Jew who managed a Christian mission in Palestine, stated emphatically that Jewish immigration to Palestine, under the duress of persecution, was divinely ordained: "no believer in the literal fulfillment of prophecy can for a moment doubt that God has ordered it so to be--that it is, in fact, the commencement of the restoration of the Jews to their own land."[12] Premillennialists saw this clearly as "one of the signs of the end."[13]

Thus Jewish persecution and emigration encouraged premillennialists to focus on prophetic events, since their "blessed hope", the return of Christ, was to precede God's grace to a restored Israel. Yet the blessed hope was to be associated with a wholly discouraging state of worldly affairs, especially the world's deterioration. Their dilemma was real, for there was gladness at any sign that the end was near, but no gladness at continued battle with the forces of evil.[14] The question was what to do while awaiting a future event whose time seemed nearer because of apparent signs of the end. If "the end is evidently

---

[12]A. Ben Oliel, quoted in Watchword 13 (Feb., 1891), p. 53.

[13]Gordon, op. cit., 13 (April, 1891), p. 85.

[14]Alexander Patterson, "Pre-millennialism and Pessimism," in Watchword and Truth 21 (June, 1899), p. 178.

drawing near,"[15] what aspects of truth needed emphasis? Which forms of apostasy in the church needed the most attention? What was to be the unifying testimony of premillennialists? Just what was the nature of the times?

A Premillennial View of the World

"Is the world getting worse?" asked A. T. Pierson in an article by that title.[16] His premillennialist perspective compelled an affirmative response. Deterioration was specified as the norm. The world represented the domain of "the flesh and the devil," and it would "never grow better, any more than the flesh and the devil will grow better...."[17] To use a favorite premillennialist analogy, the world could not be kept from sinking. The Christian, therefore, should attampt, not to keep the world from sinking, but to get as many passengers as was possible into the lifeboat.

If the "ship" appeared as fine, modern and progressive, if material and technological progress had improved living conditions, such were incapable of preventing the ship's sinking. Civilization's "improvements" were no guarantee that man's sinful nature had changed. James H. Brookes satirically presented this issue in an editorial in his journal, The Truth, in 1892:

---

[15]Cameron, ed., Watchword and Truth 22 (Oct., 1900), p. 292. Italics in original.

[16]Pierson, Watchword and Truth 23 (June, 1901), pp. 171-172. The Truth was merged into The Watchword in 1897.

[17]Brookes, op. cit., 2 (May, 1876), p. 241.

> ... because education is more widely diffused, because public school houses are found everywhere, because telegraph and telephone wires girdle the earth, because manufactures are established, because science makes progress and art flourishes, because the comforts and conveniences of living are increased, because scoundrels are not punished with the swift and terrible penalties that formerly overtook them, because prisons are handsomely fitted up for their entertainment, because society puts on the thin white-wash of refinement and respectability, instead of displaying the brutal and vulgar vices of former years, shallow thinkers leap to the hasty inference that the world is growing better.[18]

On the contrary, premillennialists saw the alleged signs of improvement as only facades for every-increasing "godlessness and wickedness." For example, in the same lengthy editorial just quoted, Brookes stated that "the most godless and wicked cities on earth [are] Paris and Berlin, the source and centre of the noblest intellectual progress and prowess."[19] Premillennialists said, in short, that improved culture could not improve man's nature.

Reputed signs of deterioration included the standard Biblical references to "wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes," as well as to supposed late nineteenth-century increases in crime, discontent, restlessness and anxiety.[20] Premillennialists noted regularly the anomalies of rising crime rates, especially of murder and suicide, in a "progressing civilization." They saw further deterioration in that murderers "nearly always" escaped hanging--evidence that

---

[18]Brookes, "What of the Night," The Truth 18 (Feb., 1892), p. 150.

[19]Ibid., p. 151.

[20]Brookes, "Outline of Pre-Millennialism," The Truth 18 (Dec., 1891), p. 35.

even those who were not murderers participated in the moral decline by not vigorously prosecuting criminal violence. Alleged increases in gambling, prostitution, vice, sodomy, homosexuality, adultery and drunkenness were all further signs of moral depravity and the consequential debacle of moral standards of behavior.

This view admittedly was pessimistic. But premillennialists were persuaded to pessimism, not so much by this available cultural evidence: they taught that the world was ruled by the forces of evil. They expected--they believed--that the world would deteriorate. For them, the conclusive evidence lay in the churches. Often they saw little to distinguish between the world and the church. For example, they said that the church "had nothing of which to boast" when its members regularly read Sunday newspapers and took Sunday pleasure trips. Optimism came hard when they saw the country's population growth rates outstripping the growth rates of the churches. These and allegations that no more than two percent of the Protestant population attended church on any given Sunday and that many churches could not balance their books helped to convince premillennialists of increased apostasy.[21] None of these signs, however, could be compared to the degeneracy signified by the spread of support for the "Higher Criticism" and "other forms of infidelity."

In other words, as social institutions, the churches showed only more complete evidence of the total world's deterioration. Moreover,

---

[21]Brookes, op. cit., p. 151.

premillennialists saw this inclusive deterioration, not as an impassive response to the forces of evil, but as an active hostility against God. The leaders of this "bitter and unrelenting" hostility were also the leaders of government, science and letters--"men of eloquence and genius and learning, like Darwin, and Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, and Ingersoll, and the great mass of philosophers and scientists."[22] Premillennialists saw active hostility in general when, for example, in spite of the existence of humane societies, cruelty flourished, or in spite of advances in technology, there was increased propensity for its uses for evil.[23]

Again, premillennialists argued that the conclusive evidence of active hostility against God was observable within the churches. The preaching and teaching of false doctrines," such as future probation (that some will be saved after their deaths), the denial of verbal inspiration and the prevalence of the influence of higher criticism were phenomena sufficient to convince the premillennialists that not only the world, but also the church was promoting evil. In sum, they saw any act which did not clearly promote "godly virtue" as evidence of active hostility against God.

But such a premillennialist view of the world usually was not delineated as clearly as the above statements imply. Their theology, to be sure, insisted that the world was in various processes of deterioration. Yet prosperity, improvements in the technologies of

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] George C. Needham, "A New Earth," The Truth 19 (1892), p. 169.

communication and transportation, and the enduring American political system served to relativize their world view. In spite of all evidences of moral decline, America was still somehow a better place to be, especially in reference to other nations. Premillennialists readily divided the world--all of which showed moral decay--into two general categories, namely, the Christian (Protestant) and the non-Christian. The criteria for this distinction centered on their freedom to promote Protestant religion, as well as on the extent to which viable Protestant groups existed. In other words, their world view which specified deterioration as normal did not specify deterioration as categorical. One could distinguish between Christian and non-Christian nations.

In short, it was ironic that active premillennialism found its strongest support in the United States and Britain. Its world view, which saw deterioration as the norm for a world rushing towards impending judgment, flourished in what were by its definitions categorically the best nations this world had to offer, and in which evangelicalism was experiencing growth. In an optimistic era, premillennialism presented a significant pessimistic note.

Premillennial Responses to the World

When the premillennialist used the term "world", he was referring to "the unbelieving portion of mankind."[24] The concept included such notions as: a) the realm of the devil and his angels--meaning that the devil controlled the extent of the influence of evil, as well as that

---

[24]Brookes, op. cit.

evil was an inevitable product of his influence; b) the domain of "natural man," including all behavior and its consequences which were not clearly Godlike; and c) "darkness," in that there was no light where God and his children were not present. Moreover, this concept especially referred to an omni-present spirit of godlessness which permeated all groups and nations. Consequently, this world was inescapable, hence the understanding that "you are in the world." Premillennialists argued that participation with this spirit of godlessness, in darkness, in the domain of natural man and in the realm of the devil was the lot of every person.

Furthermore, they argued that man was "utterly incapable" of escaping the consequences of this participation. Effectively, this meant that no organization of men, governmental or religious, educational or philanthropic could do anything to change the nature of the world. Most specifically, they argued that "the pre-millennialist denies that the world is to be converted through the agency of the church."[25] This doctrine was essential to the entire premillennialist perspective, particularly as one attempts to understand their responses to the world. George C. Needham re-iterated in The Truth that "the Bible nowhere teaches that our world will be morally and physically regenerated by the preaching of the cross in this age, nor will the proclamation of salvation introduce that era of millennial blessedness foretold by all

---

[25]Brookes, op. cit., p. 34.

the holy prophets since the ages began."[26] James Brookes asserted that "the error, held by nearly all, [is] that it is the mission of the church to convert the world." To act under this delusion was to produce nothing but "futile hopes." The point was simple and clear that no man can change the world: "it is ungodly, it is evil, ... and not only will it remain so, but will progressively show more ungodliness, more evil...."[27] This distinctive premillennialist doctrine, not shared by many other Christians, referred specifically to the believer's response. By his endeavor, the believer could do nothing to change the world.

In this context, and for this reason, the premillennialist was called to "separation from the world," while yet living in the world. Each individual believer needed to demonstrate effectively that the spirit of godlessness did not control him. The unbeliever, of course, could not so demonstrate--his unbelief was sufficient evidence of the influence of this spirit. The believer, then, understood that escape from the controlling influence of this spirit was possible by God's action alone, and this only by means of personal conversion which God effected. This was the essence of the gospel. Only God could give to an individual any freedom from worldly forces--which were defined at length in terms of hostility toward God. The believer participated in a conflict in which the principal combatants were God and the devil. Only God was able to counteract the forces of the devil. No man or

---

[26]Needham, "A New Earth," p. 169.

[27]Brookes, Editorial, 18 (1892), p. 270.

group of men could do so. Salvation was from God alone. Ultimately, then, "separation from the world" was separation from any attempt, including religious, to effect one's own salvation or that of another. Separation implied that no moral or social support was to be given to any human effort to be saved, to escape the forces of evil and darkness. Such attempts, by definition, were perfect evidences of the spirit of godlessness in action. In short, separation from the world meant total abstinence from any human effort to effect moral or social regeneration.

Emphatically, however, this did not mean that this world was to be left alone to its own devices. Inherent evil must be confronted directly. The church, as a group of believers who understood that God had provided for them a means of escaping evil forces, had a mission. If nothing else, the gospel (the truth, from a premillennialist perspective) had to be preached. Believers were to effect this "preaching of the gospel" at all costs, "even if not one soul should believe."[28] This possible consequence provided no comfort at all for premillennialists. Yet since they believed that only God could effect a personal individual salvation, they understood that only he could use even their very best efforts to propagate this central item of faith. Only God could provide this faith for another. If a believer focused on his effecting the change, rather than relying on God's action, he clearly was reverting to his old nature and was participating in the spirit of this world.

---

[28] Ibid.

In summary, premillennialists explained that the mission of the church in an ever-worsening world was simply to "preach the gospel", and to accept only those persons into their fellowship who indicated clearly their separation from the spirit of this world. In other words, acceptance into the church was open only to those who spoke of a personal salvation which they understood to have been accomplished by God alone. In this perspective, the purpose of the church was to provide a refuge, a place for believers to find rest from their previously futile efforts to find salvation and to battle godlessness, and to practice holiness.[29]

Yet evidence contrary to alleged deterioration surrounded premillennialists in the forms of cultural excellence and increased interest in Christianity. An "apparent predominance of the Christian religion," especially in an ever-increasing civilized world contradicted notions that the world was deteriorating.[30] But saloons proliferated, men warred, evil flourished. As premillennialists faced such a confusing picture of the world, the issue for them was one of hope. True hope had to focus on the supernatural. The truth which needed emphasis was centered on Christ's return. The church's most devilish apostasy was that which denied literalness in the scriptures, which denied Christ's deity and the concreteness of his return.[31] The testimony of truth was

---

[29]A. T. Pierson, "The Signs of a Decay of Doctrine and Practice," The Truth 14 (July, 1888), p. 378.

[30]Cameron, "Is Christianity Advancing?" in Watchword and Truth 22 (May, 1900), p. 135.

[31]Ibid.

a "testimony for Christ."[32] No hope other than the blessed hope deserved the believer's attention. Robert Cameron, in an editorial entitled "Better or Worse," precisely stated his concern:

> Never mind whether the world is growing better or worse. That is not material. The good world is equally lost with the bad world. Our concern should be so to preach that many may believe and be saved. All other matters are of trifling importance.[33]

For premillennialists, the nature of the times precluded any hope which was centered on man's progress. Only God in Christ provided any measure of constancy in their rapidly changing world. The "blessed hope" served to legitimate their world view. The deteriorating world and an apostate church could be successfully challenged--redeemed or damned--only by an event which by its very cataclysmic nature would usher in a new world. For that they hoped and prayed.

For this reason, as Sandeen has suggested, premillennialists as a group have not tended to develop independent church organizations.[34] New church structures would not be any better than the old, since believers could not remove apostasy from any human organization. Premillennialists argued that the essence of God's true church could not be identified with any existing denominational structure. Only individual Christians made up the true church, the "bride of Christ." As a spiritual fellowship of individual believers, the church was to await Christ's

---

[32]"Testimony for Christ" was the subtitle to James H. Brookes, The Truth.

[33]Cameron, editorial "Better or Worse," Watchword and Truth 21 (Aug., 1899), p. 227.

[34]Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," Church History 36 (March, 1967), pp. 66-83.

return. Premillennialists, then, could legitimate no activity which focused on church growth. They could and did legitimate, however, the "preaching of the gospel." They practiced personal evangelism and they supported mass evangelism, but always they directed new believers to await the "blessed hope." Premillennialists worked within the denominations to promote their perspectives, but they assumed always that at Christ's advent "some would be taken, and others would be left." The world of deterioration which they described included many within the church. They believed that only those persons who knew the truth about and waited for the "blessed hope" would survive the world's devastation which Christ's return would signal.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GREAT COMMISSION IN AN UNCIVILIZED WORLD

> It is our sole business to make men the disciples of Christ. It is not our duty to educate them, or to emancipate them, or to civilize them, but to Christianize them. Culture, political liberty, industrial improvement, will follow; but none of the products of Christian civilization will come to stay until Christianity has taken root; and then they will come without foreign pressure.
>
> A.J.F. Behrends, 1888[1]

The Missionary Enterprise

Even as some evangelicals hoped and prayed for the "Second Coming," they and others understood that the church had a distinctive mission. A. J. Gordon's favorite phrase often was repeated, "the church that ceases to be a missionary church will soon be a missing church."[2] A. T. Pierson, as editor of The Missionary Review of the World, published articles which supported his view that the purpose of missions was evangelization, or the bringing of the gospel to the "unevangelized"

---

[1]"The Principle of Christian Missions," The Missionary Review of the World (hereafter referred to as The Missionary Review) 1 (n.s., March, 1888), p. 187; (condensed from a sermon first published in The Homiletic Review, given 1884).

[2]Robert Cameron, ed., The Watchword 19 (May, 1897), p. 114. With the subsequent double number, 7 and 8, this journal became Watchword and Truth.

world.[3] Yet that mission, in the form of "the enterprise of foreign missions," almost exclusively was carried out by English-speaking Christians. They were quite aware that they brought also their "Christian" social ideals with their evangelistic message. Thus, as natives in other countries were confronted with the gospel, they were confronted also with American (or English) versions of a Christian church, a Christian home, Christian schools, Christian society and civilization.[4] Pierson implicitly agreed with his journal's regular contributors, such as Edwin M. Bliss, who stated that "the object of sending foreign missionaries to any community is not merely the conversion of a certain number of individual souls, but the development of a Christian community, founded upon solid Christian character."[5] Yet Pierson himself, as a premillennialist, also explained that one did not measure missionary success by counting converts. He explained that the aim of missions, strictly speaking, was evangelistic confrontation with, and not conversion to the gospel.[6]

Conservatives believed that this goal of evangelization was more proper, but also it was more easily accomplished, than the goal of conversion. If Christians would only follow their individual commission

---

[3]Pierson, The Missionary Review, 2 (Feb., 1889), pp. 87-88.

[4]Ibid., p. 87.

[5]Edwin M. Bliss, "Criticism Upon Foreign Missions," The Missionary Review 2 (March, 1889), p. 187.

[6]Pierson, op. cit., 2 (Feb., 1889), p. 88.

to proclaim the gospel, "the whole world [could] be evangelized in the present generation."[7] As Pierson stated in his inaugural issue of The Missionary Review, this goal specifically was "to bring this gospel of life into contact with every living, human soul in the shortest possible time and the best possible way."[8] His "theory of evangelization," in short, was that "every hearer must become a herald" (italics his).[9] Success in evangelization, moreover, signaled church vitality. Christian believers were to measure this vitality by both the numbers of missionaries sent and amounts of funds expended in support of missions.[10] For all were to understand missions as "an enterprise of the church ... the business and the only business" of the church.[11] Missions promoters used this analogy to explain that the responsibility of that business was to evangelize, not to convert.[12] Thus the enterprise's success was to be measured by input, not by outcomes. Input into this enterprise built character; this required the "investment of ... intellectual, moral and spiritual capital."[13]

Moreover, this analogy was used to show that there were profits to be expected from this venture. But if one could not use the number

---

[7]Pierson, Editorial, The Missionary Review 2 (Jan., 1889), p. 13.

[8]Ibid., 1 (Jan., 1888), p. 35.

[9]Ibid., p. 37.

[10]Ibid., 2 (March, 1889), p. 233.

[11]Pierson, "The Supreme Questions of the Hour," The Missionary Review 1 (May, 1888), p. 321.

[12]Ibid., p. 322.

[13]Ibid., p. 323.

of converts as a measure of profit, what was available to be claimed? The response came in from all sides, namely, Christian influence. Evangelicals viewed the non-Christian world as plastic, ready for Christian molding.[14] For Christians to hold back from evangelizing was folly; failure to go immediately might well mean the loss of any further chance to "Christianize." Since the numbers of converts could not be used as measures of success (only God could verify the count, as in a sense they represented his profit), the influence of evangelical Protestant missions came to be measured by the extent and freedom of its means, not by its results. An area or country was Christianized to the extent that the missionary enterprise proliferated and exerted influence. This could be measured politically, as J. T. Gracey, later an associate editor of The Missionary Review, noted, by claiming the influence of "Christian princes, kings and presidents...."[15] Gracey believed that over half of the world's population had been "conquered by Christian arms, won by Christian commerce, or multiplied by the singular birth-rate which Christianity alone renders possible."[16] Furthermore, evangelicals saw Christian influence in lgeal codes, both national and international, i.e., the rule of law had been Christianized. In short, Protestant political rule had become the "best this world has seen."[17]

---

[14] Ibid.

[15] J. T. Gracey, "The Transfer of Political Power," The Missionary Review 2 (May, 1889), p. 375.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., pp. 375-376.

A direct consequence of this missions enterprise was projected to be the "humanization" of the uncivilized. But on this point the enterprise often found official government policies as barriers. The missionary enterprise encountered commercial policies which supported trading of alcoholic beverages in Africa and which encouraged opium trafficking between India and China. Governmental policy allowed also continued slave trading in Africa. These policies clearly prevented the humanizing of natives in those cultures, from the missionaries' view. Colonization always had implied (more or less) the spread of Christianity,[18] but the missionaries charged that officially supported opium, rum and slave traffic were barriers to the proliferation of Christian ideals. So declared a resolution of the Sixth Annual meeting of the International Missionary Union:

> Resolved, that the Christian governments, by their forcible protection and promotion of the opium traffic and of the traffic in alcoholic liquors, and by unjust and oppressive treaties with heathen nations, do thereby oppose the greatest obstacles to the success of Christian missions.[19]

However, the promoters within the missionary enterprise ultimately measured its success by the extent of the input of its "capital", viz., personnel and funds. If a professing Christian himself did not actively participate in the enterprise as a working missionary, then he was challenged to support the enterprise with his money. But missionary

---

[18] F. F. Ellinwood, "The New Era of Colonization and Its Bearing on Christian Philanthropy," The Missionary Review 2 (October, 1889), p. 738.

[19] The Missionary Review 2 (August, 1889), p. 696.

statesmen regularly lamented the fact that neither manpower nor money was abundant. Worldwide, in 1892, approximately seven thousand missionaries, about one-third of whom were American, received in support funds eleven million dollars annually.[20] But pleas for further input of men and money did not go entirely unheeded. The worldwide figures presented to the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions in New York City, 1900, showed over fifteen thousand missionaries (not quite one-third American) being supported by more than nineteen million dollars.[21]

Yet, in the view of A. J. Gordon, not all dollars were of the same value. In a series of articles in his journal, The Watchword, he asked specifically for "more consecrated money." Contributions for missions needed to be "passed through the mint of prayer, and faith, and self-denial for the Lord's sake."[22] Gordon inveighed particularly at "money earned at church fairs, or ecclesiastical raffles, or vestry junketings"--it was not consecrated.[23] Gifts from estates were acceptable, but not at all preferable to living gifts. Gordon argued that "the Christian's calling" was to be "a well doer rather than a well-willer."[24] In his estimate, the clear scriptural imperative was to give while living, and

---

[20]A. J. Gordon, "The Missionary Outlook for the New Century," The Watchword 14 (July, 1892), p. 170.

[21]The New York Times, Tuesday, April 24, 1900, pg. 7, cols. 3, 4. (Reporting on the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions.)

[22]Gordon, "Missionary Money--Quality and Quantity - Part I," The Watchword 13 (October, 1891), p. 754.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 255.

to give especially to missionary work. Besides, heirs to estates could "defraud the Lord of his dues."[25] In sum, post-mortem giving by proxy--being "a bequeather instead of a giver"--made death its administrator, and as such of little value, other than in the funds' intrinsic worth.[26]

But the most serious complaints about the ineffectiveness of the missionary enterprise centered on the paucity of funds available, compared with the opulence and wealth of the churches. Mission board secretaries computed that American church members gave no more than twenty-five cents per capita annually to Christian missions.[27] A. J. Gordon claimed that five times that amount was spent on "quartette choirs," used in worship services.[28] Whereas the members of American evangelical churches allegedly were worth thirteen billion dollars in 1892, less than four million dollars had been given by Americans to Christian missions.[29] Gordon lamented that missions was treated as a charity, not as the church's "principle business."[30] In contrast, he believed that at least half of a church's total budget should go to

---

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Gordon, "The Missionary Outlook ...," op. cit., p. 170. See also his "Missionary Money--Quality and Quantity - Part II," The Watchword 13 (November, 1891), p. 286.

[28] Gordon, "Missionary Money--Quality and Quantity - Part II," op. cit., p. 286.

[29] Gordon, "The Missionary Outlook ...," op. cit., p. 170.

[30] Gordon, Missionary Money ...," op. cit., p. 286.

missions. He did understand, however, that this goal might well have entailed reduction of ministers' "sumptuous salaries or palatial parsonages [to] humble and modest support" levels.[31]

In summary, the missionary enterprise was a natural outcome of evangelical perspectives. Nineteenth-century capitalistic thought had provided a ready model for Christian endeavor as a religious enterprise. Evangelicals described this in capitalistic terms of investment, growth and profits. Yet such an analogy did not completely describe the purpose of Christian missions.

The Purpose of Missions

At the 1900 Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions in New York City, voices were raised in protest. Missions were not to be seen only in terms of enterprise. Augustus H. Strong, President of Rochester Theological Seminary, asserted that the purpose of missions was "to proclaim the truth," that is Christ as "Truth".[32] The aim of the church was not to support missions, but "to make missionaries".[33] J. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, argued that the church paid "too much attention to method and machinery and resources; too little to the supreme service of power, the filling with the Holy Ghost."[34] In other words, the enterprise was fruitless without the

---

[31] Ibid., p. 287.

[32] "Authority and Purposes of Foreign Missions," The New York Times, Tuesday, April 24, 1900, p. 5, col. 3.

[33] Ibid.

[34] "The Source of Power," ibid.

appropriation of the power of God which came only with prayer and the preaching of the gospel.

But it was Robert E. Speer, Secretary of The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., who most clearly dealt with "The Supreme and Determining Aim." He said there must be no confusion of "the aim of missions with the methods of missions."[35] He "would rather plant one seed of the life of Christ beneath the crust of heathen life than cover the whole crust over with the 'social influences' of Western civilization."[36] Speer's audience was to understand that "the aim of foreign missions is to make Jesus Christ known to the world with a view to the salvation of men"; the aim was "not to establish republics ... or to induce heathens to wear our dress or change their social life."[37]

Other speakers at this conference supported A. T. Pierson's further assertion that "the work of missions is pre-eminently God's enterprise...."[38] Therefore, the conventioners were to understand that it was God who had prepared the world for missionary activity; he had cooperated with and supported it, and had placed his benediction upon it. In other words, it was not missionaries who effected the open reception which their enterprise had experienced, but God. The missionary

---

[35] Ibid., col. 4.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 7, col. 5.

enterprise was to be seen as infused with God's Spirit, such that "the spirit of missions [be] recognized as the Spirit of Christ."[39] This spirit would maintain the church's purity only insofar as missions were the priority, pushed "with intelligence and holy zeal."[40]

In the field, missionaries themselves sometimes complained that civilizing inhibited evangelizing. In the August, 1891 issue of The Missionary Review, G. P. Bostick, a missionary to China, stated that there was "danger of burying the Gospel beneath the accompanying civilizing agencies, so that God's power unto salvation will not be seen."[41] Such statements were supported by ministers at home who, like E. P. Marvin in Watchword and Truth, maintained that Christ "did not send out Apostles to do general housecleaning for the world";[42] in other words, evangelization was the aim, not civilization. And Robert Cameron, that journal's editor, stated in September, 1900, that all missionaries and mission societies should "make a clear and unmistakable distinction between Christ and Christendom, between Christianity and civilization, between the Church of God and the nations in the midst of which that church has its home."[43]

---

[39] Ibid., col. 6.

[40] Ibid.

[41] G. P. Bostick, The Missionary Review 4, p. 600.

[42] E. P. Marvin, Watchword and Truth 20 (December, 1898), pp. 371-372.

[43] Robert Cameron, Watchword and Truth 22, p. 230.

In short, evangelicals specified that a clear distinction needed to be made between the aim of missions and the appurtenances of the missionary enterprise. There was much discussion on this issue, and no more prominently so than in the missionary literature, and in missionary conventions.

Legitimating the Enterprise

To the uninitiated, non-religious citizen, missionary activity had obvious results. For example, Charles Denby (who made no religious claims for himself) wrote to The Missionary Review in 1886; as the American minister to China, he commended the missionaries for civilizing, educating and caring for the "helpless" Chinese. He saw missionaries as "the forerunners of Western methods and Western morality." They were "preparing the way for white-winged commerce and material progress" in China.[44] British envoys in India reported their understanding that the civilization of India was dependent upon that country's Christianization. In other words, India's development in the use of the English language and the appropriation of English industrial techniques would be enhanced by the Christianization which followed the missionary enterprise.[45]

These examples make it clear that both commercial and colonial interests supported the Christian missionary enterprise. The reality of the uncivilized world prompted evangelicals to send missionaries.

---

[44]Charles Denby, The Missionary Review 1 (February, 1888), p. 117.

[45]The Missionary Review 1 (June, 1888), p. 461.

The realities of civilization which they knew prompted them to do more than strictly evangelize. And their evangelistic activity was supported (or tolerated) by commercial and colonial interests insofar as civilization became a consequence of the total enterprise.

But as has been emphasized, conservative evangelical Protestants stated that the aim of missions was to evangelize--to bring the gospel of God, as they understood and preached it, to those who had never been exposed to it. Yet the enterprise of missions did involve the use of means and methods which had cultural significance. As the conservatives discussed which methods were appropriate they generated controversies within evangelicalism. In keeping with the theme of chapter two of this dissertation, these controversies can be explained as problems in legitimation.

Missionaries faced the realities of a hard existence with a most difficult task. If they were trained poorly in linguistics, they could scarcely preach effectively in native dialects. Missionaries encountered illiteracy, thus they could not give scripture portions to natives. In countries like India, natives normally treated missionaries as part of the colonial regime, which sometimes caused bitter resentment on both sides. Missionaries everywhere worked amidst people who were diseased and dying, and sometimes hungry or starving. Thus, in spite of any doctrine which proclaimed that the missionaries' aim was to evangelize, missionaries on the field encountered difficult and challenging social realities in native life. They felt compelled to meet these many social needs; and throughout their letters and articles they pled for

teachers, technicians and doctors. But because of their doctrinal training, conservative evangelicals faced problems of legitimating these other aspects of the enterprise. Their struggles to keep evangelization as their primary task generated many heated controversies, both in the field and at home.

The issue was clearly shown in an editorial in The New York Times, May 3, 1900, upon the conclusion of the Ecumenical Missionary Conference. That secular paper's editor said that "the first step in evangelization must be, not the preaching of the gospel to those who are unprepared to receive it, but some practical demonstration that the secular civilization of the Christian nations is higher than that of the heathen nations." Specifically, "the secular advantages of Christianity should be exhibited and enforced as a prelude to the inculcation of its dogmatic teachings."[46] This, to be sure, was not the evangelical perspective of an emerging fundamentalist position! Yet conservative egangelicals invariably did support some on-the-field form of the missionary enterprise which included publication, educational and medical services at the very least, in addition to evangelization.

The most widespread controversy centered on the relative values of evangelistic vs. educational work. Ultimately, the two were well nigh inseparable in the enterprise, unless a mission agency was content to send in preachers, only to withdraw them shortly. But preaching was less than effective unless done in the native dialect, using scriptures

---

[46]The New York Times, May 3, 1900, p. 8, col. 2-3.

which had been translated into the local language. Thus Bible translation and publication were closely associated with the missionary enterprise. And the training of native teachers and preachers (which might well have involved literacy training) closely followed as an educational function of evangelization. On these points there was little controversy. But, as George E. Horr, editor of The Watchman noted, at most mission stations "soon an attempt was made to bring the children of the new Christian families under the influence of the Christian training school, and then, as far as possible, to reach the heathen children by the same agency."[47]

The resultant controversy over this wider use of schools for general education within a culture had widespread implications. In India, for example, after early failures at evangelizing the high castes only the lower castes were being evangelized. But once they were educated members of low status had no use for their learning within their society, unless they were employed by the mission agencies. Then, as Horr argued, if they were unfit for mission work, they would become "quasi-dependents" of the agencies.[48] But his conclusion pointed up the real difficulty. For as long as Christianity did not pervade the larger social system of India, "it would be a great mistake to attempt by any external means whatever to put our Indian converts upon the

---

[47]George E. Horr, "Certain Missionary Problems," The Watchman 79, 32 (August 11, 1898), p. 8.

[48]Ibid.

American level of life and civilization."[49] As Horr observed, the only potential solution was industrial training, which he saw as now "receiving the closest attention of our missionary statesmen."[50]

Other implications of the controversy over an extensive educational enterprise focused on its effectiveness in terms of actual numbers of converts attributable to education rather than to evangelization. Related to this were problems of misuse of education by natives who quickly learned social manipulation of their peers. In India, newly educated non-Christian (from both mission and government schools) persons were quickly assimilated into mission schools as teachers of non-religious subjects. Many American supporters of the missionary enterprise questioned this use of Hindu teachers in Christian schools. But as co-editor J. M. Sherwood maintained in The Missionary Review, "Hindu teachers in part [were] inevitable," if the mission schools were to remain open.[51]

It is certain that for some evangelicals, mission education could be justified only if it was "strictly evangelistic in its aim and methods."[52] Conversion of every pupil was to be the goal. But "social and religious conditions" were such that there were "few conversions"

---

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] J. M. Sherwood, "Missionary Problems in India," The Missionary Review 1 (January, 1888), p. 19.

[52] James Johnson, "Education as an Evangelistic Agency," The Missionary Review 3 (January 1890), p. 11.

in the mission schools of India. For example, on his mission tour in 1890, A. T. Pierson reported news of "evangelistic missions ... winning thousands where educational missions reach tens."[53] As a consequence, he re-emphasized that "education must be subordinate to evangelization," and it was "Christian, not secular, education to which the church is called" (italics his).[54]

However serious the discussion of such problems of methods in the field work of missions, the larger purpose of the continued discussion (which hopefully brought lively missionary issues home) was to generate an ever-increasing flow of men and dollars toward the enterprise. To use Peter Berger's terminology, the world of missionary enterprise was in construction. In legitimating this newly-building world, the problem for evangelicals was both to define the role of the missionary and to enlarge the social basis of support for that role. But more clearly for the emerging evangelical fundamentalist, the problem was to narrow the role definition of the missionary, and to insist upon a support base which accepted only the strictly evangelical aims of missions. They argued that legitimate growth of the enterprise could be gained neither by broadening the role definition nor by allowing any control (of the enterprise) by non-conservative evangelical interests.

However, the consequent explanations, which the conservatives used to legitimate their involvement in the enterprise, did emphasize

---

[53] A. T. Pierson, The Missionary Review 3 (August, 1890), p. 571.

[54] Ibid., p. 573.

1) the nature of a heathen, uncivilized world, 2) the ability of Christians to evangelize--to break down "heathendom", and 3) the Christian mandate to do so. Together, emphasis of these three points was calculated to generate a successful missionary enterprise--measured by the extent of its proliferation.

Conservative evangelical descriptions of a mission field included evaluations of the moral character of its inhabitants. For example, John R. Hykes, missionary to China, in quoting another missionary, described the Chinese as "vile and polluted in a shocking degree, ... a full, unchecked torment of human depravity, and ... with a kind and degree of moral degradation, of which an excessive statement can scarcely be made, or an adequate conception hardly be formed."[55] D. L. Leonard, an associate editor of The Missionary Review, described the West Indies as "a world of tragedy, of depravity, and of shame!"[56] William Benton Greene, another contributing editor, claimed that little "good can be said ... of the social, moral, and religious condition" of Africa's "millions".[57] He described the southern half of Africa as "utterly destitute of any civilization worthy of the name," where moral and religious "degradation is well-nigh universal."[58] In short, the missionary enterprise was not justified by conservatives without

---

[55]John R. Hykes, "The Importance of Winning China to Christ," The Missionary Review 5 (February, 1892), p. 83.

[56]D. L. Leonard, The Missionary Review 5 (March, 1892), p. 231.

[57]William Benton Greene, The Missionary Review 5 (June, 1892), p. 467.

[58]Ibid.

documenting extreme moral depravity as the key to the nature of the "uncivilized" world.

Yet these evangelicals believed that in spite of its widespread moral depravity that the world was "open to evangelization." Missionary literature and conventions regularly described the exploits of those who penetrated these "bastions of evil." Both brief and full-fledged biographies of missionaries were published, and vignettes of ordinary missionary life became the staple of local missionary meetings. The evidence of successful evangelization was in the changed conduct of the converts. For example, Archibald Turnbull, missionary to India, reported that Sir Richard Temple, former governor of Bombay had said that Indian converts were "well-behaved, law-abiding, free from crime, temperate, harmless."[59] This was attributed to the "enormous effect, morally and spiritually, produced by Christianity on their minds and hearts."[60] Furthermore, even the tragedy of missionary lives lost through disease or murder was set in martyrdom terms, with the firm belief often expressed that such events would effectively promote the further proliferation of the enterprise. This attitude was well exemplified by a comment from F. Edwards of Britain as he described "a century of missions" for the readers of The Missionary Review.[61] He noted that the establishing of the Congo Mission had cost several lives.

---

[59]Archibald Turnbull, The Missionary Review 5 (May, 1892), p. 351.

[60]Ibid., p. 352.

[61]F. Edwards, The Missionary Review 6 (January, 1893), pp. 17-26.

Then he suggested that "the silent graves, as well as the still living voices, alike are eloquent in telling what the love of Christ can inspire man to attempt and do."[62] But many missionaries believed that the principle effect of such events, which some saw as a waste, was to promote growth and "...accumulating evidence that if the ratio of increase be but maintained, we are within measurable distance of the end."[63] For conservative evangelicals, then, growth of the missionary enterprise was all but assured when missionaries were dying for their faith.

The conservatives asserted that the ability of Christians to penetrate and to evangelize the uncivilized world was unstoppable. Yet the ability of evangelicals to challenge as successfully social and religious unrest at home was seldom as clearly maintained. Growth of an evangelical Christianity was much more easily seen and documented within the missionary enterprise than within local communities. And if the growth of the missionary enterprise was successful where maintenance of old evangelical standards at home was not, then one would expect that emerging fundamentalists would be very supportive of evangelical missions. They expected that "basic Christianity" would at least confront the entire non-civilized world, even if it could not conquer apostasy at home.

Promoters of the missionary enterprise seemed to ignore this apparent anomaly. Premillennialists, for instance, asserted both the

---

[62] Ibid., p. 24.

[63] Ibid.

deterioration in morality at home and the positive effects of Christian proclamation on "heathen" cultures. They and other evangelicals continued to promote the enterprise even on the North American continent, where they could document native depravity among the Indians, for instance. In effect, however, many conservative evangelicals treated all unbelievers alike. They characterized American unbelievers as having heathen hearts. By emphasizing and legitimating personal evangelism, they could suggest that anyone, anywhere (including at home) needed God's redemptive work. Furthermore, they urged believers to evangelize every person that each one met, on the assumption that very few "true" believers existed. Conservatives thus supported foreign missions partly because they could say that a region of no belief in Christianity would prove to be a more fertile place to reach some souls than among already evangelized western areas.

But the legitimation process focused most directly on the Christian mandate to evangelize the world. If Africa was "wide open now to the gospel";[64] if "the time is at hand for a great blessing in India";[65] if "China is about breaking its old bonds";[66] and if "from all fields comes the word that the doors are open everywhere";[67] then all that was needed were men and women to accomplish the mandate. And A. T. Pierson, the most renowned of all missionary statesmen, argued

---

[64] Editorial, The Missionary Review 5 (January, 1892), p. 69.

[65] Ibid., p. 68.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., p. 67.

that the mandate was for "now". His plea was "that the children of God in our generation would at least honestly undertake to see that the gospel is borne to 'every creature' in 'all nations' before the generation passes to the great account that fixes eternal destiny!"[68] Henry Robins of Rochester, New York, emphasized that the mandate was given to the American churches because "the vast resources of our material civilizations are ... facilities granted to the church with the express design to enable her, as trustee ..., to make known God's love toward those, the world over, for whom Christ died."[69] He maintained, as did other evangelicals, that the missionary "motive" was "the command of Christ to disciple the nations."[70]

Conservative evangelicals clearly understood the mandate, but also struggled with the realities of its lack of fulfillment. The ultimate "obstacle to the immediate evangelization of the whole world," beyond even the barriers of government policy and unfriendly natives, was said to be "the worldliness of the church."[71] Conservatives wondered whether Christians who professed to be following the mandate were "devoting nearly all their time, labor, and money to the pleasures and vanities

---

[68]Pierson, "What is the Next Step?" The Missionary Review 5 (February, 1892), p. 142.

[69]Henry Robins, "Motives to Missions Among the Heathen," The Missionary Review 5 (April, 1892), p. 758.

[70]Ibid., p. 261.

[71]By "W.C.C.," "The Incubus of the Kingdom," The Missionary Review. 5 (April, 1892), p. 780.

of this world 'as the heathen do.'"[72] But, as Joseph Angus of London said, what was needed was a "willing mind," the obstacle was really lack "of prayer, and faith and zeal."[73] Missionary supporters did not see this lack of fulfillment of the mandate, however, as an insurmountable barrier. From all sides was reiterated a common theme (here quoting from Angus) that "the Christian church ... has wealth enough and men enough to preach [the gospel], in the next fifteen or twenty years, to every creature."[74]

In nearing a conclusion to this discussion of legitimation, John R. Hykes is again quoted. His "reasons for hopefulness" for Christian missions in China included

> Success.... Success in missions cannot be computed by arithmetic. You cannot count heads and say this represents the result of missionary enterprise. There is an unknown quantity to be taken into consideration. You cannot measure in a table of statistics the breaking down of prejudice, the renouncing of opposition, the dissemination of Christian truth.... Truth, eternal, irresistible, unconquerable truth, is moving forward with increasing momentum in these latter days of the nineteenth century. The Lord ... will make short work in these last days.... The great need of China is ... united, earnest, agonizing prayer for a copious outpouring of God's spirit.[75]

For Hykes and others involved in the missionary enterprise, the "uncivilized", the "heathen", would face a force so powerful that it was virtually irresistible.

---

[72] Ibid.

[73] Joseph Angus, "Apostolic Missions; or, The Gospel for Every Creature," The Missionary Review 5 (July, 1892), p. 489.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Hykes, op. cit., pp. 90-91 (cf. footnote 55).

That force had "direct evangelization" as its "chief concern," as Robert E. Speer had emphatically maintained.[76] Yet he also explained that "no other movement has accomplished anything like the proportionate results attained by missions in pacifying and civilizing the lower races."[77] In 1900, Speer had challenged the New York Ecumenical Missionary Conference with the "supreme aim" of missions as evangelization. Yet in 1902 he specified clearly "the achievements of mission work in these subordinate and secondary spheres" of civilizing influences, which had molded "social life, in affecting institutions, in establishing trade, in creating and fostering industries, in making producers and consumer, and so developing commerce."[78]

In conclusion, the enterprise of foreign missions was supported by various legitimations. For emerging evangelical Protestant fundamentalists, the preaching of the simple gospel was the enterprise's chief purpose. Yet in generating support for this enterprise, they regularly emphasized the uncivilized nature of non-Christian worlds. They could not legitimately count converts as their primary measure of success, but they could describe the positive social influence of those who Christianized. And Christianization meant civilization. As Speer showed, the "power and value of foreign missions" included also the

---

[76]Robert E. Speer, "Foreign Missions as the World's Civilizer," The S. S. Times 44 (October 18, 1902), p. 544.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid., p. 545.

fact that

> They have promoted temperance, opposed the liquor and opium traffics, which are fatal to wise commerce, checked gambling, established higher standards of personal purity, cultivated industry and integrity, elevated women, restrained anti-social customs,--such as polygamy, concubinage, adultery, and child-marriage, and infantcide,--fostered the suppression of the slave trade and coolie labor traffic, abolished cannibalism and human sacrifice and cruelty, organized famine relief, improved husbandry and agriculture, introduced Western medicines and medical science, founded leper asylums and colonies, promoted cleanliness and sanitation, and checked war.[79]

In short, the legitimators of conservative worlds in evangelical Christianity promoted their ability to Christianize, and thereby civilize, the heretofore uncivilized portions of their world. And as Speer noted, evangelical missionaries helped to explore them, they helped to promote trade with them and they helped to conciliate diplomatic problems. The fact that some persons became Christians in the process served as the evidence that their enterprise was divinely ordained, since its chief aim in the first place was evangelization. If there was also an increase in the numbers of professing Christians, God could count that as his profit.

---

[79] Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION IN THE ANGLO-SAXON WORLD

> Divine Providence does not guarantee the faithfulness nor ensure the safety of any nation, no matter how honored and famed. Though this civilization be of God, yet it must be kept and defended by man.
>
> Bishop Samuel Harris, 1887[1]

The Christian Religion: A "Most Potent Civilizer"

To whatever extent the missionary enterprise produced numbers of persons who claimed a commitment to a Christian faith, it was evident that most conservative evangelicals knew that their religion was also a powerful promoter of civilization. Arthur H. Smith, missionary to China, suggested that "the potency of Christianity" as a civilizer was "based upon a conception of it as a moral power."[2] Another missionary claimed that "the savage of to-day" saw civilization "as a great unknown power, irresistible, crushing," that is, a "moral force" previously

---

[1]Bishop Samuel Harris, "Necessity of Cooperation in Christian Work," National Perils and Opportunities (1887), p. 306.

[2]Arthur H. Smith, "What Can Christianity Do For China?" The Missionary Review 13 (February 1900), p. 128 ("condensed from the Chinese Recorder").

unencountered.[3] And that conception of power also included the notion, as Robert E. Speer put it, that "the Christian religion" held "all ideals needed by all men." It was "complete".[4] In other words, its force had universal appeal in that no other religion could "supply it with anything it lacks."[5] This conception complemented the belief, articulated by Speer, that "Christians have the one true religion."[6]

Conservative American evangelicals assumed that their "true religion" bore within it the seeds of civilization. For example, in a lengthy article in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review on the relationship between dogmatic theology and civilization, William Alexander stated that it was "the very nature of the truths in Christian dogmatics to exert a civilizing, refining and enlightening effect on the mind and manners of man."[7] And furthermore, "the highest form of civilization is unattainable by those who are without the Christian revelation."[8] But Christianity's truth was seen, not only as promoting civilization, but also as leading and directing it. As A. T. Pierson editorialized,

---

[3](Author Unknown), "Civilization -vs- Barbarism," The Missionary Review 13 (March, 1900), p. 216 ("condensed from Life and Work, Blentyre, British Central Africa").

[4]Robert E. Speer, "Christianity and Other Religions," The Missionary Review 15 (July, 1902), p. 510.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 512.

[7]William Alexander, "Dogmatic Theology and Civilization," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 8 (January, 1897), p. 40.

[8]Ibid.

"Those who do homage to the Christ today are among the wisest and mightiest of the world."[9]

George E. Horr, editor of The Watchman, reiterated this most characteristic understanding of the relationship between Christianity and civilization: "our civilization rests upon Christian ideas."[10] In support of this notion he quoted Captain Mahan's comment that "'the civilization of modern Europe grew up under the shadow of the cross'".[11] In other words, the "essence and spirit of Western civilization" was Christianity.[12] H. Clay Trumbull, the editor of The Sunday School Times, perceived this in unambiguous terms. He said that "a history of the United States or of England which did not treat of the shaping power of Christianity upon the social and national life would be next to worthless."[13] In addition, he asserted that the "gospel of Jesus ... employs the only adequate power for true culture."[14] Trumbull maintained the converse, also. He claimed that a culture without Christianity was inadequate, in an editorial entitled "Civilization not Safe Without Christianity."[15] Such was "a poor reliance, either for

---

[9]Pierson, "The Redemption of the City," The Missionary Review 17 (January, 1904), p. 11.

[10]George E. Horr, "The Larger Issues," The Watchman 79 (September 29, 1898), p. 7.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]H. Clay Trumbull, Christianity and Culture," The S. S. Times 37 (October 19, 1895), p. 658.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Trumbull, The S.S. Times 43 (January 12, 1901), p. 21.

the people who civilize or for the people who are civilized."[16] His concluding question clearly showed his position: "yet what would civilization be worth without the preserving power of Christianity?"[17] Trumbull had answered that question earlier, in 1895, when he had asserted that "any culture less broad than Christian principles is only fragmentary."[18]

Yet the reality that faced evangelicals also was quite clear in its contradiction. Critics of their perspective (on the superiority of "Christian civilization") regularly noted the "evils in Christian lands." Could they be any different than any other evil? Robert E. Speer recognized the truth of the charges, but said that they were "beside the mark."[19] He explained "that the evils of Christian lands exist in spite of their religion and under its ban, while the evils of non-Christian lands are the products of and sanctioned by their religions."[20] Furthermore, their "best virtues" were "the natural virtues which have escaped the evil influences of religion, while with us our best virtues are the direct product of Christianity."[21] Evil, then, that existed under the influence of Christian civilization was primarily the product

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Trumbull, "Christianity and Culture," op. cit.

[19] Speer, "Christianity and Other Religions," op. cit., p. 505.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 506.

of non-Christians. To this point A. T. Pierson spoke directly in his Missionary Review, that it was "by no means just to lay the sins of American and European merchants and soldiers at the door of Christianity--these men being too often in reality infidels and libertines."[22]

Conservative evangelical Protestants could not relinquish the old nineteenth-century broader evangelical notions that the Christian religion promoted civilization. If they perceived American life as deteriorating, then they could conclude only that it also was less Christian. But they argued also the converse. They feared continued immigration, especially from eastern and southern Europe, because they thought Roman and Eastern Catholics to be pagan. Immigration diluted evangelical Protestant numbers and influence; therefore they claimed that American life could only deteriorate in quality. At this point in history, the vast numbers of immigrants seemed to overwhelm conservative Protestants. They became less intent on providing social services to the newcomers and seldom did they attempt to evangelize them. Few conservatives knew the Slavic, Greek or Italian languages. Small city missions made almost no impact in sprawling ghettos. Much of what has been described as a major shift in evangelical social concern can be attributed to conservative fears of and inability to cope with the massive immigration of this period. And yet conservatives continued to promote aggressively their views of Christianity, even if they virtually ignored the immigrant problem.

---

[22]Pierson, "Christianity and Other Religions," The Missionary Review 14 (February, 1901), p. 139.

... Promoter of Individualism

To live as a citizen in a "Christian nation" did not guarantee that one was a Christian. As Pierson was careful to note, "Only those who are regenerated can be taken as true examples of Christians."[23] Conservatives said that Christians, by definition, were persons who were divinely regenerated. And as Robert E. Speer specified, it was "the idea of personality, human and divine, which lies at the root of our religion," and which made it distinctive.[24] The Bible "lifted the mind and transformed the life."[25] In other words, "Christianity ... has the power to self-renovation."[26] It offers men "the secret of life ... that will enable them to realize their true selves, and become men in the true and full sense of the word."[27]

Christian conversion has always been understood as personal. But a converted Christian's behavior, activity and response to the world has been variously understood. As some liberal evangelicals followed contemporary tendencies to promote organizational responses to social crisis--churchly and social Christianity--conservatives maintained and reinforced conceptions which emphasized individualism--personal Christianity. Conservative evangelicals saw this distinction as

---

[23] Ibid.

[24] Speer, op. cit., p. 502.

[25] Ibid., p. 507.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., p. 512.

"Churchianity versus Christianity," as did Hayes C. French in Watchword and Truth.[28] He stated that Christ "almost always dealt with individual want."[29] But more importantly, no "organized spirituality" was to be seen as "in any way independent of or superior to the individual."[30] The point was clear. Christians not only were to individualize their faith, but were to respond individually to social crisis. To this point French charged that "the church has drifted largely into legal death" by "substituting moral, physical and civic reforms for regeneration."[31]

Conservative evangelicals, in addition, saw regeneration as the focus of the Christian impulse to civilization. William Alexander's answer as to why Christianity was to be seen as the most potent civilizing force was "because it had changed the interior condition of man, his opinions, his sentiments; because it has regenerated his moral and intellectual character."[32] The Christian religion dealt "directly ... with the individual, ... producing a radical change in the whole man."[33] If such a man studied Christian theology, he would experience

> a high degree of intellectual development, refinement of taste, clearness of perception, tenderness of conscience, charitableness of judgment, breadth and largeness of view, nobleness of disposition, spiritual wisdom to detect sin in

---

[28]Hayes C. French, Watchword and Truth 20 (July, 1898), pp. 209-210.

[29]Ibid., p. 209.

[30]Ibid., p. 210.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Alexander, op. cit., p. 38.

[33]Ibid., p. 39.

> its obscurest germ, to perceive the tendency of opinions, to feel the responsibility of actions in their remoter effects and to discharge our Christian duty in the entire conduct of life.[34]

That, of course, produced "the highest style of manhood attainable" and "the highest civilization of the world" where it was taught.[35] A further statement to the same effect came from T. Edward Brown in The Watchman. He suggested that "personal character is at the root of everything" after stating that "Christianization of a nation means the Christianization of its personal units."[36] This required an understanding of "Christ's work in personal hearts," which involved "personal repentance, personal regeneration, ... personal faith ... and personal Christian character...."[37]

Intellectual expertise became an important consequence, within "the Anglo-Saxon culture," of individual Christianization, according to conservative academicians. They argued that not only did a systematic study of Christian theology produce a better "theological science," but it tended "to promote civilization indirectly."[38] William Alexander believed that theological studies influenced "all other civilizing agencies," and especially "schools, colleges and universities."[39]

---

[34] Ibid., p. 41.

[35] Ibid.

[36] T. Edward Brown, "A Christian Nation for the World's Needs," The Watchman 79 (July 21, 1899), p. 12.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Alexander, op. cit., p. 39.

[39] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

Literature had been immeasurably improved. And H. Clay Trumbull asserted that "the revival of learning in the fifteenth century was not only a precursor, but a part, of the Reformation."[40] He said that "wherever Christianity has gone, it has given rise to an ennobling literature."[41] In short, Christianity had transformed individual minds into forceful civilizing agents.

But from conservative religious views, probably the most worthwhile national consequence of individual conversion to Christianity was the making of a good citizen, a "true patriot." For example, Arthur H. Smith (quoted at the beginning of this chapter) understood that citizens were not expected to be patriotic unless they were also Christian. He maintained that Christianity and patriotism advanced "hand in hand."[42] If this nation needed anything in an age of social crisis, it was better men. For Samuel W. Dike, both "political reform" and "municipal improvement" needed better citizens.[43] The church could teach better citizenship only if it encouraged it in its own policy.

Good citizenship had very strong theological legitimation. As J. A. Rawson explained in Watchword and Truth, "rulers are sent by God.... The world-powers that exist are set up by God."[44] He argued

---

[40]Trumbull, op. cit., p. 658.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Arthur H. Smith, op. cit., p. 128.

[43]Samuel W. Dike, "The Churches and Good Citizenship," The Watchman 79 (February 3, 1898), p. 10.

[44]J. A. Rawson, "The Powers That Be," Watchword and Truth 23 (August, 1901), p. 242.

that obedience, as individuals, to the laws which they promulgate, was to be understood as "doing the will of God." To follow civil law was to follow rightly one's conscience.[45] Another contributor, as he explained his willingness to be drafted into military service, based his reasoning on his conception that "Civil Society is an ordinance of God."[46] This did not imply, as the editor had affirmed some time earlier, that Christians were authorized by God to "take control of the world at 'the ballot box.'"[47] Individualism in practice for the Christian citizen was being "content to serve and not to reign."[48]

The promotion of individualism, however, bore its greatest fruit for organized Christianity as evangelicals encouraged well-to-do persons to give of their wealth to Christian causes, privately and individually. The history of nineteenth-century moral reform had been a history of individualistic Christian benevolence. A. J. Gordon emphasized giving, both as a pastor and as editor of The Watchword. He encouraged his readers to "seek occasions for giving. Dig channels for your beneficence; make occasions for your benevolence."[49] This charge

---

[45] Ibid.

[46] Henry G. Weston, "The Christian and Politics," Watchword and Truth 24 (July, 1902), p. 208.

[47] Robert Sameron, "Too Soon," Watchword and Truth 20 (August, 1898), p. 226.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Gordon, editorial, The Watchword 13 (February, 1891), p. 29.

was especially for them "that will be rich." During the depression of 1893, H. Clay Trumbull laid the financial crisis to the unwillingness of wealthy persons to share. For him, God was "testing and trying ... every individual" for "present virtue."[50] Not only was the "virtue of courage" lacking, but more importantly, the "cruelty" of "every man for himself" ran contrary to the basic Christian principle of self-sacrifice.[51] True individual Christianity, even in times of financial panic, meant being "rich in good works, ... ready to distribute."[52] One could stand no higher in the eyes of his fellow men than when he liberally gave of his wealth, meagre or immense, for causes which magnified Christian civilization. Trumbull well summarized this concept when he said that "God's law for the development of our total manhood is the law of sacrifice."[53] And for T. Edwin Brown, a Christian nation would come only through individual conversion to Christianity:

> Every soul we win to Christian life and build in Christian character ... is but an added cell in that living stream of vital sap that is sending justice as the organic fibre and charity as the sweet juice from lowest root to topmost branch of our civic being.[54]

---

[50]Trumbull, "Lessons and Duties of the Hour," The S. S. Times 35 (August 26, 1893), p. 530.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Trumbull, "Christianity and Culture," op. cit., p. 657.

[54]T. Edwin Brown, "A Christian Nation ...," op. cit., p. 12.

... Protector of Morality

If individual Christians were obligated to live morally (and beneficiently), that was not enough. No civilization could remain which did not protect its morality. So suggested H. Clay Trumbull in a commentary on the demise of the Greek culture: "As the moral element died ..., the grossest forms of vice more and more prevailed."[55] The evangelical perspective was simple--the nation would not survive if moral principles were not upheld. The "Governor of Wyoming" was quoted in The Sunday School Times as emphasizing that "'unless moral development keeps pace with our material progress this nation will flounder and ultimately fail.'"[56] And C. G. Trumbull, successor to his father as editor, further commented that such "public men see that the question of the perpetuity of this nation is a moral question, and further they see that the full force of morality must be rooted in the Christian religion."[57]

A nation that sought to so protect morality must teach morality. And conservative evangelicals promoted the ubiquitous Sunday-school as the primary institution for this purpose. Even though the chief aim of Sunday-school was to teach the Scriptures, evangelicals understood also that "the Sunday-school 'is the most important factor in our nation in

---

[55]Trumbull, op. cit., p. 658.

[56]Governor of Wyoming. editorial, "Our Public Men and the Sunday-School," The S. S. Times 52 (May 7, 1910), p. 232.

[57]C. G. Trumbull, The S. S. Times

promoting morality and strength of character.'"[58] A "Mr. Brantley of Georgia" was said to believe "that the Sunday-school is the greatest factor in planting that seed of Christian civilization which is necessary to the maintenance of our government."[59] Promoters of the Sunday-school movement claimed that it was "the greatest healthful, social power in the world"; so said Marion Lawrence, the general secretary of the International Sunday School Association.[60] He saw the Sunday-school as a leadership training organization, a "civil force". It taught "obedience to all proper authority, and love of country." He claimed that it was "the best good citizenship agency in the world."[61]

But it was in the defense of public morality that some conservative evangelicals may have developed the combative attitude which later came to characterize fundamentalists. Some of them supported the temperance/prohibition movement, which came to generate such combative attitudes. But the drinking issue was not a distinctly Christian American problem in the same way that the "American Sabbath" problem was. To be sure, evangelicals pushed the Anti-Saloon League as "Christian citizenship taking a hand in practical politics."[62] And they declared

---

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Marion Lawrence, "The Sunday-School a Golden Gate," The S. S. Times 53 (January 7, 1911), p. 4.

[61] Ibid.

[62] C. G. Trumbull, "A State's Fight for a Fighting Chance," The S. S. Times 50 (March 14, 1908), p. 129.

that the liquor problem undermined individual and national morality, as well as threatened Christianity. But the "American Sabbath" had more direct religious association, and more clearly presented a test of whether a distinctly Christian institution would be upheld as a standard of public morality. Conservatives believed that if the Christian religion was to be a protector of morality for the nation, it must successfully defend the "American Sabbath".

This perspective was most clearly and regularly presented in The Sunday School Times, particularly as its editors commented on the World Expositions of 1893 in Chicago and of 1904 in St. Louis. In spite of contrary pressure for and trial attempts at Sunday opening, both fairs closed their gates on Sundays. In 1893, evangelicals perceived this as "the greatest triumph" of the Exposition, in the face of "the danger of the overturn of the American Sabbath."[63] The issue had been "a question of unspeakable importance to the moral and material interests of the entire community."[64] It was immoral to subject the laborer to "the greed of the capitalist" by denying "his privilege of immunity from labor on that day."[65] And had the Columbian Exposition in Chicago successfully kept its doors open on Sunday, that success "would have been a curse to America."[66]

---

[63]Editorial, "Triumph of the American Sabbath," The S. S. Times 35 (July 29, 1893), p. 465.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid.

In the 1904 St. Louis fair, the "battle for the Sabbath in the United States" was not lost.[67] C. G. Trumbull's position was emphatic:

> To hold this high vantage ground for the nation is possible only at the price of ceaseless vigilance by those who can and will recognize the root principle of the Christian Sabbath, and its vital place in a nation's life.[68]

The issue was one of protecting morality, especially in the face of "wide open" Sabbath violations in the rest of St. Louis. The nation had taken the right stand, Trumbull explained. He understood that "at St. Louis today the world sees the effective protest of a Christian nation against the immoral practices of one of its children."[69] And furthermore "the Christian citizens of St. Louis should ... campaign to raise the low standards of the city to the high standards of the nation."[70] Other examples used by Trumbull emphasized the European practice of Sabbath "desecration" in contrast with the Anglo-Saxon protection. He suggested that "there are some who are just old-fashioned enough to believe that the difference in the national fiber of sturdy Britain and effete France is connected with the way in which the two nations spend their Sundays."[71] This point only serves to show, in summary, that conservative evangelical supporters of "the Christian

---

[67] Editorial, "Is the American Sabbath Worth Preserving?" The S. S. Times 46 (July 30, 1904), p. 417.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., p. 418.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

religion" saw their role, in part, as militant protectors of morality, "because it is the religion of the majority and the religion upon which our morality is based."[72]

... Builder of a Nation

Those Christians expected that morality to be a national stance. And Christian institutions, in protecting and teaching morality, were to have national influence and importance. For example, Marion Lawrence, in his evaluation of the place of the Sunday-school in national life, stated that "it is safe to declare that the Sunday-school is the world's chiefest nation builder."[73] The Sunday-school was to be a teacher of patriotism, a promoter of national allegiance. To this point Robert E. Speer said that Christianity, in any institutional form, taught "submission and activity, present duty and future destiny, loyalty to man only as grounded in loyalty to God and truth."[74]

Conservative evangelicals saw the founding and perpetration of the United States as acts of God's providence. They believed that the "Christian religion" built the nation--the nation was a product of Christianity. A. T. Pierson maintained that "the United States can never shake off its Christian antecedents; which without utter upheaval

---

[72]David G. Wylee, "Three Views of the Public School Question," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 1 (July, 1890), p. 473.

[73]Lawrence, op. cit., p. 4.

[74]Speer, "Christianity and Other Religions," op. cit., p. 502.

will determine its consequents as Christian."[75] Conservatives believed that to ignore this factor would be to disown the entire history of national development. To this concern Robert Ellis Thompson published in 1901 a series of articles in The Sunday School Times under the general title "The Hand of God in American History." He said that "The great [American] experiment ... is no matter of indifference to [God]."[76] And later he explained that it required "no stretch of inference to regard the Constitution as the result of God's wise discipline of the country through the troubles which preceded its adoption, and to refer to a divine wisdom those great originalities which have made it a model for more than a score of later governments."[77] In other words, to ignore God's providence in America's existence was to deny the truth of history.

Yet the builders of a Christian nation also faced the fact of the prevalence of non-Christian activity and influence. Conservative evangelicals wanted to claim their nation as Christian, but were forced to declare that in much of its life it was not. But they, save for some premillennialists, believed that it could be. Much of their discussion of America as a Christian nation focused on that potential, rather than on any established fact. The building of such a nation, then, required a national will. For T. Edwin Brown, this meant a will of "enough Christian citizens overwhelmingly to outnumber, out-talk, out-work,

---

[75] Editorial, "Is America Christian or Non-Christian?" The Missionary Review 21 (January, 1901), p. 58.

[76] Robert Ellis Thompson, "God's Hand in American Invention," The S. S. Times 43 (March 16, 1901), p. 162.

[77] Thompson, "Building Better Than They Knew," The S. S. Times 45 (August 31, 1901), p. 554.

out-vote, and in every way out-influence the small minority who ... prefer to remain non-Christians."[78]

But even the premillennialist indicated an interest in this theme. Robert Cameron explained that failure to exert a Christian influence, especially in the face of prevalent greed and injustice, would lead to "the day of doom" that was "sure to come".[79] America and England could "scarcely be called Christian" because they promoted rum and opium trafficking.[80] These were "national sins" which "have led to the destruction of many nations in the past" (italics his).[81] Cameron's anger was never more clearly shown than when he explained that Satan himself had "'wheedled' good men to place the Christian name over his masterpiece of refined ungodliness and unrighteousness, modern civilization."[82] His premillennial perspective explained his position, but he still believed that men "brought under the power of the gospel of Christ" would promote Christian civilization without greed and injustice.[83] The fact of evil did not deny him the perception that America's

---

[78]Brown, "A Christian Nation...," op. cit., p. 10.

[79]Cameron, "Two Great Nations," Watchword and Truth 23 (November, 1901), p. 327.

[80]Ibid., p. 326.

[81]Ibid., p. 327.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Ibid., p. 326.

greatness had been providentially given, and that Christian men were responsible to build and to maintain a nation of love and justice. This point had been emphasized by the non-millenarian Samuel Lane Loomis in his Modern Cities when he said that "there can be no doubt that a state of society like the one in which we are living would be impossible except for the Christian religion."[84]

... Manager of Anglo-Saxon Destinies

The missionary enterprise had been prominently British and American. For this reason many saw Christian civilization and the Anglo-Saxon world as synonymous. George C. Northrup, President of the American Baptist Missionary Union asked quite pointedly, "who knows that the United States is destined to be the leading nation of the future, that the Anglo-Saxon race will rule the coming ages?"[85] His question was rhetorical, since he believed that God had given "the Anglo-Saxon race" the responsibility of managing Christian influence. People who believed otherwise failed "to estimate adequately the restorative and re-creative power of Christianity."[86] For Northrup and for Oberlin's D. L. Leonard, "nations and races, as well as individuals" were called to propagate Christianity.[87] The "united energies" of both the British and American

---

[84]Samuel Lane Loomis, Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems (New York: The Baker and Taylor Company, 1887), p. 79.

[85]George C. Northrup, "Some Hindrances to the Work of Foreign Missions," The Missionary Review 5 (January, 1892), p. 39.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Ibid; and "The Anglo-Saxon and the World's Redemption - I," The Missionary Review 7 (October, 1894), p. 748 (identical quotes).

nations were destined, in this view, to help other nations, and according to George C. Lorimer "to conquer heathen darkness."[88] He said that the English language had "been charged with the gospel of Jesus Christ" for missionary endeavor.[89]

The millenarian A. T. Pierson suggested, in support of this perspective, that what was needed was a "restoration of the conquest spirit of early Christianity."[90] He declared that the entire Christian tradition had been permeated with this spirit, and that spirit needed reviving. This did not mean forceful propagation, as Pierson had clearly explained earlier. The conquest was to be by "Divine Power."[91] And non-millenarian George Horr in The Watchman also had emphasized that this conquest was not to be articulated in imperialistic or expansionist terms. "Christian forces" may well have gone to work in new territories secured by governmental force, but fulfilling the great commission was a religious, not a state enterprise.[92] It was "whether the spiritual ideas of the East or of the West are to dominate the thoughts and convictions of the world.... The issue is whether or not Christianity itself is to become the dominant force in the moral and religious life

---

[88]George C. Lorimer, "Living and Dying Nations," The Watchman 79 (October 13, 1898), p. 12.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Pierson, "The Redemption of the City," op. cit., p. 10.

[91]Pierson, "The Sword and Christianity," The Missionary Review 13 (March, 1900), p. 220.

[92]George Horr, "The Churches and the Present Crisis, The Watchman 80 (January 5, 1899), p. 7.

of the world."[93] At any rate, the enterprise was legitimate since "it may be that the Providence of God is to put upon us a duty towards these ... peoples."[94]

Yet this was not to say that Western culture had already been fully Christianized, as Arthur H. Smith had noted. The perspective required only that Anglo-Saxon Christians understand their obligation to Christianize--to educate, both spiritually and intellectually, to "purify and sweeten" pagan passion, and to transform culture into Christian ideals of justice and good will.[95] The obligation included efforts to increase wages and standards of living, according to J. W. Bashford, missionary to China. This had economic implications at home, as it would "deliver the workingmen of the Western world from the industrial plague of the yellow peril."[96]

The issue of management of a destiny centered on notions of progress. There were social evils in Christian countries. But for Robert E. Speer, these evils were not sufficiently powerful to deny the forces of progress. He argued that Christianity was "the only religion of progress, ... the only religion which can live with progress."[97]

---

[93]Horr, "The Larger Issues," op. cit., p. 7.

[94]Editorial, The Watchman 79 (May 26, 1898), p. 1.

[95]Smith, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

[96]J. W. Bashford, "The Economic Significance of China's Evangelization," The Missionary Review 19 (May, 1906), p. 354.

[97]Speer, "Christianity and Other Religions," op. cit., p. 508.

The management of Christianity's destiny implied that as Anglo-Saxon peoples disturbed the fabric of non-Western society and "took away" their religion, that something must be given to replace what was taken, "'and that something must be the Christian faith or it will be nothing'" (here Speer quoted Britain's Griffith Jones). Speer assumed that the Christian religion was progressive, and he well summarized his argument by declaring that "Christians have the one true religion. They are bound to propagate it," to preach Christ; for "He is the truth."[98]

Again, conservative evangelicals took this perspective in a variety of ways. Premillennialists, for instance, accepted and promoted the spirit of Christian conquest, but explained it as confrontation with the gospel, and not necessarily conversion to it. They tried to distinguish between civilizing goals and Christian evangelistic goals, although they believed that one consequence of the missionary enterprise was, in fact, a higher civilization. Other conservatives felt obliged to evangelize because they believed that paganism could be conquered only by the Christian message of salvation as a civilizing force. In other words, premillennialists pushed, not for conversion, but for the spread of evangelistic activity. Other conservatives pushed for conversions as the evidence that "pagan" civilizations were being well influenced and well managed by Anglo-Saxon Christian interests. All were supported by those at home who were glad to hear of success and to hear of pagan changes toward civilization, as well as to hear of increased numbers of believers.

---

[98] Ibid.

True Worlds

Mutual contradictions did exist among conservative evangelical Protestants in America during 1890-1910. For example, millenarian doctrine did not allow for the concept of a contemporary Christian civilization. But everywhere millenarians rallied against declines in civil or social morality which they observed. They worked at upholding and maintaining national standards of morality which they believed were necessary for Christians to hold. They categorized as unbelievers any who refused to declare openly a belief in the dogmas of verbal inerrancy or of a literal return of Christ to earth, yet they looked for changed, more civilized moral living by natives as the sign of conversion.

But conservatives experienced threatening religious realities. By 1910, many began to feel overwhelmed by a realization that their voices were being muted within demoninational structures. Prestigious pulpits and seminary chairs were being filled with contemporary liberal thinkers. In response, they progressively determined to re-assert certain points of truth which they believed would protect them against perceived infidelity. Conservatives were more worried about the strength of their voices within evangelicalism than by any contradictions which their stances produced. The fundamentalist identity came as they more aggressively fought to maintain a personalized salvation amidst a world which sought social salvation. Conservatives believed that a divine, personal salvation could not come to one until he was prepared to assert that the scriptures were inerrantly authoritative, that Christ was God and would literally return to earth, and that each

Christian's mandate was to evangelize. The fundamentalist identity came to those who fought against any Christian world which said otherwise. Fundamentalist uniqueness was a function of their stance in reaction to modernism. Their doctrine was orthodox; it was not anti-Christian. Their opponents argued, however, that the fundamentalist stance was non-Christian; fundamentalists expressed little charity towards their opponents.

Although fundamentalists explained their doctrine as true, and their opponents' doctrine as false, it was not a particular dogmatic theology which was most crucial for generating controversy. They scored liberals for their attitude of skepticism towards the reality of a revealed inerrant Bible. Fundamentalists were bothered by an alleged liberal lack of concern for an individualized mode of salvation. They felt that liberal attitudes promoted loose living. But most importantly, they felt that liberals were pushing for an ecumenical religious scene which would deny the conservatives any authoritative voice from within evangelicalism. The fundamentalist character, therefore, was developed from their beliefs that their worlds of meaning were being submerged by a flood of new social and religious worlds of meaning which threatened to exclude them. Fundamentalist assertions of truth--their true worlds--were, in effect, attempts to maintain or to regain authoritative positions within evangelicalism. They claimed any world of meanings as false which threatened any potential which they might have seen for maintaining an authoritative voice within American evangelical Protestantism.

PART III

FALSE WORLDS

CHAPTER SIX

THE WORLD OF HIGHER CRITICISM--THE "DOWN GRADE MOVEMENT"

"The Professor"

The altitudinous critic professor
Is an up-to-day man, a progressor,
With a lofty ambition
To upset tradition
And set up himself as successor.

An honest, unbiased professor,
A great scientific guesser,
He can tell a priori
The worth of old story;
Can size it up like an assessor.

This Germano-Yankee professor
Will pull out his critical MESSER,
And the chips that he'll whittle
From jot or from tittle,
Give each, to its ancient possessor.

A most conscientious professor,
He's plunged in the deepest distress o'er
That scandalous libel,
A really Bible,
Imposed by the priestly oppressor.

by "J.H.S.", St. Paul, Minn.
in Watchword and Truth, 1902[1]

"Traitors Within the Camp"

Evangelical Protestant leaders before 1890 had seen themselves as more or less of the same cloth, liturgical and theological differences

---

[1]"J.H.S.", Watchword and Truth 24 (June, 1902), p. 185.

notwithstanding. However, religious conflicts within their ranks soon developed and changed their perceptions of their unity. The challenges which social unrest had presented to organized Christianity provoked varying responses as to what "social Christianity" ought to be. One area of concern was to what extent Christianity ought to be intellectually progressive to match the "spirit of the times". In response to the prevailing spirit of uncertainty, some evangelicals were declaring their doubts about the verities of specific points in Christian doctrine. Others were taking seriously some of the claims of the higher critics as to the "errant" nature of the scriptures. These, who together came to be identified as liberals or modernists, also wished to develop more specific programs of Christian social reform. As liberals, they believed that "fundamental" Christianity centered on "the Golden rule". They wanted to develop their Christian concern for others in a way such that restrictive Christian tradition or dogma would not interfere with their service in the name of Christ.

On the other side, conservative evangelicals saw liberal activity (whether in the form of intellectual criticism or in social reform), not as a search for "fundamental" Christianity, but as "an open revolt against the teachings of the Bible and a general abandonment of the simple gospel of Christ," as Robert Cameron put it.[2] Conservatives called the perceived consequences of liberal activity "The Down Grade Movement." They borrowed this term from the famous London preacher,

---

[2]Robert Cameron, ed., "Down Grade Everywhere," Watchword and Truth 21 (July, 1899), p. 196.

Charles H. Spurgeon, who had used it to characterize nineteenth-century British Baptists whom he saw as antagonistic to the orthodoxy he was preaching. Although the term was generally known among conservatives, premillennialists especially used it. They found it very useful to describe the apostasy within the church. They asserted this apostasy as fact: it had "come, and come to stay."[3] They believed that the negative effects of the down grade movement were only the expected consequence of the apostasy which they everywhere perceived within church structures.

But non-millenarian conservatives explained the down grade movement, not as a consequence of apostasy, but of the growing conflict and the deteriorating relations within evangelicalism. They characterized those who supported the liberal movement in the churches as hostile to truth. For example, Abel H. Huizinga, in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, made a startling statement about the situation:

> ... it is a tremendous warfare, with furious onslaughts, this that has been raging in recent years against our common "evangelical" Christianity. Many men who claim and pretend to speak as defenders of the faith have accepted subtle metaphysical and philosophical principles which in reality are hostile to true Christianity. This is, perhaps, the most disheartening feature of the whole contest. Traitors within the camp are always more dangerous than open enemies in the field.[4]

In short, conservatives (millenarian and otherwise) perceived the down grade movement as necessitating a battle for fundamental Christianity.

---

[3]James H. Brookes, ed., The Truth 21 (October, 1895), p. 462.

[4]Abel H. Huizinga, "Recent Phases of Christian Apologetics," Presbyterian and Reformed Review 7 (January, 1896), p. 37.

They believed that the movement was symbolized by a weakening Christianity that harbored alien voices. They believed that the emerging battles, in which they were fighting against social and religious immorality, were consequences of the developing internecine divergences.

These emerging fundamentalists referred to the "down grade movement" as the consequence of an attitude which willingly and openly "assaulted" what they had heretofore considered as essential to Christian faith, doctrine and practice. As Samuel M. Woodbridge stated in The Presbytarian and Reformed Review, these "assaults" were "pre-eminently against the Bible ..., against every fundamental doctrine of our faith, and against every one of our sacred institutions, the visible exponents of revealed truth."[5] Conservatives believed that the very act of "rejecting" or "denying" particular points of belief was an act of hostility against both God and the church which "undermined" faith. Charles H. Spurgeon had briefly stated that this "evil" was "an absolute questioning of fundamental truth ..., the presence of unbelief ... that is very deep" (italics his).[6] Conservatives asserted that when specific points of belief were rejected, so also was the authority of "divine revelation". And it was this rejection of biblical authority which they saw as the most devastating consequence of accepting the spirit of uncertainty. They viewed this denial of authority as the essence of the impetus of the down grade movement.

---

[5]Samuel M. Woodbridge, "Conservatism," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 8 (October, 1897), p. 703.

[6]Charles H. Spurgeon, "Truth for the Times," Watchword and Truth 21 (February, 1899), p. 46.

Theological and Social Consequences

For these conservative evangelicals, this movement had both theological and social consequences neither of which was acceptable. They were facing the question of both "whether" Christianity and "whither" Christianity. In either case, they believed that truth was at stake.

Theologically, these emerging fundamentalists asserted that all of the negative consequences came from "the initial step ... [of] the admission of the untrustworthiness of the sacred record as it now stands," as the venerable professor at Princeton, William Henry Green, said.[7] He observed that "after this initial admission has been made, everything farther is but a question of degrees. The Scripture is no longer reliable.... We have lost our infallible guide."[8] He then expected deterioration of the rest of theology to follow. A clue to an understanding of this perception appeared in the first issue of 1898 of Watchword and Truth. The new journal's editor, Robert Cameron, quoted from "an honored layman" who suggested that "'the down grade has reached bottom.'"[9] By this assertion, he meant that "the supernatural is discarded, ... the deity of Christ is scorned, depravity is laughed at and regeneration is evaporated into a figure of speech."[10] And three months later, in quoting from The Baptist of London, Cameron

---

[7]William Henry Green, "The Moses of the Critics," The Presbyterian and Reformed Review 5 (July, 1894), p. 396.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Robert Cameron, ed., "The Down Grade," Watchword and Truth 20 (January, 1893), p. 1.

[10]Ibid.

suggested that the absence of these doctrines in contemporary preaching "'must ultimately issue in the death' of all Christian principle or practice or hope."[11] In sum, the fundamentalist battle was for not only the essence of Christianity, but for its survival. Cameron explained this by means of a reprint from the New York Sun which was a remarkably concise "secular" evaluation of the theological consequences:

> ... upon the Bible our whole religious faith is founded; for if the Bible falls, so also falls the church which declares its divine authority. If there is no divine and infallible authority for dogma, how can it be else than an empty arrogation of knowledge impossible for man? When men assert what only God can know, other men must believe that they speak by direct inspiration from God or their assertion is futile.
>
> How could it be otherwise than that the publication of this criticism of the Bible would destroy all faith in such authority in all those who accept its conclusions? When men who have founded their religious belief on absolute faith in the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God, are told, and become convinced, that the Bible, after all, is only human literature of uncertain authorship and contradictory as demonstrable by science, what remains of our religion except a mere moral code? Accordingly, the Bishops and other clergy who are undertaking to reconcile the destruction of the infallibility of the Bible with the dogma and doctrine of their theology have entered upon an impossible task. They scuttle the ship, yet expect the crew to continue confident in its sea-worthiness.[12]

Thus conservatives viewed the "down grade movement" as destructive of the church's theology. But they asserted also that the vitality of the church as expressed through its teachers and preachers was seriously threatened. In Watchword and Truth examples of this perspective abound. Cameron seemed to delight in pinpointing specific instances of individuals and groups whom he suggested were part of this phenomenon.

---

[11] Cameron, "The Downgrade in England," Watchword and Truth 20 (April, 1898), p. 97.

[12] Cameron, "It Destroys Religious Faith," Watchword and Truth 23 (incorrectly numbered as vol. 24) (January, 1901), pp. 2-3.

In various editorials he recounted many instances of the "downgrade", such as in "Alas for Methodism" when he suggested that "methodism has advanced--advanced backwards with the 'liberal' tendencies of the times, and with the irreverent assumptions of the higher critics."[13] In "Another minister Gone", he named "The Rev. Dr. Austin, ... formerly President of Alma College" as having "gone over to the Spiritualists".[14] The "Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbot" was characterized as "this railer against the Bible" in a piece entitled "A blind guide and leader."[15] Universities failed to escape Cameron's searching eye; "Another Professor Gone Wrong" taught semitic languages and archaeology at Syracuse,[16] and Boston University in "its apostasy from the faith" was allowing Unitarian doctrine, in spite of its Methodist origins.[17] "Another Minister Tumbles" showed how the fallen minister had approved of "card playing, dancing and theatre-going."[18] And a "once loved and trusted brother", in "Another Minister Gone Wrong", was either "misrepresented" or "had an attack of temporary insanity"; Cameron said that he had "endorsed evolution in its most atheistic form", as well as having endorsed

---

[13]Cameron, Watchword and Truth 21 (April, 1899), p. 101.

[14]Ibid. (July, 1899), p. 194.

[15]Ibid. (November, 1899), p. 323.

[16]Ibid., 22 (February, 1900), p. 36 (incorrectly numbered as vol. 23).

[17]Ibid., 22 (July, 1900), p. 194.

[18]Ibid.

conclusions of higher criticism.[19] These examples (from among many) show how Cameron explained to his readers what he saw as the process by which faith was being undermined.

But if other conservative evangelicals did not use Cameron's techniques as they described illegitimate theological worlds, they did agree as to the nature of the social consequences of propounding a false faith. For example, E. P. Marvin outlined some of these consequences in "an open letter" to the readers of Watchword and Truth, as "manifestations" of the "present defection in the spiritual life of the church, and the decrease of conversions."[20] He preached that problems existed in homes which neglected religion, in a society bent on pleasure and amusement, in a church geared for merchandizing and feasting, in a publishing industry which propagated low-grade novels, in a "chromo Christianity" of ever-increasing "special days", in an ever-proliferating "craze of organization", and "last, but not least, in the sensational, secular and worldly preaching" under "unfaithful leadership," on "secular" instead of "eternal" issues.[21] In other words, the negative social consequences of denying "the faith once received" were everywhere prevalent, and especially so within the churches.

The interrelatedness of the problems of irreligion in the home and of organizational "frenzy" in religion has already been discussed in chapter one of this dissertation. Samuel W. Dike, who had spoken to

---

[19] Ibid. (June, 1900), p. 163.

[20] E. P. Marvin, "Signs of the Times," Watchword and Truth 23 (May, 1901), p. 148.

[21] Ibid., p. 149.

this issue in the great conference of the Evangelical Alliance in 1887, later wrote in The Watchman that the home was "in danger of becoming a religious pauper."[22] The problem was that the church had "seized upon" the associational "form of social order" to do its business. In so doing, it did "very little through the home itself."[23] Furthermore, in appealing to church members for good works, the church had used "powerful social and industrial motives", but had "infrequently and feebly used" motives which appealed "to them as members of families."[24]

However, conservatives argued that the "neglect of home religion" was primarily because families had relinquished religious activity to the church and its organizations. They realized that this had created several anamolies, including a preponderance of women over men in active church involvement. Herbert J. White, in The Watchman, attributed this trend to many factors, including pastoral inability to minister to men. Pastors' sermons were "invertebrate"; White emphasized that "the great preachers have always been preachers to men."[25] Other conservatives perceived additional results of increased organizational activity: children spent more time at home without parental supervision, and wives had less influence on husbands. The woman, as the active church person, needed to understand that as a wife, "home-making is husband-making and

---

[22]Samuel W. Dike, "A Neglected Institution," The Watchman 79 (June 23, 1898), p. 10.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Herbert J. White, "Why More Women Than Men in Our Churches?" The Watchman 79 (June 30, 1898), p. 14.

child-blessing."[26] If home-making, which included religious and moral instruction, was neglected, then the instruction in the church became a travesty.

Conservatives argued that the power of the church in the home was weakened "for good" by among other things, "the introduction of bad books."[27] Corrupt literature determined individual "character", "the purity of the home", "the stability of the nation" and "public morality" according to the editor of Watchword and Truth.[28] And the influence of other printed matter did not escape his wrath. Yellow journalism had "debauched" the home, particularly as it "gloated" over divorce trials and sex scandals.[29] Contemporary advertising, cartoons and pictoral work in supposedly family, "even Christian", magazines allegedly were degrading and indecent.[30] And conservatives supported at the turn of the century the notorious outcry against Sunday newspapers.

Conservatives also raised questions about local congregations' "special days". They related this issue to that of "church entertainment". Ministers used special days to increase attendance, and many believed that such attendance could not be maintained unless the

---

[26]Cameron, ed.,"Little Things in The Home," Watchword and Truth 28 (January, 1906), p. 8.

[27]Cameron, ed., "Books and Morals," Watchword and Truth 27 (October, 1905), pp. 274-275.

[28]Ibid., p. 276.

[29]Ibid., p. 274.

[30]Ibid.

newcomers were entertained. Conservative evangelicals stoutly emphasized, as did Britain's Ian Maclaren, that "'full sittings and hundreds turned away'" meant nothing if "'they do not get the gospel of Christ after they come'".[31] In assent, Cameron added, "getting an audience is not an end in itself and can never be the seal of one's ministry."[32]

"Pernicious Amusements"

As to the influence of worldly standards among Christians, evangelical conservatives continued to evaluate these as religious and social consequences of the downgrade movement. The editor of the contributors to The Sunday School Times regularly tackled the issues of church entertainment, bazaars, fairs, and suppers, as well as the proper use of the Sabbath and one's responses to "worldly" pleasure and amusement. They taught that no other social behavior more clearly showed the down grade than positive Christian acceptance of worldly values. This problem of acceptance was compounded by the world's refusal to maintain previously held Christian values, exemplified in public pressure against the Sunday "blue-laws".

However, it was for the young people that legitimation of the conservative perspective presented the most difficulty. Sunday-school pupils asked questions as to why certain forms of amusement were declared "pernicious". And their teachers often were frustrated; regularly they

---

[31] Ian Maclaren, "Church Entertainment--vs--Church Ministry," quoted by Robert Cameron, ed., in The Watchword 18 (April, 1896), p. 93

[32] Ibid.

sought help from the editors of The Sunday School Times. The editors responded weekly with "Notes on Open Letters". They recognized that "relaxation and entertainment have a healthy and necessary place in the life of young people."[33] The magazine's contributors had also emphasized this point, as did R. A. Torrey in 1906, that "young people need recreation."[34] But evangelical teachers perceived a dilemma in the making of distinctions between amusements which were legitimate and those which were otherwise. In Torrey's view, there were "recreations that are wholesome, and there are amusements that are pernicious."[35] And The Sunday School Times editors likewise agreed that there was "many a form of entertainment that is not healthy or wise."[36] But "the question that confused many" was "where to draw the line."[37]

The principles were simple enough: distinguish between games of skill and games of chance, and promote "healthy", "profitable", "wholesome", "elevating" physical exercise, not "idle", "disreputable", "border-line" activity. Conservatives argued that there were standards of public morality to which one could be asked to subscribe--to which allegiance was sought. For example, card playing was objectionable,

---

[33]Editorial, "Drawing a Line in Games," The S. S. Times 55 (November 29, 1913), p. 334.

[34]R. A. Torrey, "How Shall Christians Amuse Themselves?" The S. S. Times 48 (June 9, 1906), p. 349.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Editorial, "Drawing a Line In Games," op. cit.

[37]Ibid.

not only because chance was "a chief factor in the game," but also because it had "associations that are demoralizing."[38] On the other hand, in the words of Torrey, "physical exercise" was "one of the great safeguards of the moral conduct" of young people.[39] His discussion of principles included not engaging "in any amusement that will hurt your influence with anybody", or "that might harm someone else", or that was not "to the glory of God" (italics his).[40]

However, these answers did not satisfy the questioners. One still had to reconcile the fact that "life is full of uncertainty", i.e., that "'taking chances' is a daily, hourly experience and duty."[41] The conservative evangelical would reply that man had "no right to incur unnecessary danger" in the performance of his occupational and family responsibilities; yet "normal" risks were to be faced.[42] In the same way, then, one was not to take unnecessary moral risks in participating in games of chance and the like. Simply put, "unnecessary chance" was to be avoided."[43] They asserted that one had no more right to take unnecessary moral chances than he did to take unnecessary physical risks.

---

[38]Editorial, "What are Amusements For?" The S. S. Times 57 57 (February 6, 1915), p. 82.

[39]Torrey, "How Shall Christians Amuse ...?" op. cit.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Editorial, "Taking Chances," The S. S. Times 57 (February 27, 1915), p. 126.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

A man was not to subscribe to any standards of conduct which might incur unneeded moral risks for the participant.

The Ethics of the Down Grade

The antagonists of "the down grade movement" viewed its social consequences as including tendencies to support associations with immorality. But the larger discussion of the movement ultimately focused on the perceived intellectual and ethical dishonesty of its purveyors. For example, Was it right or "honorable" for preachers who had discarded orthodoxy to remain in "an orthodox pulpit?"[44] or was the conduct of professors who had "certain mental reservations" about the doctrinal creed to which they were required to subscribe "morally defensible?"[45] Was there not for them a "reciprocal obligation of honor" to parents who sent their children to evangelical colleges to have them brought up in evangelical truth?[46]

Overall, conservative evangelicals described the down grade movement in the most telling fashion as moral degeneration. If the movement entailed the denial of previously held beliefs, and if those beliefs were held as true by the conservatives, then their perceptions that truth was being suppressed constituted their judgment that the movement was morally reprehensible. For example, even if "the majority of students of natural science have accepted some theory of evolution or

---

[44]"The Ethics of It" (by "A Lover of Truth"), Watchword and Truth 25 (May, 1903), p. 145.

[45]Ibid., p. 144.

[46]Editorial, "Need Denominational Colleges Be Strictly Christian?" Watchword and Truth 23 (April, 1900), p. 103.

development as a working hypothesis, "was it right for their teachers to ignore "the fact ... that leading scientists have never accepted the theory, but ... have openly argued against it?"[47] The writer concludes, "where is the morality in making assertions which produce impressions utterly false?"[48]

Further ethical quandries were described. For example, conservatives regarded higher critics as unethical because they ignored the contents of the Scriptures which they assailed critically. The editor of The Sunday School Times suggested that a primary "weakness" of the critics was their "lack of any careful study of the contents of the Old Testament as it stands."[49] In this case, he explained their "ignorance of the actual contents" in such a way that one must view their ignorance as immoral.[50]

On the other hand, supporters of the critics' positions claimed that it was the conservatives who were "opposed to Biblical study."[51] But for critics to ignore or deny the fact that the conservatives were "as enthusiastic and eager in their study of the Bible as the extremists, and as fearless in their search for truth,"[52] and to charge the opposite

---

[47]"The Ethics of It," op. cit.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Editorial, "Professor Sayce in Higher Criticism," The S. S. Times 36 (March 24, 1894), p. 188.

[50]Ibid.

[51]"The Ethics of It," op. cit.

[52]Ibid.

was "absolutely without justification."[53] Furthermore, the conservative mind said that it was "difficult to believe in the sincerity and moral integrity of those who make such accusations."[54]

The "lover of truth" who wrote the article just quoted summarized the problem this way:

> Again one is compelled to ask, does a change of theological views and a departure from evangelical standards blunt the moral perceptions, and make a man careless about the honorable consistency of his conduct, or the exact truthfulness of his utterance, in order to push his new views to acceptance and cast discredit upon those scholars who conscientiously and intelligently refuse to go with him? Surely such methods are unworthy....[55]

If anything, the "false world" of "the down grade movement" was regarded as an immoral world. Conservatives argued that its theology was immoral in the suppression of truth, and it promoted immoral conduct by allowing amusements and recreation which had questionable associations. For the fundamentalistic evangelical, the world of higher criticism was both un-Christian and anti-Christian; its "truth" was perverted.

---

[53] Ibid., p. 146.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHURCH UNION--THE WORLD OF COMPROMISE

> Unity cannot be secured by compromise.... Compromise is often right in matters of policy or method. Compromise is always wrong in matters of principle or duty. Truth abhors compromise as light abhors darkness. Truth advances her kingdom by affirmation, not by evasion; by victory, not by surrender. The man who is willing to surrender his own convictions for the sake of "unity" is a man whose convictions for the sake of unity or anything else, are to be distrusted. For he who begins by being false to himself will end with being false to everybody else. Moreover, the unity which is brought about by compromise is not unity at all; it is only a weak, sentimental, flabby uniformity.
>
> George Dana Boardman, 1916[1]

Christian Unity

The history of attempts at church union is a history of frustration. Protestant denominations have cooperated at various levels, but seldom has any merger between diverse traditions been accomplished. In local communities, probably there have been more church splits than church unions. Cooperation has been seen, for instance, in non-denominational agencies such as the American Bible Society. Some missionary boards have participated in inter-denominational field

---

[1]George Dana Boardman, "Unity and Compromise," The Watchman - Examiner 4 (May 18, 1916), p. 625 ("from Life and Light," quoted on cover page).

activities, whereas at home, Easter sunrise or Good Friday services may be the visible extent of inter-denominational cooperation. Ministerial associations coordinate such activity, but most churches have rejected any movement beyond association towards union.

The voluntaristic atmosphere within the American experiment has generated ample evidence of an heretofore unknown variety of religious experience. In many cases, a lack of cooperation between religious groups has been a primary characteristic of community life. New ministers have raided established ministers' parishes. Use of facilities is rarely exchanged. Many towns have encountered the reality of several churches, none of which can support full time pastors, and have refused to consolidate resources, in spite of the pattern which other communities have set with their "federated", "union" or "community" congregations.

But social demands for a unified Christian experience have carried doubtful implications in light of the Protestant tradition. At the end of the nineteenth century, conservative evangelicals believed that the concept of Christian unity was not wholly unattractive. They knew that some, if not much of their ineffectiveness could be laid to their lack of a spirit of unity. The conservative experience during the period just prior to the fundamentalist-modernist controversies included their attempts to maintain a spirit of Christian unity while they forestalled organizational union. They faced the dilemma of practicing Christian love while they argued for proper organizational patterns for believers. Ultimately, the liberals charged them with failing to practice love and

with promoting schism. In response, the conservatives claimed that Christian love could be stretched to cover only a limited amount of religious diversity, and that they could not support any union which would deny them an authoritative voice in the setting of Christian distinctives.

Those who worked to maintain the foundations of truth did believe that there was "such a thing as Christian unity in the midst of all these diversities."[2] But conservatives could not interpret the implications of this concept as leading to organic union. James Brookes maintained that union was a relatively small item on his agenda for Christian effort, and it "would be purchased at immense cost if obtained at the price, or the compromise, of a single vital truth."[3] His perspective dominated conservative literature; conservatives maintained that ecumenical Christianity was a "false world."

These conservative evangelical Protestants were not against church union, per se, if it were based on the nature of "the true church" and of "true union". If the true church was invisible (a standard Protestant formulation), then real union was the believer's call to a "more vital union with Christ, the Lord, and a greater separation between the Christian and the world."[4] In short, conservatives argued that union was God-made, not man-made. Any effort of man to effect "external unity

---

[2]James H. Brookes, ed., The Truth 21 (May, 1895), p. 253.

[3]Ibid., p. 255.

[4]D. L. Pierson, Editorial, "Church Union, Real and Artificial," The Missionary Review 32 (July, 1919), p. 488.

or organization" was "undesirable" because it confounded the essence of true unity, namely, a God-given brotherly love. In the perspective of one missionary to Japan, Robert E. McAlpine, the personal "heart-union" of the believer with Christ was, through the expression of brotherly love, "the real unity of the visible church."[5] He said simply that brotherly love did not produce unity, it was unity. So for some evangelicals, "true" church union was simply and only "true" Christians' expressions of God's love one to another.

By the same token, then, emerging fundamentalists suggested that Christian unity was impossible with anyone who did not participate in a faith-producing union with Christ. Any such attempt at visible, organic, social unity was simply "not a 'unity of the Spirit'", in the words of R. A. Torrey, Dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.[6] He specified that "there can be no unity, and it is not desirable that there should be, between those who differ in questions of faith that are really fundamental."[7] And as D. L. Pierson, successor to his father as editor of The Missionary Review of the World, said, "union must not be at the expense of spiritual truth and power."[8] This was another way of saying that individual union with Christ was a more important goal than church

---

[5]Robert E. Alpine, Christian and Church Unity," The Missionary Review 16 (September, 1903), p. 673.

[6]R. A. Torrey, "Shall We Sacrifice Our Convictions for the Sake of Religious Unity?" The King's Business 10 (January 1919), p. 7.

[7]Ibid.

[8]D. L. Pierson, "Church Union ...," op. cit., p. 487.

union. If believers focused on external union, compromise would be demanded--and as A. T. Pierson had indicated, that might "be bought at the price of purity ..., a yielding of what is vital, a sacrifice of truth"[9]--a compromise in the individual's relationship to God.

If one compromised, he was, in effect, tolerating assaults upon the foundations of Christian truth, albeit in the name of love or "that charming word, 'charity', which is made to cover a multitude of doctrinal sins,"[10] as A. T. Pierson stated. He explained himself as follows: if truth is intolerant of error, then love, as an expression and manifestation of one who maintains the citadels of truth, cannot be expressed to anyone, by any name (even Christian), who will knowingly admit error into the citadels. Pierson declared, "our love for all men must not blind us to their doctrinal errors, nor to the danger they involve."[11] Or, in other words, one does not redeem "heresy by loving and self-denying service."[12] Can truth as expressed in church dogma and creeds be surrendered to the capriciousness of a love which the truth (which has been given up) does not direct and control? For Pierson, "to count it a matter of indifference what one believes, provided he is sincere, is to make it no longer worthwhile either to search after truth or to obey

---

[9] A. T. Pierson, "What Are the Limits of Christian Toleration?" The Missionary Review 21 (April, 1908), p. 248.

[10] Ibid., p. 247.

[11] Ibid., p. 252.

[12] Ibid., p. 251.

it when found."[13] The supporter of "the fundamentals" understood that truth produced love, but that love out of truth's hold would produce, not truth, but "a transient sentiment" or "a capricious impulse".

In short, these conservatives asserted that true Christian union could not come at the expense of a compromise in truth. They expected that Christian unity would be expressed in the love of one true beliver with another. They encountered, however, impulses towards the maintenance of a semblance of unity in the face of perceived hostility to not only truth, but to Christianity in general. Indeed, they assumed that the ecumenical world was filled with the dangers of compromise, but where they could assert "fundamentals of truth," evangelical fundamentalists would and did co-operate. The rest of this chapter describes _their_ perspectives in arenas of practical cooperation which they ultimately rejected as too prone to the evils of compromise. But such rejection came only _after_ they became frustrated in their attempts to assert Christian fundamentals _in_ such union.

Christian Union and Denominations

Denominational unity made sense as an appropriate goal. But unity, in reality, was hard to achieve and to maintain. Yet, as Groege Horr, the editor of _The Watchman_ (Baptist), repeatedly argued, it was absurd to have separate denominations for those of the same persuasion. In reflecting upon proposed union of three Baptist groups, he said that they agreed "in all those features of belief and practice which are

---

[13] _Ibid_.

essential to unity and co-operation and fellowship in one denomination."[14] Yet only two of these groups actually merged--the Baptists and Free Baptists--while the Disciples of Christ remained distinct. Horr felt also that "it always seemed needless for denominations which differ in doctrine and practice to take up the question of church union when there were so many bodies in existence differing only in minute and unessential points."[15] He argued that church union had to start among those of similar religious persuasion if it was to eventually incorporate widely divergent groups.

Yet when evangelicals contemplated church union, they were aware that all denominations shared a similar partisan organizational diversity. Each denomination had its parties, usually characterized as liberal and conservative, and often with noticeable moderate groups. In the Episcopalian church, the factional issue was primarily liturgical, between the High Church and Low Church parties. In this case, intra-denominational union seemed less attractive than interdenominational union, at least with similar parties. For instance, Baptists had difficulty contemplating incorporation with the High Church party which was "leading the whole (Episcopal) Church to Rome."[16] So, in spite of occasional overtures towards and pleas for denominational unity, party forces within church structures worked to the contrary.

---

[14]George Horr, "Baptist Union," The Watchman 87 (November 23, 1905), p. 7.

[15]Horr, "Church Union," The Watchman 86 (March 17, 1904), p. 6.

[16]Curtis Lee Laws, ed., "Episcopalians and Church Union," The Watchman - Examiner 3 (December 16, 1915), p. 1631.

On the other hand, conservative Christians maintained strong denominational loyalties. Curtis Lee Laws, editor of The Watchman Examiner, took the characteristic conservative view that despite denominational excesses, that "there are some blessings in denominationalism."[17] At least some unity of spirit was exhibited, and any further "unity of form" between denominations would be "worse than useless" unless it maintained higher levels of unity of spirit. Yet "the spirit of federation" was indeed attractive, "so long as in promoting such federation there is no sacrifice of essential truth," as A. T. Pierson declared.[18] Such federation could mean "the elimination of the bitter elements of party strife."[19] If nothing else, moves toward federation were attractive because of the potential of reduced factional rivalries. Conservative evangelical Protestants, therefore, were ready to promote federation, as long as there was "unity in essentials." They had recognized, as did Pierson, that "the bitter controversies of the ages between disciples have greatly hindered their common witness to the world."[20]

Federation, of course, did not mean the elimination of denominational distinctives. The unity sought was practical, with some

---

[17]Laws, "Christian Unity Again," The Watchman Examiner 6 (October 31, 1918), p. 1353.

[18]A. T. Pierson, "The Spirit of Federation," The Missionary Review 19 (August, 1906), p. 564.

[19]Pierson, "The Federation of Churches," The Missionary Review 22 (April, 1909), p. 245.

[20]Editorial, "The Federation Congress," Watchword and Truth 28 (January, 1906), p. 21.

organization of combined efforts, but not organic - "not corporation but co-operation."[21] The plan of federation from the 1905 Interchurch Conference on Church Federation proclaimed this goal. But the first meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in 1908 exemplified the conflict between those who held this goal and those who wanted a full assertion of fundamental truth; by its own charter it had no authority to draw up a common creed. Without a specified creed, conservatives doubted as to whether the promotion of co-operation might not take precedence over the assertion of Christian truth. One delegate, reporting in The Watchman, suggested that the concern of Christ for unity was "much deeper" than reference "to matters of outward organization."[22] The plan of federation might well perpetuate denomination schism if it failed "to promote the absolute unity"--"a unity not of form but of life"--"for which Christ prayed."[23] In other words, the goal of the Federal Council of Churches was not formulated in terms of the assertion of fundamental truth, but of cooperation in united action on social and moral questions, as well as of promotion of Christian fellowship and spiritual counsel.[24] Thus denominational distinctives remained, but conservatives saw the evaporation of the distinctives of fundamental

---

[21] Ibid., p. 15.

[22] James W. Willmarth, "The Federal Council," The Watchman 90 (December 17, 1908), p. 20.

[23] Ibid.

[24] J. Cleveland Cady, "How America's Churches Are Getting Together," The S. S. Times 47 (December 2, 1905), p. 700.

truth. For them, the danger remained that Christian distinctives would be lost, even if denominational distinctives were not.

These fears about union efforts were confirmed by the wartime emergence and rapid demise of the Interchurch World Movement. Born with promise in 1918, within two years it faced fiscal bankruptcy. By June of 1920, A. C. Dixon had "earnestly" advised all Christians "who love evangelical truth to keep out of it."[25] His reasons were clear enough: (1) it had "no doctrinal basis", (2) it was neither nominally nor decidedly evangelical, (3) its leaders were "anti-evangelical", (4) its purposes included domination of church groups in "an attempt to form a papacy without a pope" and (5) it was autocratic, rather than democratic in method.[26] Others, like D. L. Pierson, noted that the movement was failing because it compromised truth by asking unbelievers for "the support of work [that is] peculiarly Christian".[27] And C. L. Laws, who in January, 1920, had supported the movement,[28] bitterly complained by June that the movement had "emasculated Christianity by eliminating all doctrinal emphasis from its pronouncements and appeals"; it had "proved so clearly that its unity of Christian effort is based on compromise."[29]

---

[25]A. C. Dixon, "The Inter-Church World Movement," The King's Business 11 (June, 1920), p. 551)

[26]Ibid., pp. 549-551.

[27]D. L. Pierson, "The Interchurch Movement - Some Conclusions," The Missionary Review 33 (July, 1920), p. 581.

[28]Laws, "The Interchurch World Movement," The Watchman-Examiner 8 (January 15, 1920), pp. 73-75.

[29]Laws, "Baptists and the Interchurch World Movement," The Watchman-Examiner 8 (June 10, 1920), p. 751.

But Christian union was urged sometimes for reasons other than those stated by the Federal Council of Churches (fellowship, spiritual unity and social service). Chief among these was the appeal to efficiency, economy and expediency. The correlation of this appeal to commercial enterprise was obvious. In response, the 1915 assembly of the Northern Baptist Convention at Los Angeles heard A. H. C. Morse declare that Christian union would "never come as a matter of commercial necessity". It could "not be settled by the manipulation of figures."[30] In addition, as C. L. Laws editorialized, conservation of energy might well lead to stagnation of forces. He was "not pleading for a divided church", yet he said that "Protestantism, broken into fragments, has always and everywhere produced a finer and nobler civilization than the great organic solidarity known as Roman Catholicism."[31] Simply put, Christian union would not be "a panacea for all ills." A "Holy United Protestant Church" would differ little "in the long run from the 'Holy Roman Catholic Church'".[32]

Christian Unity and Missions

Nowhere were arguments for union more forceful than in the sphere of the missionary enterprise. Simply, there were too few workers in proportion to the population served, on most mission stations, for there

---

[30]A. H. C. Morse, "Union," The Watchman-Examiner 3 (July 15, 1915), p. 897.

[31]Laws, "Christian Unity Again," The Watchman-Examiner 6 (October 31, 1918), p. 1353.

[32]Ibid.

not to be some form of cooperation. Yet patterns of cooperation were controlled by dependence upon and loyalty to mission boards and their churches at home. And denominational patterns in the enterprise proliferated, in spite of the effective work of independent agencies. A party spirit was not alien to missionaries; in The Missionary Review, many contributors like Julius Richter noted with disfavor "the divided state of Christianity and of missionary enterprise."[33]

Foreign mission fields presented many obstacles to Christianizing. The missionary enterprise never was easy, and there was common agreement that cooperative mission work was essential if "the strong antagonism" against Christianity was to be broken. This common perspective was put most forcefully in 1899 by A. T. Pierson, who often was referred to as the leading missionary statesman of his time; he exclaimed, "what a lamentable blunder, if not a crime, that Christian disciples should show a divided front, and often a dissentient spirit, even in missionary operations!"[34]

But the overriding problem was just what cooperation in mission work meant and entailed. Missionaries faced religious situations in their service areas which often they saw as intolerable. Primary among these problems was the "invasion" of already "occupied" territories by different mission groups. At issue was "a breach of the courtesy due

---

[33]Julius Richter, "Is Unity Possible To-day in Missionary Work?" The Missionary Review 25 (January, 1912), p. 30.

[34]A. T. Pierson, "The Movement Toward Church Union," The Missionary Review 12 (March, 1899), p. 168.

from one Christian body to another."[35] Missionaries viewed such invasion as "uncharitable", to say the least. More than one missionary felt, as did J. Heywood Horsburgh of China, that other missionaries were sent to the field, not to evangelize, but to "set up their respective churches."[36] They were being sent by home churches "to heathen lands in such a way as to divide the Christians into 'parties'".[37]

In consequence of this proliferating discourtesy, many missionaries aimed to establish comity. In its primary sense, "comity is simply Christian courtesy"[38]--the treating of each other as if both were equal. Practical considerations of comity included territorial division, discipline and administration, the use of funds, social services (including education and publishing, as well as medical services), and intermarriage of missionaries of different societies. And the larger issue of church union always lurked just behind the issue of comity--without comity there could be no union! Ecumenecists strove for full comity with ultimate union intended, while conservatives worked for at most a limited comity, with no ultimate union intended.

The arguments for a limited comity were similar to those for non-union. Conservative evangelicals emphasized that it was a matter of

---

[35] Ibid., p. 169.

[36] J. Heywood Horsburgh, "Are We Sowing Seeds of Discord?" The Missionary Review 12 (May, 1899), p. 357 ("condensed from The Christian (London)").

[37] Ibid.

[38] David Downie, in J. T. Gracey, ed., "Cooperation in Mission Work--A Round Table," The Missionary Review 13 (December, 1900), p. 914.

priorities. As D. L. Pierson said, "to our minds, the most important achievement first to be sought is the closer and more perfect union with our Lord as the head of the church."[39] If such happened, the questions of comity would "sink out of sight" as Christians were in "perfect obedience to His control."[40] The practical results of any dispute on the mission field would "be amicably settled by arbitration or division of territory."[41] The only acceptable unity was a unity of spirit in which each person and group was convinced that the other's distinctives should remain. The characteristic picture presented was that of "the broken rays of the rainbow" which only together "bring out to the full the beauty and power of the sunlight."[42]

The missionaries saw other potential dangers in a unified church. In arguing against a "national" (unified) church, Bishop J. W. Bashford of China presented several reasons which had interesting implications. A unified national church would not "best display" the universality of Christianity; with the dropping of denomination ties would come reduced income from "mother churches" in the west; political and racial nationalism would be fostered, with the consequent reduction of "world harmony"; world wide Christian unity might be immeasurably more difficult with

---

[39] D. L. Pierson, "Denominational Unity," The Missionary Review 24 (August, 1911), p. 619.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Richter, op. cit.

"forty or fifty national churches."[43] To quote more fully on this point,

> ... does the path to the higher, final unity lie through the organization of national units maintaining race characteristics, supported from the national treasury and devoted in all international conflicts to national ideals, or does it lie through a Presbyterianism and a Methodism and a Congregationalism, each universalized and belting the globe with its members, each accustomed to various races and sympathizing with the aspirations of them all. The prospects of the higher unity certainly lie along the latter rather than the former path.[44]

Furthermore, the most telling argument against unity was the reputed failure of any union efforts which required autonomy from the home churches.

Thus, conservative evangelicals encouraged comity as sufficient for the resolving of practical mission problems. Union seemed to raise insuperable problems; kindliness and cooperation could serve well as missionaries helped each other. But the issue of church union had one other notable aspect.

Church Union--Who Really Wanted It?

Conservative Christians who were interested in preserving Christian fundamentals wanted unity. But they became aware that pressures for union were not emanating from their ranks. As C. L. Laws put it, "we are far from organic church union."[45] He was not sure that he wanted it, in spite of his moderate perspectives. It was clear however, that many

---

[43]Bishop J. W. Bashford, "Shall We Build Up World Wide Denominations?" The Missionary Review 31 (September, 1918), pp. 666-669.

[44]Ibid., p. 668.

[45]Laws, "Baptists and Church Union," The Watchman-Examiner 6 (January 10, 1918), p. 37.

liberals did want it. Fundamentalists perceived that the liberals advocated union "on sentimental and utilitarian grounds."[46] But the conservative side believed that the only sufficient ground for Christian reunion was scriptural. And, as Bishop Bashford explained, "had the unity of the church been external, had only one form of need, one order of worship, one mode of baptism and prayer, one method of church government, been acceptable to God," it was incredible that such "had not been included in the Bible."[47] These were non-essentials; therefore, external union, which would seek to control them, was itself non-essential.

This issue of essentials came down to an issue of control. The conservative evangelical believed and taught that Christian love, in unity of spirit, was to be controlled by the spirit of God, in Christ. True union had to avoid "the dangers that come from power without divine control, the danger of the energy of the flesh without the energy of the spirit."[48] He did not want to participate in an organic union in which he could not document the power of God. It was not that God could not work in a human union, but that the basis of such union must be "the person of Christ", with obedience to "his truth."[49] If the declared objectives of union did not center on such a declaration, then non-divine control seemed inevitable, as men jockeyed for power.

---

[46]Laws, "Infant Baptism and Church Union," The Watchman-Examiner, 3 (July 29, 1915), p. 950.

[47]Bishop Bashford, "Shall We Build Up ...?" op. cit., p. 666.

[48]D. L. Pierson, ed., "Church Union, Real and Artificial," op. cit., p. 488.

[49]Morse, "Union," op. cit., p. 897.

In the end, conservatives came to judge that church union was unworkable. They had no confidence that they could control organizational affairs in an ecumenical body of believers. They felt that liberal leaders within union would continue to lead Christians away from "fundamental truth." Conservatives did not trust liberals; they believed that liberal leaders tended toward autocracy. Furthermore, they believed that union would require them to denigrate their dogma, that they would be asked to keep silent on fundamentals. To do so would be to compromise. In effect, if they could not teach or proclaim orthodoxy, they would be assenting to the non-orthodox views of modernist leaders. This they could not accept; they did not want to run the danger of unwittingly being placed in the opposing camp.

Conservatives feared also that they would be asked to play down their efforts at soul-winning. They believed that church union would water down evangelistic and missionary efforts. They saw efforts toward church union as contributing to the general immorality which was symbolized in the down grade movement. They believed that they would have less support from within the churches to authoritatively speak of sin and salvation. But most of all, they believed that church union would promote Christian social service at the expense of individual regeneration. On this point conservatives could not compromise. They could not legitimate a religious world which would deny them their efforts at personal evangelization. They could not accept the world which preached the gospel of Christian social service--"the social gospel"--as man's primary duty.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE GOSPEL OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL SERVICE-- "WHICH IS ANOTHER GOSPEL"

> The gospel of Christ, when proclaimed fully, fearlessly and lovingly, has lost none of its power to capture men and to transform their lives and reform communities.... Regeneration of the individual must precede the regeneration of society, and any form of work for the betterment of mankind that forgets this is doomed to failure.
>
> D. L. Pierson, 1913[1]

A Question of Power

In recognizing and facing social unrest, American churchmen were also admitting their current inability to respond adequately. They were perplexed. They wanted to present Christianity so that individual and social reform would be inevitable. If in the last part of the nineteenth century evangelical Protestants had responded (or failed to respond) more or less as one, it was clear by 1920 that two distinct perspectives competed for loyalties in evangelical service to "the unregenerate". Loyalties differed as to the efficacy of arrangement of effort. Would focusing on social reform then transform individuals, or would focusing on individual regeneration then transform, not only

---

[1]D. L. Pierson, ed., "A Question of Power," The Missionary Review 26 (June, 1913), p. 460.

individual lives, but society's life as well? To oversimplify the case: the primary liberal allegiance was to the prevalent spirit of social reform, while the primary conservative allegiance was to the also prevalent spirit of individual achievement as underpinning social reform. The liberal spirit was convinced that social reform, in creating better social conditions, would create also better men. The conservative spirit was convinced that individual regeneration also would "remedy every social and economic evil." To say then that the liberal spirit ignored individual salvation, or that the conservative spirit ignored social reform is to mistake the issue.

However, evangelical Protestants who became known as fundamentalists believed that evangelism (personal or mass) was the best means of social reform. In the words of D. L. Pierson, as he commented on "Billy" Sunday's evangelistic campaigns, where the church had "failed to appeal to the people it was because it followed too closely polemical and liturgical lines instead of being actuated by broad evangelistic purposes."[2] Pierson argued that the "social results" of mass evangelism included community reform as the primary evidence of "the power of the gospel." No "new methods of attack" were needed, if only the "old-fashioned gospel" were preached.[3] Thus conservatives placed previous evangelical ineffectiveness on failure to use the "powerful" methods

---

[2]Pierson, "Evangelism as a Means to Reform," The Missionary Review 26 (June, 1913), p. 435.

[3]Ibid., p. 436.

of traditional evangelism. And in this perspective, evangelists like "Billy" Sunday were demonstrating clearly that "the vitality of the old methods of soul-saving" were most effective.[4]

By way of contrast, the term "new methods" referred to any method which did not focus first (if at all) on personal salvation. Yet the evidence of such regeneration was a reformed way of life, and reformation had always been part of the evangelistic goal. Fundamentalists characterized the "new methods", therefore, as having goals of "moral reform" or "social service" prior to and independent of "individual conversion". R. A. Torrey, in an editorial in The King's Business, explained it as "a difference between religion and morality. Religion has to do with man's duty toward God, morality with his duty towards man."[5] He continued by carefully stating the need for clear priorities, that "in this day of social service", the church's sphere was "religion, first of all."[6]

At issue was the source of the power needed to compel men to right living. Fundamentalists believed that the social gospelers compelled morality--"social morality"--through improvement in social environment, peer pressure and government fiat. It was an attempt, in Torrey's words, "to materialize the church, to make it a social and

---

[4] Ibid.

[5] R. A. Torrey, "Religion and Morality," The King's Business 8 (September, 1917), p. 772.

[6] Ibid.

intellectual, rather than [a] spiritual factor."[7] Not that evangelists were to shun moral issues, but that they were to understand the relative ineffectiveness of the power of "social morality". Social morality governed actions, whereas "religious morality" governed motives. The opponent of the social gospel assumed that religious motives had far more potential for compelling right living than did social moral reform. He asserted that the "sure remedy" for--the "power to overcome"--evil and selfishness (exemplified by alcoholism and other social vices) was "personal faith in Jesus Christ," which issued in good works.[8] The conservative perspective always saw personal faith as the prime motivating factor in social amelioration.

Again, the picture presented was one of foundational truth. Earlier, Pierson had suggested that "social salvation and service is needed as truly as is individual salvation and personal work; but there is danger ... that the superstructure will be built before the foundations are well laid." Christian living--right living--"in the community" required first "a right relation to Jesus Christ," as foundational. Any system of social service (even if Christian in name) which did not build upon that foundation simply had little or no "staying power".[9] One could never be sure that such reform would be permanent.

---

[7] Ibid.

[8] D. L. Pierson, "The Sure Remedy," The Missionary Review 32 (May, 1919), p. 328.

[9] Pierson, "Men and Religion Movement," The Missionary Review 24 (October, 1911), p. 778.

Even though all evangelicals recognized that some converts did not "stick", conservatives argued that a "true" conversion would result in a "lasting" reformation.

The Church and the Social Question

The discussion of the source of power for individual and social reform did not cover the problem of appropriate church responses to social crises. Sociologically speaking, any different legitimation can be used to explain similar behavior; and conversely, differing behaviors can receive similar legitimations. Given the fundamentalist explanation that "true" social reform could come only after individual regeneration, just how was the "present duty of the church in helping to solve the social problem" to be understood and implemented?[10] How was the church to prevent a "lapse into mere humanitarianism without spiritual significance?"[11]

It certainly was not the case that evangelicals ignored social concern. They took seriously the apostolic mandate to "do good"; but many were aware of the temptations toward a "holier-than-thou" attitude. James M. Gray, later dean at Moody Bible Institute, had "sometimes thought there were some of us Christians who ... were almost afraid of good works lest we ... be classed with the humanitarians of the day."[12]

---

[10] John McDowell, "The Churches and the Social Question - II," The Missionary Review 31 (November, 1918), p. 832.

[11] A. T. Pierson, "The New Sociological Gospel," The Missionary Review 19 (August, 1906), p. 563.

[12] James H. Gray, Social Righteousness," The Watchword 19 (April, 1897), p. 97.

He emphasized "that the evils which exist in the community are our concern."[13] And A. T. Pierson repeatedly stated in his Missionary Review the basic principle that such a thing as "the crisis in cities involves the mission of the church";[14] it was not Christian to stand above it in "uppish" fashion. A stronger statement came from Hugh R. Munro of New York City when, after reiterating briefly a list of "discouraging" and "depressing" social conditions, he said that "it would be at once disloyal and criminal for a disciple of Christ to betray indifference to them."[15]

But fundamentalists taught their followers that the doing of good through social service was not the church's primary mission. In the editorial introduction to Monro's article, C. G. Trumbull briefly summarized the conservative evangelical position:

> The peril lies in the fact that Social Service as a sufficient movement for the uplift of humanity is a proffered substitute for the gospel. It attempts a short cut to that social regeneration which can never come to pass save as the result of the individual regeneration of men and women by the saving blood of Jesus Christ.[16]

His perspective was clear. The duty of the church was first of all to offer no substitute for an evangelistic effort to regenerate individuals.

---

[13] Ibid., p. 98.

[14] A. T. Pierson, "The Church and the Crisis in Cities," The Missionary Review 22 (May, 1909), p. 334.

[15] Hugh R. Munro, "Is Christ's Cross in Modern Social Service?" The S. S. Times 54 (November 9, 1912), p. 710.

[16] Ibid.

And after transforming "men's lives by the power of Christ," the church was to build "them up in Christian character."[17] Monro suggested that a reversal of this procedure could not work, because without individual regeneration there was no change in "the moral consciousness of the people." He emphasized that "the moral dynamic is the indispensable factor."[18] And in his strongest terms, he concluded that "before a social revolution can occur there must be a revolution in the hearts and lives of individual men."[19]

Moreover, the duty of social service involved the understanding that environmental manipulation, however desirable, did not change man's fundamental character. Conservative evangelicals understood that there were, in fact, good people in horrible environments, and "that men of the most depraved natures are found in the best environment."[20] Thus the duty of the church was to respond, not to man's conditions, but to his spirit, to his state of spiritual being. No social gospel could convincingly touch man's spiritual needs; it failed "to give the cross of Christ the predominant place." Only the "power of the cross" could transform man. Then, and only then, could such a man become "a factor for social progress."[21] In short, as C. S. Detweiler explained,

---

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

"social programs cannot take the place of the preaching of Christ as the object of faith and winning the allegiance of men to him."[22] And, as George Horr had explained some years earlier, "If Christianity has any message to men it is to their inner life--to the realm of thought and feeling and volition."[23] He could not believe that those who were preaching a gospel of social service were "very successful in winning men to a Christian life."[24]

On the other hand, conservatives did say that the church's effective response to social crisis by meeting men's spiritual needs required a knowledge of "not only the truth as it is in Christ ... but it must also know the times."[25] Evangelicals "must be able to interpret the unrest, the aspirations and the errors of that life, first to itself, and then to the world."[26] In short, the church could not ignore, in its work for man's redemption, that "the supreme question of the hour is the social question."[27] Specifically, social unrest commanded the attention of all men. Some responded with the Christian movement in social service, supported by the "social gospelers". But that involvement did not deny their conservative evangelical opponents an opportunity to

---

[22]C. S. Detweiler, "Personal Religion and Social Service," The Watchman-Examiner 7 (February 20, 1919), p. 229.

[23]George Horr, "The Distinctive Christian Message," The Watchman 85 (June 18, 1903), p. 7.

[24]Ibid.

[25]McDowell, op. cit., I, 31 (August, 1918), p. 583.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., p. 584.

serve or direct the social movement toward reform. The church's mission was to evangelize. And conservatives regularly asserted that individuals within local congregations were to participate directly and individually in this mission. But as individuals, they also were living in the world of social malaise, and as John McDowell suggested, they could "provide leadership to the ... social movement" which was responding to the unrest.[28]

With this perspective then, conservative evangelicals explained that the church as an institution had no right to maintain institutional loyalties to competing social and political perspectives; yet individual conservative evangelicals did have the right to respond favorably (or unfavorably) to various non-religious elements of social reform. This chapter continued with a brief discussion of some perspectives on two responses to "the social question"--labor unions and socialism. It must be understood that these perspectives were based on underlying assumptions that social reform, religious or otherwise, was individualistic in character.

The Church and the Working Man

As noted in chapter one, evangelicals were acutely aware of a basic antipathy of the working class to the predominantly middle-class manifestation of American evangelicalism. For example, A. T. Pierson very clearly noted that "we are compelled to admit one grave fact: there is already a great gulf fixed between the laboring man and the

---

[28]McDowell, op. cit., II, p. 832ff.

church, and the question is, can it be filled up or bridged?"[29]

It is true that conservative evangelical churchmen did not see the labor union as capable of reducing the gulf which Pierson described. There is plenty of evidence of anti-union perspectives throughout their literature. Yet there is much conflicting evidence, too. Frequently, they did not use anti-union arguments in their attempt to generate Christian responses to the laborer, although their explanations were clearly against any form of social service which did not first seek individual regeneration. In other words, conservatives sought to portray the world of "social service" as inadequate to meet the needs of the workingman, in the same way that "secular institutions" were inadequate. In this vein Charles Stelzle (who was a laborer and unionist prior to his ministerial training) superintendent of the Presbyterian Department of Church and Labor, explained: "the institution which is engaged in a work along social lines, leaving Christ out of its life and teachings, is ... failing at a most vital point,--because a man's greatest need is, after all, spiritual."[30]

But even Stelzle was dissatisfied with this explanation. In the same article, he suggested also that "the church should minister to the physical needs of men for the same reason that she ministers to their spiritual needs."[31] And further, the church "has confined herself

---

[29]A. T. Pierson, "The Laboring Man and the Church," The Missionary Review 14 (April, 1901), p. 297.

[30]Charles Stelzle, "The Workingman and the Church," The S. S. Times 45 (August 8, 1903), p. 397.

[31]Ibid.

too strictly to the purely spiritual."[32] He believed that the church had no right to hold itself "aloof from labor organizations", and churchmen could well "become leaders among those who are earnestly seeking guidance."[33] He presented evidence that even if the laborer rejected the church, he did have "a high regard for Jesus, the friend of the workingmen."[34]

Stelzle based his argument on one cardinal notion, that "redeemed" workingmen could participate in the solution of labor crises. The means was as direct as A. C. Dixon's "solution of all the [labor] problems": "get the laboring man and the business man together at the feet of Jesus and you have got them into right relations with each other."[35] This conservative evangelical goal was to seek "to bring them to accept Christ and Christ's teaching as the guide of their lives."[36] Obviously, then, conservatives could not support any form of social service which did not first evangelize; to do so was to support a plan which did not guarantee the laborer's ability to rectify his own situation--witness the ineffectiveness of many, if not most, union strikes. Simply put, they saw continued labor unrest as prima facie evidence of the inability

---

[32] Ibid.

[33] Stelzle, "The Workingman and His Leader," The S. S. Times 45 (May 9, 1903), p. 240.

[34] Ibid.

[35] A. C. Dixon, "Businessmen and Workingman," The Watchman 88 (May 10, 1906), p. 9.

[36] Ibid.

of unregenerate workingmen to solve their problems, in spite of support in union efforts from leaders of any Christian social service movement.

Even as many anti-unionists adamantly worked to suppress the labor union movement, some conservative evangelical leaders such as Stelzle accepted its inevitability. But he tried to explain to his readers its insufficiency. In his opinion, "an arbitrary division of men into classes", i.e., unionization, would in no way serve to heal "the bitterness in human society."[37] The emphasis was far too much on human rights, even if the working man was right in his demand for justice. Only Christianity could teach properly what men's duty was. He saw oppression, not as "a transgression of right", but as a break in "the law of love and brotherhood" which Christ taught.[38] Stelzle believed that if each alike, employer and employee, would do his duty, it would "carry one farther along than the mere granting of another's right."[39]

Thus the conservative side claimed that the social gospelers were wrong, not because they supported the workingman's effort to a better life, but because they tried to "change methods" rather than man. Many conservative evangelicals earnestly believed that unionism was a passing phase in a progressing world. They could not accept a particular position (of supporting unions) which they believed they would later have to repudiate. As Stelzle said, "if the church were to advocate a particular social theory which to-day may be accepted by a majority, it

---

[37]Stelzle, "Jesus Christ and Labor Troubles," The S.S. Times 48 (April 14, 1906), p. 227.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

would lay itself open to criticism in the next generation which shall have outgrown that system."[40]

Socialism--A Challenge to Individualism

This attitude was never more clearly evident than in conservative evangelical reaction to socialism, whether in Christian form or otherwise. Conservatives felt that the concept was ambiguous; as E. F. Merriam suggested in The Watchman, the term had "no clear and exact meaning even among those who call themselves socialists."[41] But conservative evangelicals saw a "present" danger in "Christian socialism"--which also was an ambiguous term. Many understood that term, however, in a very general sense as some kind of "a movement for the improvement of social conditions," under so-called "Christian" auspices.[42]

Again, conservatives did not see the problem as one of accepting basic Christian principles of love, brotherhood and service. In Robert Cameron's words, "The end is good but the means are inadequate."[43] He suggested that "the principles of 'Christian socialism'" would be introduced only "in proportion as each person in the world accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and practices his teachings."[44] But his premillennialist perspective was stronger. He asserted that for him "to plunge into

---

[40] Ibid.

[41] E. F. Merriam, "Socialism as a Movement," The Watchman 93 (March 23, 1911), p. 7.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Robert Cameron, "Socialism," Watchword and Truth 21 (March, 1899), p. 67.

[44] Ibid.

this stupendous task" of social improvement was "a waste of time, an act of disobedience to the churches' marching orders, and a profane contempt for a divine opportunity" to evangelize.[45] A. T. Pierson emphasized the point that "the socialism taught by Christ" was entirely divorced from that of its "modern advocates,"[46] Fundamentalists saw contemporary socialist doctrine, of whatever stripe, simply as incongruous with fundamental Christianity. For example, Pierson believed that "the degree to which socialism is expressed and advocated is the index of the measure also in which Christianity is trampled upon, and evangelical doctrine maligned and ridiculed."[47]

Nor did fundamentalists condemn socialism "for pointing out evils of the present condition of things," as James Lindsay of Scotland pointed out on the pages of Bibliothaca Sacra.[48] Lindsay said that socialism's problem was in a questionable "ethical value", in the kind of "moral incentives" it could provide, and in its deficient "spiritual environment."[49] By working to change the environment, rather than man, socialism challenged prevalent concepts that men, as individuals, must

---

[45] Ibid.

[46] A. T. Pierson, "The Menance of Socialism," The Missionary Review 21 (May, 1908), p. 881.

[47] Pierson, "The Growth of Socialism," The Missionary Review 20 (December, 1907), p. 881.

[48] James Lindsay, "Philosophical Tests of Socialism," Bibliotheca Sacra 67 (January, 1910), p. 102.

[49] Ibid., p. 103.

experience personal ethical, moral and spiritual regeneration before society could experience progress. In Lindsay's words,

> Nothing can be more superficial than to suppose that by merely changing the economic conditions or relations of man, you have made any noteworthy advance towards social perfection, in disregard of the free selection of his aims and the determination of his motives.[50]

Conservative evangelicals did understand that social evil existed.

Nevertheless, they rejected socialistic efforts to restructure society. They saw no evidence that "another social system" could help mankind, in spite of their "desire to bring about a change in society which will give every other man, woman, and child a fair chance."[51] Yet conservatives did admit, like Stelzle, who by now was moving away from conservatism to the social gospel, that "the economic system under which we are living is not ideal."[52] But they rejected socialism, believing that "true" Christianity was superior. The basic attitude of conservative evangelicals, those who were working to preserve the fundamentals of Christianity, was that "the gospel" had not been proven ineffective in facing social crises. They recognized that the church had not effectively met the needs of the workingman (and others like him who were seen as most likely to be attracted to socialist doctrines). But that was not a failure of true Christianity, but of those within the

---

[50] Ibid., p. 104.

[51] Charles Stelzle, "Why the Church Cannot Adopt Socialism," The S. S. Times 51 (February 13, 1909), p. 87.

[52] Stelzle, "Why the Church Need Not Adopt Socialism," The S. S. Times 60 (November 2, 1918), p. 601.

churches who had "gotten away" from the fundamentals. The church did not need socialism in order to work at social change; change would more readily come through the means of working for individual regeneration.

In brief, this perspective suggested, as Arnold V. C. P. Huizinga put it, that socialism and Christianity were "dramatically opposed to each other, both in motive and in spirit."[53] Simply put, socialism challenged individualism. The proper Christian response was to understand that "it has always been indeed the Christian principle and effort to regenerate and improve society through the individual, thus the leverage of, the principle for, and the approach to moral improvement is within."[54]

A False Route Toward Salvation

Yet the fundamentally-oriented evangelical believed that the greatest peril from those who pushed a "gospel of social service," was the implication that the doer of good works would thereby receive his own salvation. The conservative would forcefully assert that "service is not salvation"; no one "has ever saved himself that way--by serving another."[55]

The traditional evangelical Protestant doctrine of salvation--personal regeneration--has emphasized the place of faith, independent of

---

[53]Arnold C. V. P. Huizinga, "Social or Individual Regeneration," Bibliotheca Sacra 69 (January, 1902), p. 38.

[54]Ibid., p. 49.

[55]Editorial, "What is Man's Part in Salvation?" The S. S. Times 60 (November 2, 1918), p. 601.

good works. Salvation is a gift of God; and "there is nothing in religious works or faithful Christian living that can commend a soul to God."[56] A conservative evangelical could say that any "social gospel" ran the distinct danger of promising salvation to those who worked for social reformation and especially to those who did so in the name of Christ.

Fundamentalists argued that the social gospel was false, then, not because it described social evil, nor because it worked towards social improvement. The social gospel was false because it promised a salvation which would come as a consequence of social reform--both to the reformer and to the people who were helped. The social gospel was false because it did not recognize that salvation had already been accomplished by God, and was available to anyone who would believe that. The social gospel's conservative opponents taught that "man's part in salvation" was "just to believe that the thing has been done."[57] They said that salvation was "won for us" (not "by us") through the work of atonement which Christ accomplished on the cross. Thus an individual, in order to receive personal salvation, was to believe in Christ, the "One who has done it all."[58]

The task which brought men to this understanding was called "soul-winning". As those of this persuasion viewed it, then, the "true

---

[56]Lewis Sperry Chafer, "What Really is 'The Gospel?'" The S. S. Times 59 (December 22, 1917), p. 743.

[57]Editorial, "What is Man's Part ...?" op. cit., p. 602.

[58]Chafer, op. cit., p. 744.

business" of the church was soul-winning, not social service. Nonetheless, C. G. Trumbull, the editor of The Sunday School Times, said that "incidental" social service--"a certain amount of shadow-business ... of improving temporal conditions ... is all right."[59] Social service was at best an instrument, "a way of winning men ... to Christ."[60] It could never be an end.

False Worlds

The liberal identity in American evangelical Protestantism had been generated in intellectual ferment. Old dogmas did not suffice as they participated in and served a rapidly changing world. By the turn of the century, religious liberals were coming under increasing harrassment from their conservative opponents. Liberals wanted to assert God's goodness and his immanence. They believed that as men worked together to improve social conditions, that God's goodness was being manifest. They expressed the need, if they were to meet a modern world with the Christian message of redemption, to meet that world on its terms. They believed in the efficacy of rationalistic thought; they supported evolutionism. They were willing to question received truth, it if meant that they would be better able to speak to modern man. But on all of these issues, and more, they received conservative diatribes.

---

[59]Trumbull, "Is the Truth of Our Lord's Return a Practical Matter for Today?" The S. S. Times 58 (June 24, 1916), p. 390.

[60]Ibid.

Twentieth-century liberal Christians were as theologically diverse as nineteenth-century evangelicals had been. But many of them did come to agree that human collective effort was needed to challenge social problems. The liberal identity came, in a practical sense, to be associated with the "social gospel." Fundamentalists castigated liberals at the point where liberals believed that they could have been of greatest service to men. Liberals seemed less concerned with articulating particular doctrinal statements than with working to bring their message of the love of Christ to bear on social ills. But as they received fundamentalist harrassment on these issues, they usually failed to act charitably toward their opponents. Thus, both sides, which after 1920 entered into public controversy, exhibited similar lack of Christian charity, each to the other. Communication had been broken. Each side acted as if it could not understand the other.

In conclusion, the fundamentalist side of the debate saw the gospel of Christian social service as false. Fundamentalists asserted that it was a false means to God. They said that it was not God's true way toward individual and social regeneration. They called the individual Christian to administer his temporal situation in better fashion; but they claimed that the church was not called upon to improve society. Fundamentalists called the church to preach the "true gospel" of individual regeneration through the work of God in Christ. And they claimed that any other message belonged to the "false world" of "another gospel."

PART IV

A WORLD WITHIN

CHAPTER NINE

THE NARROWER WORLD OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT FUNDAMENTALISM, c. 1920

> We here and now move that a new word be adopted to describe the men among us who insist that the landmarks shall not be removed. "Conservative" is too closely allied with reactionary forces in all values of life. "Premillennialists" is too closely allied with a single doctrine and not sufficiently inclusive. "Landmarkers" has a historical disadvantage and connotes a particular group of radical conservatives. We suggest that those who still cling to the great fundamentals and who mean to do battle royal for the fundamentals shall be called "Fundamentalists." By that name the editor of THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER is willing to be called. It will be understood therefore when he uses the word it will be in compliment and not in disparagement.
>
> Curtis Lee Laws, July 1, 1920[1]

The New Old Theology

True worlds were those that had sufficient theological foundations. False worlds were those that undermined, compromised or mis-stated foundational truth. Thus fundamentalists saw themselves as defending old foundations of truth. They believed that a good contemporary superstructure of Christianity could be established only upon foundations of solid theology--old truth, newly reasserted. Yet one cannot understand fundamentalists without understanding how they perceived their "old"

---

[1]Editorial, The Watchman-Examiner 8, p. 834.

theology in relation to the "new". They perceived that the "new theology", non-evangelical and liberal, had supplanted the old; they "did battle" to re-establish "old theology, evangelical and conservative." The new theology was seen as marking "a process of disintegration and decay"; issuing in "lazy if not cowardly, indifference"; and wrongly assuming that "Christ was equally tolerant of all parties and beliefs."[2] Some thought that this new theology resembled Unitarianism; thus it was called "the old new theology" (italics mine).[3]

By way of contrast, the "new old theology" required clear distinction on several issues. Stated perceptions of these distinctions became prevalent in conservative evangelical literature, especially after 1915. Typical of these was J. W. Weddell's "Twelve Points of Difference Between the Old and the New Theology," which appeared in one of the last issues of Watchword and Truth before its discontinuance in 1921. He specified among his points of contrast, orthodox views that "the Bible is [not contains] the Word of God"; that "Jesus Christ is the [not a] son of God"; that his birth was supernatural, not natural; that "man is God's special creation," not "the product of evolution"; that only God saves, not the environment; and that "The gospel was sent to save men out of the world," not "to save the world" (italics his).[4]

---

[2]C . L. Laws, ed., "The Snare of Liberalism," Watchman-Examiner 2 (November 6, 1914), p. 1418.

[3]Editorial, "The Old New Theology," The Watchman 89 (March 7, 1907), p. 6.

[4]J. W. Weddell, "Modernism," Watchword and Truth 43 (February, 1921), p. 50.

But fundamentalists sensed from their opponents that the place of such beliefs in a modern society was disreputable. Whereas the dominant nineteenth-century evangelical thought was more or less orthodox, early twentieth-century liberal Protestant leaders had come to reject some, if not many, orthodox tenets. Higher criticism progressively had won over adherents among American theologians, and by the second decade of the twentieth century many ministerial students studied such "liberal" or "modernist" teachers. And by 1910, seminary professor Walter Rauschenbusch had joined pastor Washington Gladden as premier promoters of "the social gospel." With this influx of modern perspectives, both on the Bible and on practical theology, conservatives perceived themselves as holding religious views from which these modern perspectives clearly were divergent.

Thus these supporters of the old theology found themselves in a distinctly different position from the one which their forefathers faced. They saw their "new old theology" as fighting to maintain a hearing in Protestantism. The distinctives of their theology were in contrast to, and incongruent with an increasingly influential religious liberalism. As Otto Koenig of Germany indicated in The Watchman, "to hold by Jesus Christ as the incarnate God, the supernatural beginning of a new life, the sole Hope of the world, is to expose ourselves to the contempt of so-called advanced and liberal thinkers, and to be out of harmony with the prevailing set of opinions."[5] And, he continued,

---

[5]Otto Koenig, "The Virgin Birth of Christ," The Watchman 89 (November 28, 1907), p. 10.

> ... the current of educated thought runs strongly against such beliefs and every thoughtful man among us feels that a great danger to our faith today comes from the force with which that current swings us around, and threatens to make some of us drag our anchors, and drift, and strike and go to pieces on the sands.[6]

It had become clear that orthodox evangelical distinctives were accepted no longer as dominant. Rationalism had confronted nineteenth-century pietistic evangelicalism, and had divided that tradition. Conservatives perceived that rationalism was carrying the day, that their orthodox proclamations were of lessening value to the modern mind.

And as regards that state of affairs, some fundamentalists understood that they were not entirely faultless. In a most remarkable article, entitled "The Orthodox Responsible for Heresy", John Marvin Dean charged that the "revival of ancient infidelity" was in part the responsibility of the orthodox, of those "who believe in the fundamentals of the gospel." Their forefathers "often failed to hold their disciples to the faith." Many lacked spirituality, possessing a "dead orthodoxy," others were "stingy" with their money. Some refused to evangelize, and others misrepresented their opponents or accused them "of the worst possible motives." Furthermore, many sneered at the term "social service"; they needed to understand the importance of making the world a better place in which to live as a natural consequence of evangelism. Some abused the doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ, whereas others were guilty "of undervaluing proper Biblical criticism." Some disclaimed cooperation with science, as well as religious cooperation.

---

[6] Ibid.

Finally, Dean charged that "orthodox people" were to be blamed for their failure to provide "a modern, up-to-date, popular and accessible orthodox literature." Liberal propaganda had not been sufficiently countered with good orthodox literature. It was "not enough to denounce" liberalism![7]

Above all, the old theology had asserted God's supernatural intervention into human affairs. Conservatives believed that the new theology operated with wholly distinct assumptions: these were anti-supernatural, the essence of rationalism. They saw rationalistic thought as carrying the day, and as overwhelming their conservative supernaturalistic religious views. Their feelings of being overwhelmed included the realization that "the discussions of the points of difference between ... the old and the new theology" were "fruitless and unsatisfactory."[8] And, as they had projected early in the conflict, the "real enemies" were not the actual points of difference of specific methods of propagation of the gospel, but "certain philosophical presuppositions that bias the interpretation of the facts."[9] Propagators of what they called the old theology, newly reasserted, unequivocally were opposed to the newly dominant rationalism which they believed could not accept the assumptions of supernaturalism. To reject supernaturalism was to reject

---

[7]John Marvin Dean, "The Orthodox Responsible for Heresy," The Watchman-Examiner 8 (November 25, 1920), pp. 1453-4.

[8]Editorial, "The Old and the New Theology," Watchman 89 (February 7, 1907), p. 7.

[9]Philip A. Nordell, "Old Foes with New Names," Watchman 81 (July 12, 1900), p. 11.

accepted testimony--evidence--of truth. For the conservative evangelical, such as Edward H. Dewart, this rejection was "perilous to Christian faith."[10]

Appraising their position, then: fundamentalists saw their "new old theology" as facing a disreputable existence. Even though their doctrine was not especially new, its place in relation to the mainstream of theological currents was new. And that position was threatened--it needed much stronger anchoring. Fundamentalists believed that what was needed was a "new interpretation" of "the old truth."[11]

The Old Truth

The point has been made repeatedly that national awareness of social crisis seemed to erupt in the last decades of the nineteenth century. However, prior to that situation, many had understood that the Christian religion could and did provide individual reformation or regeneration. Supporters of evangelical Protestantism understood also that such persons who experienced regeneration would maintain social justice as they worked against social evil. With the rise of religious liberalism came additional perspectives which encouraged men to work for social salvation independently of any evidence of a supernatural regenerative force for individuals. Thus fundamentalists believed that

---

[10]Edward H. Dewart, "Some Characteristics of Current 'New Theology,'" Bibliotheca Sacra 58 (October, 1901), p. 639.

[11]Cf. George B. Taylor, "The Old Truths and Their New Interpretations," Watchman-Examiner 3 (May 18, 1915), pp. 335-6.

they needed to reaffirm the old truth that salvation--regeneration, reformation, re-birth--came from God's work alone, and that to individuals only. They expected any subsequent social amelioration to be a by-product only--not a goal. Liberalism, from this point of view, at best ignored supernatural intervention, if it did not actively work against "those particular truths vital to salvation."[12]

The old truth which fundamentalists believed should be re-emphasized was that "new spiritual life from the Spirit of God" was an absolutely necessary ingredient to man's individual, and thereby social, regeneration.[13] This reformation, thus salvation, was possible only in consequence of the work of the supernatural God in Christ, in his life, death and resurrection. If the old truth, in these terms, was man's "means of salvation," then any effort "to dispense with clear, sharp, definite conceptions of the person and work of the world's Redeemer," was also an effort "in error".[14] In other words, fundamentalists asserted that an individual could appropriate the old truth by supernatural means only; for him to assume natural means was wrong. To work for one's own salvation denied the supernatural, the divine, God himself, his role to remake men. To reject supernatural intervention was to assume that man could "do it himself".

---

[12]Editorial, "A 'Truth and Error' Number," The King's Business 10 (August, 1919), p. 693.

[13]Editorial, "The Brotherhood of Man," The Missionary Review 26 (November, 1913), p. 858.

[14]Editorial, "Not Doctrine But Christ," The Watchman-Examiner 3 (October 14, 1915), p. 1319.

Therefore fundamentalists proclaimed that the old truth implied only one process as to "how to become a Christian". The truth of salvation could come only to those who accepted this "how to".[15] They said that by denying the basic means, liberals were denying appropriate access to truth. And without proper access, truth was inaccessible--it was unavailable. Thus fundamentalists saw liberals' claims to truth as folly, not primarily because of what was said, but because those claims were understood as not having followed the proper path to truth.

And how did fundamentalists explain "how to become a Christian?" Characteristic responses included the following elements:[16]

1. intellectual assent to a historical Jesus, whose life as the Son of God was reported accurately in the Bible (which was infallible, inspired by God), who lived, died on a cross and was raised from the dead;

2. acceptance of Jesus' life and death and resurrection as God's ground for his forgiveness of one's own misdeeds and inherent sinful nature--a "step of faith", an act of "believing in Jesus as the Christ"; and

3. acceptance of God's work in the regeneration of personal character, with consequent obedience to the law of love, as the expected and natural consequence of a faith which was supernaturally given.

As the editors of The Watchman-Examiner summarized, "We are Christians if we have accepted Christ as Savior, if we are manifesting Christ's

---

[15]Editorial, "How to Become A Christian," The Watchman-Examiner 2 (October 22, 1914), p. 1390.

[16]Compiled from various sources, prevalent in the literature, and including only those elements with which most, if not all, are in agreement.

life in our character, and if we are giving our life to his service."[17]

Fundamentalists suggested that the whole truth was violated if any of the above elements of the means to salvation was rejected. Thus they put one who denied Christ's deity in the same class as one who denied the need for personal regeneration to be primary. As Frank Hugh Foster, one of conservative Congregationalism's leading lights, specified in an analysis of liberal literature, "they ... will deny all our fundamental principles, and convert our gospel into a 'different gospel.'"[18] For a liberal to violate the "old truth" on any single point was sufficient to be stigmatized by fundamentalists as denying all of truth.

The old truth was most directly an explanation of how one received salvation sufficient for regeneration--or, as Billy Sunday would say, the old truth was that "the road to Heaven was by Christ's blood"; it was a "redeeming truth".[19] Conservatives paraphrased this theme in an infinite number of ways, as they contrasted the old and the new theologies. For instance, C. L. Laws explained that the old truth had been "concerned chiefly with the Christian religion as a redemptive power." Not that the new theology had been "indifferent to the human need of redemption," but that it had been more "concerned to square the doctrine

---

[17]"How to Become a Christian," op. cit.

[18]Frank Hugh Foster, "The Limits of Theological Freedom," Bibliotheca Sacra 58 (April, 1901), p. 239.

[19]Billy Sunday, "The Road to Heaven," Watchman-Examiner 5 (January 18, 1917), p. 77.

of Christianity with current forms of thought."[20] The emerging fundamentalists believed that their old theology explained how to make men become holy; the new theology explained how to make men do good. Simply put, they believed that the doing of good could not provide a salvation sufficient for regeneration.

"The Great Divide"

After 1915, conservative evangelicals accepted and articulated this distinction between themselves and the liberals with increasing rigor. They began to understand that they were entangled in irreconcilable differences. They understood, for example, that conceptions of Christ's deity were at stake; they were dealing with "the question of the Christ",[21] as William B. Riley suggested in his opening address at the world's conference on Christian Fundamentals at Philadelphia, May 25, 1919. Riley said that Christianity was already divided as to "Christ and his deity, Christ and his authority, Christ and his redemption." He noted that this conference, and others like it, were called "to confirm men in the 'faith once for all delivered'"; to re-capture control of theological schools and literature; and to "roll back this tide of infidelity."[22] This theme was reiterated also in the call to the General Conference on Fundamentals which preceded the Northern

---

[20] C. L. Laws, "The Old and New Theologies: Spiritual Cause and Effect," The Watchman-Examiner 5 (April 5, 1917), p. 421.

[21] William B. Riley, "The Great Divide or Christianity and the Present Crisis," The Watchman-Examiner,7 (June 26, 1919), p. 997.

[22] Ibid., p. 999.

Baptist Convention in Buffalo in June, 1920. The call's purpose was, in part, "to stay the rising tide of liberalism and rationalism and to preserve our principles in their simplicity and purity."[23]

But even though the differences were clear and were seen as irreconcilable, the goals of fundamentalists prior to 1920 were not schismatic. Rather they were towards purification, towards "demolition of the subterfuges", as Harriet Thomson of St. Louis so graphically put it.[24] Many conservative evangelicals within the denominational churches were not fighting for denominational division or separation, but for unity--a unity based on the old gospel. For example, Curtis Lee Laws, a leading voice among Baptists, repeatedly and emphatically denied that fundamentalists wanted to split the Baptists: "quite the contrary. We ... will not lead or countenance any secession movement."[25] And prior to the Baptist Fundamentals Conference in 1920, J. C. Massee stated that "the earnest wish of the committee calling the conference is to stop our drift toward division and estrangement by stopping the drift toward rationalism and materialism."[26] Yet conservatives within such

---

[23]Signed by one hundred-fifty-six Baptist leaders, with J. C. Massee and Curtis Lee Laws heading the list; "General Conference on Fundamentals," Watchman-Examiner 8 (May 20, 1920), p. 652.

[24]Harriet Thomson, "The Sound of a Going in the Tops of the Trees," The King's Business 11 (August, 1920), p. 736.

[25]Curtis Lee Laws, "That Fundamentals Conference," Watchman-Examiner 8 (May 27, 1920), p. 688.

[26]J. C. Massee, "The Baptist Fundamentals Conference," Watchman-Examiner 8 (June 10, 1920), p. 754.

denominations believed that the liberals would have been happy to see them secede. In response, conservatives maintained that "the movement for conserving and promoting the fundamentals ... is not destructive but constructive, ... a unifying rather than a divisive movement."[27]

This non-pugnacious self-characterization during the early stages of fundamentalism came from moderates like Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of The Watchman-Examiner. It was he who had coined the term "fundamentalist";[28] however, his irenic personality was noted by all. He was "not ashamed" of the term "fundamentalist", but was more interested in "the cause represented by the name."[29] He believed that the cause belonged to "aggressive conservatives--conservatives who feel that it is their duty to contend for the faith."[30] Laws was pinpointing a sore point among conservatives. If their perspectives were less viable in American Protestantism, that state of affairs might well have been partly in consequence of their failure "to maintain truth"--their lack of aggressiveness. Surely, if truth was to be restored, its defense needed to become more aggressive. Fundamentalists believed, after all, that proponents of higher criticism and of the social gospel had wrested from conservative hands important positions of influence within

---

[27]C. L. Laws, "What Does the Fundamentalist Movement Portend?" Watchman-Examiner 9 (June 9, 1921), p. 710.

[28]Cf. the chapter head-quote.

[29]Laws, "Fundamentalism is Very Much Alive," Watchman-Examiner 9 (August 4, 1921), pp. 974-975.

[30]Ibid.

the churches. Conservative spokesmen believed that they themselves needed to become equally aggressive. Liberal strength needed to be met with conservative strengths. This attitude was firmly entrenched by 1921 when C. L. Laws argued that it was now "high time" for "aggressive conservatives commonly called fundamentalists," to engage "in controversy without bitterness or malice."[31]

Other conservatives with similar views demanded a response to the "guerilla warfare" which "the enemies of orthodoxy" were waging. They did not perceive this as a call to divisiveness, however, but to "loyalty, courage, determination, and unswerving devotion to the great principles of the gospel."[32] The Bible institutes, in particular, emphasized this positive aggressiveness. Fundamentalists saw the Bible Institutes as supplemental church educational facilities. For example, J. H. Sammis characterized the Bible Institute of Los Angeles to be "not a rival of the theological schools", but in fact one of their supporters, inasmuch as The Bible School sent some of its graduates on to seminary training.[33] Fundamentalists' calls for support of Bible schools were made on pleas to support truth, not to divide churches.

In brief, if "the great divide" was between liberalism and conservativism, early fundamentalists wished to let it be known that they

---

[31]Editorial, "'The Baptist' on a Rampage," Watchman-Examiner 9 (August 4, 1921), pp. 974-975.

[32]M. A. Matthews, "Christ's Call to the Colors," Watchword and Truth 38 (July, 1916), p. 176.

[33]J. H. Sammis, "A Modern School of the Prophets," Missionary Review 31 (February, 1918), p. 120.

were pushing for Christian unity on the fundamentals. They rejected liberal claims of conservative divisiveness; they refused to be characterized as schismatic. Yet they proudly called themselves aggressive, and regularly called their followers to "do battle" for truth. They wished to maintain the liberal-conservative distinctions, but they wished also to unify evangelical Protestantism around "Christian fundamentals" (even if that meant voluntary resignations from church organizations by liberals). They faced a dilemma of anomalous goals--namely, to preserve their own conservative evangelical identity, and to restore a fragmented Protestantism to unity around that identity. The subsequent virulent controversies of the 1920's indicated the practical impossibilities of maintaining both goals at the same time. And the history of the fundamentalist movement since that time has shown quite clearly that it has dropped the second goal. After 1920, fundamentalists finally acceded to the practical reality of "the great divide." But in the years before 1920, many conservatives hoped for a re-unified evangelicalism.

"Truth in Its Relations"—Practical Fundamentalism

Yet there were practical realities in which early fundamentalists participated that did indicate the movement was to have a distinctly militant identity within American Protestantism. As a movement with growing distinctiveness, it was "very much alive." But conservatives had difficulty in comprehending their opponents' alleged intent to degrade orthodoxy. Fundamentalists were facing liberals who seemed eager, intentionally and professedly, to oust conservatives from

leadership positions. They felt that liberals simply were disregarding them; or, more importantly, they felt discounted and discredited. However, they participated in the same kind of discrediting activity toward liberals.

For instance, fundamentalists had become the primary supporters of the ever-expanding Bible institutes and missionary training schools. They used these schools to maintain the old theology in the face of the colleges and seminaries whose professors were "adrift": the influence of liberalism had discredited the traditional schools. But fundamentalist charges against liberalism in the schools were essentially quid pro quo, in spite of cautions given by their conservative colleagues against returning unfair characterizations. As C. L. Laws suggested, there were "too many people who are ... ardent theologians, who do not make the impression that they are good Christians."[34] He understood that "the natural effect" of one's becoming grounded in his convictions was a "censorious" attitude which "made it next to impossible for men to grant honesty of conviction to others."[35] In reality, the aggressive conservatives participated in the same kind of discrediting of others that they themselves felt.

Nevertheless, fundamentalists' ever-spoken demand was for the declaration of "truth". They condemned the seminaries, for example,

---

[34]Laws, "Having Christ's Spirit," Watchman-Examiner 4 (September 17, 1916), p. 1191.

[35]Laws, "Censoriousness," Watchman-Examiner 3 (April 8, 1915), p. 422.

for an adamant refusal to declare, in creedal fashion, their stand on various Christian doctrines. Liberal opponents responded that "no creed ... will safeguard the gospel" without "the guidance of the Holy Spirit."[36] In contrast, conservatives lauded the Bible schools for forthright "declarations of faith",[37] i.e., creedal statements to which all participants were asked to subscribe. If only the seminaries would "make a clear statement of their teaching and their attitude on the fundamentals of the Evangelical faith", then "unjust criticism" (from conservatives) would have no occasion to arise.[38]

Thus, practical fundamentalism centered on creeds, and not deeds. Truth had no relationships, as it were, unless it was accompanied by an open declaration of faith in specific statements, conceived as statements of truth. Fundamentalists battled for such proclamations, and as the editor of The Watchman-Examiner suggested, his paper "will be proud to be ranked with extremists when it is battling for truth. It will continue to oppose error and to stand valiantly for the faith delivered once for all to the saints."[39] Fundamentalists believed that a verbal profession of faith was, in effect, the guarantor that what followed in

---

[36]George E. Horr et al., "The Newton Reply," The Watchman-Examiner 6 (December 19, 1918), p. 1561.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Editorial quote from The Presbyterian. "A Presbyterian View of Our Seminary Controversy," Watchman-Examiner 7 (January 16, 1919), p. 71.

[39]Editorial, "The Watchman-Examiner Will Continue," 7 (December 18, 1919), p. 1740.

either word or deed was Christian; the Christian faith was to be aggressively evangelistic in statement and surely evangelistic in effect. And that faith--that sincere belief--undergirded their movement.

The World of a Newly Named Movement

If, as Gary Clabaugh has said, "the nature of Protestantism is schismatic,"[40] then in the end fundamentalism must be included under that characterization. But in spite of the divisive controversies in the 1920's, which Norman Furniss has characterized as the fundamentalist "flowering",[41] early fundamentalists found schismatic tendencies repulsive. It is true that they did not agree on every point when they interpreted basic orthodox dogma, yet they shared much of it. They shared also a combative mood, and an aggressive spirit, but again in various manifestations. In short, they were diverse adherents to an aggressive conservativism. Many were premillennialists, some decidedly were not. Denominational distinctives remained among them. Interdenominational coordination of activities on a large scale was minimally effective, with the notable exception of the organizing meeting of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919.

The fundamentalist world within American Protestant evangelicalism was a narrower world than its evangelical predecessors had experienced. Early fundamentalism could be seen as an attempt at "coercing a sense

---

[40]Gary Clabaugh, Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Company, 1974), p. 1.

[41]Norman Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1919-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

of oneness", to follow William E. Leuchtenburg's designation, in his analysis of political fundamentalism.[42] Its ideals were for an energetic Christianity unified upon "the fundamentals" of faith. Early fundamentalists clarified their stance in opposition to a modernism which they saw as ever-increasing in its influence. Louis Gasper has characterized the movement, in light of the fundamentalist-modernist controversies, as representing "a conservative reaction against ... modernists,"[43] and Willard Gatewood called it a militant offensive against religious modernism.[44] More directly, early fundamentalists, in their reactions, saw themselves as aggressively defending and conserving an old unitary evangelical Christianity against the divisiveness of non-evangelical rationalism-modernism. In their minds, they were trying to stop division, to bring all Christians by name back "to the faith"--the faith, wholly evangelical. That they would fail in that task, and that their actions would continue to be perceived by others as schismatic, they did not anticipate. They had formed informal denominational splinter groups, yet did not perceive that formal division was inevitable. Their older spokesmen had grown up in a world of evangelical oneness, and to that they wished to return: they believed that truth was one. Their new world was to be more severely restricted

---

[42]William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 705.

[43]Louis Casper, The Fundamentalist Movement (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), p. 13.

[44]William Gatewood, Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism and Evolution (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969).

than the old, but only because they wished to prevent a cause for a return to the divisiveness which rationalism had generated when it started more directly to influence traditional Christianity.

Yet one could go so far as to argue that rationalism had influenced the conservatives, in that their attempt at anchoring their faith was a response to the "looseness" of earlier evangelicalism. B. B. Warfield and his successors, including J. Gresham Machen, most certainly valued the role of reason in their methods of defending the faith. As Ernest R. Sandeen has suggested, early fundamentalists were neither ill-informed, ignorant, obscurantist, retreatist, nor rural. Urban based, they were vigorous supporters of evangelism and missions, and were not at all adverse to using up-to-date methods and technology to propagate their message.[45] They were anti-rationalist and anti-naturalist on the point of supernatural intervention in human history. They believed that a non-supernaturally influenced Christianity was unreasonable; such was not the faith which they had received.

An objective portrayal of the influence of the emerging world of fundamentalism is indeed most difficult. For example, as Sandeen has carefully noted, The Fundamentals pamphlet series (1909-1914) "is regularly referred to as the epitome of fundamentalist belief," a "movement to conservative evangelicalism."[46] But he found it hard to assess

---

[45]Ernest R. Sandeen, The Origins of Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 18.

[46]Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 189.

the influence of that series of statements. In the same way, the influence of early fundamentalism is hard to assess. Fundamentalists at first seemed moderate; later they were strident. Early, many leaders were characterized well as irenic; later many seemed irascible, and bickering among themselves seemed to increase.[47] In the same way that Sandeen has characterized The Fundamentals pamphlets as "a typical product of that progressive era,"[48] so might one describe the beginnings of the emerging fundamentalist movement. Its leaders were in the front ranks of those defending the old American-style evangelicalism, even if in its new form it was to become more stringent, and more militant.

By 1920, fundamentalism had rejected rationalism. It also had rejected progressivism, but it did not cease to appear as a reform movement. It sought to reform American Protestantism; it felt that liberalism had overstated its case; it believed that ... infidelity reigned. Fundamentalists sensed that modern religious impulses rejected conservative views. They believed that German inspired radical higher criticism prevailed, that German inspired infidelity had not been conquered--even if the German nation had been vanquished. It may be that national military success prompted conservative religious leaders to "go after" rationalistic radical German theological thought. At any rate, early fundamentalist efforts to control modern religious impulses did seem to

---

[47] Ibid., p. 206.

[48] Ibid., p. 207.

parallel governmental efforts to control industry, transportation, finance and commerce. To this end of controlling religious divergences they sought national organization.

"God Hath Spoken" to a World of Religious Crisis

In 1890, American evangelicals had faced a world of social unrest which required religious responses. As religious spokesmen, they had supported the nineteenth-century highly individualistic yet progressive social system. But they faced the reality that their evangelical proclamations had not forestalled labor unrest, agrarian discontent or political and capitalist abuses. Their dominant views of Christian social morality, individualism and national destiny were being put to the test. They perceived deterioration in national life. Some form of social service was needed that would stimulate social reform--and evangelicals believed that this social service needed to be specifically Christian.

However, the conservatives among the evangelicals interpreted this state of affairs in national life as attributable also to deterioration in the spiritual life among churchmen. The social crisis had pinpointed also a spiritual crisis. Evidence for this spiritual crisis included most specifically the challenge of higher criticism upon biblical authority. This rationalistic influence challenged their "old theology", whereas social unrest in general had challenged mainly their Christian perspectives on society. Thus, conservatives, who earlier might well have supported majority efforts to manage a social destiny, now were trying to preserve Christianity's destiny, at least the kind of evangelical impulse which had brought them to the faith which they held.

They came to perceive themselves as trying to restore "the old truths" to the mainstream of Christianity. They felt that modern conceptions of Christian social service, which had arisen in response to social crisis, missed the point of the old evangelical ideal of individual reform. In having come to their position, the conservatives had established what they perceived as a minority view on how best to resolve the social and religious "crisis".

Therefore, by 1920, the conservative successors to the late nineteenth-century evangelical tradition faced what they perceived as a religious crisis. In recognition of, and in response to their newly-perceived minority status, they saw the need for "correlation" of their diverse interests and activities. The premillennialists' majority among them temporarily put aside their prophetic concerns in order to focus on problems common to them all.[49] In May, 1919, over six thousand of them met in Philadelphia for the first "World's Conference on Christian Fundamentals." Their proceedings were published under the title, God Hath Spoken, and the conference's participants formed the short-lived "World's Christian Fundamentals Association."[50]

The bulk of the conference report was a transcription of the twenty-five addresses by fifteen of their leaders. These addresses essentially were restatements of "fundamental" doctrinal commentaries, in much of the same style as the articles which had appeared earlier in

---

[49]See Appendix.

[50]Bible Conference Committee, God Hath Spoken (Philadelphia, 1919). The movement died in the early 1940's.

The Fundamentals pamphlet series (four speakers, R. A. Torrey, J. M. Gray, L. W. Munhall and W. H. Griffith Thomas, had contributed to The Fundamentals, as well as the father of Joseph Kyle, M. G. Kyle). Each address was a detailed explanation of a specific point in Christian doctrine. No direct evidence of rationalistic influence on such doctrine was seen, yet the speakers clearly were establishing their positions in contrast to those of the higher critics.

Furthermore, the participants who attended the conference, as well as other readers of its reports, were instructed as to the nature of the crisis in "the realm of spiritual thought": the "Great Apostasy was spreading like a plague throughout Christendom." Perils were everywhere, but especially in the presence of false teachers in "high ecclesiastical positions." Cardinal scriptural doctrines were being rejected "as archaic and effete," and were being replaced by statements which concurred with modern rational thought.[51]

The Bible Conference Committee (which had called this World Conference on Christian Fundamentals) contrasted these evaluations with an emphasis on the opportunities for serious Bible study which the perceived apostasy had stimulated. Had God spoken to this peril? Surely he had. What have the Scriptures said? The fundamentalists addressed their audiences with the assumption that "God Hath Spoken, God could bring edification and enlightenment ... concerning the great fundamental doctrines of the faith 'once for all delivered unto the saints,'"

---

[51] Ibid., p. 7.

through the messages given by men "whose hearts God has touched."[52] Thus, in the face of the peril of apostasy, the conference speakers asked all believers to avail themselves of the opportunities of serious Bible study, to understand that God had spoken, and to listen to God's messengers of truth.

Yet to engage in Bible study and to describe biblical truths could not suffice in any practical challenge to the influence of what had come to be labeled as "modernism". A closer cooperation was needed between the men and institutions which saw themselves as defending truth. Whereas the participants in the Evangelical Alliance Conference of 1887 saw themselves as needing to cooperate in the face of social crisis, the fundamentalists of 1919 saw themselves as needing to cooperate in the face of a most serious religious crisis--modernism. If, in fact, the respective denominations entered into a federation agreement (as conservatives feared that they might), the participants in the Fundamentals Conference were prepared to find for themselves "a new fellowship," based on Biblical authority, Christ's deity and orthodox doctrine.[53] Such a fellowship implied a practical cooperation and "correlation" which could be most effective in the area of Bible schools, religious magazines and periodicals, Bible conferences and interdenominational foreign missionary societies.[54]

---

[52] Ibid., p. 9. For the complete introduction, see the Appendix to this dissertation.

[53] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[54] Ibid., pp. 18-25.

But the Fundamentals Conference emphasized even more clearly that "the highest form of work in which the child of God can engage is the work of prayer." The proof that their fellowship was "practical" was to be seen in their collective "intercessory prayer for world-wide revival" (italics theirs). It was prayer for evangelization, for a "mighty harvest of saved souls."[55] The essence of practical fundamentalism was in such a call to prayer. Fundamentalists explained that to say that "God Hath Spoken" was not sufficient to prove that he had, in fact, revealed himself. That proof could come only as numbers of new converts could so testify. The call to prayer for revival, then, was a call for evidence (from God) that he was still speaking. No other practical evidence than that of individual regeneration would or could prove that fundamentalism had a manifestly viable alternative to the modernists' social service.

John Roach Straton most precisely presented this perspective in his address, "the Secrets of Success in the Early Church."[56] He said that no individual, church or denomination could be "truly Christian" that did not enthusiastically evangelize.[57] He noted that the emphasis of the early church was "overwhelmingly on the winning of souls"; yet the early Christians did place "all necessary emphasis upon social service." But such social service as was necessary could not be

---

[55] Ibid., p. 25.

[56] Ibid., pp. 405-426.

[57] Ibid., p. 412.

"substituted for personal salvation."[58] The place of social service was to be as a by-product of individual regeneration. But more importantly, for Straton, the successes of the early church clearly were not through the means of social service. Rather, the early Christians "won their victories through personal work for the regeneration of individuals."[59] In this argument, Straton emphasized that each believer, preacher and layman alike, was not "really measuring up to his possibility under God, unless he is engaged in some branch of service that makes for the salvation of the lost."[60] And in his conclusion, Straton re-emphasized the point that this practical activity with its intended results simply was not possible except through the power of prayer. His critique was that "the modern church does everything else better than it prays," and that prayer was the only sufficient resource open to the church.[61]

So early fundamentalists believed that God had spoken, and that Bible study and prayer would help each Christian to hear God's voice. Yet that activity alone could not serve to maintain fundamentalist worlds. The proof that God had spoken came through individual conversions. Fundamentalists believed that social service could not prove God's activity, since supernatural intervention was not required for one to do good. Sociologically speaking, fundamentalists, with an

---

[58] Ibid., p. 413.

[59] Ibid., p. 415.

[60] Ibid., p. 416.

[61] Ibid., p. 424.

ever-increasing emphasis on successful soul-winning, had found in those efforts a very strong legitimator for their worlds. The continual presence of new converts served to justify the distinctives which they wished to maintain--their militant character developed as they literally fought to maintain these distinctives.

CHAPTER TEN

BUILDING A PLAUSIBLE WORLD--THE PROBLEM OF SURVIVAL

> The Fundamentalist movement ... believes it can prove that in reaching men and winning them to Christ, in building up virile churches, and in accomplishing the Great Commission's task of evangelization, it will shine by comparison with those churches that talk social service and practically make it a substitute gospel, but are not famed for doing the things fundamental to the progress of the Christian faith.
>
> William Bell Riley, 1921[1]

Maintaining True Worlds

Fundamentalists did not invent intellectual formulations which were intended to describe world-maintenance procedures. Yet clearly they knew that maintenance of their religious perspective required the creation of appropriate social bases, which Peter Berger has called "plausibility structures".[2] He explicated further that "the reality of the Christian world depends upon the presence of social structures within which this reality is taken for granted and within which successive generations of individuals are socialized in such a way that

---

[1]William Bell Riley, "Fundamentalism and the Faith of the Baptists," Watchman-Examiner 9 (August 25, 1921), p. 1088.

[2]Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., Anchor Books edition, 1967), p. 45.

this world will be real to them."[3]

Berger and Luckmann elsewhere have argued that in order for such world maintenance to be successful, two processes must be at work: 1) "the totality of the institutional order should make sense ... to the participants," and 2) "the totality of the individual's life must be made subjectively meaningful."[4] By 1920, fundamentalists clearly were working to establish these processes. From the conclusion of William Bell Riley's opening address to the World's Conference on Christian Fundamentals at Philadelphia, May 1919, came a most clear set of fundamentalist determinations. These effectively illustrate his understanding of these world maintenance processes, and also indicate the objectives which were laid before the conventioners. Bell declared that "we are determined, under God, in this conference and in kindred conferences ...

> [1] to confirm the men in the 'faith once for all delivered', who still hold the same; ...
>
> [2] to bring light to young men and young women, who have in youth, struggling with the problems created by the infidelity of the hour, thought they might walk in the same and live....
>
> [3] that in the educational propaganda, the men who, by means fair and foul, have captured our schools shall not continue to control them....

---

[3] Ibid., p. 46.

[4] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., Anchor Books, 1966), p. 92.

[4] that those magazines and newspapers that have stood four-square for God and his Word shall have our favor and our assistance, to the point of true success....

[5] that on every point on this continent and on every other continent, every man and woman who fights the fight of faith, and who contends earnestly for that which is to be found in God's Word, shall have the fellowship that is in Christ Jesus, and the company of us that are with them and back of them are ready to live for them and die with them, if need be, in the 'faith once for all delivered'....

[6] that even our enemies, who have sought to take the crown from the brow of our Christ, who have tried by every power at their command to discredit him among their fellows, shall be brought to the point at least where they shall understand the impossibility of their task; for we are determined

[7] to roll back this tide of infidelity, not by our own power, but by the power of the God whose prophecy is the mould of history."[5]

At issue was the survival of a movement's identity, whether fundamental religious truth in its application was to be seen primarily as evangelistic or primarily as social concern (or involvement). Just how was one to apply truth to social problems? How could meaningful change in human life occur? Which "ideal type" was to provide the model for effectiveness in Christian endeavor? Fundamentalists responded that social involvement was a "false evangelism",[6] and that the movement toward establishing the primacy of social service had drifted away from the evangelical tradition. Fundamentalists perceived the identity of their tradition as primarily evangelistic, and they saw their stance as

---

[5]Bell, "The Great Divide or Christianity and the Present Crisis," Watchman-Examiner 7 (June 26, 1919), p. 999.

[6]Cf. Brenda M. Meehan, "A. C. Dixon: An Early Fundamentalist," Foundations 10 (January-March, 1967), pp. 53-55.

"aggressively conservative". They perceived that identity as losing face in the larger social movements--including Christian efforts--toward amelioration of social problems. It was not that fundamentalists intended to become aloof from active social involvement (which may well have been the consequence of their actions, especially during and after the controversies of the 1920's,[7] but that they intended to reestablish in aggressive fashion the primacy of their evangelistic identity.

In other words, to use a sociological perspective, as conservative evangelicals became aware of the precariousness of their traditional evangelical worlds, they sought to maintain--even to rework--the common identity of those worlds as evangelistic. They described the essence of that identity in "fundamentals" terms, in the images of "foundational truth". They perceived Christian fundamentals as evangelistic in application, and any Christian response to social crisis which was not overtly and manifestly evangelistic simply was off the foundations.

The maintenance of fundamentalist religious worlds was in the end a problem of legitimating a peculiar kind of religious practice, namely, soul-winning. It was not that the practice was peculiar to the American evangelical tradition, but peculiar to a culture which was straining to make sense out of drastic social change. That culture's leaders were prepared to believe, in the face of the evidence of drastic change, such as the fantastic increases in numbers of aliens, that the only conceivable means for social reform lay in collective efforts at serving groups

---

[7]Cf. David O. Moberg, The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972).

of needy individuals. They treated as unrealistic the claims of those who preached a gospel which demanded individual regeneration as requisite to social reform.

Fundamentalism seemed to be out of step with its times. In order to survive, fundamentalists needed to convince others of the truth which they held so dearly. They could not claim that their religious beliefs were held successfully without evidence that souls were saved--that individuals were being converted as a consequence of their efforts at soul-winning (even if they claimed that God did the saving, it was clear that had they not made the effort, far fewer people would have experienced conversion). But in their efforts to be successful, and to prove the validity of their claims, early fundamentalists were not out of step with their times. They demanded that their voices be heard in church councils. They sought order. They expected that larger support of their religious perspectives would bring back the order which had been lost with the introduction of liberal perspectives. They believed that evangelical truth had been the primary foundation of the nineteenth-century social order which had been so progressive in spite of the Civil War.

Thus successful fundamentalist practice of religion centered on an aggressively evangelistic deliverance of the truth which had been imparted to the believer in that same way. The totality of the true believer's life had become meaningful by means of another's efforts at soul-winning. The truth which had been imparted to him had changed his life. It had given him new meaning in that he now had the potential to

change the lives of others. He believed that social reform was possible indeed through the linking effect of the successful practice of soul-winning. Evangelistic efforts, and specifically the practice of individual soul-winning, became then the primary means for maintaining fundamentalist worlds. Successful evangelism ensured their survival.

"Avoiding Danger Ahead"

The social reality of rival theological legitimations within evangelicalism had been exacerbated by late nineteenth-century social unrest and religious change. The emerging fundamentalist movement crystallized in its clearest form the practical theology of evangelistic means toward individual, and thereby social reform. Its opponents legitimated Christian social service as their basic practical theology. But on its own merits, social service was not castigated by the aggressively conservative. Fundamentalists did not deny that Christians needed to apply the love of Christ in service to others. Their problem of survival came to the forefront when they perceived that some of those who, in practice, pushed social service, also "attacked the strongholds of righteousness",[8] i.e., orthodox evangelical truth. Fundamentalists needed to maintain that truth. If, as M. A. Matthews specified, "The supreme business of the Church is to lead sinners to Christ,"[9] then each believer was to understand his role as:

---

[8]M. A. Matthews, "Christ's Call to the Colors," Watchword and Truth 38 (July, 1916), p. 176.

[9]Ibid., p. 178.

1) renewing "allegiance to and defense of the doctrines of the Bible";
2) practicing those doctrines consistently in "humility, self-denial, sacrifice, reverence, piety and holiness";
3) a "constructor of Christian citizenship" in "efficient leadership"; and
4) an "evangelist."[10]

In sum, Matthews argued, "every effort of the church, if the church meets the call of God, must be an evangelistic effort."[11]

Premillenialists (whom Sandeen has seen as comprising fundamentalism) especially saw their identity in evangelistic terms. Many of them long suspected that it was their evangelistic endeavor which was the stumbling block to further acceptance of their doctrinal perspectives. In commenting on this situation, T. C. Horton, associate editor of The King's Business, asserted that premillennialism had the support "of pretty much all of the best known evangelists, and a very large proportion of those ministers who are doing an aggressive soul-winning work in their pastorates."[12] It was not that other conservatives were not evangelistic, as much as that the premillennial view was unabashedly so.

However, evangelists faced not only unregenerate persons, but an era of massive social and religious change. Many orthodox Protestant observers spoke of "the passing of the old order and the coming of the

---

[10] Ibid., pp. 176-178.

[11] Ibid., p. 178.

[12] T. C. Horton, "Unprincipled Methods of Post-millennialists," The King's Business 9 (April, 1918), p. 277.

new".[13] The editor of The Missionary Review in January, 1919, was convinced that "there is danger lest many good things of the past be given up and that other less substantial be substituted". He most succinctly stated the conservative evangelical position that "there is danger lest reformation take the place of regeneration".[14] In November, 1920, the issue was still before him; in short,

> ... the tendency to "broadness" as an expression of charity among theologians, and the passion for social service as an expression of brotherly love among the laymen combine to lessen or entirely destroy the sense of the importance of faith as a foundation for Christian character, and a dynamic for truly sacrificial service.[15]

He continued by suggesting that "the elements of a man's faith must be of first importance in ... the fruit of his service."[16] That faith was to be evangelical, for oneself and for others.

Therefore, fundamentalists believed that the avoidance of potential danger to and the maintenance of one's faith was by means of evangelistic activity. The danger which they perceived was that the faith for which evangelical Christianity stood would cease to be held dear in the face of social change. The emerging fundamentalists most clearly, and without reticence, articulated this view of a changing world. They believed that only their evangelistic efforts--the essence of the faith to which they had become heirs--could "anchor" them

---

[13] Editorial, "Avoiding Dangers Ahead," Missionary Review 32 (January, 1919), p. 7.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Editorial, "Shall We Drift or Steer?" Missionary Review 33 (January, 1919), p. 957.

[16] Ibid.

successfully against the onslaught of modernity.

Looking Backward

Many suggestions have been made as to just how the origins of fundamentalism are to be interpreted. Prominent among these is Ernest R. Sandeen's thesis that fundamentalism "was comprised of an alliance between dispensationalists and Princeton-oriented Calvinists, who were not wholly compatible, but managed to maintain a united front against Modernism until about 1918."[17] LeRoy Moore, Jr., has responded that Sandeen offered "an essentially theological definition," which is unsatisfactory.[18] It cannot answer the questions raised when other "curious coalitions that actually occurred" during the controversies of the 1920's are observed.[19]

Nevertheless, in a more recent article, Sandeen has said that a "semantic muddle" had characterized most discussions of fundamentalism.[20] He specified correctly that

> ... the word "Fundamentalism" was invented just at the opening of the anti-evolution controversy, creating the mistaken impression that Fundamentalism was simply the name of a party opposing modernism in its many manifestations, a party created purely out of reaction to contemporary issues (italics mine);[21]

---

[17]Ernest R. Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," Church History 36 (March, 1967), p. 82.

[18]LeRoy Moore, Jr., "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen," Church History 37 (June, 1968), p. 195.

[19]Ibid., p. 196.

[20]Sandeen, "Fundamentalism and American Identity," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 387 (January, 1970), pp. 56-65.

[21]Ibid., p. 57.

and further he said that the movement was rooted in millenarianism and biblical literalism. Yet as Sandeen has admitted, not all early fundamentalists were millenarian;[22] neither did they have equivalent conceptions of the doctrines of inspiration. And although his statement that "the Fundamentalist movement of the 1920's was only the millenarian movement renamed"[23] is partly controvertible, Sandeen rightly has indicated that the anti-evolution crusade is not to be seen as definitive for the movement.

Since 1930, fundamentalists have institutionalized their ideals in new denominational settings, as well as in several associations for education, broadcasting and literature. Newer groups like the National Association of Evangelicals provide clear evidence of conservative group solidarity which largely was absent before 1920. Fundamentalists have used evangelistic crusades and revivals, but such are not fundamentalistic in origin. Neither is the concept of the Bible institute fundamentalistic in origin, although since 1900 most Bible and missionary training schools have been supported almost entirely by conservatives and fundamentalists. Crusades, revivals and training schools all are products of nineteenth-century (or earlier) evangelical ideals. For instance, it is ironic that D. L. Moody is sometimes characterized as an early fundamentalist. Although the premier Bible institute of the twentieth century bears his name, most of his own educational endeavor

---

[22] Ibid., p. 59.

[23] Ibid.

focused on his Northfield Institutes, which provided an essentially secular education under Christian auspices. The Bible institute originally was designed to provide a briefer period of theological training for those interested in the church's support services, and particularly for those interested in service in the missionary enterprise.

Fundamentalism has taken on many forms, moderate through extreme. Where then, can one find any characterizations of the movement which might prove suitable for most discussions? Such characterizations cannot be found in formulations of dogma or doctrine, since fundamentalists were "people of many theological positions and personality types",[24] to use Martin Marty's words. And Sidney Mead has suggested that the movement "was as broad, complex, and amorphous as what it opposed."[25]

If, as was suggested in chapter two, that the uniqueness of fundamentalism is to be seen in the way that its legitimations were presented and responded to, or that its distinctiveness is a matter of location--a militant stance--within a social-religious milieu, then further clarification is in order. By way of brief summary, this dissertation has shown that conservative evangelicals in America, during the period 1890-1920, saw themselves as participating in churches which were threatened with apostasy. In addition, they taught that they were under a mandate "to preach the gospel" in its simplest terms as they engaged in a

---

[24]Martin Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 217.

[25]Sidney Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 183.

world-wide evangelistic effort. They expected, with the aid of divine power, and with a spirit of conquest, to replace paganism with the Christian faith. Yet they faced a world which they perceived as lowering its standards, even to the point of being intent upon suppressing truth. Also, they faced a loss of control in denominational life. And they regularly encountered those who wished to replace the old-fashioned practice of soul-winning with Christian social services as the church's primary encounter with the world.

In short, fundamentalism emerged as the evident precariousness of old evangelical worlds came into conservative awareness. Fundamentalists fought, not only variously for a plethora of doctrinal standards, but especially for a declaration of their concept of the doctrine of human salvation which emphasized the unique work of the supernatural God in individual regeneration. They saw themselves as aggressively declaring truth (this truth!). They simply would not count among their number those who refused openly and clearly to declare such an understanding of this means for salvation.

This conception of their concerns can help to explain some of the incongruities that this dissertation has shown (as well as those which have been documented in other discussions of fundamentalism). For example, strict millenarian apocalyptic doctrine would seem to have precluded any effort at making a better world through evangelistic efforts, since the more quickly the world degenerated, the closer in time would be the apocalypse. Yet the missionary enterprise had broad-based evangelical support, and especially from those who held to premillennial doctrines.

Thus, fundamentalism can be seen as having taken specifically combative positions, both in analysis of and in response to a world of social and religious change. That their opponents saw these positions as incongruous with the spirit of the times says little about the potential effectiveness of fundamentalist legitimations. Many have wondered that fundamentalism thrived--that it has survived with evidence of health and vitality. But fundamentalists believed that the only basis for the survival of their worlds was a miraculous intervention of God's working in the affairs of individual lives. Continued evidence of personal regeneration became practical evidence that their worlds could survive--that their doctrinal perspectives had validity.

Therefore, it is here suggested that a unifying and identifying characteristic of the fundamentalist movement was in its aggressive efforts toward more clearly delineating a doctrine of a supernaturally inspired personal salvation and in militantly re-establishing its practical validity. Their true worlds were those in which entrance was open only to those who understood "the redeeming work of Christ" in individual lives. This explanation is foremost a matter of practical legitimation, even though their explanations were supported by dogmatic and doctrinal statements. Within fundamentalism, the totality of the individual's life could be made subjectively meaningful as he understood the doctrine of personal redemption. And the totality of his institutional order could make sense to him as he, with an aggressive spirit, learned to place other participants of his worlds (individually) in either redeemed or non-redeemed categories. As the case stood, one

either had personally received the "faith once for all delivered", or he had not. To have suggested otherwise was simply to have provided evidence of infidelity. Fundamentalists, by their definition and by their practice, were "determined to roll back" what they perceived as tidal-wave proportions of this infidelity, a total lack of support for an individualistic, God-provided salvation. They conceived of themselves as combatting modernism with its social gospel. And they cared little that the world which surrounded them came to see their behavior as ridiculous.

LIST OF REFERENCES

LIST OF REFERENCES

I. Primary Sources

A. Journals

1. Listing

The Bibliotheca Sacra: A Religious and Sociological Quarterly. Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra Company. 1844-. G. Frederick Wright was editor from 1884-1921.

Christian Fundamentals in School and Church. Monthly. Minneapolis: The Northwestern Bible Training Institute, 1920-1927. William Bell Riley was editor. His magazine was entitled School and Church 1918-1920; after 1927, he called it The Christian Fundamentalist.

The King's Business. Monthly. Los Angeles: The Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1910-1970. R. A. Torrey was associate editor from 1910-1918; T. C. Horton from 1910-1925. This journal was intended to be the successor to The Fundamentals pamphlet series.

The Missionary Review of the World. Monthly. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1888-1939 (new series). J. M. Sherwood and A. T. Pierson were co-editors until Sherwood's death in 1890. A. J. Gordon and J. T. Gracey were associate editors until 1895, when Gordon died. Gracey died in 1897. D. L. Pierson assumed the editorship upon his father's death in 1911.

The Presbyterian and Reformed Review. Quarterly. Philadelphia: 1890-1902. B. B. Warfield was the sole editor. Becomes The Princeton Theological Review, 1902.

The Sunday School Times. Weekly. Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Publishing Company, 1858-1965. Henry Clay Trumbull was editor from 1875-1903; his son Charles G. Trumbull from 1903-1941. John D. Wattles, son-in-law of H. C. Trumbull, published the paper until his death in 1893.

The Truth; or Testimony for Christ. Monthly. St. Louis, 1874-1897. James H. Brookes was the editor. After January, 1890, published by the Gospel Publishing Co., Chicago, which was purchased by Fleming H. Revell of Chicago in 1893. Merged with The Watchword in 1897.

The Watchman: A Baptist Journal. Weekly. Boston: The Watchman Publishing Co., 1819-1913. George D. Horr was editor from 1893-1904; E. F. Merriam was associate editor from 1901-1913, when the journal merged with The Examiner (New York) to form The Watchman-Examiner, under the editorship of Curtis Lee Laws.

The Watchman-Examiner. Weekly. New York: The Watchman-Examiner Publishing Co., 1913-1971. C. L. Laws was editor from 1913-1940.

The Watchword. Monthly. Boston: The Watchword Publishing Co., 1878-1897. A. J. Gordon was editor until his death in 1895. Robert Cameron, as new editor, merged this journal with The Truth upon the death of James H. Brookes in 1897.

Watchword and Truth. Monthly. Boston: Watchword and Truth Publishing Co., 1897-1921. Robert Cameron was sole editor. After 1900, the editorial and publishing offices moved around, ultimately to the west coast, first in Seattle, and then to Vancouver, B. C., Canada.

2. Bibliographic note.

The journals consulted for this study were chosen primarily on the basis of the reputation of their editors and contributors within fundamentalism after 1920. Fundamentalist publications even now reprint regularly the sermons and articles of the editors of and contributors to earlier journals, such as the monthlies, Watchword and The Truth which were combined in 1897 into Watchword and Truth. Each of these three journals was specifically millenarian, and each had a circulation of 3000, more or less.*

The influence of The Sunday School Times within conservative evangelicalism cannot be underestimated. At the turn of the century its circulation hovered around 150,000, but dropped to around 110,000 when its editor, Charles G. Trumbull declared a specifically millenarian

---

*Circulation figures are derived from George Batten's Directory of the Religious Press of the United States (New York: George Batten, 1892), and from N. W. Ayer & Sons's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer & Sons, Inc., 1916). See also the preface to this dissertation for further discussion of these sources.

position for his paper in 1915. Prior to 1915, this weekly paper's contributors usually expressed conservative views, but any enthusiastic supportor of the Sunday-school could contribute. Thus Walter Rauschenbusch's byline could be seen along with A. T. Pierson's. This paper regularly featured articles which promoted the missionary enterprise, and along with Bible study guides it regularly provided helps for good citizenship. John Wannamaker had been Henry Clay Trumbull's primary supporter in the paper's development during the 1880's-1890's.

Funk and Wagnall's initiated the second series of its monthly The Missionary Review of the World in 1888, and hired for its editor a Presbyterian pastor, A. T. Pierson of Philadelphia, who rapidly was becoming known as America's greatest missionary statesman. During the entire period under study, its circulation remained at 10,000. This journal rapidly became the nation's primary source of collated statistics on the missionary enterprise. The journal de-emphasized evangelical doctrine arguments and promoted discussions of problems and methods in missionary work.

Academic reviews, although smaller in circulation, nonetheless influenced many teachers of theology. B. B. Warfield initiated in 1890 and edited until 1902 the quarterly Presbyterian and Reformed Review, which managed a respectable circulation of 2000. This journal became the primary vehicle for the wider discussion and elaboration of the so-called Princeton Theology. It should be noted here that although J. Gresham Machen was Warfield's successor at Princeton, his influence within fundamentalism was not felt until after 1920. Machen's Christianity and Liberalism first appeared in 1923. Oberlin's Bibliotheca Sacra maintained a consistent circulation of 1000 under the editorship of G. Frederick Wright, prominent geology teacher and student of archaeology.

From the plethora of denominational newsweeklies was chosen the Baptist paper, The Watchman (Boston) which was second only to The Examiner (New York) with which it merged in 1913 to form The Watchman-Examiner. Although The Watchman's circulation approached 20,000, the combined journal exceeded The Examiner's circulation of 25,000 by only 5-10,000 in the 1910's. In its earlier years The Watchman was not uniquely conservative, as it tried to service the entire denomination. Thus Shailer Mathews and A. C. Dixon both contributed, the one very liberal, the other conservative. Fundamentalist Baptists saw Mathews as a primary instigator of modernism at the University of Chicago Divinity School, and they looked to Dixon as one of their leaders. He edited The Fundamentals pamphlet series (1909-1914) from 1909-1911. The term "fundamentalist" was first used by The Watchman-Examiner's editor, Curtis Lee Laws, to refer to the conservative theological position which he articulated.

Millenarian fundamentalist leaders of the period after 1900 supported especially the Bible schools. R. A. Torrey, who taught first at Moody, then at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) was associate

editor of The King's Business, the official organ of the school. It's circulation reached 10,000 by 1920. William Bell Riley, founder of the Northwestern Bible Training School in Minneapolis also edited its paper, Christian Fundamentals in School and Church after 1918. Riley was the prime organizer of the World's Conference on Christian Fundamentals which was held in Philadelphia in 1919, and whose proceedings were published as God Hath Spoken.

B. Other Primary Sources

Bible Conference Committee. God Hath Spoken: Twenty-five Addresses Delivered at the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals, May 25 to June 1, 1919. Philadelphia: Bible Conference Committee, 1919.

Biblical and Theological Studies, by the Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.

Dixon, A. D. The True and the False. Baltimore: Wharton, Barron & Co., 1890.

[_____, ed.] The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth. 12 vols. Testimony Publishing Co. (1909-1914). A. C. Dixon edited vols. 1-5, 1909-1911; Louis Meyer edited vols. 6-10, 1911-1913; and R. A. Torrey edited vols. 11-12, 1913-1914. These pamphlets were distributed gratis by Lyman and Milton Stewart of the Union Oil Company.

The Evangelical Alliance. National Perils and Opportunities: The Discussions of the General Christian Conference Held in Washington, D. C., December 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1887, Under the Auspices and Direction of the Evangelical Alliance for The United States. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1888.

Hodge, Charles. What is Darwinism? New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874.

Loomis, Samuel Lane. Modern Cities and Their Religious Problems. New York: The Baker & Taylor Cc., 1887.

Machen, J. Gresham. Christianity and Liberalism. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. A Theology for the Social Gospel. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917.

Strong, Josiah. Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1885.

Warfield, Benjamin Breckenridge. Biblical and Theological Studies. Edited by Samuel G. Craig. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1968, 1952.

_____. The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible. Edited by Samuel G. Craig. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948.

II. Secondary Sources

A. On Fundamentalism

Ban, Joseph D. "Two Views of One Age: Fosdick and Straton." Foundations 14 (April-June 1971): 153-71.

Bass, Clarence B. Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 1960.

Bradbury, John W. "Curtis Lee Laws and the Fundamentalist Movement." Foundations 5 (January 1962): 52-58.

Clabaugh, Gary K. Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Co., 1974.

Cole, Stewart Grant. The History of Fundamentalism. New York: R. R. Smith, 1931; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963.

Dollar, George W. "Early Days of American Fundamentalism." Bibliotheca Sacra 123 (April-June 1966): 115-23.

_____. "Facts for Fundamentalists to Face." Bibliotheca Sacra 124 (April-June 1967): 144-49.

_____. A History of Fundamentalism in America. Greenville, S. C.: The Bob Jones University Press, 1973.

Edmondson, William Douglas. "Fundamentalist Sects of Los Angeles, 1900-1930." Ph.D. Dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1969.

Eenigenburg, E. M. "The Critical Distinctions Between the Reformed Tradition and Fundamentalism in Eschatology." The Reformed Review 18 (December 1964): 3-17.

Ernst, Eldon G. "American Baptists and the New World Movement, 1918-1924." Foundations 8 (April 1965): 161-71.

Furniss, Norman. The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1919-1931. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954.

Gasper, Louis. The Fundamentalist Movement. The Hague: Mouton, 1963.

Gatewood, Willard B., Jr. Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism and Evolution. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

Handy, Robert T. "Fundamentalism and Modernism in Perspective." Religion in Life 24 (Summer 1955): 381-394.

Harrington, Carroll Edwin. "The Fundamentalist Movement in America, 1870-1920." Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, 1959.

Harvey, Robert L. "Baptists and the University of Chicago, 1890-1894." Foundations 14 (July-September 1971): 240-50.

Jorstad, Erling. The Politics of Doomsday: Fundamentalists of the Far Right. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970.

Livingstone, William D. "The Princeton Apologetic as Examplified by the Work of Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen: A Study in American Theology 1880-1930." Ph. D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1948.

McBirnie, Robert Sheldon. "Basic Issues in the Fundamentalism of W. B. Riley." Ph. D. Dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1952.

Maring, Norman H. "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible, 1865-1918 (Part I)." Foundations 1 (July 1958): 52-75; "Part II)," Foundations 1 (October 1958): 30-61.

Marsden, George M. "Defining Fundamentalism." Christian Scholars' Review 1 (Winter 1971): 141-51.

_____. The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Cast Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

_____. "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis." The Evangelicals. Edited by David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975.

_____. "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon: A Comparison with English Evangelicalism." Unpublished manuscript, in preparation for publication in Church History, 1976.

_____. "The New School Heritage and Presbyterian Fundamentalism." Westminster Theological Journal 32 (May 1970): 129-47.

Mattson, Vernon Eugene. "The Fundamentalist Mind: An Intellectual History of Religious Fundamentalism in the United States." Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Kansas, 1971.

Meehan, Brenda M. "A. C. Dixon: An Early Fundamentalist." Foundations 10 (January-March 1967): 53-55.

Moore, LeRoy, Jr. "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen." Church History 37 (June 1968): 195-202.

Morison, William James. "George Frederick Wright: In Defense of Darwinism and Fundamentalism, 1838-1921." Ph. D. Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1971.

Nelson, Clyde K. "Russell H. Conwell and the 'Gospel of Wealth.'" Foundations 5 (January 1962): 39-51.

Nelson, Roland Tenus. "Fundamentalism and the Northern Baptist Convention." Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1965.

North, James Brownlee. "The Fundamentalist Controversy Among the Disciples of Christ, 1890-1930." Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Illinois (Urbana), 1973.

Peterson, Walter Ross. "John Roach Straton: Portrait of a Fundamentalist Preacher." Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1965.

Pfeifer, Michael P. "Aspects of Fundamentalism in the 1920's." M. A. Thesis, The University of South Florida, 1972.

Roark, Dallas M. "J. Gresham Machen: The Doctrinally True Presbyterian Church." Journal of Presbyterian History 43 (June-September 1965): 124-38.

_____. "J. Gresham Machen and His Desire to Maintain a Doctrinally True Presbyterian Church." Ph. D. Dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1963.

Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. Dispensationalism Today. Chicago: Moody Press, 1965.

Russell, C. Allyn. "J. C. Massee, Unique Fundamentalist." Foundations 12 (October-December 1969): 330-56.

_____. "J. Gresham Machen, Scholarly Fundamentalist." Journal of Presbyterian History 51 (Spring 1973): 41-69.

_____. "John Roach Straton, Accusative Case." Foundations 13 (January-March 1970): 44-72.

Sandeen, Ernest R. "The Baptists and Millenarianism." Foundations 13 (January-March 1970): 18-25.

_____. "Defining Fundamentalism." Christian Scholars' Review 1 (Spring 1971): 227-33.

_____. "Fundamentalism and American Identity." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 387 (January 1970): 56-65.

_____. "The Fundamentals: The Last Flowering of the Millenarian-Conservative Alliance." Journal of Presbyterian History 47 (March 1969): 55-73.

_____. The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

_____. "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism." Church History 36 (March 1967): 66-83; reprinted as The Origins of Fundamentalism. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968.

Shelley, Bruce. "A. J. Gordon and Biblical Criticism." Foundations 14 (January-March 1971): 69-77.

Shinn, Robert W. "Fundamentalism Revisited: A Review Essay." Foundations 14 (October-December 1971): 361-65.

Southard, Samuel. "The Moral Force of Fundamentalism." Foundations 8 (October 1965): 346-50.

Straton, Hillyer H. "John Roach Straton: The Great Evolution Debate." Foundations 10 (April-June 1967): 137-49.

_____. "John Roach Straton: Prophet of Social Righteousness." Foundations 5 (January 1962): 17-38.

Szasz, Ferenc Morton, "Three Fundamentalist Leaders: The Roles of William Bell Riley, John Roach Straton, and William Jennings Bryan in the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy." Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Rochester, 1969.

Tinder, Donald George. "Fundamentalist Baptists in the Northern and Western United States, 1920-1950." Ph. D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1969.

Wells, David F. and Woodbridge, John D., eds. The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975.

Wenger, Robert Elwood. "Social Thought in American Foundamentalism." Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1973.

B. Other Secondary Sources

Abell, Aaron J. The Urban Impact on American Protestantism 1865-1900. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943.

Berger, Peter L. The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1967.

Berger, Peter L. and Luckmann, Thomas. The Social Construction of Reality. Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, 1966.

Boller, Paul F., Jr. American Thought in Transition: The Impact of Evolutionary Naturalism 1865-1900. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1969.

Carter, Paul A. The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches 1920-1940. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954.

_____. The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age. Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971.

Clebsch, William A. From Sacred to Profane: The Role of Religion in American History. New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

Fine, Sidney. Laissez Faire and the General Welfare State. Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, the University of Michigan Press, 1965.

Gabriel, Ralph Henry. The Course of American Democratic Thought. Second edition. New York: Ronald Press, 1956.

Handy, Robert T. A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.

_____. The Social Gospel in America 1870-1920: Gladden, Ely, Rauschenbusch. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Hofstadter, Richard. Anti-Intellectualism in American Life. New York Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Hopkins, C. Howard. The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, c. 1940.

James, William. Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. New York: New American Library, 1958.

Leuchtenburg, William E. The Perils of Prosperity 1914-32. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Loetscher, Lefferts. The Broadening Church. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954.

McLoughlin, William C. The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968.

Mannheim, Karl. Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949.

Marty, Martin E. Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America. New York: The Dial Press, 1970.

May, Henry F. Protestant Churches and Industrial America. New York: Harper Brothers, Publishers, 1949.

Mead, Sidney. The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963.

Moberg, David O. The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1972.

Noble, David W. The Progressive Mind 1890-1917. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1970.

Persons, Stow. American Minds: A History of Ideas. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900." Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings 64 (June 1932): 523-547.

Tillich, Paul. Perspectives of 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology. Carl E. Braaten, ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Weisberger, Bernard. They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America. New York: Quadrangle Books, 1966.

Weisenburger, Francis P. Ordeal of Faith: The Crisis of Church-Going America, 1865-1900. New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

III. Selected General Works

Aaron, Daniel. Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives. New York: Oxford Press, 1951.

Abell, Aaron F. American Catholicism and Social Action. Garden City, N. Y.: Hanover House, 1960.

Ahlstrom, Sidney. A Religious History of the American People. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

Bailey, Kenneth R. Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964.

Brauer, Jerald C. "Changing Perspectives on Religion in America." Reinterpretation in American Church History. Edited by Jerald C. Brauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

_____. Protestantism in America: A Narrative History. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953.

Cauthen, Kenneth. The Impact of American Religion Liberalism. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Cavert, Samuel McCrea and VanDusen, Henry P., eds. The Church Through Half a Century: Essays in Honor of William Adams Brown. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

Commager, Henry Steele. The American Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.

Eighmy, John Lee. Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972.

Forcey, Charles. The Crossroads of Liberalism. New York: Oxford Press, 1961.

Foster, Frank Hugh. The Modern Movement in American Theology. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1939.

Herberg, Will. Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1955.

Higham, John. Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925. New York: Atheneum, 1971.

Hudson, Winthrop. American Protestantism. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Hutchison, William R., Ed. American Protestant Thought: The Liberal Era. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968.

Kolko, Gabriel. The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963.

Lasch, Christopher. The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type. New York: Knopf, 1965.

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Raab, Earl. The Politics of Unreason: Right Wing Extremism in America. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970.

Littell, Franklin H. From State Church to Pluralism: A Protestant Interpretation of Religion in American History. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1962.

McLoughlin, William G. Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham. New York: The Ronald Press, 1959.

McLoughlin, William G. and Bellah, Robert N. Religion in America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

MacMillan, Kerr D. Protestantism in Germany. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1917.

Meyer, Donald B. Protestant Search for Political Realism 1919-1941. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1961.

Miller, Robert Moats. American Protestantism and Social Issues 1919-1939. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1958.

Moore, Edward Caldwell. An Outline of the History of Christian Thought Since Kant. London: Duckworth & Co., 1912.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. The Kingdom of God in America. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1937.

_____. The Social Sources of Denominationalism. Hamdon, Conn.: The Shoestring Press, 1954. Reprint. New York: Henry Holt & Co., Inc., 1929.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. Reflections on the End of an Era. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

O'Dea, Thomas. The Sociology of Religion. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

Reardon, Bernard M. G. Liberal Protestantism. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1968.

Reardon, Bernard M. G. Religious Thought in the Nineteenth Century. London: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Scott, William A. Historical Protestantism: An Historical Introduction to Protestant Theology. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971.

Smith, Timothy L. Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957.

Van Dusen, Henry P. The Vindication of Liberal Theology: A Tract for the Times. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.

White, Morton. Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism. New York: The Viking Press, 1949.

Wiebe, Robert. The Search for Order, 1877-1920. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.

Wilson, Raymond Jackson, ed. Darwinism and the American Intellectual: A Book of Readings. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1967.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SELECTIONS FROM GOD HATH SPOKEN

Introduction

Two outstanding phenomena characterized the realm of spiritual thought at the time of the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals, which met in Philadelphia during the last week of May, 1919.

On the one hand, the Great Apostasy was spreading like a plague throughout Christendom. A famine was everywhere--"not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah." Thousands of false teachers, many of them occupying high ecclesiastical positions, were bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many were following their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth was evil spoken of. The Bible was wounded in the house of its friends. The great cardinal doctrines of Scripture were set at naught. The Virgin Birth of our Lord, His Sacrificial Death and Bodily Resurrection,—these and similar truths were rejected as archaic and effete. The Consensus of Scholarship, the Assured Results of Modern Research, New Light from Original Sources, the Findings of Science,—all these high-sounding phrases, and others like them, became popular slogans calculated to ensnare the simple, and to deceive if possible the very elect. People generally accepted the so-called Findings of Science at their face value, never suspecting that they were only the inventions of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." To "the man whose eyes are open," of course, all this was "no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

On the other hand, parallel with the deepening apostasy, and probably actually stimulated by it, there was a widespread revival--not a revival in the sense of great ingatherings resulting from evangelistic effort, but a revival of interest in, and hunger for, the Word of God. This hunger, I say, was probably stimulated by the apostasy; for what will increase hunger like a famine? The sheep of Christ began to look up to their Shepherd for food, even for "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Men and women began insistently to ask, "Hath God really spoken? And, if so, what hath He said? What saith the Scriptures?"

The great Bible Conference on the Return of Our Lord, held in Philadelphia in 1918, together with other smaller gatherings preceding and following it, had done much to bring about this revival of Bible study. And when the Conference of 1919 came around--this time a conference on Christian Foundamentals--the attendance and interest were amazing. Think of six thousand persons attending a Bible Conference on the Atlantic Seaboard, representing forty-two of the forty-eight states of the Union, besides nearly or quite all the Canadian Provinces, as well as seven foreign countries in addition! And this, too, despite the fact that a large Conference at Baltimore immediately preceded the Philadelphia meeting, and arrangements had already been widely advertised to follow up the Philadelphia Conference with Conferences on Christian Fundamentals at various centers in the United States and Canada, all the way to the Pacific Coast.

The enemy had come in like a flood, and the Spirit of Jehovah had lifted up a standard against him.

The purpose of the present volume is to conserve, through the medium of the printed page, the results of the Philadelphia Conference. Those who attended the great meeting will want the opportunity here afforded to read and to preserve and pass on to others the addresses they heard from the platform. Those who could not attend will be glad of this means of bringing to them the messages brought to the Conference by men whose hearts God has touched and through whom it has pleased Him to bring edification and enlightenment to His church concerning the great fundamental doctrines of the faith "once for all delivered unto the saints." All will agree that the coordinated testimony here presented will be useful to the children of God in this time of declension when the thick darkness gives promise of the soon breaking of the dawn.

Bible Conference Committee

Report of Committee on Resolutions

Your committee on resolutions herewith submits the following report:

We regard it timely and altogether essential that this World Conference on Christian Fundamentals in Philadelphia should give expression to the faith for which it stands and we unite in declaring the following as our Doctrinal Statement:

I. We believe in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

II. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

III. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

IV. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in throught, word and deed.

V. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood.

VI. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.

VII. We believe in "that blessed hope," the personal premillennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

VIII. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.

IX. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost.

This declaration of faith we believe justifies both the program provided for the Conference and all the objectives included in the Conference plans.

We call earnest attention to the reports of committees that have been rendered to the Conference. These reports relate to the Correlation of Bible Schools, the Correlation of Colleges, Seminaries and Academies, the Correlation of Religious Magazines and Periodicals, the Correlation of Bible Conferences, the Correlation of Interdenominational Foreign Missionary Societies.

We believe that progress has been made by the Committee on Bible Schools which looks to a closer co-operation of these institutions, and a further development and standardization of their various curricula. We are confident that the Bible training schools of this country are to be the subjects of God's special favor and mediums for the defense of "the faith once delivered." While deploring the wave of skepticism

that has wrecked many theological seminaries and so rendered them unfit places for the education of our ministry, we rejoice that in the Bible school God has again raised up a standard against the enemy.

We recommend to the young men and women of our land who wish training for religious work the Bible training schools of the country. We urge that they secure this training in these Bible schools and in the remaining safe colleges and seminaries. We propose to catalog such Bible schools as we believe to be worthy of commendation and support, and we advise that the central committee at Philadelphia stand ready to furnish information to all young people who are giving consideration to the matter of education.

We also wish to call the attention of all consecrated men, to whom God has given large means, to the modern Bible training schools as a medium of defense against modernism. We heartily advise them to give such financial assistance to these schools as will make possible their largest work. We feel that these schools, if properly strengthened, will provide a faithful ministry to both the home and foreign fields, and will develop from that great body of laymen who remain untouched by modernism, fit representatives of the faith--men and women, who when commissioned to home or foreign field may be depended upon to stand for the great fundamentals of our Holy Word.

The report of the Committee on Correlation of Colleges, Seminaries and Academies brings painfully before us the fact that modernism has already captured very many of these schools. Godly parents, desiring to educate their children and recognizing the grave danger of sending them into a skeptical atmosphere that destroys all confidence in a personal God, all reliance in the Bible as a divine revelation, and which even discredits the binding authority of the moral law, will stand increasingly in need of counsel. We advise that the central committee make a list of such colleges, seminaries and academies as refuse to use text books or employ teachers that undermine faith in the Bible as the Word of God and in Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh, and that upon request furnish these to the young people seeking education or to parents seeking counsel.

We also take occasion to say that we are fully persuaded that men to whom God has given large means should make careful study both of the professorship and of the courses taught in those schools for which they propose any gifts. We believe that in loyalty to God they should make their gifts to such schools and such only as believe in the very authority of the Bible and the very deity of Christ and in our holy faith as voiced by the Book and represented by the Lord.

Concerning the report of the Committee on the Correlation of Religious Magazines and Periodicals, we call attention to the recent movement in some of the more prominent (so-called) evangelical denominations. This plan is to centralize all representative magazines and

periodicals and thereby express themselves through a single but certainly controlled medium. We have every reason to believe that the motive back of this movement is not wholly that of economy and efficiency, both of which advantages we acknowledge, but that the carefully conceived and thoroughly planned intention is to make these denominational magazines and papers the medium of modernism.

We recommend, therefore, most heartily those men who, in utter loyalty to their own denominational standards and confessions of faith have refused to be incorporated, and who, in the interest of orthodoxy are willing, if need be, to endure great loss rather than betray their Lord.

Believing that the overwhelming majority of the laymen of America are still loyal to the authority of the Book to the deity of Christ and to the old standards and confessions of faith, we most heartily commend to them every magazine and newspaper edited ably in the interest of Christ and His real cause. We believe that there ought to be a world-wide movement to give to such orthodox mediums a greatly increased subscription list, and all needful financial assistance.

In order to enhearten those faithful men who at present are fearing their independent action, we call attention to the experience of the Sunday School Times in coming out openly and without apology for all the fundamentals of our faith. It lost hundreds of subscribers in so doing, but we gladly report that on the other side it gained thousands and has been in a more prosperous and independent position ever since it took open and determined stand on the matters that now divide evangelicals and moderns.

Concerning Correlation of Bible Conferences and plans for their future multiplication we call attention to the report of the committee made in this matter. It is our conviction that the plans therein outlined will prove both timely and effective, and make a needful contribution to the cause of our Christ in turning back the tide of skepticism that threatens all denominations and the entire land.

We recommend that the Committee on Correlation of Bible Conferences keep in touch with and co-operate with the multiplied conference centers already established, and that instead of attempting in any wise to centralize the movement, it seek to better establish these centers, extend the movement, and so correlate the conferences themselves as to effect at once an economy and increased efficiency.

We note with interest the determined endeavor to force the various evangelical denominations into a federation in which the "fundamentals of the faith" will play little or no conspicuous part. We believe that the accomplishment of such a religious corporation, at the cost of truth, would provide a flashing spectacle of apparent church success to be speedily succeeded by the most colossal failure that has characterized

Christianity since the dark days when an ecclesiastical corporation (the Roman Catholic Church) controlled the religious thinking of the world. We voice our determined protest, and as members of the various evangelical denominations hereby declare our utter unwillingness to enter into any such federation movement. In the event of its formal adoption by our respective denominations, it is our fixed determination to find for ourselves a new fellowship, one in which the Bible will be authoritative, the deity of Christ undisputed and "the faith once for all delivered" the basis of our confession and of our conduct.

We also wish to call attention to those branches of church work known as Y.M.C. and Y.W.C. Associations. Without exception we have befriended these institutions, served them at every point possible in our power, and believed them to be representatives of the churches that brought them into being. We still maintain the same attitude and contend for the same definition of their origin and functions. We think, therefore, that the Y.M.C.A. is suffering today from the very same afflictions that are befalling the evangelical denominations that brought it into being, namely, from modernism. The deleterious effects of this denial of the faith are felt most keenly in certain of its training schools where skeptical professors are appointed to places of power, and orthodox men are uniformly refused an audience.

We call attention to the fact that, in addition to this aggravated condition, the Y.M.C.A.'s and Y.W.C.A.'s connected with the universities of the country, yielding to the spirit of worldliness which has always characterized the state, are adopting a kindred program, and that orthodoxy is decreasingly permitted a voice in their halls and modernism is increasingly invited to exploit its infidelity in the presence of young people who, while at college, are trying to develop Christian character. As taxpayers and as representatives of evangelical denominations and churches, we demand that the state universities and Christian associations, belonging as they do in the first instance to the entire people, and in the second instance the evangelical churches, shall cease from this partiality to skepticism and thereby escape the revolution that is sure to come if the custom of recent years is continued.

Concerning the Y.W.C.A. we express our entire sympathy with the orthodox branch in the Board of Administration. These Godly women have attempted by every honorable means at their command to keep the association itself evangelical and retain the evangelical church membership test, as expressed in the *"Modified Portland Basis." They refuse to submit to the Los Angeles amendment which proposes to take away from

---

*The modified Portland Basis. As these organizations bear the name of Christian and are engaged directly in the Savior's service, it is clearly their duty to maintain the control and management of all

the evangelical churches the institution to which they gave birth and, by great sacrifices of time and money, have brought to its present proportions, and to turn the same over to a membership which shall make no distinction between a Jew and Gentile, Christian Science--so-called--and the true follower of Christ, regenerate and unregenerate. We would advise them to refuse continued alliance with an institution that thus repudiates its past and starts on a course which is sure to dishonor Christ and grieviously injure His true churches.

We herewith pledge our hearty co-operation and all possible support to such schools, missionary societies, papers and associations as shall stand intelligently and steadfastly for the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the great fundamentals of our holy faith as above declared.

Respectfully submitted,

W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D. D.,
Chairman Resolutions Committee.

WM. B. RILEY, D. D., L. W. MUNHALL, D. D., JAMES M. GRAY, D. D., CHARLES L. HUSTON, CHARLES A. BLANCHARD, J. R. SCHAFFER, CHARLES G. TRUMBULL, ORSON R. PALMER, WM. L. PETTINGILL, J. DAVIS ADAMS, Secretary.

---

their affairs in the hands of those who profess to love, who publicly avow their faith in, Jesus the Redeemer as divine, and who testify their faith by becoming members of Evangelical churches.

I subscribe the above principles, and also the following six fundamental Bible truths which constitute the evangelical church basis: The deity of Jesus, the efficacy of the death of Christ as an atonement for sin, the necessity for the regeneration of the sinner, the actual resurrection of the body of Jesus, the deity of the Holy Spirit, the inspiration of the Scriptures, generally expressed in the formula "We maintain the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice."