CHRISTIAN HISTORY
Issue 55: The Monkey Trial & the Rise of Fundamentalism

The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: Did You Know? - The Frenzied Twenties

The tumultuous culture in which American churches waged their religious war

editors

In the 1920s, as conflicts between "fundamentalists" and "modernists" heated up, change in American culture was accelerating. Some Christians celebrated these dramatic changes; others pointed to the following items as proof that things were only getting worse:

All through the 1920s, with Prohibition in force, criminal gangs battled to control the illegal liquor business—most notoriously in Al Capone's Chicago. Between 1920 and 1927, 250 people were murdered in Chicago gang warfare.

Women were given the vote in 1922 (conservative Christians were against suffrage ten-to-one, but two notable supporters of women's suffrage were fundamentalists Billy Sunday and William Jennings Bryan). In 1925, the first woman governor was inaugurated in Wyoming. In 1928, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to cross the Atlantic in a plane.

Optimism about the economy (and greed) produced an era of wild speculation in the stock market. On September 3, 1929, stocks reached an all-time high—only to crash to an all-time low by October 29. President Herbert Hoover still claimed the economy was "on a sound and prosperous basis."

By the end of 1921, knee-length skirts had become the standard fashion, causing much comment in the secular and religious press. In the 1920s, "flappers" (right) were "thoroughly modern" women who smoked, danced, wore short skirts, drank, and bobbed their hair.

In 1920 radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh broadcast the results of the presidential election, even though few could tune in. By 1922 500 radio stations had sprouted, and Americans were spending $10 million on radio sets and parts—and more and more time entertained by the new medium.

By 1923 15 million cars were registered, and one out of four Americans bought or sold an automobile. In 1924 the price of a Model-T Ford reached an all-time low: $290 (without a self-starter).

Between 1870 and the late 1920s, the number of divorces in the United States increased fivefold, and more than half were initiated by women.

Books were often critical or indifferent to religion. Sinclair Lewis's ***Elmer Gantry*** (1927) skewered revivalist religion, while novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald (***The Great Gatsby***, 1925) and Ernest Hemingway (***The Sun Also Rises***, 1926) wallowed in disillusionment with modern life.

In 1921 the "Black Sox" Scandal came to a close when eight Chicago White Sox players were banned from baseball for life for taking bribes in the 1919 World Series. In 1923 members of President Warren Harding's executive branch were convicted of selling influence in the famous Teapot Dome Scandal.


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Because of the terrorist activities of the Oklahoma Ku Klux Klan, (right) the governor imposed martial law in 1923. In 1925 the KKK held a demonstration in Washington, D.C., at which 40,000 members marched down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Sports became an American obsession (right). The talk of 1920s college football was "Red" Grange (the "Galloping Ghost of the Gridiron"), and Knute Rockne's "Fighting Irish" of Notre Dame. In professional sports, heroes included boxers Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, baseball slugger Babe Ruth and pitcher Walter Johnson, and golf phenom Bobby Jones.

The nation was mesmerized by the 1924 trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb. These two well-educated young men murdered a man just to see what the experience would be like. In 1927 radicals Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed for killing a factory guard; many Americans protested that they had been railroaded for their leftist politics.

On the other hand, conservatives were pleased with such events as these:

In 1922 the U.S. Post Office destroyed 500 copies of ***Ulysses*** by James Joyce for obscenity, and in 1927, the mayor of Boston banned Eugene O'Neill's play ***Strange Interlude***.

Illiteracy reached a new low of 6 percent, a decline of 14 percent from 1870.

In 1925 a bill requiring daily Bible readings in all public schools was passed by the Florida legislature, and in the same year, laws were passed in Tennessee and Texas forbidding the teaching of the theory of evolution in public classrooms.

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The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: From the Editor - A Movement to Make One Mad

Mark Galli

Some theologies make the eyes glaze over; others make the blood boil. To me, Calvinism is intellectually coherent; medieval scholasticism, logically rigorous; and the Anglicanism of a Richard Hooker, emotionally satisfying. But I have to exert a great deal of mental discipline to stick with books of these stripes. Interesting stuff but not stuff that demands my attention.

On the other hand, take liberation theology. It drives me crazy—the philosophical assumptions, the sweeping statements, the judgmentalism. And then there's all that stuff about concern for the poor that strikes just a little too close to home. I don't stop reading liberation theology because it finally bores me but because it makes me too angry to go on.

That's how a lot of people feel about fundamentalism. It's hard to be neutral about the movement, with all its sweeping statements and judgmentalism—and its jibes about theological and moral compromise that strike just a tad close to home sometimes. There may be many "angry fundamentalists," but there are also a few angry anti-fundamentalists out there.

This is one reason this topic is a challenge to report on. But there are others.

For example, there is no one event or one person around which the movement crystallizes. The Scopes "Monkey" trial is the most public defining event, yet as you'll see (on the Timeline and "Fundamentalist Network," it's just one facet of a much larger and complex movement.

Another example: fundamentalism is not a movement completely distinct from modernism, the movement it reacted against. In some ways, modernism and fundamentalism were both "Enlightenment projects": both labored strenuously to bring the Christian faith under some rational, systematic control. So, the fundamentalist complaint about liberal rationalism is ironically also a fair critique of fundamentalism.

But never let it be said that ***Christian History*** shirks its duty in the face of complexity and ambiguity. For us, of course, complexity and ambiguity are not the last responsibilities of historians. We trust you'll find some unifying themes and intriguing stories that help you understand sympathetically a movement that continues to anger, please, frustrate, puzzle, and impress.

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The Monkey Trial

The first trial of the century revealed a great divide separating American Christians.

David Goetz

The court will come to order," said the Honorable John T. Raulston. "The Reverend Cartwright will please open the court with prayer."

It was Friday, July 10, 1925, 9 A.M., in Dayton, Tennessee, a small mountain community of about 2,000. It was the State of Tennessee versus John Thomas Scopes, the first American trial to be nationally broadcast on radio.

It should have been an open-and-shut case: did a high school mathematics-turned-biology teacher teach evolution in class? If yes, Scopes was guilty of violating a new Tennessee law.

But the case ballooned into one of the great media events of the twentieth century. Like the O. J. Simpson trial in our day, the case itself set no significant precedents, but it revealed a widening chasm in America, and in American Christianity.

Media circus

In January, about six months prior to the "monkey trial" (as it came to be known), the lower house of the Tennessee legislature passed the Butler bill:

"It shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the universities, normals, and all other public schools of the State ... to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." Any teacher found guilty of the misdemeanor would be fined between $100 and $500.

The bill created a national buzz, and immediately the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) advertised to pay the costs to test the statute in court. A mining engineer in Dayton, Tennessee, George W. Rappelyea, convinced John Scopes to admit to violating the statute to become a test case.

When nationally known Clarence Darrow joined the defense team and William Jennings Bryan, the prosecution, the made-for-radio trial was set.

Both men were in the twilight of their careers. Almost 70 years old, Darrow had just come off a highly publicized trial in Chicago, in which he saved two admitted murderers (Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb) from capital punishment with an insanity defense. Darrow was widely known as a defender of "radicals" and an outspoken agnostic.

Bryan had been a three-time presidential candidate and secretary of state under Woodrow Wilson. Though he had not practiced law in more than 30 years, he was the author of a syndicated weekly column on the Bible and was recognized as a leading spokesman for emerging fundamentalism.

When the trial began, more than 100 journalists—including sardonic H. L. Mencken—descended on tiny

Dayton. The press had its angle from the outset. To them Darrow symbolized objectivity, tolerance, and forward thinking—clear-headed modernity at its finest. Bryan symbolized narrowmindedness, tribalism, and social backwardness —tendentious Christianity at its worst.

Also from the beginning, the prosecution and defense understood the media circus being created, and each side choreographed its part, playing not only to a jury but to a nation at attention.

Did Scopes break the law?

On day one of the trial, as many as a thousand people crammed into the 700-seat courtroom. After a new indictment was returned (to ensure no mistrial), the selection of the jury began.

An early exchange revealed the partisan nature of the trial. Defense attorney Darrow, wearing purple suspenders, a white shirt, and a white string necktie, was examining a prospective juror, an itinerant preacher. Darrow asked, "What is your business?"

"I am a minister," J. P. Massingill replied.

"Ever preach on evolution?"

"I don't think so, definitely," the minister said, "that is, on evolution alone."

"Now, you wouldn't want to sit on this jury unless you were fair, would you?"

"Certainly, I would want to be fair; yes, sir," the minister replied.

Darrow asked him again whether he had preached on evolution, and the minister said he was strictly for the Bible.

Darrow pressed, "I'm talking about evolution. I am not talking about the Bible. Did you preach for or against evolution?"

When the minister said, "I preached against it, of course!" the courtroom erupted into applause.

"Let's have order," the judge barked, and eventually excused the minister from jury duty.

After the jury was selected, it was dismissed for two days as prosecution and defense argued whether the indictment was legitimate (the defense argued that the Butler Bill violated the Tennessee constitution in denying freedom of speech). In the end, the judge ruled the indictment was legitimate, and the defense entered a plea for Scopes: Not guilty.

On day four, each side made an opening statement. The defense argued the trial represented not a conflict between secular humanists and Christians, but between tolerant, educated Christians and intolerant, obscurantist Christians. Defense attorney Dudley Malone said, "We believe there is no conflict between evolution and Christianity. There may be a conflict between evolution and the peculiar ideas of Christianity which are held by Mr. Bryan as the evangelical leader of the prosecution, but we deny that the evangelical leader of the prosecution is an authorized spokesman for the Christians of the United States. ... We maintain and we shall prove that Christianity is bound up with no scientific theory."

The state, on the other hand, said the trial was about the immediate facts: did Scopes in fact violate the Tennessee statute?(right)

The state began its case in the afternoon, calling as its first witness Walter White, county superintendent of public instruction. White testified that Scopes had admitted to him that he had taught from the textbook ***Civic Biology***, that Scopes confessed he "could not teach that book without teaching evolution," and that "the statute was unconstitutional."

In Darrow's cross-examination, White admitted he had no complaint about Scopes's work as a teacher.

The next state's witness was 14-year-old Howard Morgan. He testified that his teacher, John Scopes, taught him about evolution, that "the earth was once a hot molten mass, too hot for plant or animal life to exist upon it."

Prosecuting attorney Stewart asked Morgan, "How did he [Scopes] classify man with reference to other animals; what did he say about them?"

"Well, the book and he," replied Morgan, "both classified man along with cats and dogs, cows, horses, monkeys, lions, horses, and all that."

During his cross-examination, Darrow asked Morgan, "He [Scopes] didn't say a cat was the same as a man?"

"No sir," replied Morgan. "He said man had a reasoning power, that these animals did not."

Darrow quipped, "There is some doubt about that, but that is what he said, is it?" and the courtroom guffawed.

Darrow then asked Morgan, "What he [Scopes] taught you ... has not hurt you any, has it?"

Morgan replied, "No, sir," and the courtroom once more broke into laughter.

Two more state's witnesses testified that afternoon, and with that, Stewart said, "The state rests." The prosecution had made its case in only a couple of hours.

Man among the primates

The defense wanted to show that evolution was a universally held view among scientists, and that it was not a contradiction for Christians to subscribe to the theory. So the defense brought in from world-class universities experts who, in many cases, were also Christians.

Late in the afternoon on day four, for example, the defense called Maynard Metcalf, a zoologist from Baltimore, to the stand. Under questioning, Metcalf said he had been a department chairman at Oberlin College, had conducted research at Johns Hopkins University and other institutions, and had received a government research appointment under President Wilson.

Darrow asked him, "Are you a member of any church organizations?"

"I am now a member of the United Church in Oberlin," Metcalf replied. He said he had led an adult Bible class for three years as well as a Bible class for college students.

When Darrow began asking Metcalf about how widespread the teaching of evolution was, the state objected that this would be hearsay evidence. The defense wanted the judge at least to hear the

evidence before making a ruling, so the judge allowed the examination to continue but dismissed the jury.

Darrow then asked Metcalf, "Is evolution taught in all the leading colleges of the world?"

Metcalf discussed the difference between evolution and ***theories of evolution***. He concluded, "We are in possession of scientific knowledge to answer directly and fully the question: Has evolution occurred?"

Darrow asked, "Will you tell what it means—the fact of evolution?"

"I think it means the change of an organism from one character into a different character," Metcalf replied. "The term in general means the whole series of such changes which have taken place during hundreds of millions of years, which have produced from lowly beginnings, the nature of which is not by any means fully understood, the organism."

"Now in the classification of scientists, zoologists," asked Darrow, "where does man come?"

"He is classed," said Metcalf, "among the primates."

Bryan speaks out

On day five, the prosecution challenged the defense's scientific testimony, asking the judge not to admit it. The state argued that expert testimony was not pertinent.

Darrow rebutted, "We expect to show by men of science and learning—both scientists and real scholars—men who know what they are talking about—who made some investigation ... that any interpretation of the Bible that intelligent men could possibly make is not in conflict with any story of creation . ...There isn't a human being on earth [who] believes it literally."

After more debate, William Jennings Bryan rose to his feet for the first time in the trial. One Bryan biographer noted that for the first four days of the trial he had "sat in a stifling courthouse in his shirtsleeves waving a large fan." This first speech was also his last major speech of the trial.

Bryan began slowly, "The principal attorney [Darrow] has often suggested that I am the arch conspirator and that I am responsible for the presence of this case, and I have almost been credited with leadership of the ignorance and bigotry which he thinks could alone inspire a case like this."

Bryan mocked evolution, reading from the biology textbook Scopes had used, pointing out the "evolutionary tree" diagram. "He [Scopes] tells children to copy this diagram," Bryan jibed, "and take it home in their notebooks, to show their parents that you cannot find man! That is the great game to put in the public schools, to find man among animals, if you can.

"Tell me that the parents of this day have not any right to declare that children are not to be taught this doctrine."

After citing Darwin's ***Descent of Man***, Bryan thundered, "Never have they traced one single species to any other, and that is why it was that this so-called expert stated while the fact of evolution, they think, is established, that ... every theory [of how it came about] has failed . ...

"I suppose this distinguished scholar [the defense's first witness] who came here shamed them all by his number of degrees. He did not shame me, for I have more than he has, but I can understand how my

friends felt when he unrolled degree after degree."

Bryan pointed out that "more of the jurors are experts on what the Bible is than any Bible expert who does not subscribe to the true spiritual influences or spiritual discernments of what our Bible says."

"Amen," shouted voices in the audience.

"The facts are simple," Bryan concluded, "the case is plain, and if those gentlemen want to enter upon a larger field of educational work on the subject of evolution, let us get through with this case and then convene a mock court, for it will deserve the title "mock court" if its purpose is to banish from the hearts of the people the Word of God as revealed."

The courtroom swayed with applause.

After more wrangling, the judge conceded to allow expert testimony but in written affidavits only. Such testimony would be read into the court record, but the jury would never see or hear it. The judge, defense, and prosecution all knew the affidavits might come into play in the inevitable appeal.

Surprise move

So the defense read some comments Governor Peay had made as he signed into law the Butler bill: "It will be seen that this bill does not require any particular theory of interpretation of the Bible regarding man's creation to be taught in the public schools . ...The widest latitude of interpretation will remain as to the time and manner of God's processes in his creation of man."

The defense showed that the new Tennessee biology textbook (which had just replaced ***Civic Biology***) also made use of Darwinism, and concluded that biology couldn't be taught without mentioning evolution.

Then the defense read a statement into the record from Walter C. Whitaker, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Knoxville, Tennessee: "As one who for 30 years has preached Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as 'the express image of the Father,' I am unable to see any contradiction between evolution and Christianity."

The defense added similar statements to the record from Dr. Shailer Mathews, dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, as an expert on the Bible, as well as from scientists at Harvard University, Rutgers University, and the University of Chicago.

Then, in what proved to be the most effective strategy of the trial for the defense, defense attorney Arthur Hays called William Jennings Bryan to the stand.

Hays's move was highly unusual since Bryan was an attorney for the prosecution. Bryan's testimony about Scopes would not, in fact, be valuable. But Hays had a deeper strategy: he wanted to weaken the prosecution's case by making its star attorney look foolish.

Over the objections of his own team members, Bryan took the stand: "[The defense] came here to try revealed religion. I am here to defend it, and they can ask me any questions they please."

Thus began the much-hoped-for confrontation between Darrow and Bryan, the modernist and the biblicist. It was a heated, two-hour exchange that, in the end, did not affect the case as much as it did the nation.

Bryan takes his stand

Wearing a blue shirt and blue suspenders, Darrow opened by asking, "You have given considerable study to the Bible, haven't you, Mr. Bryan?"

"Yes, sir, I have tried to."

"Do you claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?"

"I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there," Bryan said. "Some of the Bible is given illustratively. For instance, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' I would not insist that man was actually salt, or that he had flesh of salt."

Darrow questioned Bryan on the story of Jonah, and then moved to the story in the Book of Joshua, in which God is said to have made the earth stand still.

"Mr. Bryan, have you ever pondered what would have happened to the earth if it had stood still?"

"No."

"You have not?"

"No," Bryan replied. "The God I believe in could have taken care of that, Mr. Darrow."

"I see. Have you ever pondered what would naturally happen to the earth if it stood still suddenly?"

"No."

"Don't you know it would have been converted into a molten mass of matter?"

Bryan snapped, "You testify to that when you get on the stand. I will give you the chance."

Darrow then pressed Bryan on the date of the Flood. "What do you think that the Bible, itself, says?" asked Darrow.

"I never made a calculation."

"What do you think?" pressed Darrow.

"I do not think about things I don't think about," quipped Bryan.

"Do you think about things you do think about?" snapped Darrow.

"Well, sometimes."

The court rippled with laughter.

After a bit, Darrow asked, "Mr. Bryan, don't you know that there are many other religions that describe the Flood?"

"No, I don't know," Bryan replied.

"You have never examined any other religions?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you read anything about the origins of religions?"

"Not a great deal," replied Bryan.

After Bryan mentioned he had studied Confucianism, Darrow asked, "Do you know how old the Confucian religion is?"

"I can't give you an exact date."

Darrow persisted. "Do you know how old the religion of Zoroaster is?"

"No, sir,"

"Do you know they are both more ancient than the Christian religion?"

Bryan replied, "I am not willing to take the opinion of people who are trying to find excuses for rejecting the Christian religion."

Darrow jumped on Bryan: "You don't care how old the earth is, how old man is, and how long the animals have been there?"

"I am not so much interested in that," replied Bryan.

Darrow's interrogation kept cycling back to the age of the earth.

"Mr. Bryan," Darrow asked, "could you tell me how old the earth is?"

"No, sir, I couldn't."

"Could you come anywhere near it?"

"I wouldn't attempt to," Bryan said. "I could possibly come as near as the scientists do, but I had rather be more accurate before I give a guess."

When at one point prosecuting attorney Stewart complained, "What is the purpose of this examination?" Bryan interrupted, "The purpose is to cast ridicule on everybody who believes in the Bible, and I am perfectly willing that the world shall know that these gentlemen have no other purpose than ridiculing every Christian who believes in the Bible."

Darrow snapped, "We have the purpose of preventing bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States and you know it, that is all."

Bryan replied, "I am simply trying to protect the Word of God against the greatest atheist or agnostic in the United States," and the crowd applauded.

Darrow barked, "I wish I could get a picture of these clackers."

Morning without the sun

A little later, Darrow and Bryan went at it again, "Mr. Bryan, do you believe the first woman was Eve?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe she was literally made out of Adam's rib?"

"I do."

"Did you ever discover where Cain got his wife?" Darrow asked.

"No, sir," snapped Bryan. "I leave the agnostics to hunt for her."

"Does the statement 'The morning and the evening were the first day,' and

'The morning and the evening were the second day' mean anything to you?"

"I do not think it necessarily means a 24-hour day," said Bryan.

Darrow kept pressing Bryan to admit the days were literal, 24-hour days, but Bryan only replied, "My impression is that they were periods."

"Have you any idea of the length of the periods?" asked Darrow.

"No, I don't."

"Do you think the sun was made on the fourth day?" asked Darrow.

"Yes."

"And they had evening and morning without the sun?"

"I am simply saying it is a period."

Darrow ragged on, "They had evening and morning for four periods without the sun, do you think?"

"I believe in creation as there told," replied Bryan, "and if I am not able to explain it, I will accept it. Then you can explain it to suit yourself."

"Mr. Bryan, what I want to know is, do you believe the sun was made on the fourth day?"

"I believe just as it says there."

"Do you believe the sun was made on the fourth day?"

"Read it!" snapped Bryan and then turned to the judge. "Your Honor, I think I can shorten this testimony. The only purpose Mr. Darrow has is to slur at the Bible."

"I object to that," replied Darrow. "I am examining you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes!"

The judge had heard enough, and he adjourned the trial for the day. The next morning, he refused to let the questioning of Bryan continue because he believed Bryan's testimony would "shed no light" on the trial.

But to many Americans, the exchange shed all too much light on the fundamentalists, whom they felt Bryan represented. ***The Christian Century*** put it most graciously, that though there was a convincing argument for the "conservative position," "Mr. Bryan is manifestly unable to make this argument, for he has neither the mind nor the temper for the task."

The Nation put it more sarcastically: "Among fundamentalist rank and file, profundity of intellect is not too prevalent."

The verdict

Knowing the trial was a lost cause, Darrow, on the final day of the trial, asked the judge: "I think to save time we will ask the Court to ... instruct the jury to find the defendant guilty."

After only eight minutes of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict: Scopes was guilty of violating the Tennessee statute. The judge fined Scopes $100.

The fundamentalists convinced the jury but not the larger American public. At best, the trial revealed that even among American Christians in the 1920s, there were two competing standards for determining truth, one "biblical," the other, "scientific," and it was difficult to see how they could be reconciled.

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Prayer Debate

Who could pray at the trial?

David Goetz

On day three, when Judge Raulston asked Reverend Stribling to open with prayer, Darrow interrupted: "Seeing that ... the nature of this case being one where it is claimed by the State that there is a conflict between science and religion ... we object to the opening of the court with prayer."

The prosecution countered, "We, for the State, think it is quite proper to open the court with prayer ... and such an idea extended by the agnostic counsel for the defense is foreign to the thoughts and ideas of the people who do not know anything about infidelity and care less."

Defense attorney Arthur Hays complained, "May I ask to enter an exception to the statement, 'agnostic counsel for the defense'?"

The judge replied, "Gentlemen, do not turn this into an argument," and agreed to let the prayer be said.

That afternoon, Hays, over the prosecution's objections, read a petition from a group of ministers: "We, the following representatives of various well-known religious organizations and synagogues, do hereby petition Your Honor that, if you continue your custom of opening the daily sessions ... with prayer, you select the officiating clergymen from among other than fundamental churches . ... There are many to whom the prayers of the fundamentalists are not spiritually uplifting and are occasionally offensive . ... It seems only just and right that we should occasionally hear a prayer which requires no mental reservations on our part."

The petition was signed by two Unitarian ministers, one rabbi, and one Congregational minister.

Hays made a motion for the court to hear prayers by "men who think that God has shown his divinity in the wonders of the world, in the book of nature, quite as much as in the book of the revealed Word."

The judge said he would refer the petition to the local pastors' association of Dayton, and the courtroom erupted into laughter and applause.

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Bizarre Meaning

A portion of a Commonweal editorial from July 22, 1925, reveals some of the eccentric aspects of this first media trial:

Fantastic as are many of the aspects of this amazing drama, ludicrous even as are some of the characters playing their parts amid movie cameras, buzzing aeroplanes, radio installations, clicking telegraph keys, chattering typewriters, and all the apparatus of up-to-the-last-minute publicity, some quality deeper and grave and more disturbing than all the issue of ordinary life pervades everything said or done.

As you turn into the grove of trees surrounding the court house, you read a hand-lettered sign which proclaims:

> The Kingdom of God, Paradise Street, is at hand.
>
> Forty days of prayer itemizing your sins and iniquities, for eternal life—if you come clean.
>
> God will talk back to you in voice.
>
> ***—Deck Carter, Bible Champion of the World***

Deck Carter is an itinerant preacher who says he is the only person to whom God has talked since Joan of Arc. Hardened newspaper reporters who have investigated Deck Carter tell me he is an honest man who won't take money as he goes about the country calling people to God. Deck Carter's methods are rough and crude, but perhaps his strange sign is more to the point than ... the clever descriptions of the young gentlemen of the ***Nation***; or the ***New Republic***.

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Darrow Takes the Stand

Bryan cross-examines his adversary.

editors

Though Clarence Darrow's examination of William Jennings Bryan is famous, less well known is Bryan's examination of Darrow. After the trial, for the sake of the press alone, Bryan and Darrow switched roles.

Bryan: Do you believe in the existence of God as described in the Bible?

Darrow: I do not know of any description of God as in the Bible . ...As to the origin of the universe and what is back of it, I do not pretend to know. I haven't the intimate acquaintance with it that Mr. Bryan has.

Bryan: Do you believe that the Bible is the revealed will of God, inspired, and trustworthy?

Darrow: I believe there is much value in the Bible, but I do not believe it is written or inspired by God . ...Portions in it are ... sublime, like such portions of any other great book . ...I might even say this of Mr. Bryan's ***In His Image***, if I could find a sublime part.

Bryan asked if Darrow believed in the divinity of Christ (he said Jesus was only a "great Jew who would deliver the Jews from their physical bondage"), miracles (no). Finally he asked, "Do you believe in the immortality of the soul?"

Darrow replied, "I have been searching for proof of this all my life with the same desire to find it that is incident to every living being, and I have never found any evidence of it."

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The Press Weighs In

Condensed editorials from the summer of 1925 show a nation at odds.

It is exceedingly significant, that evolutionists generally, theistic, atheistic and otherwise, allied themselves with the infidel crew engaged in the defense of the Christless Scopes. It should also be remembered that not one of the several witnesses who testified, by affidavits, or otherwise, in behalf of Scopes, believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures or the Deity of Christ. The Civil Liberties Society, a diminutive aggregation of atheistic asses, not only endorsed the Christless Scopes, but assisted in financing this crusade of atheism.

—The Baptist Monthly Magazine

At bottom, the issue is whether the separation of church and state shall be maintained. To be sure, there is no mention of this at Dayton. The fundamentalists are not saying, even among themselves, "There should be a Protestant state church in America." No such monstrous ambitions are consciously entertained by fundamentalists, but the significance of fundamentalism lies not in what it is consciously but in what it is unconsciously. Unconsciously it puts the church above the state.

—The Nation

The appearance of Mr. Darrow on the side of the defense was an embarrassment and a misfortune. At the best, Mr. Darrow's agnostic views completely disqualify him to represent any but the most extreme antagonists of the Bible and the Christian faith. If he had possessed any adequate knowledge of the Bible and the processes by which it is interpreted today, he could have set Mr. Bryan some real questions, rather than the stale inquiries that were the stock in trade of skeptical argument a generation ago. It was inevitable that the impression made by the conduct of the defense would be that of hostility to the Bible and the church.

—The Christian Century

Mr. Bryan and the people who support him and give him power intend that their opinions shall get into the law of the country. What he wants is that his ideas, his interpretations and beliefs, shall be made mandatory. When Mr. Darrow talks of bigotry he talks of that. Bigotry seeks to make opinion and belief mandatory. Mr. Bryan would have his habits, customs, ideas, and opinions the law of the land, and to a considerable extend he is succeeding.

—The Chicago Daily Tribune

The fact that geology can produce not one true fossil that shows one species changing into another, makes evolution a mere rope of sand, or a chain whose every other link is missing. The natural atheism of the unregenerate heart is grasping quickly at the false claims of the pseudo-scientist who propagates this bunk.

God has said, "He is Antichrist who denieth both the Father and the Son." What the Romans [Catholics] have never done, apostate Protestants are now doing, under the leadership of Jews and Unitarians,

deceived by the false claims of science.

—Moody Bible Institute Monthly

Thousands of columns of newspaper debate have been published under Dayton date lines in the past two weeks, and from it all, the cause of the religion of Jesus Christ has not been helped, but the world has been broadcast with the reeks of doubt and skepticism, and only the future can tell what the harvest will be.

—The Atlantic Constitution

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User-Friendly Faith

What liberals believed—and why fundamentalists made such a fuss.

Harold Carl

The fireworks that exploded at Dayton, Tennessee, at the 1925 "Monkey Trial," were first lit two centuries earlier, though the fuse had smoldered quietly. In the 1700s, European intellectuals revamped the millennium-old system for discerning truth: instead of grounding all knowledge in biblical revelation, they tried to build on the foundation of human reason.

This "enlightened" method (thus the name for the period and movement, the Enlightenment) produced some startling conclusions. David Hume (d. 1776) reasoned that God's existence could not be "proved." Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) and Friedrich Schleiermacher (d. 1834) argued that religion was not so much about God as about people's religious experiences. G. W. F. Hegel (d. 1831) said God was not the personal being described in the Bible but an impersonal force.

The Enlightenment championed the scientific method, where everything—including the Bible—was subject to rational, empirical analysis. In this environment, the discipline of biblical criticism grew up. It was also the context in which Charles Darwin concluded the world wasn't created in six days but was the product of millions of years of evolution.

Such European developments made their way across the Atlantic only slowly, but by the end of the 1800s, many American thinkers had become Enlightenment rationalists, or "liberals" or "modernists." This development alarmed many American Christians.

Harold Carl, chaplain and lecturer in religion at Berry College, Mt. Berry, Georgia, here explains the distinctives of American liberalism, a movement that sparked what is now called the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

"A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a without a cross." So wrote neo-orthodox theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, criticizing the nineteenth-century liberal "gospel."

Even today's liberals recognize the truth in Niebuhr's jibe, and they reject a lot of nineteenth-century liberalism's easy rationalism. But these liberals were not trying to water down the gospel. Instead, they believed they were rescuing religion from doctrinal bondage and obscurity. They sincerely wanted to make Christianity palatable to modern people. Many were, in one sense, trying to make the faith user-friendly.

They did this by emphasizing a number of themes, which became distinctives of American liberalism.

A first-hand God

In the 1800s, conservative theologians tended to balance God's transcendence—that he is self-sufficient and apart from, far above, and infinitely greater than creation—with his immanence. Liberal theologians favored the immanence of God—the God "present to creation," active within the universe, involved in human history.

For William Adams Brown, one of America's "Christocentric liberals," God was "not a transcendent being living in a distant heaven whence from time to time he intervenes in the affairs of earth. He is an ever-present [spirit] guiding all that happens to a wise and holy end."

Friedrich Schleiermacher, German father of liberal theology, taught that people become one with God, not through the objective death and resurrection of Christ, but through a feeling of "absolute dependence" and "God consciousness."

Some liberals blurred the distinction between the Creator and the creation, between revealed religion and religious experience. God was experienced primarily in nature and human reason. American churchman Theodore Parker (d. 1860) wrote, "There is no difference but of words between revealed religion and natural religion, for all actual religion is revealed in us, or it could not be felt, and all revealed religion is natural or it would be of no use to us."

A reasonable faith

Liberalism exchanged the external authority of the Bible and the teachings of the church for the internal authority of reason.

Much of Scripture was viewed as poetic, mystical, even mythical. At best, it was a flawed human record of history, not a divine revelation—and it should be analyzed as one would analyze any book. Charles A. Briggs, in ***The Authority of Holy Scripture: An Inaugural Address*** (1891), said,

"It is not a pleasant task to point out errors in the sacred Scripture. Nevertheless Historical Criticism finds them, and we must meet the issue whether they destroy the authority of the Bible or not."

Reason (along with feeling, as above) reigned as a final arbiter of truth. The first president of the Free Religious Association, Octavius Brooks Frothingham (d. 1895), wrote, "The new Liberal Church has a consistent scheme of thought; it goes to the mind for its ideas; it admits the claim of spontaneity; its method of obtaining truth is rational; the harmony it demands is harmony of principles—the orderly sequence of laws."

As a corollary, liberals assumed that reasonable, educated, modern people could not accept the miraculous. Liberals contended that biblical miracles were "pre-scientific" explanations of events people did not understand. The immanent God of liberalism did not interrupt the spontaneous course of nature and history but acted within nature and history. Theodore Parker wrote, "God, ever present, never intervenes; acting ever by law, a miracle becomes needless, and also impossible."

Hope for humanity

Liberals tended to emphasize human freedom and people's capacity for good. Humanity was moving forward and upward. God wasn't saving a sinful humanity; he was perfecting an incomplete and immature humanity. John Fiske (d. 1902), in The Destiny of Man, wrote, "The future is lighted for us with the radiant colors of hope. Strife and sorrow shall disappear. Peace and love shall reign supreme."

Thus morality was stressed more than doctrine. Walter Rauschenbusch (d. 1918), champion of the social gospel, argued that religion and ethics were inseparable and that "Ethical conduct is the supreme and sufficient religious act." Many liberals followed Kant in teaching that Jesus was merely the personified idea of good, an example to follow. The ethical teachings of Jesus were paramount.

Innate human depravity was thus denied. Rauschenbusch wrote, "The permanent vices and crimes of

adults are not transmitted by heredity, but by being socialized . ...Hereditary social evils are forced on the individual embedded in the womb of society." Sin was therefore a result of social forces.

Furthermore, it was considered mere error and limitation, which moral and ethical education would eliminate. "Education," German theologian G. E. Lessing (d. 1781) said, "is revelation that affects the individual ... and the development of revealed truths into truths of reason is absolutely necessary if the human race is to be helped by them."

Evolutionary truth

Evolution became a flash point in 1920s America because it contained so many elements of liberal thought.

Evolution gave nineteenth-century liberals an earth that had developed over millions of years, not by the supernatural, outside intervention of God. Thus evolutionary thought encouraged the doctrine of divine immanence—God working in and through creation and history.

When the doctrine of evolution was applied to sociology, liberals concluded that humanity was not stuck in sin and depravity but was evolving gradually toward a greater good. John Fiske wrote, "The dream of poets, the lesson of priest and prophet, the inspiration of the great musician, is confirmed in the light of modern knowledge; as we gird ourselves up for the work of life, we may look forward to the time when in the truest sense the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ."

Thus, religious ideas became increasingly relative and subject to reason. Beliefs were said to undergo a long course of development, beginning with polytheism and moving to monotheism. Judaism progressed to Christianity. G. E. Lessing believed biblical revelation and historical truths are of a lower order than the "necessary truths of reason." The Old Testament was relevant for humankind in its infancy; the New Testament, its youth. Full-grown humanity must be ruled by reason.

The essential conflict over evolution is illustrated by the contrasting statements of two American theologians. Charles Hodge (d. 1878), conservative at Princeton Theological Seminary, wrote in ***What Is Darwinism?*** (1874),

"What is Darwinism? It is atheism ... an absent God who does nothing is, to us, no God."

Fiske, for his part, said, "Evolution is God's way of doing things."

A new religion

Historian Sydney Ahlstrom described the nineteenth century as "The Golden Age of Liberalism." It made major inroads in Congregationalism, Methodism, Unitarianism, and in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and substantially influenced Baptist and Presbyterian denominations. Seminaries like Harvard, Yale, Union (New York), Andover, and Boston University gradually became centers for liberal thought, also called "the new theology" or "progressivism."

Some conservatives moderated their views in light of liberalism. Some, for example, believed God created the earth, though they acknowledged he may have taken millions of years to do it. Others distrusted some miracles (like Jonah and the fish) while fully accepting others (the Resurrection).

But many would not budge on any point. Presbyterian theologian J. Gresham Machen represented this group, which concluded that liberalism was not another form of Christianity but another religion all together. It is this group—the vocal and the intransigent—who began to publicly attack liberalism in the early 1900s and who eventually took on the name "fundamentalists."

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Right Jabs and Left Hooks

All fundamentalists fought with modernists—but not for the same reasons or in the same way.

D.G. Hart

In 1925 just after the Scopes trial, social critic H. L. Mencken wrote with typical flair, "Heave an egg out a Pullman window, and you will hit a fundamentalist anywhere in the United States"—a comment implying that fundamentalism was a large and monolithic movement. But who exactly were the objects of this imaginary egg?

Some scholars have portrayed them as southern, rural, uneducated folk pitted against northeastern, urban, academic elites. Yet a number of fundamentalists, such as Presbyterian theologian J. Gresham Machen, were well educated, and some important conservative institutions and pulpits were located in northeastern cities. More recent studies stress theology as the key distinctive: early fundamentalists were primarily dispensationalists or champions of biblical inerrancy. Other studies identify still other keys.

One characteristic common to all fundamentalists was a militant opposition to modernism—which made fundamentalism as diverse as the modernism it opposed. Some fundamentalists objected primarily to the liberal understanding of the kingdom of God—the idea that Western civilization was establishing Christ's earthly rule. Others found evolutionary teaching most reprehensible. Others still were troubled by the increasing cultural disarray in the United States. Still other fundamentalists identified biblical criticism as the chief culprit.

In spite of the complexity of the movement, though, it is possible to see three major strands in fundamentalism—and each is exemplified in the life and ministry of a fundamentalist leader.

The culture warriors

Many people think early fundamentalists withdrew from social and political concerns. But a closer look reveals that many prominent fundamentalists denounced the social engineering of liberal Protestants while promoting their own solutions for American society. One such minister was John Roach Straton.

Born in the Midwest and educated at Southern Baptist institutions, Straton made his greatest mark as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City from 1918 until his death in 1929. Like most Anglo-American Protestant ministers, Straton believed the church should bring "the truth of individual salvation and that of social salvation into their right relationship." Unlike ministers of the social gospel, Straton believed genuine social reform could only come by conversion of individuals: "The leaven of individual righteousness must finally leaven the entire social lump."

Straton's interest in social reform was not rhetorical. In New York and at previous pastorates, he visited red-light districts, where he led protests against prostitution; he was a strong advocate of Prohibition, and he promoted a variety of economic reforms (e.g., the minimum wage, pensions for mothers, and profit-sharing) that he believed would equitably distribute wealth and thereby take away the appeal of many vices.

His most celebrated defense of fundamentalism came in a series of debates he conducted in 1923 and

1924 with Charles Francis Potter, a Unitarian minister in New York. Not only were they broadcast on the new medium of radio, but major newspapers gave front-page coverage, and later the debates were published in book form.

In the debate, Straton mixed scientific and historical proofs for the truth of the Bible with common sense appeals to American middle-class morality. His concluding comments in the first debate said volumes about his concerns:

"The very foundations of the American Republic were laid down upon the open Bible." This book taught nations "the value of monogamy, the sacredness of the marriage vow, the religious equality of the sexes, and the sanctity of the home." To Straton, the well-being of the United States depended on the continuing acceptance of Christianity.

Bible school dispensationalists

Bible institutes and schools, like Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and Philadelphia College of the Bible, arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to train Christian workers for evangelism and missions—and to provide an alternative to America's liberal-leaning colleges and seminaries.

Bible schools were also important for disseminating the doctrines of dispensationalism—a key feature of much fundamentalist thought. Dispensationalism is a method of biblical interpretation that sees history in moral decline (contrary to the optimism of liberal Protestantism). At the end of the age of the church, there will be greater immorality and apostasy, followed by Christ's return and the Day of Judgment. Dispensationalism not only helped people interpret history, it provided a ready incentive for evangelism and missions.

James M. Gray, a minister in the Reformed Episcopal Church, was the first dean and president of Moody Bible Institute. He began his duties in 1904 and directed the Chicago school until his death in 1935. Gray was not the most visible fundamentalist, but he regularly invited prominent fundamentalist leaders to speak at Moody. He made sure his students received a steady diet of arguments, usually grounded in dispensationalist theology, against liberal theology.

Gray's dispensational theology colored his assessment of American politics. In his mind, the United States was in an awful spiritual conflict between Christ and Satan, one which fostered wars and rumors of wars. Christ's return was the only hope. Then Satan would be bound and Christ and his saints would reign. Liberals were of no help, he said, planning as they did for a golden age through the social gospel, the League of Nations, and laws of Congress. Gray even detected traces of communism in liberalism. But more heinous was liberalism's denial that the teaching of the Bible was the only way to "restrain" and "eradicate" "evil in the world and the hearts of men."

Gray was one of the first conservatives to reply to Harry Emerson Fosdick's provocative sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Fosdick had argued that doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, the Second Coming, and inerrancy were minor points that should not jeopardize church unity.

In his response, Gray reaffirmed traditional Protestant doctrines in light of dispensational thought. He then added that if liberals "had not sought to introduce their strange and subversive doctrines among God's saints," fundamentalists would not have needed to "contend for the faith delivered to them once for all." Gray argued it was liberals who were disrupting the churches, not fundamentalists, who were simply preaching and writing what Protestants had always believed.

Calvinist contrarians

Fosdick preached his famous sermon against fundamentalism at New York City's First Presbyterian

Church, a congregation within the same denomination (the Northern Presbyterian Church) in which Clarence Macartney (1879- 1957) ministered. Macartney's opposition to modernism arose not so much out of worries about America's social fabric or dispensational thought but Calvinist theology (with its concern for the sovereignty and glory of God) and Presbyterian polity (with its dependence on historic creeds).

Macartney had his Presbyterian credentials in order. He graduated from Princeton Seminary, and he pastored prominent Presbyterian congregations in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh; he also served on the board of trustees of his alma mater. He became moderator of the Northern Presbyterian Church's 1924 General Assembly, the only fundamentalist to be elected to that post.

His arguments against liberalism, no doubt, explain his appeal to conservative Presbyterians. In an article written for the ***Ladies Home Journal***, Macartney argued that conservatives were not opposed to scholarship or to science per se. Rather they were alarmed by what liberalism did to the God of the Bible. "Modernism not only discredits the Bible," he wrote, "but it belittles God." God has been reduced "to so low a rank that Moses or Elijah or Isaiah would never recognize him as the God in whose presence they stood and whose Word was upon their lips."

Macartney also argued that the creed of Presbyterians (the Westminster Confession) was not an "outworn interpretation of theology," a common liberal complaint. Instead, it constituted "the foundation upon which stands the Christian Church." By requiring Presbyterian ministers to subscribe to the creed, the church was not putting up unnecessary barriers but only requiring what the Bible clearly taught.

Macartney believed that because of its confessional tradition the Presbyterian Church was "destined to be the leader in the conflict." Never had Presbyterians a greater opportunity to serve Christ's kingdom than by defending and affirming their confession of faith.

Macartney's words were pro-phetic. A former fellow classmate at Princeton Seminary, J. Gresham Machen, eventually led conservatives out of the Northern Presbyterian Church and offered theological ammunition to fundamentalists of all Christian communions.

Fundamentalist jazz

Fundamentalists were united in opposing modernism but not in identifying modernism's guiding ideas or gravest consequences. Fundamentalism, then, sounded more like a mixed jazz quartet than the tenor solo sung during Sunday morning worship.

The melody of fundamentalism consisted in pointing out the errors of liberalism but its proponents could not resist the chance to improvise on that melody.

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The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: Christian History Timeline

Growing Concern: 1870-1900

1876
What will eventually be called the Niagara Bible Conference first meets (meeting annually until 1901); it inspires Bible and prophecy conferences nationally, which defend the Bible's verbal inerrancy and promote holiness and premillennialism

1881
Presbyterian theologians B. B. Warfield and A. A. Hodge write "Inspiration," which defends the inerrancy of Scripture; such articles begin to appear increasingly

1889
Moody Bible Institute founded, inspiring the founding of hundreds of Bible institutes and colleges that will become centers of fundamentalism

1892
Charles Briggs, liberal professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary, New York, is convicted of heresy for his liberal interpretations of the Bible

Defining the Issues: 1900-1920

1909
Scofield Reference Bible, whose notes teach dispensationalism and Keswick holiness, published; will become best-selling Bible among fundamentalists

1910-1915
The Fundamentals published; promotes conservative teaching

1910
Northern Presbyterian Church affirms five essential doctrines: inerrancy of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, Christ's substitutionary atonement, his bodily resurrection, and miracles

1919
World's Christian Fundamentals Association formed, the largest and longest-lasting (until the 1940s) international fundamentalist association

1920
Curtis Lee Laws, editor of the Baptist Watchman-Examiner, coins the term fundamentalist

1920
Conservatives in the Northern Baptist Convention organize the Fundamentalist Fellowship to combat spreading liberalism

Public Confrontations: 1920-1930

1923
J. Gresham Machen's ***Liberalism and Christianity*** defines liberalism as another religion

1923
Baptist Bible Union formed to gather Baptist fundamentalists of various denominations

1924
Evangelical Theological College (later Dallas Theological Seminary) founded; will become a dispensational stronghold

1925
At the Scopes trial, fundamentalism fares poorly in most Americans' eyes

1929
Presbyterian fundamentalists found Westminster Theological Seminary

Institution Building: 1930-1950

1932
Northern Baptist fundamentalists form the General Association of Regular Baptists

1936
Presbyterian fundamentalists form the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

1937
Disgruntled Orthodox Presbyterians form Bible Presbyterian Church

1941
American Council of Churches formed as a conservative alternative to World Council of Churches

1947
Moderate Northern Baptist fundamentalists form the Conservative Baptist Association

Liberalism and Neo-Orthodoxy

1874
John Fiske's Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy is one of many books that try to combine Christianity and the new scientific learning

1880
Society of Biblical Literature formed to promote scientific study of the Bible

1891
Washington Gladden's Who Wrote the Bible popularizes the new biblical criticis

William N. Clarke

1894
William N. Clarke's***An Outline of Theology*** is the first systematic theology from a liberal perspective

1908
Federal Council of Churches adopts "The Social Creed of the Churches" to promote the social gospel

1917
Walter Rauschenbusch's A Theology of the Social Gospel further popularizes the political and social optimism of liberalism

1922
Harry Emerson Fosdick creates a stir with his sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"

1924
Shailer Mathews's The Faith of Modernism will become the most widely distributed book promoting modernism

1927
Presbyterian General Assembly decides the five fundamentals are no longer binding for ministerial candidates

1932
With Reinhold Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society, neo-orthodoxy ascends, critiquing liberalism's optimism and its accommodation to culture

1936
John Mackay assumes presidency of Princeton Theological Seminary; leads Presbyterianism in neo-orthodox directions

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The Monkey Trial & the Rise of Fundamentalism: A Gallery of Militants, Moderates, & Millionaires

It's pretty hard to stereotype early fundamentalist leaders.

Kelvin Crow

John Franklyn Norris

(1877-1952)
Pistol-packing pastor

The son of a drunken sharecropper and a devout mother, Frank Norris became one of the most controversial clerics of the 1920s, and the basis for much of today's unflattering caricature of fundamentalists. His flamboyant preaching converted thousands, but the Atlanta Constitution charged, "The Rev. J. Frank Norris ... is one, good, sound, reason why there are 50,000,000 Americans who do not belong to any church at all."

At 15 he was shot by horse thieves, and his mother tutored him in the faith during the difficult recovery. After completing Southern Baptist Theological Seminary training in two years, he pastored a church of 13 members, which grew to 1,000 in three years. In 1909 he moved to the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth. There he founded his own newspaper and pioneered radio preaching. Membership increased tenfold.

When Norris preached, he roamed the platform shouting and weeping, with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper the other. He brought monkeys into the pulpit to mock Darwinism, and he held a public funeral for "John Barleycorn" when Prohibition passed. In a sermon series against municipal corruption, he preached on "The Ten Biggest Devils in Fort Worth—Names Given." Enraged community leaders tried to run him out of town and his life was threatened. When his church was destroyed by a fire of undetermined origin, Norris was indicted for arson but eventually acquitted.

In his 1926 sermon series "Rum and Romanism," he attacked the Catholic mayor of Fort Worth, accusing him of misappropriating funds to Catholic causes. Norris received a threatening phone call from a friend of the mayor, who later showed up in his church office. Heated words were exchanged, Norris pulled out a pistol and shot the man four times, killing him. He was tried but found innocent on the grounds of self-defense.

Norris called himself "the Texas Cyclone" and was a whirlwind of activity. In 1935 he added the Temple Baptist Church of Detroit to his pastoral duties, and he commuted between his Texas and Michigan congregations for 16 years. He held revivals in 46 states. He was a founding member of the World Christian Fundamentals Association and a charter member of the Baptist Bible Union.

Norris was dictatorial and fiercely independent. Turnover in his congregations was high, with as many as 600 members leaving at one time. Norris was thrown out of the city, county, state, and denominational associations for such things as calling fellow Baptists, "little, modernistic, lick-the-skillet, two-by-four-aping, asinine preachers."

He founded his own loose association of churches named the Premillennial, Fundamental, Missionary Fellowship, but the group fractured in schisms and discord. Deserted by most of his friends, he died of a

heart attack while attending a youth rally in Florida.

Curtis Lee Laws

(1868-1946)
First "fundamentalist"

Curtis Lee Laws coined the term "fundamentalist" and made it part of the American lexicon.

Laws established himself as a strong leader of the denominational conservatives during 20 years of successful pastorate. In 1913 he left the pulpit to become editor of an independent and influential Baptist publication, the ***Watchman-Examiner***. Laws declared from the beginning an editorial partisanship in favor of the conservatives and against the modernist camp.

In 1920 he joined with 22 Baptist leaders, including militants like William Bell Riley and J. Frank Norris, to plan and lead the Buffalo Conference on the "Fundamentals of the Baptist Faith." In an editorial after the conference Laws rejected popular labels for the increasingly organized protest movement, such as "landmarker", "conservative" and "premillennialist." He thought these were inaccurate or had negative connotations. Instead, he chose "fundamentalist" as a neutral and inclusive term for those "who still cling to the great fundamentals and who mean to do battle royal for them."

Laws felt his greatest achievement at the 1920 conference was the agreement that fundamentalists would work within the Northern Baptist Convention and cease boycotting general meetings. He was a voice for moderation within the fundamentalist camp, and wanted to work to reform the Convention from within, believing that conservative thought still predominated.

He took his fellow fundamentalists to task for the tone of the meeting where, "a sober, reverential, thoughtful body of men and women was transformed into a shouting, hissing, applauding bedlam." He also editorialized in his paper, "In contending for the faith, men should have and manifest the spirit of the Master."

His more moderate position eventually split Laws from Riley and the militants in the Baptist Bible Union. He supported the formation of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism as conservative organizations training ministers and missionaries loyal to the Northern Baptist Convention. Laws retained his position as a conservative leader within the Northern Baptist Convention until his retirement in 1938.

Adoniram Judson Gordon

(1836-1895)
Socially active renovator

When A. J. Gordon arrived at Clarendon Street Baptist Church in 1870, he set to reform the empty ritualism of a near dead church not with "innovations" but "renovations." His "renovations" also left a mark on later fundamentalism.

He preached scriptural inerrancy, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, and the continual reality of miracles.

He became a premillennialist through his association with D. L. Moody and the writings of John Nelson Darby. Gordon felt he was living in the end times and watched developing Zionism with "quivering anticipation."

Scandalized by the "degenerate influence" of the American daily newspapers and the "semi-secularization" of the religious press, Gordon established "an unobtrusive little monthly," the Watchword, in 1878. Regarding such liberal ideas as evolution and the social gospel, Gordon wrote, "Saints were not evolved from sinners ... and New Jerusalems are not evolved from municipal Babylons by improving drainage and sanitation."

A close associate of D. L. Moody all his life, Gordon helped lead his Niagara and Northfield prophecy conferences. He taught in Moody's interdenominational Northfield school.

In 1877 Gordon founded the Industrial Temporary Home. It provided food and lodging for the needy on the grounds that it was futile to preach to those who had empty stomachs. Gordon also instituted the use of grape juice for Communion so as not to seat "that right-hand minister of the evil one" next to those just released from his service.

Gordon was also active in a number of social causes. He was arrested for speaking at an outdoor meeting to protest the suppression of street preachers. He actively supported Prohibition. He upheld women's right to preach and teach men in the church and their right to vote in civil elections.

Almost single-handedly, Gordon raised the money for the American Baptists to adopt the Livingstone Congo Mission, and he supported local missions to the Jews and to Chinese immigrants in Boston. He also founded Boston Missionary Training School to train men and women for the mission field.

After he died, just after celebrating his twenty-fifth anniversary as Clarendon's pastor, his friends named his missionary school for him—today's Gordon College.

William Bell Riley

(1861-1947)
Charismatic administrator

W. B. Riley was a charismatic opponent of modernist theology, "the ablest executive that fundamentalism produced."

Born just before the Civil War, Riley earned his way to college raising tobacco. After seminary and a series of brief pastorates, he moved to the First Baptist Church in Minneapolis, where he ministered for 45 years. His concern turned almost immediately to the influence of rationalism, higher criticism, and evolution on the Northern Baptist Convention. His two books on the "menace of modernism" spread his fame as a champion of conservatism.

His preaching style was very dignified; a reporter said Riley preached "like a prosperous banker." But beneath the calm exterior was an inflexible opposition to modernist thought. He preached against drinking, gambling, prostitution, dancing, revealing dress, movies, and opulence. He also preached to convert listeners, and he designed a balcony aisle that lead straight to the altar so no potential convert could change his mind while wending down the back stairs.

Riley held to "orthodoxy plus," with the plus being aggressive, militant action. As early as 1908 he advocated division into two denominations with the liberals leaving, but by the 1930s, the fundamentalists were the departing group.

In an attempt to unify the fundamentalists across denominations, Riley helped found the World Christian Fundamentals Association (1919). Membership was open to anyone willing to subscribe to a nine-point

confession of faith. Riley led the organization to sponsor 20 bills in state legislatures against the teaching of Darwinism. Riley himself frequently debated pro-evolution speakers.

In 1920 and 1922 Riley led fights in the Convention to purge Northern Baptist schools of modernist thought and to impose a doctrinal statement on the denomination. After being outmaneuvered in both battles, he joined J. Frank Norris and T. T. Shields in forming the Baptist Bible Union (1923) to unite conservative Baptists of all conventions "who believe the Bible to be the Word of God."

Shortly after his move to Minneapolis, he founded Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School (1902) to train pastoral leaders for small towns and rural congregations. In 1938 he founded Northwestern Theological Seminary to train urban pastors. In 1945 he founded Northwestern College, an undergraduate fundamentalist organization. On his death bed he put all three schools under the care of the young Billy Graham.

Having laid the groundwork in his final years, Riley's last organization—an independent Minnesota Baptist Convention—came about shortly after his death.

John Gresham Machen

(1881-1937)
Non-fundamentalist fundamentalist

"I never call myself a 'fundamentalist' " Machen wrote to a friend in 1927. But he was indeed a fundamentalist, if an unusual one, and a key defender of historical doctrine.

He was brought up in a genteel Presbyterian home. From his father, a prominent Baltimore lawyer, he acquired an interest in classical literature and rare books; his mother encouraged him to read English and French Victorian literature.

Machen broke the fundamentalist stereotype in several ways. He was a scholar in entire life. He studied at Johns Hopkins University and Princeton Theological Seminary, then spent a year in Germany at the seat of higher criticism. He returned to Princeton filled with intellectual doubts, but upon resolving them, became a prolific author of influential books supporting fundamentalist positions. (In addition, his ***New Testament Greek for Beginners*** [1922] became a standard textbook for generations of seminary students.)

In ***Christianity and Liberalism*** (1923), he argued that liberalism was a different religion from Christianity, and that modernists should be forced out of the churches. The liberal ***Christian Century*** agreed: "Two worlds have crashed" and the differences were "as profound and as grim as that between Christianity and Confucianism."

On the other hand, he disliked the fundamentalist tendency to reduce the faith to a set number of essential doctrines. Nor did he think "that the prophecies of the Bible permit so definite a mapping out of future events." He also refused to accept total abstinence from tobacco and alcohol. He sometimes even regretted not smoking: he once said he thought tobacco was "a wonderful aid ... to friendship and Christian patience." When a new president of Princeton Seminary declared his intention to broaden the school to include more liberal points of view, Machen led the resistance. After suffering defeat, he withdrew from his academic home of 23 years and founded Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (1929).

He was also concerned that denominational missionaries had turned from the primary purpose of saving souls to medical and social work. So he formed the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions in 1933. The General Assembly declared the action to be schismatic and ordered Machen to

withdraw or stand trial. He stood fast and was suspended from the Presbyterian ministry in 1935.

Now completely at odds with the leadership of his denomination, Machen founded the Presbyterian Church of America (later renamed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) and was elected its first moderator. One year later, this independent "scholar of fundamentalism" died of pneumonia contracted on a winter trip to rally supporters for his vision of the one true church.

Lyman and Milton Stewart

(1840-1923) (1838-1923)
Oil magnates against modernism

The Stewart brothers grew up in a devout Presbyterian home in Titusville, Pennsylvania, where oil was first discovered. While both brothers took part in a number of oil-related enterprises, Lyman was more the risk-taking entrepreneur. After a couple of disastrous failures, in 1886 their "Adams Canyon #16" struck the first gusher ever in California. Their stock holdings mushroomed, and the brothers consolidated them into one corporation: the Union Oil Company of California.

In 1894 Lyman attended the Niagara Bible Conference and became interested in publishing literature on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. In 1907 he and his brother helped bankroll the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (today's Biola University). They also gave some money to help the Scofield Reference Bible get published, but Lyman still hadn't settled on a grand project by 1908, when he wrote his brother, "The Lord certainly has something a great deal better for both of us than to have us spend our time and thought dealing with business affairs."

In 1909, he attended a service at Chicago's Moody Church and was taken with pastor A. C. Dixon's response "to something that one of those infidel professors in Chicago University had published." The ordinarily shy businessman approached Dixon and revealed his idea to create a massive series of publications to discredit modernism. The tomes would be distributed to every pastor, missionary, professor, theology student, Sunday school superintendent, and religious editor in America and Britain. The bellicose Dixon, Lyman believed, would be the perfect editor.

Dixon listened to the oil baron's plan and replied, "It is of the Lord. Let us pray."

A few months later, the first of twelve volumes of ***The Fundamentals*** (right) was sent to 175,000 addresses. (From 1910 to 1915, the publishers printed about 250,000 copies, pressing 3 million altogether.) The books contained 90 articles that defended the authority of Scripture and other Christian doctrines.

The volumes, however, were ignored by academic journals and denominational presses. Historian Ernest Sandeen notes, "The Fundamentals plainly failed in its primary purpose—checking the spread of modernism." Nonetheless, the Stewart brothers had published the earliest major text that educated fundamentalists in a broad range of subjects.

—by Ted Olsen and Mark Galli

Kelvin Crow is president of Education Support Services and contributor to the **Historical Dictionary of the United States Army** ***(Greenwood).***

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Fundamentalist Internet

The people, conferences, and organizations that made up the fundamentalist family.

Bob Jones IV

Fundamentalism was a broad movement that arose from and sustained itself in a variety of sub-movements in conservative Christianity.

This chart suggests some of the relationships and "families" within fundamentalism. Naturally the relationships were much more complicated in history than can be expressed in a simple chart, so, see notes on the next page for explanations.

—Bob Jones IV

Bob Jones IV is a graduate student at the University of Notre Dame.

Fundamentalist Internet Notes

Higher Life Movement

Arose out of pre-Civil War revivalism and stressed a deeper work of the Holy Spirit beyond conversion. It took two forms.

Wesleyan

National ***Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness***. An outgrowth of Phoebe Palmer's New York City "Tuesday Meetings," holiness camp meetings stressed a dramatic "second blessing" that brought freedom from sin.

Church of God (Anderson). A precursor to the numerous Church of God denominations springing from the Azusa Street Revivals.

Christian & Missionary Alliance. Founded by A. B. Simpson, who left the Presbyterian Church under the influence of holiness teachings. Later Pentecostals would claim Simpson as an evangelical forebear of the tongues movement.

Reformed

Keswick meetings. Institutionalized around the time of Moody's British campaigns, Keswick holiness stressed repeated "filling with" and "surrender to" the Holy Spirit to attain victory over sin.

Northfield Conference. The Bible conference started by Moody in 1880 increasingly emphasized Spirit-filling, especially after F. B. Meyer's arrival from Britain in 1891.

Student Volunteer Movement. This mission board sent Spirit-filled young people to carry the gospel around the world.

Gordon College. Founder A. J. Gordon was diffident on dispensationalism but a vocal champion of

Keswick holiness.

Victorious Life Testimony conferences. After accepting Keswick holiness teachings in 1910, Charles Trumbull, editor of the widely-circulated ***Sunday School Times***, founded this conference, which eventually settled in Keswick Grove, New Jersey.

Columbia Bible College. Founded by Trumbull follower Robert McQuilkin in Columbia, South Carolina, to promote Keswick holiness teaching.

Pentecostalism

Azusa Street revival. Led by William Seymour, a holiness preacher, these revivals insisted that spirit baptism, as evidenced by speaking in tongues, was the universal sign of a sanctified life.

Assemblies of God. The first effort to organize the many churches founded in the wake of the Azusa Street revivals.

International Church of the Four-Square Gospel. Founded by evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, who had earlier withdrawn her membership from the Assemblies of God.

Dispensationalism

John Nelson Darby. The British originator of the dispensational system of interpreting Scripture.

Prophetic Times. A widely-read newspaper that interpreted current events in light of dispensational understandings of prophecy.

Niagara Bible Conference. This long-running conference did for dispensationalism in America what the Northfield Conference did for teaching on the Holy Spirit.

Moody Bible Institute. The Chicago Bible school perpetualized (especially through its press) two of the evangelist's main emphases: the Spirit-filled life and dispensationalism. Also helped keep missions and evangelism central.

Scofield Reference Bible. First published in 1909, the Scofield Bible's marginal notes raised both dispensationalism and Keswick holiness teaching to a level of near-inspiration.

Bible Institute of Los Angeles. A headquarters for West Coast fundamentalism. Funded specifically to teach a dispensational hermeneutic. R. A. Torrey was first dean.

Dallas Theological Seminary. Founded by Presbyterian L. S. Chafer whose systematic dispensationalism rivaled that of Scofield.

Revivalism

Charles Finney. The converted lawyer, "Father of Modern Revivalism," taught that specific techniques could encourage conversion.

D. L. Moody. The first major revivalist to adopt premillennialism; he was also influenced by the higher life movement.

Billy Sunday. He headquartered at the influential Winona Lake Bible Conference (founded 1895).

Charles E. Fuller and The Old Fashioned Revival Hour. By the 1940s, this dispensationalist had one of the most popular programs on all of radio.

John R. Rice and The Sword of the Lord. Through this widely-circulated magazine, Rice became one of the most influential fundamentalist leaders.

Youth for Christ International. Following the model of evangelists Jack Wyrtzen and Percy Crawford, YFC generated a new wave of revivalism and launched Billy Graham's career.

Billy Graham. Until 1957, Graham was embraced by fundamentalists.

Anti-Modernism

Northern Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. split over modernism in the 1920s without the influence of either dispensationalism or higher life teachings.

Westminster Seminary. After the Princeton Seminary board was restructured to lessen the influence of conservatives, J. Gresham Machen left to form this institution.

Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. This mission board was founded to combat the modernism that Machen perceived on the foreign field.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church. After being disciplined by the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Machen and his allies formed the OPC.

Bible Presbyterian Church. Carl McIntire and a handful of other Machen lieutenants split from the opc over Machen's steadfast refusal to ally the denomination with dispensationalists.

Southern Baptist Convention
The denomination as a whole remained so conservative that it avoided splits in the 1920s.

J. Frank Norris and World Baptist Fellowship. Norris, a fiery preacher, was the principal in founding a number of organizations among dissident fundamentalists in the South.

Bible Baptist Fellowship. Started by a group who resented Norris's control of World Baptist Fellowship. The new fellowship founded Baptist Bible College.

Jerry Falwell. Converted by the radio ministry of Charles Fuller and educated at Bible Baptist College, Falwell traces his heritage to Norris.

Northern Baptist Convention
Split in the 1920s by conservatives heavily influenced by both higher life and dispensationalism.

General Association of Regular Baptists. Conservatives who had operated within the Convention since 1923 under the name Baptist Bible Union withdrew to form the garb.

Conservative Baptist Association of America. Formed by conservatives frustrated with NBC's missions policies.

Non-Denominational Coalitions

World's Christian Fundamentals Association. Founded by William Bell Riley, the WCFA acted as an umbrella organization for fundamentalists.

The Fundamentals. These volumes opposed modernism and advocated both dispensationalism and Keswick holiness teachings.

Anti-evolution crusade. The major political expression of fundamentalism was led by William Jennings Bryan. Succeeded in banning the teaching of evolution in the schools of many states.

Bob Jones University. Named after the evangelist who founded it in 1927, BJU saw its mission as countering the erosion of faith experienced by students exposed to modernist professors at state colleges.

American Council of Christian Churches. Machen lieutenant Carl McIntire founded the accc to oppose the Federal Council of Churches and to provide a network for churches and denominations that had decided in favor of separation.

Other denominations.
Fundamentalists fought modernism in many denominations: Methodist, Congregational, Mennonite, among others.

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Relevant Morality

Modernism's most popular preacher on the hopes of liberals.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

Though in the 1930s, pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick questioned many liberal premises, in the 1920s, he was an ardent champion of modernist thought. In a 1926 essay, "What Christian Liberals Are Driving At," he outlined two major aims of liberalism; the following is a condensed excerpt.

Certainly I cannot claim the right to speak for all Christian liberals. There are too many different sorts of them, from swashbuckling radicals, believing not much of anything, to men of well-stabilized convictions who are tolerant of differences and open-minded to new truth. But there is a large and growing group in our churches for whom I shall try to speak.

The uproar of the last few years associated with fundamentalism has been caused in part by the clear and true perception of the reactionaries that the liberals are gaining and that, if not stopped now, they will soon be in control. What the liberals are driv-ing at, therefore, is an important matter, not only to the churches, but also to the public in general. Let me try to group their major aims and motives under two heads.

Getting with it

For one thing, liberals undoubtedly wish to modernize Christianity's expression of its faith. The Protestant Reformation was a valiant stroke for liberty, but it occurred before the most characteristic ideas of our modern age had arrived. The Augsburg Confession is a memorable document, but the Lutherans who framed it did not even know that they were living on a moving planet, and Martin Luther himself called Copernicus a new astrologer. The Westminster Confession is a notable achievement in the development of Christian thought, but it was written 40 years before Newton published his work on the law of gravitation.

Protestantism, that is, was formulated in prescientific days. Not one of its historic statements of faith takes into account any of the masterful ideas which constitute the framework of modern thinking—the inductive method, the new astronomy, natural law, evolution. All these have come since Protestantism arrived.

Protestantism stiffened into its classic forms under the intellectual influences long antedating our modern world, and the chaos and turmoil in Christian thought today are the consequences. They spring directly from the impossible endeavor of large sections of the church to continue the presentation of the gospel in forms of thought that are no longer real and cogent to well-instructed minds.

As one deals with young men and women religiously upset, one must often blame their unsettlement not so much upon the colleges as upon Christian churches and Sunday schools—upon religious agencies which taught these young people in the beginning that the Christian gospel is indissolubly associated with the prescientific view of the world in the Scriptures or the creeds; that the gospel of the Lord Jesus is dependent upon fiat creation or the historic reliability of old miracle narratives; that the God of the gospel, like the God of the early Hebrew documents, is a magnified man who could walk in the garden in the cool of the day or come down from the sky to confound men's speech lest they should build a

tower high enough to reach his home.

It is a tragic error thus to set up in the minds of young children an artificial adhesion between the gospel and a literal interpretation of Scripture and creed, so that, when education inevitably opens a child's mind, the whole unnatural combination of liberalism and spiritual faith collapses, and Christ is banished from a soul because he has been associated with opinions that are bound in the end to prove untenable.

Liberalism is not primarily a set of opinions; it is a spirit of free inquiry which wishes to face the new facts, accept whatever is true, and state the abiding principles of Christian faith in cogent and contemporary terms.

Doing good

At the very center of liberalism, as I understand it, is the conviction that nothing fundamentally matters in religion except those things which create private and public goodness.

In historic and contemporary Christianity, three elements have been continually used as competitors of character in the interest of Christians. They have repeatedly usurped the place which private and public righteousness ought to occupy as the one supreme matter with which Christianity is concerned and for which it works. These three elements are ritual, doctrine, and church.

This does not mean that ritual is unnecessary or unimportant in religion. Religion always has had its ceremonies and always will.

Nevertheless, a peril lurks in all ritualism—the supposition, namely, that the Lord God of this infinite universe cares anything about our meticulous performance of a ceremony—if it does not issue in private and public righteousness.

Nor does the liberal Christian belittle doctrine. The ordered and intelligible statement of the convictions which undergird Christian living is important. A man's creed, if real and vital, is his conviction about the nature and meaning of his life, of the world in which it is lived, and of the God who rules it. That certainly is basic and controlling.

Only there is an omnipresent danger in emphasis on doctrine. Doctrine in time is petrified into dogma. It is officially formulated. Then there is an ecclesiastical type of mind ready to use it, no longer as an inspiring elucidation of the convictions by which men really live but as a mold into which men's thinking must be exactly run. Doctrine is then authoritative, a definition laid down in times past of the way in which men must always think. And men often pride themselves on this repetition of their fathers' thoughts, as though the God and Father of Jesus cared anything for that, except as it represents real convictions vitally issuing in private and public righteousness.

Furthermore, the liberal certainly does not undervalue the church. Nevertheless, the pathos of Christian History lies in the way the church has so often misrepresented and obstructed vital Christianity. Our multiplied and meaningless denominations are doing that today.

In one of our American communities, a congregation called itself The Church of God. They could not agree among themselves and, having split asunder, the split called itself, The True Church of God. They in turn divided, and the new division called itself The Only True Church of God.

The tragedy of that picturesque situation, too typical of our modern Protestantism to be pleasant, is that none of these divisions has any imaginable relationship with the one supreme business of religion: the creation of private and public righteousness.

A liberal, therefore, in his emphasis is utterly careless of sectarian distinctions. He sees that our denominational peculiarities for the most part are caused by historic reasons only, have no contemporary excuse for existence, and have no contribution to make to righteousness. He is convinced that nothing matters in any church except those few vital and transforming faiths and principles of the gospel, common to all churches, which do create personal character and social progress.

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A Return to Bondage

Fundamentalism's most gifted theologian critiques liberalism.

J. Gresham Machen

J. Greshen Machen

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Even H. L. Mencken, the agnostic and cynical columnist of the Baltimore Sun, admired Presbyterian J. Gresham Machen (right) as an "adept theologian" whose scholarship was "wide and deep." Machen made the most adept critique of liberalism in his 1923 book, Christianity and Liberalism. The following are condensed excerpts.

The great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology. This modern non-redemptive religion is called "modernism" or "liberalism."

The liberal attempt at reconciling Christianity with modern science has really relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity, so that what remains is in essentials only that same indefinite type of religious aspiration which was in the world before Christianity came upon the scene. In trying to remove from Christianity everything that could possibly be objected to in the name of science, in trying to bribe off the enemy by those concessions which the enemy most desires, the apologist has really abandoned what he started out to defend.

In view of the lamentable defects of modern life, a type of religion certainly should not be commended simply because it is modern or condemned simply because it is old. In the midst of all the material achievements of modern life, one may well ask the question whether in gaining the whole world we have not lost our own soul. Are we forever condemned to live the sordid life of utilitarianism? Or is there some lost secret which if rediscovered will restore to mankind something of the glories of the past?

Such a secret the writer of this little book would discover in the Christian religion. But the Christian religion which is meant is certainly not the religion of the modern liberal church, but a message of divine grace.

Whatever happened to sin?

At the very root of the modern liberal movement is the loss of consciousness of sin. The consciousness of sin was formerly the starting-point of all preaching, but today it is gone.

Characteristic of the modern age, above all else, is a supreme confidence in human goodness; the religious literature of the day is redolent of that confidence. Get beneath the rough exterior of men, we are told, and we shall discover enough self-sacrifice to found upon it the hope of society; the world's evil, it is said, can be overcome with the world's good; no help is needed from outside the world.

Despite all superficial continuity, a remarkable change has come about within the last 75 years. The change is nothing less than the substitution of paganism for Christianity as the dominant view of life.

In speaking of "paganism," we are not using a term of reproach. Ancient Greece was pagan, but it was glorious, and the modern world has not even begun to equal its achievements. What, then, is paganism? Paganism is that view of life which finds the highest goal of human existence in the healthy and harmonious and joyous development of existing human faculties.

Very different is the Christian ideal. Paganism is optimistic with regard to unaided human nature, whereas Christianity is the religion of the broken heart.

We do not mean that the characteristic Christian attitude is a continual beating on the breast or a continual crying of "Woe is me." Nothing could be further from the fact. On the contrary, Christianity means that sin is faced once for all and then is cast, by the grace of God, forever into the depths of the sea.

The trouble with the paganism of ancient Greece, as with the paganism of modern times, was not in the superstructure, which was glorious, but in the foundation, which was rotten. There was always something to be covered up; the enthusiasm of the architect was maintained only by ignoring the disturbing fact of sin.

In Christianity, on the other hand, nothing needs to be covered up. The fact of sin is faced squarely once for all and is dealt with by the grace of God. But then, after sin has been removed by the grace of God, the Christian can proceed to develop joyously every faculty that God has given him.

Middle Ages redux

Faith, according to the Christian view, means simply receiving a gift. To have faith in Christ means to cease trying to win God's favor by one's own character; the man who believes in Christ simply accepts the sacrifice which Christ offered on Calvary. The result of such faith is a new life and all good works, but the salvation itself is an absolutely free gift of God.

According to modern liberalism, faith is essentially the same as "making Christ Master" in one's life; at least, it is by making Christ Master in the life that the welfare of men is sought. But that simply means that salvation is thought to be obtained by our own obedience to the commands of Christ. Such teaching is just a sublimated form of legalism. Not the sacrifice of Christ, on this view, but our own obedience to God's law, is the ground of hope.

In this way, the whole achievement of the Reformation has been given up, and there has been a return to the religion of the Middle Ages. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, God raised up a man who began to read the Epistle to the Galatians with his own eyes. The result was the rediscovery of the doctrine of justification by faith. Upon that rediscovery has been based the whole of our evangelical freedom.

The grace of God is rejected by modern liberalism. And the result is slavery—the slavery of the law, the wretched bondage by which man undertakes the impossible task of establishing his own righteousness as a ground of acceptance with God. It may seem strange at first sight that "liberalism," of which the very name means freedom, should in reality be wretched slavery. But the phenomenon is not really so strange. Emancipation from the blessed will of God always involves bondage to some worse taskmaster.

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An Army of Conservative Women

Women played a surprisingly prominent role in early fundamentalism.

Mary Ann Jeffreys

The history of fundamentalism is primarily the story of men debating, men starting organizations, and men founding colleges and seminaries. But that is only part (albeit the largest part) of the story.

Women certainly played key roles behind the fundamentalist scenes. Ninety percent of Sunday school teachers were women; women raised millions for foreign missions; thousands served on the mission field; women led the fights for the poor, for women's suffrage, and for Prohibition.

Frances Willard founded the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which grew to two million members by 1897. She called it the "largest army of women inside the realm of conservative theology."

Up-front females

Fundamentalist women also played up-front roles in the rising movement. A few fundamentalist institutions, especially in the late 1800s, supported women's preaching and ordination. In 1888 Christian & Missionary Alliance's (C&MA) Nyack College awarded its annual preaching prize to a woman. In those days, Moody Bible Institute (MBI) trained scores of women who became evangelists, preachers, and pastors. Gordon Bible College in Boston assigned female students to summer pastorates in rural New England to prepare them for what historian Janette Hassey calls "the wide ministry of [female] alumnae serving as preachers, pastors, and Bible teachers." The Salvation Army's Catherine Booth preached twice at Chicago's Moody Church.

Women were featured speakers at Bible and prophecy conferences, which were incubators for fundamentalism. D. L. Moody's Northfield Conference in 1880 featured popular women preachers such as Maria Gordon, leader of the Boston area WCTU. Winona Lake Bible Conference (with 10,000 visitors each summer) promoted and welcomed women speakers such as the Salvation Army's Evangeline Booth-Clibborn and female MBI graduates. One mbi graduate taught New Testament and Christian fundamentals; another spoke on "Christ and Modern Questions." Dr. Henry Savage, a leading fundamentalist and pastor of First Baptist Church in Pontiac, Michigan, invited evangelist Amy Stockton to speak at his Maranatha Bible Conference.

During the height of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, many fundamentalist churches, including W. B. Riley's First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, welcomed women to their pulpits to speak to mixed audiences on temperance and women's voting rights. Evangelist and Bible teacher Uldine Utley preached revival for five weeks from John Roach Straton's Calvary Baptist pulpit in New York. The revival concluded with 10,000 at Madison Square Garden.

Helen Sunday

Fundamentalist churches discouraged women's pastoral leadership—except under exceptional circumstances. Baptist A. S. Hobart said it was "incredible that any Baptist church, except some western one where there are no men,

Click to Enlarge...

would want a woman for a pastor."

Maybe not as pastors, but in many cases, women served as preachers, teachers, and organizers in the fight against modernism.

Sundays without rest.*Helen "Ma" Sunday* (right) ***was the one who managed her husband, Billy's, extensive evangelistic campaigns. After his death in 1935, she became a speaker in her own right, as well as a fund raiser for fundamentalist causes. She also served on the board of Bob Jones University.***

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Enraptured with Order

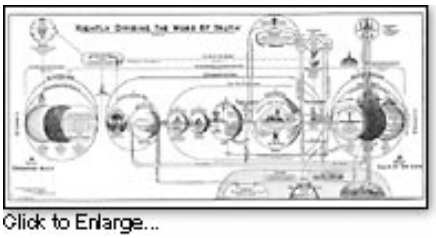
How fundamentalists strove mightily to make sense of history.

editors

Clarence Larkin believed the biblical interpreter "cannot intelligently do his work without a plan. He must have drawings and specifications." To that end, the mechanical-engineer-turned-preacher wrote and illustrated ***Dispensational Truth, or God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages*** (1919), a 180-page book that contains 90 charts.

These charts, he wrote, must be tested against the Bible itself, yet to properly interpret and understand the Bible, "The charts are indispensable." The above, according to Larkin, is "the main chart" of his book.

Diagramming Bible books and salvation history is characteristic of dispensationalism—a method of interpreting the Bible that divides history into different "dispensations" or spiritual eras. In each dispensation, God reveals a new aspect of his will, and according to C. I. Scofield, each dispensation is "a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment—marking his utter failure in every dispensation."



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Though others have divided history into spiritual eras, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), an early leader of the Plymouth Brethren in England, was the first to create a full-blown dispensational system. He promoted his ideas in America during a preaching tour in the 1870s. Scofield, one of many pastors and teachers taken with his ideas, eventually published a Bible with dispensationalist notes (in 1909) that became the standard Bible for fundamentalists.

Dispensationalists are known for their premillennialism: because the world is corrupt, Christ must return before the millennial kingdom is established. This view directly challenged the postmillennialism of liberals (and evangelicals like Charles Finney), who believed human effort would eventually create the kingdom of God on earth. Interpretive disagreements (such as whether believers would be raptured by Christ before or after the Tribulation) have split dispensationalists into warring factions at times.

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The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: Christian History Interview - Spurring on Secularism

The leading historian of fundamentalism assesses the damages inflicted by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.

interview with George Marsden

What happened to fundamentalism and liberalism after the ruckus died down? In the long run, was the fundamentalist-modernist controversy a "tempest in a teapot," or a significant event in modern American religious history?To help us bridge the gap between the 1930s and today, Christian History ***spoke with George Marsden, professor of history at the University of Notre Dame. George is author of the now classic*** Fundamentalism and American Culture ***(Oxford, 1980).***

What happened to fundamentalism after the 1930s?

After losing a number of public battles, like the Scopes trial, the fundamentalists regrouped; they formed independent denominations, Bible churches, and parachurch and revivalist organizations. They mobilized the radio—Charles Fuller and his ***Old Fashioned Revival Hour*** is a good example.

The watchers of mainstream culture were writing off fundamentalism, assuming that as people became more educated they would become more liberal. In fact, fundamentalism was moving on the popular front and was still quite effective. In the 1970s, Jerry Falwell revealed to the country that fundamentalism had not gone away and was still a powerful movement.

What about liberalism?

Liberalism flourished, and mainline Protestant churches were very influential in the culture; they tended to think they spoke for Protestantism in America.

For instance, in the 1940s, major radio networks were expected to donate some time for Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant programming. The National Council of Churches, which determined who would represent Protestantism on this free air time, refused to invite fundamentalists to participate. Charles Fuller arguably had the most popular religious radio program of the day—air time for which he paid. When he demanded equal free time, he was refused.

This "control" of Protestant culture, of course, weakened in the sixties and seventies as mainline Protestantism fragmented, and mainline churches started losing members.

So even though liberals controlled the media, they didn't sabotage the appeal of fundamentalism.

The cultural center doesn't control lots of things that are going on in subcultures on the periphery in American life. Fundamentalism is a pretty good illustration of that.

Fundamentalists have a reputation for majoring in minors, worrying as much about card playing and dancing as about inerrancy and the Incarnation. Is that fair?

Bans on smoking, drinking, dancing, and such have always been a feature of revivalist Christianity—evangelical and fundamentalist. At evangelical Wheaton College, for example, social dancing is still forbidden. However, behavioral tests are no longer as important as political tests. Today fundamentalists would have serious doubts about a believer who is a political liberal.

Have fundamentalists borrowed anything from liberalism?

Perhaps one thing fundamentalists now share with liberals is a therapeutic model of ministry. Fundamentalists are still serious about doctrine, but they now have an entire industry that helps people talk about feelings and deal with relationships. Naturally, fundamentalists handle relational topics differently than do liberals, but they often traffic in the same therapeutic language and

assumptions.

Have liberals learned anything from fundamentalists?

Liberals have learned that it's difficult for the church to survive if there's nothing that makes the church distinct from culture. If all we need are social agencies or schools, church becomes superfluous. So liberals have become more concerned about doctrine, though they would hardly share the same doctrinal stands as fundamentalists.

Did the fundamentalist-modernist controversy impact the larger American culture?

The controversies of the 1920s strengthened the hand of people who wanted to secularize the culture; they were able to argue that religion is divisive, and the way to keep the peace is to restrict religion to the private domain.

Also secularism became more dominant in mainline Protestant schools, which reacted strongly against fundamentalism. For instance, one message mainline Protestant colleges sent to their constituencies in the 1930s and 1940s was this: "We're religious, but we're not fundamentalist!" That reaction tended to move them further from their particular religious identities, so that today many Presbyterian and Baptist colleges are just as secular as Yale and Harvard.

What did the controversy reveal about ongoing issues in American culture?

In America it's been assumed that a single, government-run school system can teach values that will satisfy everybody in the community. That assumption developed in the day when broadly Protestant values were common.

The fundamentalist-modernist controversy—especially in regards to the teaching of evolution—pointed out that cultural unity was breaking up (this is even before the mainstream allowed much room for the values of Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and other religious groups).

It's impossible for a single school system to represent all those views. We're still facing those issues, and gradually Americans are coming to see that a single educational system is not going to work.

What still puzzles you about fundamentalism?

Many fundamentalists seem to hold two views at once. One is the premillennial view—culture is on the decline; it's under God's judgment; we shouldn't trust in politics or human solutions because things are just going to get worse and worse until Jesus returns.

At the same time, the same people will argue that we should be reforming America: America is God's chosen nation—or was once a Christian nation and we should try to bring America back to this godly condition.

On the one hand, America is Babylon and under judgment. On the other hand, America is Israel, God's chosen nation.

What do you appreciate most about fundamentalists?

Fundamentalists are willing to take a stand, and that's often been a difficult thing to do.

If you let culture make tolerance the preeminent virtue, pretty soon you won't have anything else. And so it's good that there are Christians who have said we need to draw a line somewhere.

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Issue 55: The Monkey Trial & the Rise of Fundamentalism

The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: Christian History Interview - Here We Stand

A fundamentalist historian answers the critics of fundamentalism.

interview with Mark Sidwell

Fundamentalists have long endured criticism not only from liberals but from evangelicals and secularists as well. Christian History ***interviewed a fundamentalist historian to get his take on the "rap" against them:Mark Sidwell is production coordinator of Bob Jones University Press, a leading publisher of textbooks for Christian schools. He holds a Ph. D. in church history from Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist school. He is co-author of a high school U. S. history text and author of*** Free Indeed: Heroes of Black Christian History ***(Bob Jones, 1995).***

Regarding 1920s fundamentalism, one evangelical historian told us: "Too many mistakes, too much controversy, too many bad things done to save good causes." Do you agree?

As an overall evaluation, I obviously don't agree. Fundamentalists made mistakes; I certainly don't think it was good that J. Frank Norris shot someone in his office! Some fundamentalists would have done things differently had they had better insight or knowledge.

But we must remember they were confronting a belief—modernism—that was absolutely contradictory to historic Christianity. It's hard to be polite and restrained when you're dealing with deadly error.

Many in our culture assume history has vindicated liberals.

I think the opposite is true. Just look at the decline in numbers and influence of the mainline denominations. There are a lot of other cultural factors involved in that decline, of course, but I think theological liberalism is one.

Furthermore, liberalism has continued to decline theologically. Liberalism in 1920 was more conservative than today's liberalism. Homosexual ordination would not have been tolerated then, not as it is today in liberal circles. Time has revealed the consequences of liberalism's decision to turn its back on the authority of the Word of God.

Finally, there is the fact that fundamentalism has survived and flourished, in spite of hostility of liberals and the media. Fundamentalists were addressing real needs that liberals could not meet.

Fundamentalists are often considered angry and judgmental. Is that completely inaccurate?

Like most caricatures, it's based on something in history. Some fundamentalists have been too angry.

But sometimes we're angry because of the natural frustration humans feel when confronted with wrongdoing. When people are so willing to contravene the laws of God, a natural anger will result. We fundamentalists have to make sure that the anger we feel is a righteous anger against evil; we should not allow ourselves to get carried away.

Don't fundamentalists tend to equate political conservativism with biblical Christianity?

That's a danger for us, certainly. But we're more suspicious of conservative politics than many realize. For example, we've gotten some flak from conservative business interests here in Greenville County because of stands we've taken.

Last year our county council passed an ordinance condemning homosexuality as inconsistent with community life in Greenville County. It caused a big uproar, and the Chamber of Commerce came out against the ordinance because it felt such a pronouncement would be bad for business. So fundamentalists in this case split from the usual conservative coalition, which includes business. It was a moral issue to us, not only in that we wanted to speak out against illicit sexuality but also against greed and profit-at-any-price.

Don't fundamentalists tend to split over theological and moral minutiae?

Sometimes this happens. It's a danger. But you have to decide what's scriptural and what is important enough to be a point of division. And that's tough; it takes a lot of care and prayerful study. And, of course, people will make mistakes in deciding. And I might point out that fundamentalism started as an effort by Christians to ignore minor differences in order to unite in defense of the essentials.

I know we at Bob Jones University (BJU) have often been accused of being hyper-separatist, but people don't see what has gone on behind the scenes.

Take Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority in the 1970s. When he started in politics, he began working with Catholics and Mormons, among others. These were certainly not fundamentalists; some were not even Christian. Yet he was drawing them together in almost a religious crusade.

Still there was a genuine attempt to talk things over with him. I was an undergraduate at bju at the time, and I remember Dr. Jones, Jr., speaking in chapel, saying he'd just met with Jerry Falwell, and he felt they had settled a lot of the problems.

In spite of all our efforts, however, eventually Falwell went his separate way. In his case, I think it's clear that Falwell split from fundamentalism. He's shown that he's been willing to work with charismatics (in the ptl scandal), and he's even made some accommodation to Roman Catholics. In ***Sports Illustrated***, he referred to Lou Holtz, then coach of Notre Dame, as an evangelical Christian. The very fact that he invited Billy Graham to speak at this year's Liberty University commencement shows how far he's removed himself from us.

Many say fundamentalists should emphasize love, not purity, as the mark of the Christian.

Certainly Scripture teaches the importance of unity among brethren. It teaches love. It teaches compassion. And fundamentalists need to manifest those qualities just as much as other Christians.

Our problem is when people violate basic matters of Scripture and then tell us we have to be understanding or inclusive about it! To us this is simply mixing light with darkness. Second John (not to mention teachings of Paul and Jesus) tells us that if someone comes to you and doesn't bring the doctrine of Christ, don't have anything to do with him. Don't have him into your house. Don't bid him Godspeed. Still, separation has to be done in love.

We don't get any joy out of separating from others. But we must obey the Word of God. If this involves breaking some sort of friendship or tie, we're sad about that, but we show our love for Christ by obeying all his commandments.

In evangelical and liberal circles, love often seems to be defined as a sort of sentimental inclusivism. But as any parent knows, sometimes love involves making difficult choices and taking a stand.

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The Monkey Trial and the Rise of Fundamentalism: Recommended Resources

The Rise of Fundamentalism

Mark Galli

Generally speaking

The nearly undisputed authority on American fundamentalism is George Marsden at the University of Notre Dame. See especially his ***Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism***, 1870-1925 (Oxford, 1980) for a balanced and engaging analysis by an evangelical scholar.

To get the views of fundamentalist historians—and some details and "attitude" you won't find in Marsden—see George W. Dollar's ***A History of Fundamentalism in America*** (Bob Jones, 1973) and David O. Beale's ***In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850*** (Unusual, 1986).

Biographies tell the story

Early fundamentalism was defined by vigorous leaders who were vigorous individualists, and good biographies are available on many of them. Two you might begin with: D. G. Hart's ***Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America*** (Johns Hopkins, 1994) and C. Allyn Russell's ***Voices of American Fundamentalism: Seven Biographical Studies*** (Westminster, 1976).

To better understand the modernist point of view, see William R. Hutchison's ***The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*** (Harvard, 1976), and read a biography of a moderate modernist like ***Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet*** (Oxford, 1985) by Robert M. Miller.

The trial of the century

The Scopes trial continues to fascinate, but nearly all accounts are biased in favor of Darrow, as is Irving Stone's ***Clarence Darrow for the Defense*** (Doubleday, 1941)—though Stone can ***write***.

You'll do better to check out a copy of Sheldon N. Grebstein, ***The Monkey Trial: The State of Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes*** (Houghton Mifflin, 1960), which contains edited transcripts from the trial, as well as key portions of Darwin's ***The Origin of Species***, the textbook Scopes taught from, and editorials from leading newspapers of the day. This is the best book on the trial, in my view, because it lets readers draw their own conclusions.

If you're interested in the current state of the creation/evolution debate, there are web sites galore to view. The .Origins Archive (http://www.talkorigins.org/origins/other-links.html) has one page that lists dozens of web sites devoted to each side of the issue.

Two thumbs down

You'll be wasting your time with the movie version of the trial, ***Inherit the Wind*** (1960), with Spencer

Tracy in the role of Darrow. In this telling, liberals are untarnished heroes and fundamentalists, buffoons.

On the other hand, you can read Carol Iannone's ***"The Truth About Inherit the Wind***," a pointed critique of the movie, in ***First Things***, February 1997 (also on the web at http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9702/iannone.html). Then watch the movie: you'll learn how Hollywood distorted history and thus a great deal about our culture

Back Issues

Two issues of ***Christian History*** discuss people and events out of which fundamentalism eventually grew: ***Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders*** , and ***D. L. Moody***. Both can be ordered by calling 1-800-806-7798.

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