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FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE MISSOURI SYNOD

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

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INTRODUCTION

There is a considerable amount of misunderstanding about the relationship between Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod. An illustration of this may be seen in the wording which was originally chosen for the title of this study: "Fundamentalism in the Missouri Synod." The word "in" reveals a basic error of historical interpretation which the author shared with many others both within and without the Missouri Synod. It is commonly assumed and frequently asserted that the Missouri Synod has been significantly changed as a result of its contact with Fundamentalism, and certain features of the Synod are sometimes singled out as evidence that this has taken place.

The conclusion of this study is that Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod were not related closely enough for either to exert major influence upon the other. Basic factors in the background of each group kept them at a distance from one another, and, while their paths were often parallel, they never actually converged. The relationship was, for the most part, cordial, but never intimate, with the result that there was no important interchange of ideas and attitudes. It is for this reason that the word "in" had to become "and"--"Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod," signifying the revised view of at least one student of the subject.

Much of the misunderstanding can be traced to inaccurate

concepts of Fundamentalism. Some equate Fundamentalism with every form of Protestant conservatism. Others apply it more specifically to all who hold to the traditional doctrines of the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. Still others use it as a synonym for religious anti-intellectualism and bigotry. Those who wear the label proudly use it to describe their loyalty to what they consider to be the most essential facts of the Christian faith.

In this study, however, the term Fundamentalism is used to designate a particular historical movement which arose and flourished in some sections of American Protestantism during the period 1909-1930. The reason for restricting the term to this movement is that this is what the term was originally coined to describe. A series of booklets entitled The Fundamentals sparked a renewed effort on the part of some conservative Protestants to defend and proclaim certain foundational doctrines of Protestantism in the face of mounting liberal opposition. The doctrines under dispute were also usually called "the fundamentals": divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, atoning death and bodily resurrection, and His second coming at the end of time. During the period under consideration an important series of controversies raged both in certain denominations and in state legislatures. The movement crossed denominational lines and even threatened to effect a new alignment of Protestants in America. Not only church members but also the general

public eventually became involved and engrossed in the conflicts. It was a movement of major significance, and although it subsided a generation ago without accomplishing most of its major objectives, the spirit of Fundamentalism has survived, and its adherents and their descendants are still a force to be reckoned with in American religious life.

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (originally called the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States) had much in common with the Fundamentalists. It, too, was committed to a thoroughly conservative theological position which embraced the fundamentals, and it also exhibited a very belligerent attitude toward Liberalism. And yet, the synod's convictions and outlook were by no means identical with those of the Fundamentalists. Conditions in the Missouri Synod at the time of the Fundamentalist-Liberal controversies were such that its members did not need to rely upon Fundamentalism for strength or strategy. In reality, the Missouri Synod was never involved in the controversies in the manner that the Fundamentalists were, but rather observed them from the sidelines, cheered the Fundamentalists on in their struggle, and waged war on Liberalism only from a distance. Members of the Missouri Synod were, in fact, critical of Fundamentalism itself on several crucial points, and, consequently, were unwilling to be identified with it.

However, a continuing relationship of sorts did exist between the two parties, and, in certain subtle respects they did manage to make impressions upon one another. The

purpose of this study is to explore this relationship and these impressions.

CHAPTER I

Fundamentalism was a reaction against a certain kind of liberalism which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I. Fundamentalists and their allies were not so much reacting against liberalism as they were reacting against a certain kind of liberalism which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I. Fundamentalists and their allies were not so much reacting against liberalism as they were reacting against a certain kind of liberalism which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I.

PART I. THE FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENT

The fundamentalist movement was a reaction against a certain kind of liberalism which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I. Fundamentalists and their allies were not so much reacting against liberalism as they were reacting against a certain kind of liberalism which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I.

1. The Fundamentalist Movement, by H. Richard Gribbs, Jr., in *Christianity and Culture*, ed. by Lewis S. Mudge, Jr. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 11-22.

CHAPTER I

CHANGING THOUGHT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Fundamentalism was a reaction against some drastic changes which had taken place in Protestant thought in the half-century preceding World War I. Traditional views and even articles of faith were being subjected to an unprecedented amount of criticism and revision. Furthermore, these changes were being made at the very foundations of the faith.¹ The origin and authority of the Bible, the person and work of Christ, the nature of man, the problem of sin, the reality of miracles, the relationship of God to the natural order--orthodox views on all of these matters were being replaced by a new and radically different theology.² These changes were the product of a series of developments within the churches. They were advocated by scholars and clergymen who considered them to be necessary and wholesome improvements over the doctrines of earlier centuries. However, these changes were also a reflection of conditions in the secular world. They incorporated both the outlook and the methods of recent scholarship in the fields of history and science. They were designed to reach

¹Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 14,15.

²John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 217-24.

effectively into the heart and mind and life of modern man.³

This complex of changes in Protestant theology is usually termed "Liberalism," and rightly so. For it represents a new freedom of thought, a willingness to cut loose from much that bound it to ancient Christendom and to accommodate itself extensively to contemporary thinking. Liberalism appeared in many varieties and degrees. Some extremists eventually left the historic Protestant faith when they discovered that they could no longer accept the central doctrines even in a modified form. To these extremists the term "Modernist" may be applied.⁴ Liberals were those who tried to hang on both to Christianity and to contemporary thought. Modernists were those who let go of Christianity and were content to improvise a new religion out of the best elements of human experience. Liberals, as a rule, remained in the Protestant denominations. Modernists, more often than not, left Protestantism for groups such as the Unitarian Church or the Congregational Church, which permit a wide range of theological views.⁵

By the time the Fundamentalist reaction reached its

³Robert T. Handy, "Fundamentalism and Modernism in Perspective," Religion in Life, XXIV (Summer, 1955), 381-94.

⁴In this presentation the terms "Liberalism" and "Modernism" are employed according to the definitions given above. In much of the literature they are used synonymously or with somewhat different distinctions.

⁵Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., pp. 224-26.

peak in the second decade of the twentieth century, Liberalism was deeply entrenched, and, in fact, was the dominant force in many Protestant church bodies. This is important to a proper understanding of Fundamentalism. It explains in part why the movement at times became frantic and even fanatic.⁶ The opponent was formidable. For a period of fifty years and more Liberalism had been growing in size and strength. Liberal views were being spread from many prominent pulpits, in popular literature, and in Sunday Schools. A number of important seminaries were staffed by liberal faculties with the result that more and more ministers with this orientation were entering the field.⁷ Foreign mission boards, in many cases, were directed by men of liberal leanings, and this was apparent both in the missionaries whom they sent out and in the programs which they advanced.⁸ On almost every front Liberalism had gained either acceptance or virtual control, and unless stopped, the Fundamentalists feared, would be completely victorious. This is not to say that Fundamentalists often admitted the weakness of their strategic position. On the contrary, they made every effort to demonstrate confidence and strength. And yet, the fierceness of their campaigns against Liberalism indicates the seriousness with

⁶ Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 321,322.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 42,48.

⁸ John Horsch, Modern Religious Liberalism: The Destructiveness and Irrationality of Modernist Theology (Chicago: The Bible Colportage Association, 1938), pp. 163-83.

which they took the challenge and the danger that they saw in it. As it turned out the Fundamentalists had little hope of defeating Liberalism. The best they could do was to hold their ground in the struggle and to maintain their identity in church bodies that were becoming increasingly liberal.⁹

Liberalism was composed of a number of elements. Several congenial and yet relatively independent theological currents converged to form this once mighty stream of thought. No attempt is made here to discuss these currents in detail or to trace down all of their sources. What follows is a brief summary of the four most important elements of Liberalism with some indication of the relationships that existed among them as well as the manner in which they eventually combined.

The Theology of Religious Experience

A basic characteristic of Liberalism is the high estimate that it placed upon religious experience. The vital and abiding factor in true religion, Liberals believe, is not a correct understanding of God gained from churchly creeds and a divine book, but rather a personal consciousness of God and the experience of His presence and power in the life of the individual. The subject of religious study, then, is not God or the Scriptures, but rather the inner being of man himself. Man, by nature, is capable of communion with God. He has been endowed by his Creator with

⁹Cole, op. cit., pp. 325-27.

considerable dignity and even with an immortal soul. Though sinful and imperfect due to his animalistic origin, man can rise above these lower impulses, be reconciled to God, and progress steadily toward the fulfillment of His higher will. The value of the Bible and other religious authorities is that they record the spiritual experiences of others and thus enable the reader better to achieve these experiences himself. A representative expression of this subjective liberal view is found in the words of Harry Emerson Fosdick, who to many was the arch-Liberal:

The one vital thing in religion is first-hand, personal experience. Religion is the most intimate, inward, incommunicable fellowship of the human soul. In the words of Plotinus, religion is "the flight of the alone to the Alone." You never know God at all until you know Him for yourself. The only God you ever will know is the God you do know for yourself. . . .

. . . the function of an authority in religion, as in every other vital realm, is not to take the place of our eyes, seeing in our stead and inerrantly declaring to us what it sees; the function of an authority is to bring to us the insight of the world's accumulated wisdom and the revelations of God's seers, and so to open our eyes that we may see, each man for himself. . . . That is the only use of authority in a vital realm. It can lead us up to the threshold of a great experience where we must enter, each man for himself, and that service to the spiritual life is the Bible's inestimable gift.¹⁰

This view differs substantially from traditional Protestant teaching about the depravity of man and the objective authority of the Bible. The anthropocentricity which characterizes it is in sharp contrast with the theocentricity

¹⁰Christianity and Progress, pp. 157-65, quoted in Fundamentalism vs. Modernism, compiled by Eldred C. Vanderlaan (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1925), p. 217.

of both Lutheran and Calvinist orthodoxy. From where did this revolutionary accent come?

It was born in the soul of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834), a brilliant and sensitive theologian and preacher, who stands at the beginning of the liberal movement. Emerging from a background that included Reformed, Moravian, Kantian, Spinozan, and Romantic influences, Schleiermacher endeavored to restate the Christian religion to a skeptical age. In reality, though, he largely ignored his heritage and "broke the ground for a new theology."¹¹ Schleiermacher's theology was constructed in reply both to the Rationalists and the Romanticists. The former, he believed, confused religion with a way of thinking and the latter with a way of acting or with art. In reality, though, religion lies still deeper. It belongs in the realm of "feeling" or "affection." It is union of the finite with the Infinite, the experience of complete dependence upon Him, and, as such, is distinct from both knowing and acting. Of course, religion is related to both morality and belief-- it is their indispensable friend, which precedes both and gives them their validity. This experience at least in some measure is common to all religions. Christianity is unique in that it relates everything to the redemption of Christ. Through His perfect God-consciousness, communicated to the

¹¹O. W. Heick and J. L. Neve, History of Protestant Theology, Vol. II in A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), 39,40.

individual by divine grace, Christ overcomes sin. All Christian teaching must be developed from this personal experience of God achieved through Christ. Furthermore, religion is a social phenomenon, involving a person in an organic fellowship with all who share this vital experience. This minimizes most denominational distinctions.

Extreme though it was, the theology of Schleiermacher restored an important emphasis to Protestant thought, the value of religious experience, which had been neglected especially by Orthodoxy. This emphasis was taken up by Liberalism and has remained one of its dominant characteristics.¹²

Biblical Criticism

Another significant aspect of Liberalism is its appraisal of the Scriptures. Classical Protestantism, both Lutheran and Reformed, had accepted the Bible as a unique, authoritative, and infallible revelation of God. All information contained in this holy volume was considered to be historically and scientifically accurate. Every matter of Christian faith and life was to be determined by its declarations. The function of human reason was to understand and to apply the truth of the Bible, but it was intrinsically impossible for the mind of man to improve upon it. Difficulties or discrepancies in it were attributed either to faulty transmission of the text by copyists or to the inadequacy of human reason to grasp

¹²Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., pp. 182-89.

the deep things of God. Liberalism, on the other hand, operated with a vastly different view. It stressed the human element in the Bible. It concluded that the Bible had come into existence in much the same way as any other ancient literature, that it was a mixture of fact and fiction which recorded the spiritual insights and progress of an ancient people with a genius for religion. The task of interpretation, according to the liberal view, is to discover the historical and religious realities behind the scriptural accounts, which were often quaint or even crude, to discard that which is false and unworthy, and to incorporate what is valid and enduring into the growing body of modern knowledge. To this end the biblical scholar must employ all the tools of literary and historical criticism. Most Liberals continued to grant that the Bible was a unique revelation of God, at least in some restricted sense; however, some classified it as just another collection of religious writings. The following is a "middle-of-the-road" statement of the liberal view:

These bits of dross amid the gold do not destroy the worth of the Bible, but they do make sharply against the conception of it as everywhere inspired and authoritative. It is important, to get a right appreciation of it, that we face the facts. Indiscriminate praise hurts rather than helps in the long run. The Bible is a very human book; it pictures the progress of a very primitive people toward the love of the highest things; its writers are often mistaken, often biased, often possessed with illusions, sometimes possessed with human weakness and passion. We must read it as we would read any other book, passing lightly over the unhelpful parts, dwelling on what is true and elevating, and thus making it a stimulus, never a hindrance to our inward growth.

. . . Finally, how, or in what sense, has the Bible

authority? In a word, its authority is that of the truth which it contains, no more. We cannot call a statement true simply because the Bible says so; but whatever of truth the mature experience of Christendom finds in the Bible demands our allegiance--not because it is in the Bible, but because it is true.¹³

Liberals arrived at these radical conclusions under the influence of nineteenth century biblical and historical scholarship, which centered largely in Germany. Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) had established the importance of critically and objectively examining historical documents in order to determine as closely as possible what had actually happened in history. Research in the natural sciences led many to question the literal accuracy of the Genesis creation account. As archeology came into its own, men were curious to compare its findings with the biblical records. These factors stimulated a tremendous amount of biblical study and that from new and imaginative points of view. Conservative scholars expressed their reservations and often their rejection of the new approaches, but they were in the minority, and the revolution in biblical studies continued unabated.¹⁴

In the Old Testament field the name of Julius Wellhausen

¹³Durant Drake, "Problems of Religion," pp. 267-73, 275, quoted in Vanderlaan, op. cit., pp. 207, 208.

¹⁴Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Nineteenth Century in Europe: The Protestant and Eastern Churches, Vol. II in Christianity in a Revolutionary Age: A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1959), 39, 40.

(1844-1918) is outstanding, not because he was the first or even the most original of the critics, but because he popularized theories that had been developing for some time.¹⁵ According to these theories, the Old Testament writings, for the most part, came--not from the pens of those to whom they had been traditionally attributed--but rather from a number of writers or schools of writers with different and even conflicting conceptions. In the course of time, probably after the return from the Babylonian captivity, these traditions were edited, combined, and issued under the names of ancient prophets and heroes. Thus, Moses did not actually write the Pentateuch, nor David many, if any, of the Psalms, nor Isaiah a substantial portion of the book that bears his name. The ritual of the tabernacle and temple was an invention of the post-exilic priesthood. Elements that purport to be prophetic were actually written after the events occurred in order to exalt them as spectacular acts of God. Miracles did not actually occur, but were the product of primitive superstition or pious imagination.¹⁶ An important concept that controlled many of these theories was Darwin's theory of evolution, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. The religion of Israel was assumed to have evolved slowly from an earlier polytheism to the lofty

¹⁵Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., pp. 193,194.

ethical idealism of the prophets. Furthermore, a study of comparative religions

became prominent, in which relationships were sought between biblical religion and those of surrounding peoples, and in which great stress was laid upon the role of cultural factors on the development of religion.¹⁷

Critical principles were also applied to the New Testament. The authorship of many books was seriously questioned. The dependence of the first three evangelists upon one another and outside sources was asserted, and the characteristic emphasis of each book was traced to historical circumstances and controversies. Investigation convinced the critics that the New Testament authors did not hesitate to distort the facts when it suited their purposes. Consequently, they felt that

the actual life and teachings of Jesus can only be doubtfully constructed from the materials now available . . . the full authenticity of any of these materials cannot properly be assumed; human fallibility is evident in all of them.¹⁸

Accounts of miracles, including Christ's virgin birth and resurrection from the dead, were regarded as mere legends produced by apostolic devotion. The essence of Christianity was considered to be distilled in the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁸Edwin A. Burt, Types of Religious Philosophy (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1939), p. 323.

¹⁹Heick and Neve, op. cit., p. 123.

The doctrine of Christ's deity was discounted as a later accretion supplied primarily by St. Paul. Some of the more radical critics denied that the historical Jesus had ever existed.²⁰

The acceptance of biblical criticism had profound implications, not only for the interpretation of specific passages, but upon the status of the Bible itself. Scriptural authority was seriously undermined or, at least, understood in a completely different sense from that of the pre-critical era. Above all, the doctrine of inerrancy had been thoroughly discredited in the minds of many Protestants.²¹ And yet, though deprived of its traditional authority by biblical criticism, Scripture retained a high and important place in liberal esteem. This came about through a combination of biblical criticism and the insights of Schleiermacher, who, it will be remembered, located the center of authority in religious experience. This authority could still be ascribed to the Bible, despite the loss of its infallibility. For it contains the record of men's experiences as they responded to the revealing work of God which culminated in Christ. Through the study of these records, especially with the assistance of biblical criticism, one can get to the very core of these experiences and be led to participation in them himself.²²

²⁰Latourette, op. cit., pp. 53,54.

²¹Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., p. 195.

²²Ibid., pp. 197,198.

The Theory of Evolution

Except for a relatively minor skirmish with Copernican astronomy, Protestant theology did not face a serious challenge from science until the middle of the nineteenth century. However, when it finally came in the form of Darwin's theory of evolution the impact was staggering. Conservative elements of Protestantism were, for the most part, driven into severe reactions, one of which was Fundamentalism. Liberals, on the other hand, responded to the challenge in a more constructive manner. Instead of fighting the new scientific theory they used it together with the other forces described in this chapter to accomplish a theological revolution.

These events were triggered in 1859 by the publication of Charles Darwin's Origin of Species. The monumental significance of this work lies, not in the concept of evolution itself which had been proposed in one form or another by various philosophers, but rather in the application of this theory to the biological realm together with extensive supporting data.²³ Darwin's theory is that man himself, along with all other living things, is the product of an evolutionary process. This development occurs according to the following principles: (a) All living organisms must struggle for existence since, in each generation, more are produced than can

²³Burt, op. cit., p. 303.

reach maturity under the environmental conditions that prevail; (b) In the course of this struggle only those survive and produce offspring which are best adapted to the environment; (c) The factor or factors that enable an organism to survive, whether it be the improvement of an existing organ or the appearance of a new one, is passed on to its offspring; (d) However, the similarity between parent and offspring is never complete. There is always some variation which enables the offspring, at least in some cases, to adapt even more successfully than did his parents. The cumulative benefit of these variations after many generations can produce a new biological species. The appearance of all forms of life, including man, can be explained by this process.²⁴

On a number of counts this view collided with traditional Protestant thought. It removed man from his position of honor as a special creation of God and as the bearer of His image. It contradicted the revered account of creation given in the book of Genesis. It left little room for the Fall and for the concept of sin as a continuing reality. Consequently, it eventually threatened even the doctrine of redemption. Taken seriously, it seemed to shatter the picture of a kind and loving Creator who controlled the universe with just and wise laws. Natural law and moral law no longer seemed to agree.

Here, then, was a vast magnification of the problem

²⁴Ibid., pp. 303,304.

of evil: how to reconcile the terrible struggle and waste of the evolutionary process with the existence of a good and all-powerful Creator.²⁵

Two developments already described equipped liberal Protestants to meet the challenge of evolution and even to join forces with it. The first of these, the theology of religious experience, viewed Scripture and all doctrinal statements merely as reflectors of religious experience and consequently was not disturbed to discover error in them. Such discoveries were simply indications that the doctrines in question had to be revised. The other development, biblical criticism, was itself completely committed to the scientific method and to the acknowledgement of truth even though this might upset some treasured traditions. In fact, the critics themselves had adopted a theory of evolution patterned after Darwin's in order to explain the religion of Israel.²⁶

The new direction which liberal theology took as a result of its synthesis with the theory of evolution can be demonstrated from the writings of Lyman Abbott, a "Christian evolutionist." In his study of Abbott, Ira V. Brown summarizes his views as follows:

Deity, then was the secret and power of evolution. True, development was not always onward and upward. Life and institutions, like trees, sent branches in various directions. The whole, however, grew ever taller, larger, and more diversified in structure.

²⁵Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., p. 202.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 203, 204.

This was true of religion, "the life of God in the soul of man."

With these definitions Abbott went on to apply the evolutionary principle to the Bible, theology, the church, society, and the soul. The Bible he considered inspired literature but not an infallible book. It was the product of centuries of growth and was constructed by a "process of natural selections." The "New Theology" he regarded as an advance over Calvinism. The church he compared to a "tree, rooted and grounded in Christ." He pictured the progress of society under the impetus of religious ideas, and saw the Christian social order as the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." The soul, too, evolved. Redemption was "the entire process of intellectual and spiritual development in which man passes . . . into the condition of virtue." Christ came "not merely to show divinity to us, but to evolve the latent divinity which he has implanted in us." History was but the record of "this evolution of the divinity out of humanity." Abbott believed that "under the inspirational power of the divine spirit" man's spiritual nature was growing stronger, his animal nature being stamped out. The individual, the church, and society were all strange intermixtures of paganism and Christianity, in which Christian love was steadily displacing pagan selfishness and transforming the earth into the Kingdom of God.²⁷

The Social Gospel

Unlike the preceding three elements of Liberalism, the social gospel achieved its most significant development on the American scene. Many of its roots can be traced to European events and thought, but the foliage and fruit are distinctly American. As the label indicates, this element is basically a social concern, and it was the intense social changes which took place on this continent in the period

²⁷ Ira V. Brown, Lyman Abbott - Christian Evolutionist (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 143.

following the Civil War that provoked the peculiar theological response called the "social gospel." Among the most important of these changes was the rapid growth of large cities caused by a shift of population away from the rural areas as well as by the steady stream of European immigrants most of whom settled in the cities. Closely related to urbanization was the development of the great industries under the control of a relatively few exceedingly wealthy financiers. Accompanying this, all too often, was the ruthless exploitation of labor by the industrialists. Labor, in turn, organized in an effort to improve its lot. The violence of the subsequent struggle for power between management and labor is well known and continues in various forms to the present day. The urban environment in which most of this took place became a breeding ground for social problems. Dirt, disease, crime, immorality, injustice, and political corruption all flourished in the impersonal atmosphere of the overcrowded urban areas.

Protestant churchmen were by no means oblivious to these problems. Along with other concerned citizens they expressed alarm at things as they were and girded themselves for action. However, opinions differed sharply on the forms that this action should take. Conservatives, in general, employed traditional methods. They tried to improve society by converting individuals to the faith and obedience of Christ. Liberals, on the other hand, fortified by a more optimistic view of man and encouraged by the possibilities of psychology and soci-

ology, set out to transform society itself.²⁸ The rationale for this was supplied by the theology of the social gospel.

Prior to the social gospel movement churches were usually among the defenders of the status quo in social and political matters. The capitalistic system had flourished in the Calvinistic atmosphere of early America and was usually considered to be in keeping with God's unchanging will. The ideals of the church and the economic order became closely identified. Christian assistance to oppressed people was largely restricted to material aid in the form of charity and to the spiritual comfort of eternal life through faith in the Gospel. Little was said or done to correct the flagrant abuses which caused their misery, even though, in not a few cases, church-going industrialists were responsible for them. This uncritical acceptance of the existing order was severely criticized by the prophets of the social gospel, who outlined bold new courses of action. Their lead was followed by a sizeable section of American Protestantism and this emphasis soon became an important characteristic of Liberalism.²⁹

The theme of the social gospel was that society could and should be thoroughly transformed. This was to be accomplished not only by improving individuals but also by reconstructing the social environment. It was in the period between

²⁸Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 475-77.

²⁹Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., pp. 238, 239.

the Civil War and World War I that this theme emerged and rose to a place of prominence in liberal theology. Some of the social factors that called it forth were mentioned above. There was also a significant theological background. From the very beginning Americans had been possessed by the dream of establishing a kingdom of God on earth, a community of God's people which was ordered by His will in every area of life. This was the express purpose of the Puritan emigration and the founding of the New England colonies. When the republic was established this hope was blended with the democratic ideal. Furthermore, the moral idealism that had already been woven into the fabric of Liberalism was most receptive to the social gospel theme.³⁰ Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) had reduced religion largely to a practical affair, a matter of morality. Men are reconciled to God through Christ for the sake of the Kingdom, which, Ritschl said, "was the organization of humanity through action inspired by love."³¹ This anticipated the theme of the social gospel and helped to prepare the way for it. Another factor was the doctrine of the solidarity of mankind, advocated by Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) which tended to break down much of the individualism of earlier Protestantism. In addition, the upward pattern of the theory of evolution was encouraging to all programs of human betterment. Finally, liberal scholars found a biblical

³⁰Ibid., pp. 243, 244.

³¹As quoted in ibid., p. 119.

basis for their social views in the message of the minor prophets of the Old Testament as well as in the teachings of Jesus.³²

The social gospel movement called upon the churches to speak out against the glaring social evils of the day, in particular against the excesses of the free-enterprise system. They were urged to strive for the application of the law of love to relations between management and labor and to provide the social ideals which were necessary for the advancement of civilization. Every aspect of social life was to be brought under the influence of Christian ethics. Not only individuals but organizations, periodicals, hymns, and sentimental novels such as Charles M. Sheldon's In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do? were devoted to the cause of preaching and living the social gospel.³³

Foremost among the proponents of the social gospel was Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) whose pastorate in a German Baptist congregation on New York's notorious West Side threw him into the midst of the evils against which the movement was addressed. His background was conservative and pietistic, but also included the social outlook of Ritschl. His involvement with the social gospel began with membership in the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, an organization devoted to discussion of and efforts toward the social objectives of

³²Ibid., p. 244.

³³Ibid., pp. 245, 246.

Christianity. In 1903 he became professor of church history at Colgate-Rochester Theological Seminary and in 1917 published his best-known work, A Theology for the Social Gospel. Unlike many others in the movement, Rauschenbusch remained relatively conservative in his theological views. His optimism about man was tempered by a recognition of original sin. The key concept of his theology was the Kingdom of God, which he interpreted as a just and righteous social order.³⁴ He applies this concept as follows:

The Kingdom of God is humanity organized according to the will of God. Interpreting it through the consciousness of Jesus we may affirm these convictions about the ethical relations within the Kingdom; (a) Since Christ revealed the divine worth of life and personality, and since His salvation seeks the restoration and fulfillment of even the least, it follows that the Kingdom of God, at every stage of human development, tends toward a social order which will best guarantee to all personalities their freest and highest development. This involves the redemption of social life from the cramping influence of religious bigotry, from the repression of self-assertion in the relation of upper and lower classes, and from all forms of slavery in which human beings are treated as mere means to serve the ends of others. (b) Since love is the supreme law of Christ, the Kingdom of God implies a progressive reign of love in human affairs. We can see its advance wherever the free will of love supersedes the use of force and legal coercion as a regulative of the social order. This involves the redemption of society from political autocracies and economic oligarchies; the substitution of redemptive for vindictive penology; the abolition of constraint through hunger as part of the industrial system; and the abolition of war as the supreme expression of hate and the completest cessation of freedom; (c) The highest expression of love is the free surrender of what is truly our own, life, property, and rights. A much lower but perhaps more decisive expression of love is the surrender of any opportunity to exploit man. No social group or

³⁴Olmstead, op. cit., pp. 492,493.

organization can claim to be clearly within the Kingdom of God which drains others for its own ease and resists the efforts to abate this fundamental evil. This involves the redemption of society from private property in the natural resources of the earth, and from any condition in industry which makes monopoly possible.

(d) The reign of love tends toward the progressive unity of mankind, but with the maintenance of individual liberty and the opportunity of nations to work out their own national peculiarities and ideals.³⁵

The impact of the social gospel and its wide acceptance among Protestants can be measured in terms of the many social resolutions and programs which were adopted by denominations and inter-church groups. Most significant of these was the issuance in 1908 by the newly organized Federal Council of Churches of a "Social Creed of the Churches," which called for significant action on many social problems of the day.³⁶

These, then, are the four main currents which combined to form the strong and influential theological movement called "Liberalism." Each had its distinct field of concern and yet possessed a natural affinity for the others. All were born out of a desire to confront and even to benefit from the challenges of a new age. Of course, there were many other currents of thought which also flowed into this great stream, and there were other factors which materially affected the theological and ecclesiastical scene. However, for the purpose

³⁵Walter Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), pp. 142,143.

³⁶For a detailed study of the social gospel see Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, c.1940).

at hand, the four outlined above will suffice. For it was against these in particular--the theology of religious experience, biblical criticism, the theory of evolution, and the social gospel--that Fundamentalism threw itself with such determination and vigor.

CHAPTER II

PRECIPITATING FACTORS OF A NON-THEOLOGICAL NATURE

The theological factors described in the previous chapter were unquestionably the primary causes of the Fundamentalist reaction. It was essentially a religious movement, concerned with the content of Christian teaching and belief. It was a crusade to defend the faith against what it considered to be novel and debilitating views, which sprang--not from loyalty to divine truth as revealed in the Bible--but from an inordinate regard for human reason and its accomplishments. To view Fundamentalism from any other perspective is to see only part of the picture, and that in distortion.

However, once the pre-eminence of theological factors is granted, an examination of other factors can be most helpful. For Fundamentalism was not only a theological phenomenon which engaged the attention of specialists. It was also a popular movement of considerable scope, which involved large numbers of lay-people and ordinary clergy, a movement which was shaped and driven by social forces as well as those of a theological nature, a movement which owed a great deal to the enthusiasm and peculiarities of individual leaders. These factors, too, constitute a vital part of the background from which Fundamentalism emerged.

The Secularization of Society

One factor which spurred Fundamentalists into action and kept their campaigns going for nearly a generation was the realization that society was moving steadily toward greater secularization. This did not take the form of declining church membership. In reality, there had been an impressive gain both in numbers and in proportion to the total population.¹ However, despite this growth, the influence of the church upon individuals and society as a whole was diminishing. Spiritual and moral values were giving way to materialistic goals. The church had been moved from a position of centrality to a place on the sidelines, where it had to compete with a growing number of other interests and institutions. The thought and conduct of people, even of active church members, were no longer determined as extensively by the church's direction as by the patterns of the world.²

¹According to Carl S. Meyer in "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (July, 1961), p. 408, only twenty-two per cent of the population of the United States was churched in 1890 as compared with forty-three per cent in 1930. However, Weisberger points out the fact that much of this gain was in Roman Catholic Churches while Protestants barely kept pace with the rising population. Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, c.1958), pp. 228-29.

²Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 17, 18, 28.

Fundamentalists blamed liberal theology for these disturbing conditions. By undermining the confidence of people in the Bible and in traditional Christianity, Liberals had also weakened their regard for the church and for the way of life that she taught--at least, so the Fundamentalists believed. In their eagerness to modernize Protestant doctrine and make it attractive to twentieth century minds, Liberals had, in reality, torn the heart out of this doctrine and divested it of its power. Instead of sanctifying the world by the proclamation of divine truth, the church was being secularized by the insidious influences of the world. Until the church recuperated from the disease of Liberalism it could not hope to stem the rising tide of secularism which was engulfing society. By contributing to the spiritual downfall of the nation in this manner, Liberals were, whether they realized it or not, the close allies of Communism.³

To say the least, this analysis was an oversimplification. This relationship between Liberalism and secularism would be difficult, if not impossible, to establish. Liberalism may properly be included as one possible cause, but to lay the whole blame at her doorstep is to ignore other far more obvious causes, namely, urbanization and public education.

In the previous chapter reference was made to the tremendous growth of urban centers between the Civil War and

³Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), pp. 17,18.

World War I.⁴ In rural areas the church had dominated the social scene. It was the recognized authority for both thought and life, and often the center of community life as well. Furthermore, the close, enduring relationships between people that usually prevailed in the rural setting enabled the church to exert a powerful and enduring influence. The church and society were closely identified. To ignore or to defy the church was to ignore or to defy society, with the subsequent risk of being ostracized.⁵ However, in the cities a completely different situation obtained. There, not the will of the church, but economic success, or, at least, survival, the pursuit of sensual pleasure, and the struggles for social prestige and for political power were the dominant forces in the lives of people. The casual, short-lived personal relationships that characterized so much of urban life exerted little social pressure of a positive kind. People could afford to do just about as they pleased without fear of rebuke from friends and neighbors. There were churches in the city, of course, and people attended them, but the influence of the church was largely dissipated in the loosely knit, materialistic urban communities. As more and more people moved into this environment secularization

⁴Supra, p. 21.

⁵Cole, op. cit., pp. 12-15.

increased.⁶

Fundamentalists realized that cities were the centers of secularism and frequently warned against the spiritual and moral hazards that were confronted there. However, instead of seeing social conditions as the cause of secularization, Fundamentalists blamed theological developments. They observed that cities were also the centers of Liberal thought, and where Liberalism was sowed, they believed, secularism would be reaped.⁷ And yet, the fact that these two phenomena existed side by side does not necessarily mean that Liberalism produced secularism. As was indicated in the previous chapter, the actual relationship was somewhat the reverse. Liberalism was, in part, a response to secularism, a desperate effort to gain a hearing for the church in a secular world by making extensive use of secular presuppositions and methods.⁸ In urban centers where the new knowledge was being spread through institutions of higher learning, Protestant leaders felt strongly compelled to make the concessions and revisions that constituted Liberalism.⁹ The theological

⁶Winthrop S. Hudson, The Great Tradition of the American Churches (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1953), pp. 110-36. Aaron Ignatius Abell, The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), pp. 3,4.

⁷Furniss, op. cit., p. 28.

⁸Supra, p. 7.

⁹H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Company, c.1929), p. 184.

preoccupation of the Fundamentalists blinded them to the social causes of secularism, and led them to charge their Liberal opponents with too much responsibility for it.

Another major cause of secularism was the development of the public school system and the elimination of religious teaching from them. Until the nineteenth century, education on every level was dominated by the churches. However,

by 1850 the proponents of state public schools as the outstanding agency of education had won their fight, and a public school system had been established as a settled American public policy.¹⁰

Part of this battle, according to Wilds, consisted of freeing the public schools from sectarian influences.¹¹ The advantage to the church of the earlier arrangement is obvious. Curricula in church-sponsored schools were heavily fortified with religious instruction. Extra-curricular programs of an evangelistic and edifying nature also contributed to the spiritual growth of the pupils. Graduates of church school ordinarily emerged with a strong sense of loyalty to their church, its teachings, and its moral standards. However, when public schools became the general medium of education they managed to instill a secular outlook as effectively as the church schools had promoted a religious outlook. In the absence of

¹⁰Elmer Harrison Wilds, The Foundations of Modern Education: Historical and Philosophical Backgrounds for the Interpretation of Present-Day Educational Issues (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., Publishers, c.1942), p. 434.

¹¹Loc. cit.

theological restrictions the new scientific attitudes swiftly gained supremacy. Students who were trained in this atmosphere did not hesitate to question matters that had previously been considered beyond dispute. Religion, morals, political and social patterns--all were subjected to critical examination, and, not infrequently, were rejected as obsolete.¹²

Fundamentalists were appalled at the secularism which was being cultivated in the public schools of the land. As will be seen in a subsequent chapter,¹³ some of their most militant efforts were devoted to controlling this influence. Earlier conservatives had struggled to keep religion in the curricula of the public schools, or, if this failed, to keep the children out of the schools.¹⁴ Their frustration in both of these efforts and their fear of the spiritual dangers of higher education led many Fundamentalists to adopt an attitude of arrogant anti-intellectualism. At least in the Liberal view, this attitude became a prominent feature of Fundamentalism.¹⁵

¹²Cole, op. cit., pp. 22,23.

¹³Infra, pp. 127-136.

¹⁴Cole, op. cit., pp. 22,23.

¹⁵Furniss, op. cit., pp. 39-41.

World War I and its Aftermath¹⁶

The Fundamentalist-Liberal controversy began before World War I and, doubtless, would have continued even if this war had not occurred. However, the war had some very significant effects upon the controversy. In one respect, at least, it confirmed Fundamentalists' convictions about the rightness and the necessity of their cause. Above all, it changed the character of the movement from one of relatively calm and reasoned argument to that of highly emotional and even irresponsible attack. Finally, it enabled the Fundamentalists to damn their opponents by associating them with a feared and hated national enemy.

In the first place, the war shattered much of the evolutionary optimism about man that had been proclaimed so confidently by pre-war Liberals. The human progress to which Liberals had pointed in society, religion, and science suddenly appeared to be very superficial and even a mirage alongside the unprecedented terror and devastation of the war. Among those who noted the collapse of this optimism were many Liberals themselves. In his impassioned attack on Liberalism Horsch includes the following quotation from a Liberal pen:

On the whole things were going on very well indeed.
The old chariot of progress was forging its way bravely

¹⁶This section follows the presentation of Furniss, op. cit., pp. 23-26, except as noted below.

up the hill and presently we should arrive. Just where we were going to arrive did not seem very clear. That, however, did not matter. Wherever it was, we were getting there. And now the chariot has suddenly and awfully pitched over a precipice and we are writhing at its foot in blood and tears. We had said complacently that the "ape and tiger" were at the point of death; behold they have turned upon us and are rending us to pieces. The moral tragedy of the world is being enacted in a muddy, bloody horror before our eyes, and our little fantastic dreams of progress are looking very futile and cheap over this vast catastrophe. This war is the greatest revelation of the moral perversity of man since Calvary. The one thing we cannot do after this is to belittle sin or explain it away.¹⁷

Fundamentalists were understandably heartened by this show of weakness in liberal doctrine. They hailed the war as the vindication of their own position and as an indictment of the entire liberal system. They rejoiced at the disillusionment that Liberals were expressing and urged them to abandon their unrealistic views in favor of traditional doctrine. To many Fundamentalists the cataclysmic events of the conflict signified the nearness of this world's end and the return of Christ in judgment. A new burst of interest in premillennialism was aroused and remained an important emphasis of many Fundamentalists.

Another affect of the war was a growing spirit of hatred, suspicion, and intolerance in the Fundamentalist camp over against their Liberal opponents. In its earlier stages the controversy was carried on more calmly and charitably.

¹⁷Richard Roberts, The Biblical World (November, 1918), p. 281, quoted in John Horsch, Modern Religious Liberalism: The Destructiveness and Irrationality of Modernist Theology (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1938), p. 280.

Fundamentalists relied either upon apologetics or positive persuasion to win their points. But during and after the war they resorted increasingly to less worthy methods. Vehement personal attacks, distorted propaganda, unscrupulous heresy-hunting, smear tactics, and pressure groups were among the weapons employed in the fight. It must be said that to a certain extent Liberals provoked these reactions by their ridicule and disdain, but for the most part they were more sinned against than sinning in this respect.

This attitude has been diagnosed as a residue of animosity and insecurity which had been stirred up by wartime propaganda. People had been taught to fear and to hate their enemies, to expect the worst from them, to destroy them by any available means. Once awakened, these feelings were slow to leave, even after the original enemy had been subdued. In their desperation to win, Fundamentalists often expressed unreasoning and ruthless hostility. The target had changed but the weapons were the same. Fundamentalists belabored Liberals with a brand of viciousness that was originally designed for use against military foes.¹⁸

Not only critics of Fundamentalism but even its friends and some of its supporters deplored this. As recently as 1958 a descendant of Fundamentalism expressed regret over

¹⁸For an extensive discussion of the effect of wartime propaganda on the churches see Ray H. Abrams, Preachers Present Arms (New York: Round Table Press, Inc., 1933), Chapters III, IV, and V.

these unwholesome aspects of the movement and explained that this is one reason why many present-day Evangelicals do not wish to be known as "Fundamentalists."¹⁹ At the height of the controversy a Lutheran writer, who was sympathetic to some elements of Fundamentalism, revealed clear disgust for its lovelessness and belligerence:

The intolerance and persecution evinced by the modern Pseudo-Fundamentalists, inhibits their usefulness. Sane men and women are becoming impatient with those who are so ready to consign to the flames those who do not agree with them in every particular. The attitude which says, "Disagree with me and you are a crook," is becoming only to a "fuddlementalist." The spirit of the following clipping for instance from The Searchlight only invites the derision of fair-minded men: "\$100 reward. The Searchlight is going to offer a reward. It will deposit in the bank a \$100 cashier's check to be given to a student of any denominational college in the South who will supply the Searchlight with evidence that modernism is taught in the school where the said student attends." And the editor promises not to divulge the name of the student, so that the informer may be kept immune to discipline. The number of such "rewards" is limited to twenty.

Such submarine attacks are poor policy, to say nothing of their "Christianity." The following words of Dean Farrar are deserving of serious consideration in this connection: "The worst of all heresies in any Christian, and the heresy that Christ holds as most inexcusable, however commonly and however bitterly it betrays itself in our controversies, is the heresy of hatred. If a man be animated by that spirit . . . his Christianity is heathenism, and his orthodoxy a cloak of error." Usually too this "odium ~~thologicum~~" is not the emphasis of conviction, but of persuasion. Often enough, moreover, it is the vociferation of mere opinion, if not indeed the wrath of wounded egotism. Fortunately only a special type is fitted for plying the nefarious trade of religious detective and spy. All honest men

¹⁹J. A. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1958), pp. 31-38.

will go their way doing their daily duty, observing rather than aiding and abetting those who enjoy this form of ministration.²⁰

Still another consequence of the war, and closely related to the previous point, was the opportunity it provided Fundamentalists for identifying Liberalism with the despised German nation. As was pointed out in Chapter I a great deal of liberal theology can be traced to nineteenth century German sources. Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Wellhausen, and Rauschenbusch--to mention only a few--were all Germans, although, of course, Rauschenbusch did his most important work on American soil. Seizing upon these facts, Fundamentalists asserted that liberal theology was an outgrowth of the same materialistic philosophies that had overtaken Germany and led it to start the most terrible war that the world had ever seen. The rampant Liberalism of Germany had paved the way for this global disaster, Fundamentalists claimed. In striving to conquer Europe the Germans were simply carrying to its logical conclusion the evolutionary principle of the survival of the fittest. To contend against Liberalism was viewed as part of the battle against the hated "Hun." The effectiveness of this identification of Liberalism with Germany--both as a stimulus to greater Fundamentalist efforts and as a weapon against liberal thought--is difficult to appreciate a generation and more later. Abrams describes this

²⁰C. J. Södergren, Fundamentalists and Modernists (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1925), pp. 30-31.

process of condemnation by association:

All was part of a vast network of Hun propaganda in this country--the higher criticism, the doctrine of evolution, the teachings of Germany, and the methods of education.

". . . let us be true patriots and fight to its death the new German theology apostasy in America. Let us tear down from our universities, theological seminaries and churches this poisonous serpent that has stealthily coiled its slimy form around our modern life and with one voice declare that America shall be holy, pure and free. Exit bastard new German religious apostasy, and enter spirit of brotherhood, love and power."

That was the indictment made by George W. McPherson, Presbyterian minister, and re-echoed a thousand times in the same phraseology. David Hugh Jones of Evanston, Illinois, also a Presbyterian, said that "German rationalism had found its way into America," the people had lost their faith because of it, and the theological seminaries had been harboring the monster for years. Many Presbyterians and Baptists particularly sensed this as a part of the general plot to undermine America's faith in God.²¹

Personalities

As with any human enterprise, Fundamentalism was what it was largely because of the men who led it. A most colorful and energetic group of personalities provided the movement with leadership and direction. Not only clergymen but statesmen, scholars, philanthropists, doctors, lawyers, and, unfortunately, opportunists and exhibitionists of various kinds took commanding positions. Some were self-appointed; others were pressed into service. Some were a credit to the cause, unselfishly expending large amounts of time and money

²¹Abrams, op. cit., p. 114.

in its behalf; others were a source of embarrassment and grief. Some were both gifted and learned; others had little to offer but their zeal, and this frequently was misguided. In any case, for better or for worse, these leading personalities left their marks upon the Fundamentalist crusade. To understand them is, in many ways, to understand it.

In the first place, there were prophetic figures from the ranks of the clergy. These are the men who raised the call to arms, who organized and conducted the mass meetings, who produced large quantities of popular literature, and, in general, set goals and recruited support for the attainment of these goals. In this category William Bell Riley is the outstanding representative. Although pastor of the large and influential First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Riley managed to participate extensively in Fundamentalist activities of every imaginable kind. He edited three different periodicals and contributed to innumerable others. By 1923 he had produced a forty volume series of study booklets as well as fifteen additional books of a religious nature.²² He headed the most significant and enduring Fundamentalist organization as well as several lesser ones. He was a leading Fundamentalist crusader in the Northern Baptist Convention. He traveled from one end of the country to the other lecturing and preaching for the cause. He spearheaded several legislative battles

²²Furniss, op. cit., p. 110.

in behalf of Fundamentalist objectives.²³ Unfortunately, his drive and prolificness were combined with a factious and contentious nature. Though reasonably well-informed, he did not hesitate to express himself dogmatically in fields where he had little competence. Furniss refers to "his peculiar combination of anecdote, ridicule, and indictment during debate."²⁴ Eventually he advocated the separation of Fundamentalists from their respective denominations so that a single new conservative body might be formed.²⁵ Other notables of Riley's type were Amzi Clarence Dixon, also a prominent Baptist minister; Reuben A. Torrey, Dean of the Los Angeles Bible Institute; and James A. Gray, Dean of Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.²⁶ Also conspicuous and influential at times were John R. Stratton of New York and Frank J. Norris of Fort Worth, both Baptists, but their flamboyant individualism rendered them less effective than the above men. Prophetic leaders such as these provided the heart and strength of Fundamentalism.

William Jennings Bryan provided the silver tongue. One biography capsules his career and character as follows:

Three times candidate for the highest office in the power of his countrymen to give him, once Secretary of

²³Ibid., p. 31.

²⁴Ibid., p. 84.

²⁵Cole, op. cit., p. 315.

²⁶Furniss, op. cit., p. 12.

State . . . esteemed one of the most eloquent men of his time, a prophet of great social changes, and to millions of his fellow men the champion of their religious faith. . . . He was a man of unwavering purpose and unflinching spirit. . . . He was sincere. . . . He was ambitious not only for himself but for the causes he had decided were right and beneficent to mankind. . . . Throughout his career, religion and morals were the motivating forces behind his actions. . . . Bryan was not a highly intellectual man. He led his people not by an appeal to their intellects, but by an appeal to their hearts. . . . Bryan was, at heart as in political name, a democrat. Instinctively he understood the common people. He felt as they felt, and from his silver tongue fell the words that expressed to them their unphrased sentiments. Few men in American public life have been so hated and despised, yet at the same time so loved and esteemed as William Jennings Bryan.²⁷

Toward the end of his life, after his political power had waned, Bryan became an avid campaigner for Fundamentalism and one of its most beloved spokesmen. His astonishing stamina, his rapport with the common people, and his oratorical charm were valuable assets at the height of the conflict. Not only at the assemblies of the Presbyterian Church of which he was a member, but at religious gatherings of all kinds Bryan gave his best for the defence and advancement of the Fundamentalist position. He died in his sleep after his greatest battle, the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee,²⁸ of which more will be said in a later chapter.²⁹

A number of respected scholars supplied Fundamentalism with a certain amount of theological depth and security. Of

²⁷Genevieve Forbes Herrick and John Origen Herrick, The Life of William Jennings Bryan (Chicago: Buxton Publishing House, 1925), pp. 27-31.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 244-54, 346-85.

²⁹Infra, pp. 132-36.

them, J. Gresham Machen probably was the most important. He received his training at Princeton University and Seminary and did graduate work at Marburg and Göttingen. Until 1929 he was a professor at Princeton Seminary. It was his contention that Liberals were sloppy thinkers; an incisive, erudite mind enabled him to support this contention with considerable success.³⁰ Furthermore, he insisted that Christianity and Liberalism were two mutually exclusive religions.³¹ In general, he avoided the objectionable excesses in which some Fundamentalists indulged, and, consequently, enjoyed the respect of his opponents. However, he did have a fiery temper and a sectarian bent. He led the campaign against Liberalism in his own Northern Presbyterian Church. In 1929, together with other conservative scholars--Oswald T. Allis and Robert Dick Wilson--he left Princeton in an administrative dispute over Liberalism and founded the thoroughly conservative Westminster Seminary. In 1933, this group of scholars and their conservative supporters established their own foreign mission board, and, in 1935, left the denomination altogether. Closely associated with them in these conflicts was Clarence E. Macartney, famous Philadelphia pulpiteer.³²

³⁰Furniss, op. cit., p. 128.

³¹Lefferts A. Loetscher, The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), p. 116.

³²Furniss, op. cit., pp. 128,129; 140,141.

Benjamin B. Warfield, another member of the Princeton faculty, published many scholarly works in defence of the conservative faith, but he died in 1921 before the controversy reached its peak. However, it was largely through his conservative influence that Princeton maintained this tradition as long as it did, and the above men were usually considered to be his followers.³³ The contribution of these Princeton conservatives to the Fundamentalist movement was substantial. Their learning and scholarship were deeply admired and extensively employed by other Fundamentalists, many of whom were ill-equipped to discuss theology with Liberals on an equal plain. The sympathies of the Princeton men were clearly with this movement. However, they never identified themselves with it completely. The recurring premillennialism as well as certain other features of Fundamentalism could not be fully reconciled with the distinctive form of Calvinism to which they subscribed.³⁴ James Orr of Scotland and Melvin Keyl, an archaeologist, also added the strength of their scholarship to the movement.

By no means least important were the men who supplied the financial backing for several of the more expensive Fundamentalist projects. Among these, the most active and generous were Lyman and Milton Stewart of California. Their

³³Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 136, 152.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 91, 99. See also Ned B. Stonehouse, J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), pp. 336-39, 343-46.

contributions included the Los Angeles Bible Institute, the Stewart Evangelistic Fund, and the reprinting and wide distribution of a premillennialist pamphlet Jesus Is Coming. Their largest and most significant expenditure was for the publication and circulation of The Fundamentals, the twelve booklets from which Fundamentalism eventually received its name. No less than \$300,000 was put in trust for this undertaking alone.³⁵ The tremendous strategic value of these volumes will be discussed in a later chapter.³⁶ At this point it need only be said that without the Stewart money and what it provided Fundamentalism probably would not have gained the momentum that it finally achieved. Late in the campaign, 1925, George F. Washburn, a wealthy Bostonian with a chain of hotels in Florida put \$200,000 of his money into the cause. However, since his contributions were poured into an unsuccessful organization which he founded, they were of little lasting benefit to the movement.³⁷

Several members of secular professions left their practices in order to become full-time Fundamentalists. Arthur I. Brown, a surgeon from Vancouver, B. C., traveled far and wide bearing testimony to the Fundamentalist faith and lending his scientific stature to various Fundamentalist

³⁵Cole, op. cit., pp. 52-55.

³⁶Infra, Chapter IV.

³⁷Cole, op. cit., pp. 270-75, and Furniss, op. cit., pp. 57-62.

organizations.³⁸ Philip Mauro, a patent lawyer from New York, devoted his legal and polemical talents to the assault upon Darwinism and made several major contributions to The Fundamentals.³⁹

Finally, there were men of suspect motives and fanatical tendencies who brought disgrace and contempt upon the movement. Edgar Young Clarke, an unscrupulous promoter with a long record of financial and moral irregularities, founded the Supreme Kingdom in 1926, a Fundamentalist fraternal order dedicated primarily to the fight against evolution. Within eighteen months it had grown into a large organization with branches in several states, and enjoyed at least the moral support of a number of leading Fundamentalists. However, the organization collapsed as quickly as it had grown when it was discovered that Clarke was pocketing a large portion of the receipts. Gerald Winrod of Kansas combined an anti-evolution campaign with anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Negro propaganda. His organization, The Defenders of the Christian Faith, and his periodical, The Defender, were outlets for this brand of cultivated hate. John R. Stratton and Frank J. Norris, mentioned above, could also be placed into this group of disreputables because of their eccentric-

³⁸Ibid., pp. 31, 54, 58.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 11,12.

ities and extravagances.⁴⁰

Fundamentalism did not arise in a vacuum, nor in an environment that was exclusively religious. Social, emotional, and personal factors also had a part in its development. Three factors, in particular, were instrumental in adding to its momentum and in altering its course at various times. They were: the secularization of society, World War I and its aftermath, and the unique personalities of its leaders.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 62-68. Winrod's son, Gerald, attended a parochial school of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in Wichita, Kansas, St. John's College, Winfield, Kansas, and Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois--also Missouri Synod institutions. He entered the ministry of this church body for a time, but was suspended December 12, 1961, for anti-Semitic activities. Notice of this appeared in The Lutheran Witness, LXXX (December 12, 1961), 614.

CHAPTER III

PRE-FUNDAMENTALIST REACTIONS

Fundamentalism was one of several conservative movements which had arisen in Protestantism since the time of the Reformation. There were crusading conservatives before Fundamentalism and there have been others since. Even contemporary with Fundamentalism there were similar but unrelated movements operating parallel with it. ←

Fundamentalism itself should be dated no earlier than 1909 when the first volume of The Fundamentals appeared.¹ The term "Fundamentalist" was coined in 1920.² A crest was reached in 1925 at the famous Scopes "monkey-trial" in Dayton, Tennessee.³ By the end of the twenties the vigor and aggressiveness of the movement was fading, and in the thirties Fundamentalists were generally subdued and even on the defensive.⁴ The forties were a period of transition, and the fifties saw the birth of a new conservative movement under

¹"A Statement by the Two Laymen," The Fundamentals: a Testimony to the Truth, XII (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, n.d.), 3.

²J. J. Packer, "Fundamentalism" and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1958), p. 29.

³Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 6.

⁴Ibid., p. 180.

the leadership of Carl F. H. Henry and his periodical, Christianity Today. In this new stage the term "Fundamentalism" has been replaced by the older and more respectable term, "Evangelicalism."⁵

This chapter will consider the immediate antecedents of Fundamentalism, those conservative elements in the period from 1870-1908 which foreshadowed Fundamentalism and prepared the way for it. To some extent all of these elements were carried over into Fundamentalism and became part of it. However, Fundamentalism was not just the continuation and intensification of these earlier phenomena. It was a new movement, with new leadership, new strength, and new methods, as well as a new label, "Fundamentalism." The offspring was obviously related to the older conservative reactions, but it was just as obviously a new and separate entity. The purpose of this chapter is to learn to know the "child" better by becoming acquainted with its "parents."

Anti-Liberal Literature

From its inception Liberalism had met with severe criticism from conservative writers. However, in the final third of the nineteenth century when it became obvious that Liberalism was gaining wide acceptance in the churches some strong new literary attacks were launched. These were in the form of periodicals and booklets in which traditional beliefs were

⁵Packer, op. cit., p. 40.

defended and the newer views were condemned. This literature was written in a popular, inspirational, and emotional style. It was addressed, not to scholars, but to lay-people and ordinary clergy. A recurring theme in this literature was premillennialism, the doctrine that Christ will rule on earth in perfect peace and righteousness for one thousand years just before the Final Judgment and the end of the world. In addition, great stress was laid upon the supernatural aspects of biblical religion as well as upon the deity and work of Jesus Christ.

A leading figure in this literary assault was James H. Brookes, Pastor of Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri.⁶ Both as the editor of a widely-read magazine, The Truth, and as the author of numerous conservative books, he labored tirelessly to counteract the encroachments of Liberalism. Brookes summarized the objectives of his magazine after eighteen years of publication in these words:

It has advocated from the beginning:

The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The utter ruin of man by sin.

The absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

A present and certain salvation for the believer through

⁶Arno Clemens Gaebelinein, Half a Century: the Autobiography of a Servant (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," c.1930), p. 39.

the blood of the Son of God.

The personal and pre-millennial advent of the Lord Jesus as the hope set before the church.

. . . It should be borne in mind that The Truth was a pioneer of its kind in this country. While much of the truth it advocates is not popular, even among Christian people, there are many more now who believe in the pre-millennial return of the Lord than there were eighteen years ago.⁷

This is a positive statement of Brookes' platform. It illustrates the premillennial concern that he expressed so frequently and emphatically. However, an examination of a number of issues of his periodical reveals that a good deal of space was also devoted to the negative work of polemics. Biblical criticism, evolution, the social gospel and other liberal accents were frequently denounced. The magazine was clearly as anti-liberal as it was pro-conservative.

Similar to Brookes was Adoniram J. Gordon, pastor of Clarendon Street Baptist Church of Boston and editor of The Watchword. Upon the death of Dr. Brookes, his magazine was combined with that of Dr. Gordon, and the new organ was known as Watchword and Truth. Apparently the new magazine was not as "prophetic" and as polemical as its predecessors had been. Consequently, another periodical, Our Hope, which previously had concerned itself primarily with reporting on the work of Christian missions among the Jews, took up the anti-liberal, premillennial cause and gained many subscribers

⁷The Truth, XVIII (November, 1892), Editor's Note.

from former readers of The Truth. Arno C. Gaebelin was editor of Our Hope and the author of dozens of books. His earlier works were devoted largely to premillennialism, but in later years his writings revealed a growing anti-liberal concern.⁸ Other periodicals of the kind mentioned above were the Bible Champion and The Bible Student. Several theological journals contributed consistently to conservative thought and subjected Liberalism to searching and scholarly criticism. They were Bibliotheca Sacra and Princeton Theological Review. Widely read books were Premillennial Essays (1878), Prophetic Studies (1886), and the booklet, Jesus Is Coming.⁹

Bible Conferences

Closely related to the above-mentioned literary efforts were the many Bible conferences which were held beginning in the late 1870's. Among the organizers and speakers at these gatherings were many of the same men who wrote much on the anti-liberal literature. Some of these conferences met annually for a number of days. Others met monthly for part of a day or even an entire day. Still others, and there were thousands of these, were called sporadically by interested individuals and groups. Most of these conferences were similar

⁸Gaebelin, op. cit., pp. 104, 45-46, 86-98.

⁹Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), pp. 45-47.

in character and in purpose. They were called in order to sound the anti-liberal, premillennial theme. They consisted of Bible study meetings often combined with preaching and prayer services. They appealed to conservative members of various denominations. In general, the sponsors of these conferences attempted to avoid controversy over sectarian differences so that the most essential points of the conservative Protestant faith might be proclaimed--at least those points which they considered to be most essential. The psychological values of these conferences were as significant as the theological values. Participants were encouraged and inspired by these large gatherings of like-minded people, united in the defence and advancement of the "old" Gospel. They were invigorated emotionally and spiritually by the rousing song-fests and the dynamic speakers. In their local communities and even in their respective church bodies the conservative cause often seemed despised and weak, but at a Bible conference they could experience its strength and glory.¹⁰ Names often associated with these conferences were: Arno C. Gaebelin, a leading dispensationalist, C. J. Schofield, A. C. Dixon, Arthur T. Pierson, James M. Gray, who were to become prominent Fundamentalists, as well as James H. Brookes and Adoniram J. Gordon who were mentioned in the previous section.

Of the regularly scheduled conferences the oldest and

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 31-35. For a first-hand account of the Bible conference movement from the pen of one who was very active in it see Gaebelin, op. cit.

most influential were the Niagara Bible Conferences, which met annually from 1876 to the turn of the century. An interesting insight into the nature and purpose of these assemblies can be gained from an article published in The Truth announcing the sixteenth annual conference which was held July 7-13, 1892:

The object of this conference is so well known that but little needs to be said concerning the subjects and methods of teaching; but the inquiry is often made whether any conditions of membership or of attendance exist. To this it may be answered that while there is a committee in charge of the arrangements and conduct of the conference and while the brethren who lead in the study of the Word are agreed in general as to the doctrines taught and though a Declaration of Doctrines was adopted two years ago, there is no formal membership or condition of attendance. All persons desiring to avail themselves of these days of study and Christian fellowship are most cordially invited to attend. The distinctions of sect or denomination are invited and never intentionally obtrude. Neither as some here supposed is the meeting engaged exclusively with dispensational or prophetic questions. It does consider these which more than ever demand an answer from every thoughtful mind, but the larger portion of time and study is given to the Person and Work respectively of the Holy Spirit and of Christ Jesus, to topics of Christian life and service and to the analysis and interpretation of the Bible and its books.

Besides these there are discussions of theories which have of late years been forced upon the attention of the churches and which deeply affect Christian faith and practice.¹¹

A notice of the eighteenth annual conference (July 12-18, 1894) illustrates the determination of the leaders to prevent the issue of premillennialism from interfering with the larger objectives of the conference:

¹¹W. J. Erdman, "The Niagara Bible Conference," The Truth, XVIII (May, 1892), 393, 394.

Though this conference has been known for nearly a score of years as a witness to the doctrine of the Premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet this and kindred themes are not, as some supposed, the only subject of study.

It is needless to say that all brethren holding the common evangelical faith, whatever may be their differences of opinion on certain questions pertaining to the Premillennial Advent, are heartily invited to attend.¹²

Revivals

The role of revivals in the fight against Liberalism was an indirect one. Unlike the two phenomena mentioned above, revivals did not have as one of their primary aims the overthrow of Liberalism. Their purpose, rather, was the salvation of individuals. Revivals were concerted efforts, usually by a number of Protestant churches in a community, to convert the unchurched and to reclaim backsliders. A secondary purpose was to recharge the faith and piety of existing church members. Now a means for achieving these goals was the old, conservative doctrine, presented in an exceedingly simple and popular form, together with sentimental music and other persuasive devices of mass psychology. Many popular evangelists did flail away at Liberalism frequently; however, their main interest was not polemics but evangelism.

And yet, revivals did serve the conservative cause well. The message that revivalists preached was conservative. Consequently, the people who were gained by revivals were, for

¹²"The Niagara Bible Conference," The Truth, XX (June, 1894), 338.

the most part, added to the ranks of conservative congregations. Furthermore, revivals were sometimes supported by liberal congregations and pastors who felt that Protestantism should present a united front to the masses, and who hoped to gain at least some members as a result of their participation. Once the new members were in their churches Liberals hoped to broaden their outlook. For the sake of expediency, then, some Liberals were willing to overlook their disagreements with conservatives and join them in evangelistic efforts. This concession was probably more beneficial to conservatives than to Liberals, since it constituted at least a qualified endorsement of the former's position and an admission of their evangelistic superiority.¹³

The new era of revivalism began with Dwight L. Moody.¹⁴ More than anyone else it was he who adapted the revival to the new urban scene and who learned how to exploit the media of mass communication.

Moody did not invent the professional revival. Men like Coughy, Hammond, Parker and Knapp had done that. But Moody adapted it to contemporary America. He had a feel for the gigantic and, above all, for the newly found power of mass communication. (How his eyes would have sparkled at a television set!) He could organize and consolidate like a supermanager. He could present his message in the brisk and simple terms of a salesman who

¹³Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: the Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, c.1958), pp. 221,222.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 174.

trusted his product and knew his customer--and was, in fact, a replica of him. He crossed an old institution with new techniques and produced a spectacular product.¹⁵

Moody's most important period of evangelistic activity was from 1873-1881, during which he toured great metropolitan centers in both America and England with astonishing success. Although he conducted a number of revivals after this time they were not his main occupation and did not measure up to his earlier efforts. His formal education was very limited, but his overwhelming sincerity and boundless energy more than made up for this. His orientation was clearly conservative and biblical. His goal was the conversion of individuals and he viewed eternal salvation as man's great need. He had little interest in trying to change the existing social order because he believed that the person who had found God had found the necessary resources with which to meet the problems of this life. And, even if these problems were never solved, Moody could not be dismayed, for this life was of small consequence to him, compared with the life to come. Unlike many of his successors, Moody eschewed polemics and, to the despair of other conservatives, did not hesitate to associate with notorious Liberals.¹⁶

After Moody retired from the revival circuit J. Wilbur Chapman and Reuben A. Torrey carried on in his

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 206, 207.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 203-19, 223-26.

general tradition, assisted by the genial songster, Charles Alexander. While these men, like Moody, operated with a certain amount of dignity and taste, others initiated a trend toward the bizarre and vulgar. This was exemplified by men such as Samuel P. Jones and Gypsy Smith and culminated in Billy Sunday, whose work carried over into the early part of the Fundamentalist era. His sensationalism and uninhibited antics succeeded in drawing both large crowds and wide public attention to his meetings, especially in the years between 1914 and 1919. In the early twenties Sunday's star suddenly fell because of the changing mood of the post-war period. Along with most post-Moody revivalists, Sunday lashed out fiercely at Liberalism, but even with him this was not a primary objective.¹⁷

Bible Institutes

Partly as a protest against the Liberalism that was being taught in many denominational colleges and seminaries, and partly in order to insure an adequate supply of conservative church workers, a number of Bible institutes were founded in the pre-Fundamentalist era. The first and foremost of these is the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, founded in 1886 by the revivalist himself.¹⁸ The first superintendent was

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 231-65. A more sympathetic evaluation of the post-Moody revivalists is found in Fred W. Hoffman, Revival Times in America (Boston: W. A. Wilde Publishers, c.1956), pp. 147-52. See also: William G. McLaughlin, Jr., Billy Sunday Was His Real Name (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 270-87.

¹⁸ Cole, op. cit., p. 43.

Reuben A. Torrey who was mentioned above for his revivalistic activities. Later on Torrey also became a leading Fundamentalist and put the prestige and facilities of his school at the disposal of that movement. Also important was the Los Angeles Bible Institute which was built by Stewart money¹⁹ and headed by James M. Gray who also became an important Fundamentalist.²⁰ Similar schools were founded at Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and New York, as well as in many smaller cities.²¹

Since the Bible institutes did not have exacting academic standards and since their fees were low, many young people were able to take advantage of the training that they offered. The curricula were Bible-centered and ample provisions were made in them for warning students about the dangers of liberal views. A controlled "Christian" environment was maintained which included strong encouragement of personal evangelism and foreign missions. Scholarship at these institutions did not often reach a high level, but zeal and conservative loyalty usually did. In these critical years before the Fundamentalist crusade thousands of Christian workers were turned out by these Bible institutes,²² Many of these graduates became avid Fundamentalists, and some even leaders of that movement.

¹⁹Supra, pp. 46,47.

²⁰Furniss, op. cit., p. 12.

²¹Hoffman, op. cit., p. 144.

²²Cole, op. cit., pp. 43,44.

Conservative Reactions in the Churches

Several major church bodies went through seasons of controversy over Liberalism even before the days of Fundamentalism. However, painful and disturbing though they were, these pre-Fundamentalist battles were kept under control and finally brought to settlement. Peace did not endure, however, for, beneath the surface, dissatisfaction and dissent continued to smoulder and, as will be seen in Chapter IV, eventually exploded into new and more violent controversies. At this point it will be informative to review briefly the preliminary skirmishes.

In 1875 the board of Vanderbilt University, owned and operated by the Methodists, dismissed Prof. Alexander Winchell for teaching that man had descended from preadamite stock. Thus, conservative Methodists won their first controversy with Liberalism.²³ However, the next one proved to be far more difficult for them. In 1895 H. G. Mitchell, Professor of Old Testament at the Boston University School of Theology, was accused of teaching higher-criticism. In proceedings that continued off and on until 1908 the charges against him were first sustained and then dropped. Next, in 1904, conservatives attacked Borden P. Browne, another member of the Boston faculty, but in this case all five charges were dis-

²³Ibid., p. 41.

missed by the judicial committee, never to be raised again.²⁴

Among the Presbyterians, conservatives enjoyed greater success. In 1891 Charles A. Briggs stirred up a storm with an address that he gave on the authority of the Scriptures at his inauguration into the chair of Biblical Theology of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Not only were his statements against inerrancy daringly liberal, but they were also couched in terms that were needlessly offensive. In May of that year the General Assembly voted to veto his appointment to the faculty of Union Seminary. The following year seminary officials annulled the agreement which gave the assembly this veto power, and in 1893 the General Assembly disassociated itself from the seminary. In 1891, while all this was going on, opponents of Briggs took measures to oust him from the Presbyterian ministry. At the General Assembly in 1892 conservatives secured passage of the "Portland Deliverance" which called upon Presbyterian clergy either to hold to the inerrancy of Scripture or to leave the ministry. Finally, the following year, Briggs was suspended by the General Assembly and eventually joined the Protestant Episcopal Church.²⁵ A friend of Briggs, Prof. Henry Preserved Smith of Lane Theological

²⁴William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1933), pp. 390,391.

²⁵Lefferts A. Loetscher, The Broadening Church: a Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), pp. 48-62.

Seminary, took sides with the former during his trial, and in 1894 was also suspended. The vote against him was even larger than that which was cast against Briggs.²⁶ In 1899, in response to a call from Arthur Cushman McGiffert for acceptance of a more liberal attitude toward the Bible in the Presbyterian Church, the General Assembly took an even more conservative stand. It declared four conservative teachings to be "fundamental doctrines" of the Church: the inerrancy of the Bible, the inerrancy of all statements attributed to Jesus, the teaching that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus, and the doctrine of justification by faith alone. On the basis of this declaration heresy charges were filed against McGiffert in 1900, but he withdrew from the church before any action could be taken.²⁷ In addition to silencing these liberal voices in their midst, Presbyterian conservatives also stopped an effort to revise the creedal statements of their body both in 1890 and 1893.²⁸ However, the issue was revived again in 1900 and finally met with acceptance in 1903.²⁹ Thus, after some impressive victories, conservatives sustained a major loss.

Since the Disciples of Christ is a loosely-knit federa-

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 63-68.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 68-74.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 39-47.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 81-90.

tion of congregations and the International Assembly lacks legislative authority over its constituents, the conservative defence in this denomination took a different form from that in the above-mentioned bodies. There was no attempt to hold heresy trials or to establish theological limits, because the organizational structure of the denomination included no provisions for such action. However, lacking these channels of protest, conservative Disciples concentrated on other means, namely the printed word of a popular church periodical. When this failed to check Liberalism many conservatives separated from the denomination in 1906 and formed a new group called the "Churches of Christ."

One reason the controversy raged severely among the Disciples is that the doctrine of Scriptural inerrancy and authority was exceptionally important to them. A prime objective of their denomination from the beginning had been to restore Christian worship and practise to the forms of the primitive New Testament Church. Their guide and source in this attempt at repristination was the Bible, which they considered to be completely adequate and infallible. Consequently, when Liberalism questioned the authority and accuracy of the Bible, conservatives feared that, not only the basis of their doctrine, but even the basic objective of their church and its uniqueness were being undermined.³⁰ Other issues which were of little concern to conservatives in other denom-

³⁰Furniss, op. cit., pp. 170,171.

inations were incorporated into the protests of conservative Disciples, namely, the use of the organ in worship services and the practise of receiving unimmersed people into membership.³¹

The earliest liberal Disciple was L. L. Pinkerton, who came out against the doctrine of plenary inspiration in his publication, Independent Monthly, already in 1868. However, he found so little sympathy for his position that he did not carry through on the series of articles which he had planned on this subject. Another was Clark Brandon, who was condemned repeatedly for expressing similar ideas after 1870.

W. R. Harper, president of the University of Chicago, was a prominent advocate of higher criticism. He was supported by H. L. Willett of the department of Semitics at Chicago. Willett spread these views in many popular lectures and institutes, as well as through the pages of the Christian Evangelist. The conservative opposition was headed by another Semitics professor of Chicago University, J. W. McGarvey, who found both space and editorial backing in another denominational periodical, the Christian Standard. J. H. Garrison, editor of the Christian Evangelist, came under attack for printing the liberal views of Willett and others like him. The matter came to a head during the 1899 convention and Garrison countered by purchasing the magazine, which enabled

³¹Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, c.1948), pp. 386, 405.

him to carry the liberal banner without interference. During the next ten years Liberalism increased among the Disciples, and the last severe controversy before Fundamentalism occurred in 1909 in which conservatives tried unsuccessfully to keep Willett off the program of the convention.³²

The Baptists did not quarrel seriously over Liberalism until after 1910. Controversy prior to that, though irritating and even agonizing, did not reach alarming proportions. The bone of contention during these years before Fundamentalism was the growing Liberalism of the Baptist University of Chicago and its Divinity School. It had been established in 1890 as a defence against Liberalism, but soon became infected by the very "disease" which it was supposed to prevent. In 1906 the Chicago Baptist Association took offense at Prof. George B. Foster's book, The Finality of Christianity, and, as a result, expelled him from the association. In an effort to reduce tension university officials transferred Foster from the Divinity School into the department of Comparative Religion. However, conservative displeasure continued to erupt against this and other evidences of Liberalism. While no major battles ensued, undercurrents of discontent and numerous minor outbursts gave ominous warnings of the violent conflicts which were to come.³³

³²Ibid., pp. 418-20.

³³Robert G. Torbett, A History of the Baptists (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, c.1950), p. 444.

Fundamentalists had the benefit of strong and zealous predecessors. Earlier conservatives provided both inspiration and effective techniques for combatting Liberalism. Polemical literature, Bible conferences, revivals, Bible institutes, ecclesiastical politics all found their way into the Fundamentalist arsenal. However, as Chapter V will reveal, Fundamentalists did far more than merely fire their fathers' guns. They also devised some new and even deadlier weapons. And they threw themselves into the fight with even more fierceness and tenacity than their forebearers had displayed.

CHAPTER IV

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Conservatives had not been lax about defending the faith. The previous chapter described the diversified and aggressive forces with which they had tried to check Liberalism. Nor were they easily discouraged. By the time Fundamentalism was born in 1909 the battle had been raging for forty years and more. However, as far as conservatives were concerned, it had been a losing battle. No sooner would they close the lines in one place than Liberals would break through in another. It has already been noted that many major denominations had fallen largely into control of Liberals.¹ This did not happen by default. Conservatives had protested vehemently both in print and on the floors of their church assemblies. They had instituted heresy proceedings, reinforced doctrinal standards, and, in one case, had withdrawn from the denomination. However, despite all this, Liberalism continued to spread and to conquer. It must have been painfully obvious to thinking conservatives that their best efforts had not been good enough.

Something dramatic, something big was needed, if the conservative cause was to be saved. New hope would have to be instilled into conservative hearts and new vitality into their programs. New appreciation would have to be awakened for

¹Supra, p. 8.

their doctrinal heritage and for the dangers that were threatening it. New supporters would have to be enlisted and new banners raised around which conservative forces could rally. Otherwise, evangelical Protestantism could look forward only to continued decline and perhaps even to eventual defeat.

When The Fundamentals² were published and distributed beginning late in 1909, the conservative element received the very "shot-in-the-arm" that it needed so badly. These booklets initiated a resurgence of militant conservatism and launched a powerful new religious crusade. For years to come, not only in church bodies but also in the secular world Fundamentalism was a movement of major significance. No longer would the conservative-liberal controversy be squelched or ignored. Under the pressures exerted by the Fundamentalists the conflict was both heightened and brought out into the open. Although this crusade, like its predecessors, failed to unseat the Liberals, it did, at least, strengthen and preserve the conservative core within certain denominations, from which still another movement was to be born a generation later.

Historical Background

Where the idea for The Fundamentals originated is not

²The Fundamentals: a Testimony to the Truth (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, n.d.), I-XII.

clear, but Lyman and Milton Stewart of Los Angeles supplied the money and also selected the editorial committee.³ Their earlier financial contributions to the conservative cause were mentioned above.⁴ Apparently, a large part of their wealth was made in oil, for Lyman was president of The Union Oil Company.⁵ From 1909-11, A. C. Dixon, pastor of Moody Church, Chicago, a Baptist, was chairman of the editorial committee. When he left to become pastor of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, Louis Meyer, a Christianized Jew, succeeded him. Upon Meyer's death in 1913, R. A. Torrey, dean of the Los Angeles Bible Institute became chairman, and the project was completed under his leadership. Others who served on the committee were Henry P. Crowell, Thomas S. Smith, D. W. Potter, Elmore Harris, Joseph Kyle, Charles R. Erdman, Delavan Pierson, L. W. Munhall, T. C. Horton, H. C. Mabie, and John B. Shaw. Originally, it was planned to issue a volume every two or three months, but difficulty was encountered in liquidating some securities which the Stewarts had donated in order to finance the effort, and the second editor sustained a long illness, prolonging the project to about five years.

³Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 55.

⁴Supra, p. 47.

⁵Arno Clemens Gaebelein, Half a Century: the Autobiography of a Servant (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," c.1930), p. 207.

Nearly three million copies were sent out in all. The first nine volumes were sent out to all English speaking Protestant ministers, evangelists, missionaries, theological professors, theological students, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, Sunday School superintendents, religious lay workers, and editors of religious publications throughout the world, as far as their names and addresses were known. There was no charge for the booklets and it was not even necessary to request them. However, in the "Forward" to volume IX it was explained that the remaining three volumes would be mailed only to those who indicated a desire to receive them by sending in an order card, although the original no-charge policy remained in effect.

In response to The Fundamentals some two hundred thousand letters were received, most of them voicing enthusiasm and support for the cause. A large prayer circle was formed with members throughout the world who sought to strengthen the endeavor with their intercessions.⁶

Tone of the Volumes

The tone of these volumes is, for the most part, moderate, reverent, and thoughtful. The fierceness and bitterness that characterized so much of later Fundamentalism was not in evidence here. Nor can the charge of vulgarity or sensationalism be leveled against them. Most contributors attempted to

⁶The Fundamentals, XII, 3-8.

treat their subjects in a calm and scholarly manner. They revealed a fair acquaintance with the views of their Liberal opponents, and, although they endeavored to expose flaws and inadequacies in these views, they were by no means fanatical or vicious about it. Some of the articles were primarily homiletical and inspirational, rather than scholarly. None called for drastic or sectarian action. They were sober, confident statements of conservative Protestant teachings and an attempt to establish the validity of these teachings in the face of Liberal criticism. Perhaps more than anything else, The Fundamentals was trying to demonstrate the fact that conservative theology was still very much alive and that it enjoyed the acceptance and support of competent and learned people.

A Corrective for Conservatives

Furthermore, the contributors attempted, at least in a limited way, to counteract some of the false emphases and undesirable traits of their fellow conservatives. An example of this is seen in an article by Reuben A. Torrey on the Holy Spirit in which he castigates the arrogance that conservatives often displayed and traced this to a wrong understanding of the Spirit:

If we think of the Holy Spirit merely as a power or influence, our thought will be, "How can I get more of the Holy Spirit?"; but if we think of Him as a divine Person, our thought will be, "How can the Holy Spirit get more of me?" The former conception leads to self-exaltation the latter conception to self-humiliation, self-emptying, and self-renunciation. If we think of

the Holy Spirit merely as a Divine power or influence and then imagine that we have received the Holy Spirit, there will be the temptation to feel as if we belonged to a superior order of Christians. A woman once came to me to ask a question and began by saying, "Before I ask the question, I want you to understand that I am a Holy Ghost woman." The words and the manner of uttering them made me shudder. I could not believe that they were true. But if we think of the Holy Spirit in the Biblical way as a divine Being of infinite majesty, condescending to dwell in our hearts and take possession of our lives, it will put us in the dust and make us walk very softly before God.⁷

Another example is Charles R. Erdman's article on Socialism. While rejecting the social gospel, he calls upon the churches to give greater emphasis to the social principles of Christianity and their application to the problems of the day. Not many years after this was written Fundamentalists became most antagonistic to anything resembling the social gospel, but at this point they appeared to share some important concerns with this school of theological thought and were not too proud to learn from it. The following statements by Erdman sound almost like a quotation from Rauschenbusch:

there are some in the church who are consciously guilty of sins against society, and others who, because of the difficulty of the questions involved, excuse themselves on the ground that their wrong practices are necessitated by the industrial system of the age. Some are quite comfortable under what they regard as orthodox preaching, even though they know their wealth has come from the watering of stocks and from wrecking railroads, and from grinding the faces of the poor. The supposed orthodoxy of such preaching is probably defective in its statement of the social teachings of the Gospels. One might be a social bandit and buccaneer and yet believe in the virgin birth and in the resurrection of Christ; but one cannot be a Christian unless he believes "that one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died

⁷R. A. Torrey, "The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit," *ibid.*, I, 55,56.

for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again," and to live for Christ means to live for Him in every sphere and relationship of life, whether employer or employee, capitalist or laborer, stockholder or wage-earner.

We must all admit the grave complexity of modern life, and the delicacy and difficulty of the problems involved, yet we must not be content to countenance practices which are unjust or unchristian. To be absolutely true to conscience and to Christ will mean sacrifice and loss of money and social prestige. It is never easy to take up the cross daily and follow Christ; but there is a new call for heroism, for martyrdom. Absolute loyalty to Christ in the business and social world today often means crucifixion, pain, death, but "it is the way the Master went; must not the servant tread it still?"⁸

This is an aspect of The Fundamentals which is often overlooked-- the constructive and refining influence which they attempted to exert upon the conservatives themselves. Criticism of Liberals was combined with at least some self-criticism. The original Fundamentalists were discerning enough to realize that the conservative cause was endangered by extremists and deficiencies from within, as well as by Liberalism from without. While concentrating on the latter, they did not ignore the former.

An Analysis of Contents

An examination of the contents of The Fundamentals reveals that their prime purpose was the defense and exaltation of traditional views of the Bible. Nearly one-third of the articles (twenty-seven out of ninety) were devoted to this subject. (See Table 1 on p. 76) Of these, half were leveled

⁸Charles R. Erdman, "The Church and Socialism," ibid., XII, 117, 118.

TABLE 1

TABULATION OF SUBJECTS TREATED IN THE FUNDAMENTALS*

Subject	Number of Articles Devoted to It
Bible	27
General Christian Apologetics	9
Jesus Christ	8
Evangelism	7
Science-Evolution	6
Sub-Christian Cults	6
Personal Testimonies	5
Atonement	5
Prayer	4
Sin	4
Second Coming of Christ	3
Conversion	3
Holy Spirit	2
Sabbath	1
Stewardship	1
Consecration	1
Church	1
Socialism	1
Total	94

*Most articles are listed only once. However, a few are listed twice, since several subjects receive extensive treatment in them.

against higher-criticism.⁹ In all, the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures were vigorously maintained. Evidence was cited from archaeological discoveries in support of Biblical accuracy.¹⁰ The value and use of the Bible were demonstrated in various ways.¹¹ This preoccupation with the doctrine of the Scriptures is also apparent in the articles which were not devoted primarily to this subject. In almost all, the writers expressed their complete loyalty to the inspired, authoritative Bible. Perhaps the most able and incisive contributor to this subject was James Orr of Scotland. Commenting on the higher-critical theory of the post-exilic origin of the Pentateuch, he says:

And so I might go over to the provisions of the law one by one--tabernacle and priests and rituals and sacrifices

⁹Dyson Hague, "History of Higher-Criticism," *ibid.*, I, 87-122; Franklin Johnson, "Fallacies of the Higher-Criticism," *ibid.*, II, 48-68; Robert Anderson, "Christ and Criticism," *ibid.*, II, 69-84; J. J. Reeve, "My Personal Experience With Higher Criticism," *ibid.*, III, 98-118; William Craven, "Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament," *ibid.*, IV, 46-72; F. Bettex, "The Bible and Modern Criticism," *ibid.*, IV, 73-90; James Orr, "The Early Narratives of Genesis," *ibid.*, VI, 85-97; George L. Robinson, "One Isaiah," *ibid.*, VII, 70-87; Joseph D. Wilson, "The Book of Daniel," *ibid.*, VII, 88-100; Andrew C. Robinson, "Three Peculiarities of the New Testament," *ibid.*, VII, 101-5; W. H. Griffeth, "Old Testament Criticism and New Testament Christianity," *ibid.*, VIII, 5-26; George F. Wright, "The Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch," *ibid.*, VIII, 10-21; G. O. Troop, "The Internal Evidence of the Fourth Gospel," *ibid.*, VIII, 18-25.

¹⁰George F. Wright, "The Testimony of the Monuments to the Truth of the Scriptures," *ibid.*, II, 7-28; M. G. Kyle, "The Recent Testimony of Archaeology to the Scriptures," *ibid.*, II, 29-47; David Heagle, "The Tabernacle in the Wilderness: Did it Exist?" *ibid.*, IV, 7-45.

¹¹Howard Crosby, "Preach the Word," *ibid.*, VIII, 100-9; George F. Pentecost, "What the Bible Contains for the Believer," *ibid.*, X, 97-110.

and Day of Atonement--these things in their post-exilian form, had never existed; they were spun out of the inventive brains of the scribes; and yet the people accepted them as the genuine handiwork of the ancient lawgiver? Was ever such a thing heard of before? Try it in any city. Try to get the people to take upon themselves a series of heavy burdens of taxation or tithes or whatever you like, on the grounds that it had been handed down from the middle ages to the present time. Try to get them to believe it; try to get them to obey it, and you will find the difficulty. Is it credible to anyone who leaves books and theories in the study and takes a broad view of human nature with open eyes? I aver that for me, at any rate, it is not; and it will be a marvel to me as long as I am spared to live, how such a theory has ever gained the acceptance it has done among unquestionably able and sound-minded men. I am convinced that the structure of the Bible vindicates itself; and that these counter theories break down.¹²

Not all defenders of the Bible were as lucid and penetrating in their argument as was Orr, but all recognized this doctrine to be the key to their defence, and they upheld it with their best efforts.

Fundamentalists believed that the Bible was the infallible revelation of God, and, therefore, the only source and standard of teaching. In every particular they endeavored to base their theology on the statements of the Bible. The attacks of higher-criticism upon the Bible were interpreted as attacks upon the very foundations of faith. If the divine authority and inerrancy of the Bible were surrendered, no point of doctrine would be safe and all hope of certainty would be gone, at least, so they feared. And their fears proved to be well-founded. By changing the conception of the

¹²James Orr, "Holy Scripture and Modern Negations," ibid., IX, 43.

Bible, higher-criticism had opened the way for all the other doctrinal modifications of Liberalism. As long as it was necessary to find biblical support for new views and emphases, the opportunities for doctrinal change were limited. However, if the Bible was only human literature, as the critics said, and subject to the usual imperfections and inadequacies and errors of mankind, then biblical support was not really necessary. One could disagree with the Bible, or improve upon it, or seek eternal truth elsewhere. Fundamentalists were convinced that if this approach were to be followed the essentials of Christianity would be lost. Not only many individuals, but even whole denominations had already taken this route, and Fundamentalists were determined to stand at the crossroads and wave their warning flags so that others would not make the same mistake. It was for this reason that they dwelt on the doctrine of the Scriptures more than on any other single subject. They saw their main assignment as that of refuting higher-criticism and restoring confidence in the Bible as the inspired, infallible Word of God.

Nine articles were devoted to apologetics of a more general type. These dealt with such questions as the existence of God and the superiority of Christianity over other systems of thought. Representative titles are: "Christianity No Fable," by Thomas Whitelaw,¹³ "Modern Philosophy," by

¹³Ibid., III, 86-97.

Philip Mauro,¹⁴ and "The Testimony of Christian Experience," by E. Y. Mullins.¹⁵

The person and work of Christ were treated in eight articles.¹⁶ His virgin birth, deity, moral glory, resurrection, and glorious return were forcefully asserted in traditional terms. To Fundamentalists this was also a crucial area. Liberalism had questioned all miraculous elements in the biblical record. This included the unique manner of Christ's conception, His return from death in bodily form, as well as the supernatural deeds that were ascribed to Him in the New Testament. The next stage of this de-supernaturalization was the denial of His deity. After the higher-critics had finished their analysis of Jesus Christ He was little more than a sensitive and gifted religious teacher. Some went so far as to deny his historical reality altogether. Convinced that Christianity without the divine, eternal, risen Christ was no Christianity at all, Fundamentalists bore fervent

¹⁴Ibid., II, 85-105.

¹⁵Ibid., III, 76-85.

¹⁶James Orr, "The Virgin Birth of Christ," ibid., I, 7-20; Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Deity of Christ," ibid., I, 21-8; C. Campbell Morgan, "The Purposes of the Incarnation," ibid., I, 29-54; William Moorehead, "The Moral Glory of Jesus Christ a Proof of Inspiration," ibid., III, 42-60; Robert E. Speer, "God in Christ the Only Revelation of the Father," ibid., III, 61-75; R. A. Torrey, "The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ From the Dead," ibid., V, 81-105; John Stock, "The God-Man," ibid., VI, 64-84; John L. Nuelson, "The Person and Work of Jesus Christ," ibid., VI, 98-113.

testimony to these ancient Christological truths. The fact that they wrote more about the Bible than about Christ does not mean that their concern for Him was less than for the Book. In reality, their defence of the Bible was, for the most part, a piece of their defence of Christ. For their faith in Christ was based on what the Bible said about Him. To tamper with the Bible, they believed, was to tamper with the medium through which Christ was given to them. Fundamentalists believed that if they could repel the attacks against the Bible, their defence of Christ Himself would be that much more secure. John Stock sums up the feelings of all Fundamentalists about the Christ of Liberalism as compared with the Christ of the Bible:

A so-called Savior, whose only power to save lies in the excellent moral precepts that He gave, and the pure life that He lived; who is no longer the God-man, but the mere-man; whose blood had no sacrificial atoning or propitiatory power in the moral government of Jehovah, but was simply a martyr's witness to a superior system of ethics--is not the Saviour of the four Gospels, or of Paul, or Peter, or John. It is not under the banner of such a Messiah that the Church of God has achieved its triumphs. The Christ of the New Testament, of the early Church, of universal Christendom; the Christ, the power of whose name has revolutionized the world and raised it to its present level, and under whose guidance the sacramental host of God's redeemed are advancing and shall advance to yet greater victories over superstition and sin, is Immanuel, God with us, in our nature, whose blood "cleanseth us from all sin," and who is "able to save, even to the uttermost, all that cometh to God through Him."¹⁷

Evangelism and missions were stressed heavily in volume

¹⁷Op. cit., p. 84.

XII, which contained six articles on these subjects.¹⁸ The only other similar article appeared in volume IX.¹⁹ Doctrines that must be emphasized in evangelism, personal witnessing, Sunday School evangelism, foreign missions, motivational considerations, and lessons which sponsoring churches can learn from the mission fields were discussed in these articles. Although conservatives were well ahead of their opponents in these fields of endeavor, they were not inclined to be complacent. Furthermore, liberal influences were becoming apparent both in the mission fields and in Sunday School literature, and these articles provided an opportunity to spotlight these developments.²⁰ The reason for saving this evangelistic theme for the final volume was probably psychological. Having proclaimed the great truths and refuted the most dangerous errors in earlier volumes, the editor wished to leave his readers with the desire to spread the message around.

Science and religion, which were contested so hotly later on in the Fundamentalist Crusade, received only a moderate

¹⁸L. W. Munhall, "Doctrines That Must be Emphasized in Successful Evangelism," *ibid.*, XII, 11-23; John Timothy Stone, "Pastoral and Personal Evangelism, or Winning Men to Christ One by One," *ibid.*, XII, 24-44; Charles G. Trumbull, "The Sunday School's True Evangelism," *ibid.*, XII, 45-63; Robert E. Speer, "Foreign Missions or World-Wide Evangelism," *ibid.*, XII, 64-84; Henry W. Frost, "What Missionary Motives Should Prevail?" *ibid.*, XII, 85-96; R. A. Torrey, "The Place of Prayer in Evangelism," *ibid.*, XII, 97-107.

¹⁹Charles A. Bowen, "A Message from Missions to the Modern Ministry," *ibid.*, IX, 95-110.

²⁰Frost, *op. cit.*, pp. 85,86; Trumbull, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-55.

amount of attention in The Fundamentals. The first of these articles did not appear until volume IV. Entitled, "Science and the Christian Faith,"²¹ it maintained that there was no real conflict between the two disciplines. Genesis I was not a scientific treatise, but rather a simple, popular, and, in some ways, symbolic account of creation. The possibility that vast cosmic periods may have been involved in the creative process was granted. "Recent" trends of scientific thought were mentioned, which allow for rapid and sudden changes in species, rather than the exceedingly slow changes about which Darwin wrote. The acceptance of these lines of thought dissolves most of the difficulties raised by the Darwinian theories. Articles in later volumes spoke more confidently and even contemptuously of the evolutionary theory. "The Passing of Evolution,"²² and "Decadence of Darwinism,"²³ were two such titles. Another article summarizes some of the objections which Fundamentalists raised regarding the theory of evolution:

But when we consider that the evolutionary theory was conceived in agnosticism, and born and nurtured in infidelity; that it is the backbone of the destructive higher criticism which has so viciously assailed both the integrity and authority of the Scripture; that it utterly fails in explaining--what Genesis makes so clear--those tremendous facts in human nature, the presence of evil and its attendant suffering; that it

²¹James Orr, ibid., IV, 91-104.

²²George F. Wright, ibid., VII, 5-20.

²³Henry H. Beach, ibid., VIII, 36-48.

offers nothing but a negative reply to the supreme question of the ages, "If a man die, shall he live again?" that it, in fact, substitutes for a personal God "an infinite and eternal Energy" which is without moral qualities or positive attributes, is not wise, or good, or merciful or just; cannot love or hate, reward or punish; that it denies the personality of God and man, and presents them, together with nature as under a process of evolution which has neither beginning nor end; and regards man as being simply a passing form of this universal Energy, and thus without free will, moral responsibility, or immortality, it becomes evident to every intelligent layman that such a system can have no possible point of contact with Christianity.²⁴

Still another objection is the effect which the teaching of evolution allegedly has upon human morale:

When you read what some writers, professedly religious, say about man and his bestial origin your shoulders unconsciously droop; your head hangs down; your heart feels sick. Your self-respect has received a blow. When you read Genesis, your shoulders straighten, your chest emerges. You feel proud to be that thing called man. Up goes your heart and up goes your head.²⁵

These two extracts evidence some of the strong emotional content of the Fundamentalists' reaction to evolution. By 1925 this issue became the center of the controversy and the source of violent emotionalism.

Fundamentalists were eager to disassociate themselves from certain religious groups which they considered to be sub-Christian. Six articles were given over to discussion of these groups and condemnation of their teachings.

²⁴Evolution in the Pulpit by an Occupant of the Pew," ibid., VIII, 31.

²⁵Dyson Hague, "The Doctrinal Value of the First Chapters of Genesis," ibid., VIII, 82.

Russellites (Jehovah's Witnesses),²⁶ Mormons,²⁷ Christian Scientists,²⁸ Spiritualists,²⁹ and Roman Catholics³⁰ were singled out for this treatment. Scathing terms were employed, especially against the Church of Rome, which was denounced, not only as being less than Christian, but even as "the work of Satan."³¹

A number of personal testimonies were included in the first five volumes--one by a physician,³² one by an attorney,³³ one by a mission-worker,³⁴ one by an Anglican rector,³⁵ and one with the quaint title, "Tributes to Christ and the Bible by Brainy Men not Known as Active Christians."³⁶ The latter was a collection of short quotations from men such as

²⁶William G. Moorehead, "Millennial Dawn: a Counterfeit of Christianity," ibid., VII, 106-27.

²⁷R. G. McNiece, "Mormonism: Its Origin, Characteristics, and Doctrines," ibid., VIII, 110-27.

²⁸Maurice E. Wilson, "Eddyism: Commonly Called Christian Science," ibid., IX, 111-27.

²⁹Algernon J. Pollock, "Modern Spiritualism Briefly Tested by the Scriptures," ibid., X, 111-27.

³⁰T. W. Medhurst, "Is Romanism Christianity?" ibid., XI, 100-12, and J. M. Foster, "Rome, the Antagonist of the Nations," ibid., XI, 113-26.

³¹Medhurst, op. cit., p. 111.

³²Howard A. Kelley, "A Personal Testimony," ibid., I, 123-6.

³³Philip Mauro, "A Personal Testimony," ibid., IV, 105-19.

³⁴Charles T. Studd, "A Personal Testimony," ibid., III, 119-26.

³⁵H. W. Webb-Peploe, "A Personal Testimony," ibid., V, 120-24.

³⁶Ibid., II, 120-5.

Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon Bonaparte, Goethe, Rousseau, and others.

Doctrines related to the atonement were expounded in five articles.³⁷ Sin³⁸ and prayer³⁹ were each the subject of four. Conversion⁴⁰ and the Second Coming of Christ⁴¹ were each treated in three articles and the Holy Spirit⁴² in two. A single article was devoted to each of the remaining subjects:

³⁷H. G. C. Moule, "Justification by Faith," ibid., II, 106-19; Franklin Johnson, "The Atonement," ibid., VI, 50-63; Thomas Spurgeon, "Salvation by Grace," ibid., IX, 48-65; Dyson Hague, "At-One-Ment by Propitiation," ibid., XI, 23-42; C. J. Schofield, "The Grace of God," ibid., XI, 43-54.

³⁸Robert Anderson, "Sin and Judgment to Come," ibid., VI, 37-49; Charles B. Williams, "Paul's Testimony to the Doctrine of Sin," ibid., VIII, 49-63; Thomas Whitelaw, "The Biblical Conception of Sin," ibid., XI, 7-22; Jessie Penn-Lewis, "Satan and His Kingdom," ibid., X, 48-63.

³⁹Arthur T. Pierson, "The Proof of the Living God," ibid., I, 70-86; and "The Testimony of Foreign Missions to the Superintending Providence of God," ibid., VI, 5-21; and "Divine Efficacy of Prayer," ibid., IX, 66-83; R. A. Torrey, "The Place of Prayer in Evangelism," ibid., XII, 97-107.

⁴⁰H. M. Sydenstricker, "The Science of Conversion," ibid., VIII, 64-73; Thomas Boston, "The Nature of Regeneration," ibid., X, 26-30; George W. Lasher, "Regeneration, Conversion, Reformation," ibid., X, 31-38.

⁴¹John McNicol, "The Hope of the Church," ibid., VI, 114-127; William C. Procter, "What Christ Teaches Concerning Future Retribution," ibid., IX, 84-93; Charles R. Erdman, "The Coming of Christ," ibid., XI, 87-99.

⁴²R. A. Torrey, "The Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit," ibid., I, 55-69; W. J. Erdman, "The Holy Spirit and the Sons of God," ibid., X, 64-78.

Sabbath,⁴³ stewardship,⁴⁴ consecration,⁴⁵ church,⁴⁶ and Socialism.⁴⁷

The relative amount of space assigned to each topic as noted in Table 1 is significant. It indicates in the first place that The Fundamentals lived up to their title. Subject matter was restricted almost exclusively to very basic items on which nearly all conservative Protestants could agree. Editors and authors avoided points which were controversial among the conservatives themselves. In the interest of striking effective blows at Liberalism they stood together and spoke with one voice. A truce was called upon intramural conflicts so that they could unite against their common foe. This required a drastic shift in emphasis. Premillennialism, which had been a consuming interest of the most active pre-Fundamentalists, was shoved into the background. There were many conservatives in important denominations which were hostile to this doctrine. No doubt, this was one factor which had deprived the pre-Fundamentalist campaigns of wider support. The editorial committee, apparently sensing this, printed only

⁴³Daniel H. Martin, "Why Save the Lord's Day?" ibid., X, 5-17.

⁴⁴Arthur T. Pierson, "Our Lord's Teaching About Money," ibid., X, 39-47.

⁴⁵Henry W. Frost, "Consecration," ibid., X, 79-88.

⁴⁶Bishop Ryle, "The True Church," ibid., IX, 5-9.

⁴⁷Charles R. Erdman, "The Church and Socialism," ibid., XII, 108-119.

three articles on the Second Coming of Christ,⁴⁸ all of which stopped short of premillennialism. In the last of these the author reviewed the differences between premillennialists, who believed that Christ would return visibly before a thousand year period of righteousness and glory, and the post-millennialists, who believed that Christ would come after such a period. He cited Scripture passages on both sides of the question and then concluded with this appeal for mutual tolerance:

However great the divergence of views among students of prophecy may seem to be, and in spite of the many varieties of opinion among the representatives of the two schools which have been mentioned in passing, the points of agreement are far more important. The main difference is as to the order, rather than as to the reality of the events.

The great body of believers are united in expecting both an age of glory and a personal return of Christ. As to many related events they differ; but as to the one great precedent condition of that coming age or that promised return of the Lord there is absolute harmony of conviction: the Gospel must first be preached to all nations (Matt. 24:14). The Church must continue to "make disciples of all the nations . . . even unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19,20).

This is therefore a time, not for unkindly criticism of fellow Christians, but for friendly conference; not for disputing over divergent views, but for united action; not for dogmatic assertions of prophetic programs, but for the humble acknowledgment that "we know in part"; not for idle dreaming, but for the immediate task of evangelizing a lost world.⁴⁹

This shift in emphasis away from premillennialism was undoubtedly

⁴⁸See footnote 41.

⁴⁹Charles R. Erdman, "The Coming of Christ," ibid., XI, 98.

a bid for wider support in the crusade against Liberalism, and an attempt to avoid divisive controversy over this issue in the conservative camp. Pre-Fundamentalists, too, had taken measures of this kind, in connection with their Bible conferences;⁵⁰ however, The Fundamentals went much further in their attempt to sidestep the obstacle of premillennialism.

Relation to Lutheran Theology

Several observations must be made about the contents of The Fundamentals and their relation to Lutheran theology, in anticipation of the second part of this study. These observations have to do both with subjects that are slighted and with those that are presented in a manner which was unsatisfactory to Lutherans. For example, only one article was devoted to the doctrine of the Church,⁵¹ and it is both too brief and too negative, from the Lutheran point of view, stating mainly what is not essential to the nature and function of the Church. Little is said in any of the booklets about the corporate nature of Christianity, or the mutual edification of believers. The concept of Christianity presented in these volumes is largely individualistic. Closely related to this deficiency is the lack of stress on the Sacraments. They are mentioned in passing occasionally, but always in terms of Reformed theology, which was the orientation of most Fundamentalists.

⁵⁰Supra, pp. 56,57.

⁵¹Ryle, op. cit.

The regenerating power of Holy Baptism is categorically denied:

Many students of the New Testament, accepting the Gospel of John as canonical and genuine, stumble over the same great truth and "pervert the right ways of the Lord." Taking the fifth verse of John 3, they accept the doctrine of regeneration, but couple it with an external act without which, in their view, the regeneration is not and can not be completed. In their rituals they distinctly declare that water baptism is essential to and is productive of the regeneration which Jesus declares must be from Heaven.⁵²

Against the depreciations of Christian Science, Holy Communion is exalted as "the very heart and citadel of Christian worship."⁵³ However, the nature of this sacrament and its significance in the life of the Church are nowhere discussed. No mention is made of the part which the Sacraments play in initiating and fostering the fellowship of the Church. Equally disturbing from the Lutheran point of view are declarations such as the following about the immediate working of the Holy Spirit: "This Divine Spirit operates how and where He pleases and with or without means."⁵⁴ The means which the Spirit sometimes uses are the Word of God, the influence of Christians, prayer, and the faith of the witness.⁵⁵ The Sacraments are not included. The Lutheran position is that the Holy Spirit converts and strengthens men only through the divinely ordained

⁵²Lasher, op. cit., p. 33.

⁵³Wilson, op. cit., p. 118.

⁵⁴Sydenstricker, op. cit., p. 66.

⁵⁵Loc. cit.

means which are the Word of God (Gospel), Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion.⁵⁶ Finally, The Fundamentals present a view of prayer which Lutherans consider exaggerated and distorted. "Prayer not only puts us in touch with God and gives us knowledge of Him and His ways, but it imparts to us His power."⁵⁷ In the Lutheran view, the knowledge and power of God are available only through the Word and Sacraments. Prayer is conceived as the outreach of man to God, while God's outreach to man is concentrated in the means of grace. It was, in part, these features of The Fundamentals which led Missouri Synod Lutherans to remain apart from the Fundamentalist crusade and to be influenced by it only in an indirect manner.

The impact of The Fundamentals upon conservative Protestants was tremendous. Following their appearance old campaigns against Liberalism were revived and bold new ventures were undertaken. Cole gives a thumbnail sketch of these events:

The far-reaching influence of The Fundamentals can scarcely be measured. The books were welcomed by tens of thousands of churchmen. The language in which they were delivered stirred in sympathetic readers, first, anxiety for the well-being of Christianity, then, fear for the preservation of the historic faith, and then, spirited defence of the old gospel. Correspondence, caucus, revival, multiplied to promote the aims of the critical cause. During the five or six years these publications were in process of dissemination, frequent Bible and prophetic conferences were interspersed throughout the country to fan the flame of religious discontent into open reactionism. Factional periodicals intensified fears and suspicions. The World War did not so much

⁵⁶ John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics: a Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 441.

⁵⁷ Arthur T. Pierson, "Divine Efficacy of Prayer," The Fundamentals, IX, 72.

initiate controversy as it accentuated divisive forces that had been nurtured for years. The Fundamentals having accomplished their leavening work, and the war having concentrated religious militancy, conservatives became the fundamentalist movement."⁵⁸

The next chapter will consider these developments in greater detail.

⁵⁸Cole, op. cit., p. 61.

CHAPTER V

THE FUNDAMENTALIST CRUSADE

While The Fundamentals were still in the process of publication and distribution World War I erupted in Europe and for four years, 1914-18, monopolized the interest and energy of the Western World. Wartime propaganda charged the atmosphere with strong feelings of suspicion and militance.¹ Among many conservative Protestants this fortified the stimulus provided by The Fundamentals, and strengthened the new crusade against Liberalism.

This chapter will survey the highlights of the Fundamentalist crusade. Several problems make it difficult to describe the movement briefly with any degree of clarity. For one thing, it was by no means a united or coordinated effort, but rather a whole collection of independent efforts. In general, all were striving for the same goals. A similar spirit and manner were common to most. In not a few cases the same men occupied leading positions in a number of Fundamentalist organizations. And there was at least one major attempt to amalgamate the scattered forces of Fundamentalism into one federation. However, the various units of Fundamentalism carried on autonomously, for the most part, and sometimes even competitively. They fought, not only

¹Supra, pp. 36-41.

through denominational machinery, but also through extra-denominational programs, and finally in the field of civil politics. Complicating the issue even further is the phenomenon that the theological issues shifted from period to period and even from situation to situation. The standard works on Fundamentalism² give detailed accounts of all these factors. No attempt will be made here to retell that story. What follows is a general overview, noting the major theological foci around which controversy raged and the various planes on which the crusade was conducted.

Major Theological Emphases

The strategy of The Fundamentals was to narrow the discussion down to basic points of Christian doctrine upon which all or most conservative Protestants could agree. This was possible because it was precisely such doctrines which Liberalism had criticized. Already in the pre-Fundamentalist era five basic points were put forth by conservatives as the heart of their faith: the inerrancy of the Bible, the deity of Christ, His virgin birth, His substitutionary atonement, His physical resurrection and bodily return. These were issued as a summary of essential Christianity for the first

² Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931); and Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

time at the Niagara Bible Conference in 1895³ and were reaffirmed on many different occasions by various Fundamentalists. However, the Five Points did not always occupy the center of attention. For a time there was a drift back toward millennialism and after that the anti-evolutionary theme became dominant. It is possible to divide the Fundamentalist era into three stages according to these shifts in emphasis. 1909-1913 was the Five Points stage, with particular stress on the first point--the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible. Evidence has been cited from The Fundamentals to bear this out.⁴ The second stage, 1914-1918, brought millennialism to the fore, largely as a result of the war.⁵ The final stage, 1920-1931, was given over largely to combatting evolution.⁶ This is not to say that these themes completely dominated their respective periods. Concern over other issues also arose from time to time, but the general trend was according to this pattern.

A subject which never became a primary target of Fundamentalism, but which was attacked frequently along the way, was the social gospel. Because it conflicted with traditional concepts of sin and redemption, and because it included evolutionary concepts, this view could not be recon-

³Cole, op. cit., p. 32.

⁴Supra, pp. 75-9.

⁵Gerald Birney Smith, Current Christian Thinking (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1928), p. 74.

⁶Furniss, op. cit., pp. 51,52.

ciled with Fundamentalist theology. Alarm over social gospel tendencies was most commonly expressed in connection with foreign mission work when it was discovered that some missionaries were conducting this type of ministry instead of proclaiming the biblical message. Inner-city mission programs were also criticized occasionally for the same reason.⁷

Three Planes of Fundamentalist Activity

Campaigns against Liberalism were carried on at three different levels. In the first place, they were initiated through extra-denominational agencies. Like-minded Protestants from various church bodies would unite for polemical projects of common interest. However, the inspiration and ammunition gained from these sources was, in most instances, applied vigorously on the denominational scene as well. Finally, as the crusade gathered momentum Fundamentalists carried the fight into the secular world, too, in an effort to eliminate liberal teaching from the public schools of the land.

1. The extra-denominational plane

No doubt, it was the decline of conservative strength

⁷For a typical protest of this kind see Robert A. Ashworth, "The Fundamentalist Movement Among the Baptists," The Journal of Religion, IV (November, 1924), 621. A chapter on the relationship between Fundamentalism and the social gospel is included in Paul A. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches, 1920-1940 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, c.1954), chapter IV.

within the denominations during the pre-Fundamentalist period which led churchmen of this bent to seek consolation and support from outside sources. If conservatives had succeeded in overthrowing Liberalism within their respective church bodies, there would have been little incentive for extra-denominational activities of this kind. However, such success had been denied them, and they felt that if there was to be a new rallying of conservative forces, it would have to begin outside denominational borders. Much pre-Fundamentalist activity had also been on this plane and these efforts provided the foundation upon which Fundamentalists constructed their programs. The anti-Liberal programs established by their predecessors--polemical literature, Bible conferences, revivals, and Bible institutes⁸--were intensified by the Fundamentalists, and all but one, revivals, continued to play significant parts in their crusade.

Polemical literature increased both in quantity and in vehemence. The moderate, studious tone of The Fundamentals gave way to one that frequently bordered on the hysterical and the fanatical.⁹ A lack of erudition, and, in many cases, even of honesty is all too obvious. Countless tracts were published on controversial subjects and were scattered far

⁸See chapter III.

⁹W. M. Forrest, Do Fundamentalists Play Fair? (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926), pp. 38-44.

and wide by zealous supporters. A large number of independent periodicals kept the Fundamentalist cause before the Protestant public. Of these many were poorly supported and short-lived, but several exerted wider influence and were of considerable significance. Examples of the latter are The Christian Fundamentalist, later known as Christian Fundamentals in School and Church, edited by William Riley; The Bible Champion; The Sunday School Times; The King's Business, published by the Los Angeles Bible Institute, which was announced in the final volume of The Fundamentals as the continuing voice of that endeavor; and The Moody Bible Institute Monthly. In addition, there were non-official publications addressed primarily to readers of certain denominations which protested against Liberalism and advocated Fundamentalist views: The Christian Advocate (Disciples); Call to Colors, later known as The Essentialist (Methodist); The Presbyterian; and the Watchman-Examiner (Baptist). A steady stream of full-length books also came from Fundamentalist presses. William Jennings Bryan produced several very popular works¹⁰ as well as a number of articles.¹¹ J. Gresham Machen wrote prolifically, Christianity and Liberalism¹² perhaps being the most important

¹⁰In His Image (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1922), and Orthodox Christianity versus Modernism (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, c.1923).

¹¹"The Fundamentals," Forum, LXX (July, 1923), 1665-80, and "God and Evolution," New York Times, Sunday, February 26, 1922, Section 7, p. 2.

¹²New York: Macmillan Company, 1924.

contribution to the cause. A. W. McAnn's God or Gorilla¹³ was referred to constantly in the evolutionary controversies, and James Henry Leuba's The Belief in God and Immortality¹⁴ provided evidence of spiritual decline in college students as a result of exposure to liberal views. Both Cole and Furniss furnish extensive bibliographies on the literature of Fundamentalism.¹⁵

Fundamentalist writers denounced the tenets of Liberalism as false and degrading. They called upon Liberals to do the honest thing, which was to leave the churches, and they challenged conservatives to see to it that a complete purge was effected. A rather restrained expression of this message is the following:

Why does not Modernism acknowledge that it is a new thing under the sun and start a new institution? Because it has no vitality. It is purely destructive. (Acts 20: 29,30) It is a parasite that lives by preying upon the life of the Church. Left to itself, it would soon wither and die. It does not create Christians. Its principal business is taking young Christians who have been brought into the Church by men and women of faith, and turning them into pagans. . . .

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. . . The Church must see and meet the issue. She must

¹³New York: Devin-Adair Company, c.1922.

¹⁴Furniss, op. cit., pp. 17,18 mentions this book several times and stresses its importance, but does not give full bibliographical data. The volume was not available to the author of this study. Harold B. Kuhn, "Philosophy of Religion," in Contemporary Evangelical Thought, edited by Carl F. H. Henry (Great Neck, N. Y.: Channel Press, c.1957), p. 224 refers to Leuba as a writer in the field of the Psychology of Religion, and a man of non-conservative views.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 38-41, and 183-91; and Cole, op. cit., pp. 240-45, 341-50.

take her stand decisively on the side of faith and have no more to do with the evolutionary philosophy. She must cast it out root and branch, if she is to save her own soul, or have any salvation to offer to the world . . . she must rise up and cast out the heresy of Modernism, if she is not to perish from the earth.¹⁶

Bible conferences, or "Prophetic" conferences as they were also called, enjoyed a burst of renewed popularity during the war years. Whereas the most important conferences during the pre-Fundamentalist era had been conducted in resort areas, the main wartime conferences were moved to great urban centers. The first of this group was held at Moody Church, Chicago, in February, 1914. In his autobiography, Arno Gaebelin accepts credit for originating the idea for this meeting.¹⁷ The conference theme was "The Coming and the Kingdom of Christ," which combined millennialist accents with denunciation of the social gospel. Copies of the proceedings were sent gratis to all theological students in America as well as to foreign missionaries.¹⁸ Four years of war heightened millennial interest even further, leading to several additional major conferences in 1918. One was held at New York's Carnegie Hall, which was crowded nightly with enthusiastic hearers. Gaebelin headed the organizational committee as well as the panel of speakers. Assisting him at the rostrum were

¹⁶Jessie Wiseman Gibbs, Evolution and Christianity (Memphis, Tennessee: Published by the Author, 1930), pp. 188,189,191.

¹⁷Half a Century: the Autobiography of a Servant (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1930), p. 110.

¹⁸Cole, op. cit., p. 230.

R. A. Torrey, James M. Gray, William B. Riley, Wilbur Chapman, and others. Singing was led by the famous revival musician, Charles Alexander. The announcement which was published in advance of the meeting illustrates the relationship between the war and the resurgence of premillennial thought:

Over four years ago the horrible world-conflict started, a conflict which has filled the earth with unspeakable suffering. Since then millions have asked the question, "How is it all going to end--Is this to go on forever or is there something better in store for the human race and for this earth?" Who can give us a definite answer? . . . In the inspired pages of the Bible we find the prophetic record of a coming day when all swords will be turned into plowshares and all spears into pruning hooks. It is in this blessed Book we read of nations learning war no more, and that ultimately the human race, freed from the curse which sin has brought, will enjoy permanent peace. . . . How and when all this will come to pass is also made known in this divine revelation. The present day upheavals seem to many to be the travail pains of the birth of that coming age of righteousness and peace.

The announcement concludes with a guarantee that "fanciful speculations" will be avoided and that warnings will be issued against "present day apostasy" and "the subtle skepticism of the German-made theology."¹⁹ Later the same year a similar conference was held at Philadelphia. The following year, 1919, again saw Fundamentalists gathering at Philadelphia for a major Bible conference. However, on this occasion attention was diverted away from millennialism and back to the Five Points. Furthermore, this meeting was instrumental in forming a permanent fundamentalist organization, the

¹⁹Gaebelein, op. cit., pp. 110-12.

World's Christian Fundamentals Association. In addition to major conferences such as these, a host of smaller ones were conducted throughout the country during these years, the most important of which were sponsored by the Bible institutes.²⁰ Thus, millennialism, which had been relegated to the background during the first phase of the movement, regained the spotlight for a time, primarily through Bible conferences and the literature which was prepared in connection with them.

The Bible institutes, whose contributions to Fundamentalist literature and conferences have already been mentioned,²¹ rendered their most significant assistance in terms of manpower. By 1929, the Moody Institute alone had graduated more than 69,000 church workers, most of whom presumably were devoted to the conservative cause. Jasper Masseur, a prominent Baptist, is quoted as having said that in his judgment these people more than anyone else had saved the conservative cause in the United States. The Los Angeles Bible Institute, though disturbed by some internal Liberalism for a time, also trained a host of Fundamentalist workers, as did other similar schools throughout the country.²² In 1924, an effort was made to gather these schools into a national association named the Association of Conservative Evangelical Colleges. Only twenty institutions joined, however, and two years later the

²⁰Cole, op. cit., pp. 231-36.

²¹Supra, pp. 60-2.

²²Furniss, op. cit., pp. 72-74.

Association was merged with another Fundamentalist organization with a much wider range of conservative interests.²³

Revivalism was the only other pre-Fundamentalist institution of an extra-denominational nature that continued to function during the Fundamentalist era. The last of the important revivalists (that is, until the appearance of Billy Graham in the mid-1940's) was Billy Sunday, whose great success was achieved from 1914 to 1919. During these years he held mammoth revivals in nine large American cities--Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, Dallas, Detroit, Washington, and New York, and claimed 98,000 conversions. His doctrine was Fundamentalist and he included Liberalism among the great evils of the day against which he preached. However, it was by no means his favorite target. When his popularity waned drastically after 1920 revivalism ceased to provide even indirect support to the Fundamentalist crusade.²⁴

Fundamentalists made one important innovation on the extra-denominational level: the establishment of an aggressive, permanent organization. Called the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, it was devoted to the struggle against Liberalism on many fronts. This is something that

²³Cole, op. cit., pp. 251-53. See also infra, p. 105.

²⁴Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: the Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, c.1958), pp. 246-65, and supra, pp. 57-60.

pre-Fundamentalists either had never attempted, or, at least, had never achieved.²⁵ The World's Christian Fundamentals Association was formed at the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals which met at Philadelphia in May, 1918.²⁶ Prior to this, William A. Riley and Amzi C. Dixon had met with several other conservative leaders to lay the groundwork for the conference and to make plans for the proposed association. At the Philadelphia Conference the millennial issue was played-down and attention was focused upon less controversial items of conservative concern. A nine point creedal statement was adopted as well as a firm program of Fundamentalist action. Liberalism in schools, church literature, and auxiliary agencies was assailed. A warning was issued to the effect that unless their respective denominations acceded to Fundamentalists' demands, the latter would be compelled to form a new religious body.²⁷ Following the initial conference more than a hundred similar but smaller conferences were conducted throughout the country. Committees were active investigating Liberalism in the churches. At the second convention in 1920, evolution was introduced as a target worthy of concentrated assault,

²⁵A somewhat similar organization, the Bible League of North America, had been organized in 1902. However, its efforts were restricted primarily to the production of printed materials. See Furniss, op. cit., pp. 56,57.

²⁶Supra, p. 101; Cole, op. cit., p. 289. Furniss wrongly locates this conference at Moody Church, Chicago, op. cit., p. 50.

²⁷Robert Hastings Nichols, "Fundamentalism in the Presbyterian Church," The Journal of Religion, V (January, 1925), 23,24.

and further exhortations were delivered about the need for ending Liberalism in the denominations. At the fourth annual convention held at the Los Angeles Bible Institute in 1922, a resolution was passed foreshadowing the great legislative battles over evolution. Furthermore, a committee was appointed to direct the publication of doctrinally safe Sunday School literature. Conventions in 1923 and 1924 were enthusiastic but lacking in tangible results. In 1925, delegates were challenged to force Liberals from their denominations. They commended the governor of Tennessee for prohibiting evolutionary instruction in the public schools and appointed William Jennings Bryan to assist the prosecution in the impending Scopes trial. The 1926 convention produced no significant action. In 1927, the association was bolstered by a merger with several smaller, struggling Fundamentalist organizations, including the Association of Conservative Evangelical Colleges. However, this did not supply the needed vitality, and by 1930 the World's Christian Fundamentals Association became just another conservative group. Public interest had drifted away from the evolution question and no equally stirring polemical topic was found to take its place.²⁸ Though it functioned effectively for only a decade, the World's Christian Fundamentals Association was responsible for initiating much aggressive action against Liberalism

²⁸Furniss, op. cit., pp. 49-56; Cole, op. cit., pp. 298-317.

and was the nearest thing to coordinated leadership that the movement ever enjoyed.

Another active but short-lived Fundamentalist agency was the Bible Crusaders of America, founded in 1925 by George F. Washburn, a wealthy Bostonian with a chain of hotels in Florida. \$200,000 of his money and a formidable array of Fundamentalist officers enabled the Crusaders to get off to a strong start. Washburn styled himself as the successor to William Jennings Bryan, who had recently died after gaining a conviction in the Scopes case. The Crusaders enjoyed some success in promoting anti-evolution legislation in several southern states, but, after 1926, collapsed as a result of a growing public apathy toward the evolution debate.²⁹

Edgar Young Clarke's Supreme Kingdom and Gerald Winrod's Defenders of the Christian Faith were fringe organizations of questionable sincerity.³⁰ The Anti-Evolution League of America, the Bryan Bible League, and the Research Science Bureau were smaller organizations devoted to the fight against Darwinism.³¹

2. Controversy in the denomination

A prime purpose of the extra-denominational activities

²⁹Cole, op. cit., pp. 270-75; and Furniss, op. cit., pp. 57-62.

³⁰Supra, pp. 48,49.

³¹Cole, op. cit., pp. 259-67.

was to rouse conservatives for anti-Liberal campaigns within their respective church bodies. Earlier defeats on this level had had a demoralizing effect, and it was hoped that the extra-denominational rallies and writings would restore confidence and determination for continued and intensified action.

The extent to which this hope was realized may be seen in the denominational conflicts of the Fundamentalist Era. This section will review the controversies which occurred in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., Northern Baptist, and Methodist Episcopal communions; for it was here that the controversies were most serious. Of the three, the Presbyterians experienced the most wide-spread and painful struggles. For this reason they receive more detailed attention here than the other two church bodies. The discussion will concentrate upon major issues and leading personnel. For an extensive commentary on the various conventions, as well as on the maneuvering which took place behind the scenes, the reader is referred to the studies of Cole and Furniss.³²

Presbyterians

Presbyterian conservatives did not identify themselves completely with the Fundamentalist Movement.³³ However, in outlook, disposition, and objectives there is sufficient similarity to warrant their inclusion in it. Furthermore,

³²Ibid., Chapters V, VI, and VIII; and Furniss, op. cit., Chapters VI, VIII, and X.

³³Supra, p. 46.

a number of important Fundamentalist leaders came from their ranks.³⁴

Some impressive victories had been racked up by Presbyterian conservatives in the pre-Fundamentalist era.³⁵ Another was added in 1910 when the General Assembly declared five doctrines to be necessary and essential, and instructed the presbyteries to license only those ministerial candidates who subscribed to them. Prior to this declaration presbyteries were allowed to decide for themselves which of the traditional doctrines were to be binding upon candidates. The text of the five points, except for omission of reference to the Second Coming of Christ, are very similar to the Five Points of Fundamentalism:

1. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our Standards, that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of the Holy Scripture as to keep them from error. . . .
2. . . . that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. . . .
3. . . . that Christ offered up "himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and to reconcile us to God." . . .
4. . . . concerning our Lord Jesus, that "on the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession." . . .
5. . . . that the Lord Jesus showed his power and love by working mighty miracles. This working was not contrary to nature, but superior to it. . . .

These five articles of faith are essential and necessary.

³⁴William Jennings Bryan, Clarence Macartney, and J. Gresham Machen.

³⁵Supra, pp. 63,64.

Others are equally so. . . .³⁶

This declaration was reaffirmed both in 1916 and in 1923.³⁷

However, enforcement proved impossible because of mounting Liberal opposition. Evidence of this is embodied in An Affirmation (popularly called the "Auburn Affirmation"), issued in 1924 over the signatures of 1,274 Presbyterian ministers. This document objected to the action of the General Assembly on the Five Points, insisting that the laws and history of the Presbyterian Church call for a wider liberty of thought and teaching on the part of its ministers. Furthermore, it declared these resolutions unconstitutional, since they were made without the approval of the presbyteries.³⁸ In 1927, upon recommendation of a special commission, the resolutions on the Five Points were annulled by the General Assembly on constitutional grounds.³⁹

Only two other Fundamentalist victories of importance can be cited. One was the rejection by the presbyteries in

³⁶Minutes of the General Assembly, pp. 272,273, quoted in Maurice W. Armstrong, Lefferts A. Loetscher, and Charles A. Anderson, The Presbyterian Enterprise: Sources of American Presbyterian History (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1956), pp. 280-83.

³⁷Lefferts A. Loetscher, The Broadening Church: a Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), p. 99. This book describes the conflict from a liberal point of view.

³⁸The full text of An Affirmation is given in Armstrong, Loetscher, and Anderson, The Presbyterian Enterprise, pp. 284-88.

³⁹Loetscher, op. cit., p. 134.

1920 of a Plan of Union with other evangelical Protestant church bodies which had been recommended by the General Assembly. Fundamentalist concern over the resulting doctrinal compromise was one factor which led to this rejection.⁴⁰ The other victory was the election in 1924 of Clarence Macartney as moderator of the General Assembly by the slim majority of eighteen votes.⁴¹

The failure of Fundamentalists to achieve greater and more numerous conquests cannot be attributed to lack of effort. Conservative rallies and circulars were employed vigorously at strategic points. On convention floors as well as in the presbyteries Fundamentalists pressed their points,⁴² but with diminishing results.

Conservative impetus came primarily from the Princeton Theological Seminary and the Philadelphia Presbytery. At Princeton, J. Gresham Machen was the acknowledged head of the faculty majority, which felt that Liberals should be removed from the denomination. Charles Erdman, backed by seminary president J. Ross Stevenson, occupied the corresponding position in the minority which, though almost equally conserv-

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 100,101; and Edwin A. Rian, The Presbyterian Conflict (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1940), pp. 26,27. This book describes the conflict from a Fundamentalist's viewpoint.

⁴¹Loetscher, op. cit., p. 121.

⁴²Furniss, op. cit., p. 135; Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 114-16.

ative, held an inclusive attitude toward Liberals.⁴³ There was no liberal faction at Princeton; the clash was between exclusive and inclusive conservatives. Eventually, the latter group, because of its mediating position, gained the confidence of the church body and led the way to a settlement.⁴⁴ At Philadelphia, Clarence Macartney, a prominent and eloquent pulpiteer, was the leading spokesman for the conservative majority.⁴⁵ It was from this presbytery that numerous important Fundamentalist campaigns were launched.⁴⁶

Fundamentalists suffered some of their most serious defeats over the issue of Liberalism in the foreign mission fields. In 1921, the General Assembly refused to believe Fundamentalists' allegations that the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions was tolerant of Liberalism in the China field. Robert E. Speer, secretary of the board, and Charles Erdman, a board member, were among those who vouched for the evangelical convictions of the missionaries.⁴⁷

However, Fundamentalists were not assuaged. In 1924,

⁴³Rian, op. cit., pp. 60-69; and Ned B. Stonehouse, J. Gresham Machen; a Biographical Memoir (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), pp. 372-74. This is a very sympathetic review of Machen's life by a colleague and former student.

⁴⁴Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 147,148.

⁴⁵Rian, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 199; and Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 104-108.

⁴⁷Speer and Erdman were noted for their conservative views. Both had been contributors to The Fundamentals.

agitation headed by Robert Dick Wilson resulted in a resolution by the General Assembly calling upon the mission board to be cautious lest its theological integrity be jeopardized by cooperation with other evangelical groups. Joint mission efforts with non-Presbyterians were not to involve the support or endorsement of teachings which conflicted with the "evangelical faith." On paper this appears to be a significant conservative victory. However, since the board never withdrew from any of the objectionable enterprises, the incident only illustrates the impotence of the Fundamentalist faction.⁴⁸

The issue was revived in 1932 when a report was published by a committee of laymen from seven denominations, including the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., entitled Rethinking Missions: a Layman's Inquiry After One Hundred Years.⁴⁹ This committee, which operated independently of the denominational mission boards, conducted a survey of work in Burma, China, India, and Japan, with the aid of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. The data thus gathered was evaluated by a Commission of Appraisal, which, in turn, issued the report, Rethinking Missions. The theological views expressed in this report deviated drastically from those of traditional Presbyterianism. It denied the

⁴⁸Rian, op. cit., pp. 127-29.

⁴⁹New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932.

absolute and unique validity of the Christian religion and recommended that Christian missionaries cooperate, rather than compete, with the non-Christian religions. Within a few days both the General Council and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. rejected these views and recommendations.⁵⁰

Shortly after this, Pearl S. Buck, the novelist, who was one of the denomination's missionaries in China, provoked Fundamentalists further by several articles which she wrote on the Rethinking Missions report and her own philosophy of missions.⁵¹ Her liberal theological views and endorsement of the controversial report seemed to verify Fundamentalists' fears. Although she soon resigned from her missionary position, Fundamentalists continued to criticize the board, stating that it should have taken disciplinary action against her immediately.⁵²

The conservative protest against these two developments began in the form of an overture made by J. Gresham Machen in 1933 to the New Brunswick Presbytery of which he was a member. It called upon the Board of Foreign Missions to exclude Liberals both from the board itself and from the mission

⁵⁰Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 149,150; and Rian, op. cit., pp. 129-33.

⁵¹"The Layman's Mission Report," The Christian Century, XLIX (November 23, 1932), 1434-37; and "Is There a Case for Foreign Missions?" Harpers Magazine, CLXVI (January, 1933), 143-55.

⁵²Loetscher, op. cit., p. 150; and Rian, op. cit., pp. 133, 138-40.

fields, and to avoid cooperative mission efforts which involved doctrinal compromise.⁵³ The overture was defeated by a large majority, and another was passed which expressed confidence in the board. However, in several more conservative presbyteries, similar motions were passed, which brought the matter to the attention of the General Assembly that same year. There, despite Machen's earnest testimony against the board, delegates rejected the overtures and gave the board a resounding vote of confidence.⁵⁴

Convinced that they could not "reform" the Board of Foreign Missions, Machen's group of conservatives founded the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions a month later, June 27, 1933, and in October of that year elected Machen as president.⁵⁵ At the very next General Assembly, held at Cleveland, May 24, 1934, delegates made it clear that they would not tolerate a competitive mission program and threatened to discipline those who supported it. Refusal to contribute to the regular denomination mission effort was interpreted as disloyal and disorderly conduct.⁵⁶

Not only conservative observers, but even those of

⁵³Machen's argument was presented in a 110 page pamphlet, Modernism and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. (n.p., n.d.).

⁵⁴Loetscher, op. cit., p. 150; and Rian, op. cit., pp. 143-45.

⁵⁵Stonehouse, op. cit., p. 482; Loetscher, op. cit., p. 150; and Rian, op. cit., p. 146.

⁵⁶Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 484,485.

liberal sympathies note in this action an unprecedented move toward centralization of authority in the denomination.⁵⁷

Among the opponents of the Independent Board were individuals who believed that the General Assembly had dealt unfairly and harshly with it.⁵⁸

However, the decision of the General Assembly stood, and the New Brunswick Presbytery, of which Machen was still a member despite his efforts to transfer to the Philadelphia Presbytery, initiated disciplinary action against him. The trial began on February 14, 1935, and continued until March 29, 1935, when the judicial committee found him guilty and suspended him from the ministry. A year later, Machen and his followers formed a new denomination, the Presbyterian Church of America.⁵⁹

Fundamentalists were just as disturbed about Liberalism in American churches as they were about its presence in their foreign missions. In 1922 they initiated disciplinary action against Harry Emerson Fosdick. Although a Baptist, Fosdick had been granted permission by the New York Presbytery to serve as associate minister of First Presbyterian Church, New York City. In May, 1922, he delivered a sermon entitled, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" which was widely circulated

⁵⁷Rian, op. cit., pp. 151-67, 170; and Loetscher, op. cit., p. 151.

⁵⁸Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 486, 487.

⁵⁹Rian, op. cit., pp. 168-87; Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 487-92; and Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 151, 152.

in printed form.⁶⁰ In it Fosdick argued that certain traditional doctrines then under discussion--the virgin birth, inerrancy of Scripture, and Christ's Second Coming--were not essential, that he personally did not believe them, and that Liberals such as he should be permitted to remain in the churches. The Philadelphia Presbytery, inspired by Macartney, led the attack on Fosdick, requesting that the General Assembly instruct First Church to bring its pulpit into line. In 1923, a resolution to this effect was passed and the Five Point Declaration was reaffirmed.⁶¹

However, the following year, 1924, when the matter was finally settled, it was done with such sympathy and good will toward Fosdick that conservatives had little cause for joy. The resolution centered on the fact of Fosdick's Baptist affiliation, stating that if he could accept the Presbyterian confession of faith, he would be invited to join the denomination; otherwise, he ought not remain on the ministerial staff of a Presbyterian church. Fosdick declined and the matter was closed. However, conservatives had not gained their point on a doctrinal basis, which was their intention, but rather

⁶⁰For a discussion of this sermon and the attendant circumstances see Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Living of These Days: an Autobiography (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1956), p. 146. No copy of this sermon or bibliographical data on it were available to the author of this study.

⁶¹Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 351-55; Rian, op. cit., pp. 29-36; and Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 108-12.

on the grounds of denominational membership.⁶²

In the hope of resolving the controversies which were raging in its midst, the General Assembly in 1925 appointed a Special Commission to study the problems and to recommend solutions. Three areas in particular were singled out for consideration: the validity of the Five Points declaration, the advisability of broadening the formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith, and the powers of the General Assembly--with special reference to its authority over presbyteries in the licensing of ministerial candidates. The report of this commission delivered to the 1926 General Assembly was, in essence, a plea for toleration, asserting that the Presbyterian system had long operated with the concept that diversity is permissible as long as there is basic unity. Furthermore, the commission contended that the General Assembly has the right to exercise judicial powers and to amend the denominational constitution in conjunction with the presbyteries, as well as to exercise legislative and executive powers. The enthusiastic acceptance of this report constituted a serious defeat for the Fundamentalists. From this point on, efforts to dislodge Liberalism were doomed to failure, for the governing body of the denomination, after careful study, had voted overwhelmingly to permit Liberals to remain, as long as their views did not undermine the con-

⁶²Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 368,369; Rian, op. cit., pp. 38-40; and Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 121-24.

victions and confessions of the church. However, not the individual, but the church body, through its established units of government, was to determine if and when a Liberal had gone too far. This vote for toleration marked the end of Fundamentalism as a significant force in the denomination. Subsequent protests on the part of this faction, irritating and unpleasant as they were, had little hope of swaying the majority.⁶³

The decline of Fundamentalists' influence can also be seen in events that transpired on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary during this period. From its founding Princeton had been a center of theological conservatism and a bulwark against Liberalism. In this respect--at least, until the end of the nineteenth century--it was representative of the denomination which it served. However, as that century turned, theological views in the denomination also began to turn. Liberal voices began to be heard in increasing numbers, and when militant conservatives attempted to silence them, these Liberals fought stubbornly for their right to remain in the denomination and to express their views. Until 1914, the faculty and governing boards of the Princeton Seminary were united in their exclusive attitude toward Liberals. They believed that Liberals should be expelled from the denomination, and through the seminary they trained the rising

⁶³Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 125-33; and Rian, op. cit., pp. 55-57.

generations of ministers to believe this. While the church body was growing more tolerant of Liberalism, the seminary was attempting to maintain its traditional exclusiveness.⁶⁴

In 1914, J. Ross Stevenson was elected to the presidency of the seminary, and under his influence an inclusive element arose on the campus. In the two governing boards as well as on the faculty certain individuals came to believe that the seminary should represent the entire church body and not just the Fundamentalist faction. Among Ross's supporters on the faculty were Charles R. Erdman, Frederick W. Loetscher, and J. Ritchie Smith. Although soundly conservative in their own beliefs, these men were irenic in their attitude toward Liberalism. Tension between the inclusive minority and the exclusive majority at Princeton mounted steadily during the 1920's. However, in the end the minority triumphed. In 1926 they requested that the General Assembly investigate conditions at the seminary. This was done, and an additional investigation was ordered in 1927. At the 1928 General Assembly action was postponed for still another year. However, in 1929 when the decision was finally made, the seminary's administration was reorganized in such a way as to prevent the exclusive majority from dominating the scene. Dissatisfied and defeated by this move, Machen and several other faculty members (Oswald T. Allis, Robert Dick Wilson, and

⁶⁴Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 136-38; Rian, op. cit., pp. 60-64; and Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 216-18.

Cornelius Van Til) resigned the same year and founded Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. After these men withdrew, Princeton Seminary, although it remained predominately conservative, no longer contributed to the protest against Liberalism. In this instance, too, Fundamentalists had been forced to yield.⁶⁵

Further evidence of waning Fundamentalist strength was William Jennings Bryan's failure in 1923 to be elected as the moderator of the General Assembly. His victorious opponent, Charles F. Wishart, was a tolerant conservative. Undaunted, Bryan sought passage at the same convention of a resolution which would bar denominational funds to any educational institution which taught the theory of evolution. However, after much discussion the resolution was defeated by a large majority. Both the personal leadership and the cherished Fundamentalist views of "the Commoner" were rejected by his fellow Presbyterians, indicating their growing determination to leave room for Liberalism in their midst.⁶⁶

The Fundamentalists of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. were a rather small, but vociferous and able group of conservatives who insisted that the denomination outlaw Liberalism and eliminate its adherents from the ministry. At the beginning of the era under consideration in this study

⁶⁵Loetscher, op. cit., pp. 139-48; Rian, op. cit., pp. 65-87; and Stonehouse, op. cit., pp. 218-22, 409-45.

⁶⁶Loetscher, op. cit., p. 111.

(1909-1931), Fundamentalists were able to exert some influence upon their church body. However, during the 1920's their position was re-examined and finally rejected as contrary to the spirit and tradition of Presbyterianism. The majority of their fellow-churchmen decided that they should be more tolerant of Liberalism, as long as it remained within reasonable bounds. However, Fundamentalists continued their protests, and when these failed founded several competitive institutions. One of these, the Independent Mission Board, brought disciplinary action upon its supporters. It was as a result of such action that Machen, the chief Fundamentalist, along with a number of like-minded people, withdrew and formed a new denomination.

With his departure the Fundamentalist crusade in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. came to an end quickly and quietly. Those who at first had sided with Machen's extremists apparently concluded that the controversy itself was more reprehensible than the evils which it was trying to correct.

Baptists⁶⁷

Fundamentalist leadership in the Northern Baptist Convention came primarily from two organizations. One was

⁶⁷Because the scope and intensity of the Fundamentalist crusade in the Northern Baptist Convention never reached the proportions that they attained in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. the discussion here is confined to a brief synopsis. Sources are: Robert G. Torbett, A History of the Baptists (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, c.1950), pp. 445-49; Furniss, op. cit., pp. 119-26; and Cole, op. cit., pp. 65-97.

the National Federation of Fundamentalists of the Northern Baptists, founded in 1920 with Jasper Masee at the helm. Major objectives of this group were combatting Liberalism in the educational institutions of the denomination and the adoption of a creedal statement as a means of controlling unsound doctrine. After 1925, the organization ceased to be an effective Fundamentalist force. The other Fundamentalist agency in that body was the Baptist Bible Union, founded by William Riley in 1921 because of dissatisfaction with Masee's group. The Union protested against Liberalism both in the schools and in the foreign mission program of the denomination. When the convention failed to correct these situations to the satisfaction of Unionists, the group took measures to found its own mission board, and actually did establish its own university. When it opened membership to Southern Baptists, some feared that the Union would attempt to form an entirely new church body, but this never materialized. After 1928, this organization also declined in influence. Many conservatives were afraid of its sectarian tendencies and repulsed by the belligerent behavior of its leaders.

Beginning in 1920, the Fundamentalist crusade was carried to the floor of the Northern Baptist Convention. In that year, the Convention heard Federation representatives denounce the Inter-Church World Movement, an ecumenical endeavor which had been receiving favorable consideration by the denomination. In addition they called for an investigation of Liberalism in the schools. The latter was granted by the

Convention, and the following year a committee reported that, although most schools were doctrinally sound, some teachers were not and these should be deposed.

The vexing question of a creedal statement was raised at the 1921 Convention in view of a large gift which was offered to the denomination with the provision that it be used to support only those ministers who subscribed to the Five Points. Conservatives secured its acceptance. In 1922, Fundamentalists attempted to gain adoption of a doctrinal statement, but delegates chose to retain their traditional non-creedal status. Again in 1923 there was an unsuccessful move of this kind, and a further defeat was sustained by conservatives when the Convention resolved that in the future boards be permitted to refuse gifts to which doctrinal strings were attached.

While persisting with the creedal issue, Fundamentalists in 1924 opened a new subject of controversy--Liberalism in the mission fields. Both moves were successful only in part. A committee, including several Fundamentalists, was appointed to investigate missions and a creedal statement was adopted with the provision that it never be used as a test of faith. In 1925, the committee reported that most missionaries were above reproach, but that some were liberal in their views. A resolution was introduced demanding the recall of all who had departed from fundamental doctrines. After the heart of this motion was removed by an amendment, amid heated debate, it was passed, again leaving Fundamentalists little victory.

Fundamentalists' overtures were soundly defeated on the

Convention floor in both 1927 and 1928. In reality, this marked the end of the Fundamentalist crusade among the Northern Baptists. Constituents of varying outlooks had grown weary of the fight and subsequent disturbances were relatively minor.

Methodists⁶⁸

For several reasons Fundamentalists were destined to attain only very limited success in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The chief obstacle was Methodism's traditional aversion to doctrinal tests, and its inclination instead to exalt the importance of the religious life. Wesley himself had insisted on toleration of differing theological positions and had eschewed a literalistic view of the Bible. Furthermore, among the Methodists, no Fundamentalist leader arose of sufficient stature to gather an effective conservative force within that denomination.

And yet, despite these disadvantages, Fundamentalists did their best to rid the denomination of Liberalism. Chief protagonist was Harold P. Sloan, who, in 1925, organized the Methodist League for Faith and Life, which was devoted to the conservation of traditional views on the Bible and the

⁶⁸This section, too, will be limited to a brief summary, since Fundamentalism among the Methodists remained a relatively small and ineffective movement. Sources are: William Warren Sweet, Methodism in America (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, c.1933), pp. 389-93; Cole, op. cit., pp. 163-92; and Furniss, op. cit., pp. 148-55.

person of Christ. Also providing Fundamentalist leadership from time to time was Leander W. Munhall, veteran Methodist revivalist.

Already in 1912 protests were raised by conservative Methodists against the social gospel views which were appearing in church literature as a result of "The Social Creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church" adopted by the General Conference in 1908. Most of this agitation stemmed from the New Jersey Conference, which continued its criticisms through 1916 when an appeal was made to the General Conference to delete the offending materials. However, only one title was withdrawn in response to this appeal, and conservative resentment was not relieved.

These and subsequent complaints were lodged primarily against the courses of study which the Methodist Church prepared for the in-service training of its ministers. Since Liberalism in this area could pollute the mainstream of Methodist teaching, Fundamentalists concentrated their objections here. A strong offensive was launched in the 1920 General Conference toward a conservative modification of the study course, but only a vaguely-worded resolution was passed. In 1923 the Conference decided to restudy the issue, but in 1924 another inconclusive motion was the best that could be passed.

During the years 1925-1927 Sloan endeavored to rally conservative strength through the program of his organization, and came to the 1928 Conference armed with a lengthy

petition designed to secure a major victory. However, the delegates declined to hear him out and later also rejected his proposal to adopt a creedal statement.

After this, Fundamentalists were no longer able to stage major protests in the Methodist Church, but existed only as a disorganized minority. The nearest thing to a Fundamentalist victory during the entire period was the deposition of an elderly clergyman, J. D. M. Buckner of Aurora, Nebraska, who had announced his acceptance of higher-critical and evolutionary views. This occurred in 1922.

Survey of the denominational scene

Major Fundamentalist battles were confined to the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist Episcopal denominations--all of the north. Their southern counterparts were sufficiently established in conservatism and free of Liberalism to avoid serious disputes. There were some vigorous discussions and a few fundamentalist resolutions also in these southern church bodies, but nothing of great consequence. Among the Disciples of Christ, who had gone through controversy in the pre-Fundamentalist era, the issues narrowed after 1909 to the questions of open membership and immersion, which were not part of general Fundamentalist concern, and, consequently, are not considered here. Episcopalians, too, struggled with doctrinal questions during this period, but there was no important connection between conservatives of this church and those in the Fundamentalist Movement. Hence, these

events, likewise, are omitted from this study.

Fundamentalist concern in the denominational controversies revolved largely around liberal influences upon the ministry. Presbyterian conservatives pinned their hopes on a restrictive licensing procedure for ministers at home and abroad, as well as on control of the major theological seminary. Baptist Fundamentalists scrutinized the teaching in their denominational training schools, and also labored for a doctrinal test for the ministry at home and abroad. Methodist conservatives centered their attacks on the course of studies provided for the in-service training of their ministers. Obviously, if the ministry could have been controlled, Liberalism could have been checked. However, in every case the denominations rejected these proposals and adopted more tolerant positions, thus making it possible for Liberalism to flourish in their midst.

3. Political battles against Evolution

During the 1920's, Fundamentalists carried the fight against Liberalism beyond the confines of their churches and extra-denominational institutions into the political arena of many state legislatures. The target of their attacks was the teaching of evolution in the public schools. A number of studies had been made by concerned individuals which convinced them that exposure to evolution and other unbiblical

views was ruining the faith of Christian young people.⁶⁹ Outraged that tax-supported schools were counteracting religious training in this manner, Fundamentalists attempted to pass laws in a number of states prohibiting the promulgation of these views in the public schools. No less than thirty-seven anti-evolution bills were introduced at their instigation into twenty state legislatures.⁷⁰ As will be seen, of these only four were actually passed, but the Fundamentalist campaigns in behalf of these bills were very strenuous in most cases. Among those who led the attack were William Jennings Bryan, the statesman, William B. Riley, J. Frank Norris, and John R. Stratton--all Baptist ministers. The Bible Crusaders of America, headed by George F. Washburn, were active for awhile. It was Washburn who hoped eventually to get an anti-evolution measure into the Federal Constitution itself.⁷¹ The World's Christian Fundamentals Association, the Anti-Evolution League of America, the Supreme Kingdom,

⁶⁹James Henry Leuba, The Belief in God and Immortality is mentioned by Furniss, op. cit., pp. 17,18 as being particularly important; however he does not furnish any further bibliographical data. Other works of this type cited by Furniss are: Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook, Religion Among American Men, as Revealed by a Study of Conditions in the Army (New York: n.p., 1920); and W. A. Brown, The Church in America (New York: n.p., 1922). None of these books were available to the author of this study.

⁷⁰Howard K. Beale, Are American Teachers Free? an Analysis of Restraints Upon the Freedom of Teaching in American Schools (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1936), p. 227.

⁷¹Furniss, op. cit., p. 59.

and other similar organizations also lent initiative and support to the anti-evolution cause.

Many students of this phase of the movement are quick to condemn the Fundamentalists for bigotry, intolerance, ignorance, and fanaticism.⁷² However, Beale points out that those who make these charges fail to notice similar shortcomings on the other side:

Defenders of evolution, however, share with its opponents responsibility for passage of these restrictive laws. They, too, substituted epithets for arguments. . . . Analysis of their attitude shows that many of the defenders of "freedom" were actually striving for freedom for science only, while denying freedom to fundamentalism. Intolerance was by no means all on the side of the anti-evolutionists. President Faunce of Brown wrote, "The conflict of science and theology is really a conflict between the open mind and the closed mind in both theology and science. The dogmatists are to be found both in the pulpit and in the laboratory."⁷³

Furthermore, most observers fail to appreciate the deep religious sincerity of the Fundamentalists. They fought as they did--often in a caustic and unreasoning manner--because they felt that their faith was threatened, that the truth of God and the eternal salvation of many people hung in the balance. That some individuals among them were pathological agitators must be granted. However, most who entered the campaigns were inspired by higher motives. In the process

⁷²John M. Mecklin, The Survival Value of Christianity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, c.1926), especially Chapter I; Virginus Dabney, Liberalism in the South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932), Chapter XVI; and Forrest, op. cit., the entire book.

⁷³Op. cit., p. 249.

of defending their faith Fundamentalists were frequently submitted to ridicule and even reprisal, and the conduct of many under fire is impressive witness to their sincerity.⁷⁴

No one has summed up Fundamentalist reasons for anti-evolution rulings better than William Jennings Bryan. In an address delivered at Charleston, West Virginia, before the State legislature, April 13, 1923, he declared:

teachers in public schools and colleges who are teaching evolution . . . claim the right to teach what they please. A few scientists assume to set up a Soviet government in education, and, although public employees, demand the right to teach us true, unsupported guesses that undermine the religious faith of Christian taxpayers. It is no infringement on their freedom of conscience or freedom of speech to say that, while as individuals they are at liberty to think as they please and to say what they like, they have no right to demand pay for teaching that which the parents and the taxpayers do not want taught. The hand that writes the paycheck rules the school.

Christians are compelled to build their own schools and colleges in which to teach Christianity. Why should not atheists and agnostics build their own schools and colleges in which to teach their doctrines? Will they make the sacrifices that Christians do?

If the evolutionists deny that they are either atheists or agnostics, and contend that they are simply teaching a "scientific" interpretation of the Bible, they should receive the same answer. What right have the evolutionists--a relatively small percentage of the population--to teach at public expense a so-called scientific interpretation of the Bible when orthodox Christians are not permitted to teach an orthodox interpretation of the Bible?⁷⁵

The point is far more penetrating than Bryan's critics are willing to grant: If Christianity cannot be taught in the

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 250-54.

⁷⁵Bryan, Orthodox Christianity versus Modernism, pp. 45,46.

public schools, why should anti-Christian evolution be permitted? The people who pay for the schools have the right to determine what is taught in them. As Beale has pointed out, this "hired-man" attitude toward teachers was shared by the opponents of Fundamentalism, who would have raised equally vociferous objections if teachers would have taught views unacceptable to them, for example, Marxism.⁷⁶

Fundamentalists succeeded in passing anti-evolution laws in four states. Oklahoma was the first. In 1923, the measure passed the Senate by only four votes, although the House had approved it by an overwhelming majority. Two years later it was repealed, and subsequent efforts to reinstate it, in 1927 and 1930, were in vain despite strenuous conservative campaigning.⁷⁷ Tennessee Fundamentalists, after failing to get a restrictive measure through in 1923, were successful two years later by large majorities in both houses.⁷⁸ In 1926, Mississippi was the scene of a Fundamentalist victory. The Bible Crusaders of America, represented by T. T. Martin, managed to get an anti-evolution statute on the books.⁷⁹ In Arkansas, after the Senate defeated their bill in 1927, Fundamentalists forced a referendum the following year, and the popular vote brought them a smashing victory.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Beale, op. cit., pp. 258, 259.

⁷⁷Furniss, op. cit., p. 83; and Beale, op. cit., p. 227.

⁷⁸Dabney, op. cit., p. 290.

⁷⁹Loc. cit.; and Cole, op. cit., p. 273.

⁸⁰Furniss, op. cit., p. 94.

Near victory was achieved in Florida in 1923 when the legislature passed a resolution condemning the evolutionary theory. However, later efforts to convert this into prohibitive legislation were defeated.⁸¹

In four other states restrictive rulings of one kind or another were imposed by various officials, although the legislatures in each case refused to pass the equivalent legislation. Governor Cameron Morrison of North Carolina, in 1924, with the support of the State Board of Education barred certain science texts from the high schools and issued an order against teaching evolution.⁸² In 1927, a Fundamentalist "Committee of One Hundred" worked feverishly in that state to persuade legislators to pass a law to this effect, but without success.⁸³ The governor of Texas, Mrs. Miriam Ferguson, in 1925 followed the example of the North Carolina governor by announcing an anti-evolution ruling after the legislature had rejected a similar bill.⁸⁴ In the same year, when the Mississippi lawmakers declined to adopt a Fundamentalist bill, the State Superintendent of Schools issued an order that accomplished the same purpose. As was mentioned above, an anti-evolution law was finally passed in Mississippi a year later, 1926.⁸⁵ In 1927, the State Superintendent of Schools

⁸¹Beale, op. cit., p. 227.

⁸²Ibid., p. 228.

⁸³Dabney, op. cit., p. 296.

⁸⁴Furniss, op. cit., p. 87.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 92,93.

in Louisiana took a similar course of action when the legislators in that state rejected a restrictive bill.⁸⁶

In six other southern states Fundamentalists were completely unsuccessful despite earnest efforts--Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Kentucky.⁸⁷ In a few other states--Oregon, New York, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere--there were some attempts to enact protective legislation or rulings, but nowhere except in the south, the bulwark of conservatism, did Fundamentalist crusading create major disturbances. Thus, the conservatism which prevented serious uprisings over Liberalism in the southern church bodies, was the factor which encouraged such uprisings on the political scene.

The only test case of an anti-evolution law was tried in Dayton, Tennessee, July, 1925. John T. Scopes, a biology teacher at Central High School, taught some phase of the evolutionary teaching to one of his classes, and a friend, George Rappleyea, by pre-arrangement, witnessed the offense and then lodged a complaint against him to provide an opportunity for testing the law. The American Civil Liberties Union provided a distinguished panel of attorneys to defend him, chief of which was Clarence Darrow, a brilliant trial lawyer and a notorious agnostic. William Jennings Bryan was put forward by the Fundamentalists to assist the prosecution.

⁸⁶Beale, op. cit., pp. 228, 229.

⁸⁷Furniss, op. cit., pp. 78-83.

The trial immediately captured the attention of the American public. As the day of the trial drew near more than a hundred newspaper reporters and thousands of spectators streamed into the little town to witness the proceedings. A carnival atmosphere pervaded the community and sympathy for the Fundamentalist cause ran high. Spectators, jury, and even the judge made open display of their conservative leanings. Efforts of the defence to bring scientific and religious authorities to the stand were overruled on the grounds that the law was clear. In an unusual and daring move, Darrow summoned Bryan himself to the stand, and, in a dramatic and heated exchange, attempted to demonstrate the untenable nature of biblical literalism from the prosecution's own testimony. Newspapermen, in general, were hostile toward Fundamentalism, and made the most of their opportunity to portray it as being ignorant and bigoted. Mindful of the unsavory publicity that the town was receiving from the trial, the judge brought the case to an abrupt close before Bryan had had an opportunity to cross-examine Darrow or even to make a closing argument. Scopes was convicted, however, and fined one hundred dollars. Efforts to appeal the case were unsuccessful. Bryan died in his sleep the day after the trial, probably, in part, because of the strain. After the spectacle at Dayton, other communities, regardless of their Fundamentalist convictions, avoided the onus of anti-evolution trials.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Genevieve Forbes Herrick and John Origen Herrick, The Life of William Jennings Bryan (Chicago: Buxton Publishing

Fundamentalist accomplishments on the political level were far more formidable and enduring than on any other level. Although their legislative victories were few and their one judicial victory a farce, they did succeed in planting a fear of teaching evolution in the hearts of most southern educators, even in areas where no laws or rulings were in effect. Writing as late as 1941 Beale says that evolution still could not be taught in the rural south.⁸⁹ However, more recently, industrialization and urbanization have been proceeding at a rapid pace in many southern areas, with the result that prohibitions and inhibitions against evolution have relaxed to a considerable degree, and will, undoubtedly, disappear entirely within a few decades.

The Fundamentalist movement had largely spent itself by the 1930's. Some activity continued on all levels during that decade, but the drive and the power were gone. The reasons for this are apparent. For one thing, some of the most prominent Fundamentalists had left the scene by this time. Bryan died in 1925. Riley retired in 1930. Norris and Stratton were largely discredited. Dixon had moved to England. Among the Presbyterians, Machen and his group had been repudiated and had left the denomination. Furthermore,

Company, 1925), chapters XXVII and XXVIII; Furniss, op. cit., pp. 3-9, 90-92; and Beale, op. cit., pp. 232-34, 252-58.

⁸⁹ Howard K. Beale, A History of Freedom of Teaching in American Schools (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1941), xiii.

the wartime hysteria that had given an emotional charge to the movement gradually subsided, leaving conservatives in a less belligerent mood. The depression of the 1930's also played a part in the decline of Fundamentalism. As a result of it, financial backing for the movement was drastically reduced, and, in addition, the denominations were forced to pay more attention to their financial problems and less to the controversy over Liberalism. Also significant was the fact that after two decades of severe conflict people on both sides were becoming weary and disgusted with it, and eager to turn to more pleasant and positive pursuits. Finally, the spirit of the movement was broken by the overwhelming defeats which it had suffered, and, while conservatives still cherished their distinctive beliefs, the mood for aggressive action had passed.⁹⁰

However, the triumph of Liberalism was short-lived. By the time Fundamentalism was disarmed, in the 1930's, a new and even more deadly opponent rose up to challenge the validity of Liberalism. The opponent was Neo-Orthodoxy, and within twenty years Liberalism itself had been largely discredited in theological circles as being obsolete and unrealistic.⁹¹

⁹⁰Cole, op. cit., pp. 321-37; and Furniss, op. cit., pp. 177-81.

⁹¹John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), chapter XII.

THE MISSOURI SYNOD'S THEOLOGICAL CONSERVATISM

The position of Missouri Synod Lutherans to the Fundamentalist movement was determined in part by the type of theological conservatism to which they were heirs. They may have a thoroughly conservative church body as the case of the Fundamentalist-Liberalist controversy is generally acknowledged.² However, this conservatism was in no sense identical with that of the fundamentalists, nor even with that of all other Lutherans.

PART II. THE MISSOURI SYNOD'S RELATIONS WITH FUNDAMENTALISM

Scriptural authority; the Holy Scriptures, the historic confessions, the writings of certain fathers, and the ecumenical councils were the primary sources of the Lutheran dogmatic system. In the eyes of Lutheran theologians the Bible was the primary source of theological truth and the foundation of the Christian faith.

The fundamentalist which follows refers to the interpretation of the Bible. The part books. This does not mean that the Bible was the only source of truth, but that the Bible was the primary source of truth and the foundation of the Christian faith.

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CHAPTER VI

THE MISSOURI SYNOD'S THEOLOGICAL CONSERVATISM

The reaction of Missouri Synod Lutherans to the Fundamentalist movement was determined in part by the type of theological conservatism to which they were heirs.¹ That they were a thoroughly conservative church body at the time of the Fundamentalist-Liberalist Controversy is generally acknowledged.² However, this conservatism was by no means identical with that of the Fundamentalists, nor even with that of all other Lutherans.

The distinctive characteristic of Missouri Synod conservatism was its unyielding adherence to the traditional Lutheran doctrinal authorities: the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the writings of Martin Luther, and those of the seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodox dogmatists. In an age of theological upheaval when traditional

¹The discussion which follows refers to the conservatism of the Missouri Synod in the past tense. This does not mean to suggest that this conservatism has since been surrendered, but merely that the present study is concerned primarily with it as it existed during the Fundamentalist Era.

²R. H. C. Lenski of the Ohio Synod wrote in the Kirchenzeitung, May 20, 1922, "If there ever was a strictly conservative Lutheran body, it surely is the Missouri Synod. . . . Missouri has at all times been unyielding; it is so still. In this body the Scriptures have been, and still are, valued to their full import. There was no disposition to surrender any part of them." Quoted in translation by Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace: a History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 13. The volume and page numbers of the Kirchenzeitung reference are not given.

views and authorities were being challenged and overthrown in certain other church bodies, the Missouri Synod continued to cherish and to uphold this doctrinal heritage. For clarification, interpretation, and application of theological truth, as well as for the basic content and structure of their theology, it was to these ancient authorities that Missouri Synod Lutherans primarily resorted. Contemporary theological literature, including that of Fundamentalism, was not regarded as authoritative by them and was not widely used.

Perhaps the most important theological work produced in the Missouri Synod during the Fundamentalist era was Franz Pieper's Christliche Dogmatik.³ Written during the period 1917-1924 by the Synod's most prominent and respected dogmatician, this three volume work was widely used both as a seminary classroom text and as a reference work.⁴ The influence of Pieper's Christliche Dogmatik was extended into the English-speaking segments of the Synod through a one volume epitome in English prepared by John Theodore Mueller and published in 1934.⁵ The continuing significance of

³Four vol. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917-1928).

⁴The Synodical Centennial Committee: H. W. Romoser, A. H. Kramer, G. A. Fleischer, E. T. Lams, and H. M. Zorn, in "Forward," to an English translation of Pieper's Dogmatics: Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, v,vi.

⁵Christian Dogmatics: a Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934).

Pieper's Dogmatics is seen in the fact that a three volume English translation appeared in the early 1950's.⁶

This chapter will discuss and illustrate the heavy dependence of Pieper and other Missouri Synod theologians upon the traditional Lutheran authorities, rather than upon the writings of their contemporaries in the Fundamentalist Movement.

The Holy Scriptures

According to its constitution, the Missouri Synod regarded the Bible as the supreme theological authority:

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:--

1. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice.⁷

This article, in essence, was part of the original synodical constitution adopted in 1847⁸ and remained unchallenged throughout the Fundamentalist era, despite the wide acceptance of biblical criticism in other parts of the theological world.

⁶Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. All subsequent references to Pieper's Dogmatics or the index will be from this English translation.

⁷Synodical Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, compiled by the order of the Synod. English edition translated from the fifth completely revised German edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), p. 1.

⁸H. Kowert, "The Organization of the Missouri Synod in 1847," in W. H. T. Dau, editor, Ebenezer: Reviews the Work of the Missouri Synod During Three-Quarters of a Century (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 101.

Nor was this acknowledgment of scriptural authority merely an empty token. Synodical writers of this period were usually very careful to indicate the biblical basis of their theological positions. Literature of all kinds bristled with "proof-texts." A notable instance of this is Francis Pieper's Christian Dogmatics. The index of this large work includes twenty pages (two columns to the page) of scriptural references in which passages are cited from fifty-nine books of the Bible.⁹

This extensive use of the Bible was based upon an elaborate and lofty concept of its nature and place in the divine plan. Pieper expounds this view in the first volume of his Dogmatics. The section on Holy Scripture covers 174 pages.

He summarizes several of his key points as follows:

The Scriptures not only tell us that they are the Word of God, but they also tell us very clearly why they are the Word of God, namely, because they were inspired, or breathed into the writers, by God.¹⁰

Since the Holy Scripture is God's Word by inspiration, it possesses, as a matter of course, also divine properties, or attributes (affectiones vere divinae), namely, divine authority (auctoritas divina), divine efficacy (efficacia divina), perfection (perfectio), and perspicuity (perspicuitas, sive claritas).¹¹

Because of their high estimate of the Bible, Missouri Synod Lutherans zealously defended it against all who attacked its authority or message.¹² Furthermore, they were grateful

⁹ Pieper, Dogmatics, IV, 1004-1025.

¹⁰ Ibid., I, 217.

¹¹ Ibid., 307.

¹² Infra, pp. 173, 174.

for the testimony of those in other churches who shared their views and apologetic fervor.¹³ It was particularly on this point that the Missouri Synod and Fundamentalism had something in common. Both respected, utilized, and defended the Bible as the supreme theological authority.

The Lutheran Confessions

Second in importance only to the Bible itself, in the view of Missouri Synod Lutherans, was the authority of the Lutheran Confessions. This, too, was established in the synodical constitution. Immediately following the paragraph which acknowledges the authority of the Holy Scriptures is this statement regarding the Lutheran confessional writings, here referred to as "Symbolical Books." For purposes of clarity the introductory phrase of the article is also given:

The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation:--

2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord.¹⁴

Of these nine documents only the last six are uniquely Lutheran. They were produced during the sixteenth century

¹³p. E. Kretzmann, The Foundations Must Stand: the Inspiration of the Bible and Related Questions (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936), chapter VI.

¹⁴Synodical Handbook, p. 1.

by Martin Luther and his followers in order to define their understanding of biblical truth in contrast with the teachings both of the Roman and Calvinist Churches. Lutherans of subsequent generations have, in most cases, acknowledged these confessions as their official declarations of faith, but, in practice, have not always abided by their teachings.¹⁵

The Missouri Synod, however, was a segment of Lutheranism which took the confessions very seriously. Under the leadership of C. F. W. Walther the Synod in its early years was instrumental in reviving confessional interest and loyalty among other Lutherans in America. This was done in opposition to S. S. Schmucker and others who were attempting to adapt Lutheran teaching and practice to closer conformity with the rest of American Protestantism.¹⁶ At the beginning of the Fundamentalist era Missouri Synod Lutherans had occasion to recall Walther and the confessional heritage which he had championed. 1911 was the centennial year of Walther's birth, and this was observed with numerous memorial festivals through-

¹⁵Willard Dow Allbeck, Studies in the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1952), p. ix.

¹⁶W. J. Mann, Lutheranism in America: an Essay on the Present Condition of the Lutheran Church in the United States (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857), pp. 18-37. For a more exhaustive study of the movement to "Americanize" Lutheranism see Vergilius Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: a Study of the Issues Between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism (New York: The Century Company, 1927).

out the Synod¹⁷ as well as with commemorative articles.¹⁸ A recurring theme in these articles was Walther's devotion to the Lutheran Confessions and the vital necessity of continued faithfulness to them within the Missouri Synod. A decade later, when the Synod was preparing to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of its founding, W. H. T. Dau wrote a series of articles on "Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod,"¹⁹ in which Walther's unswerving loyalty to the confessions is once again described and advocated.

In the view of the Missouri Synod, a high regard for the authority of the confessions does not detract from the supreme authority of the Scriptures. The confessions are an accurate explanation of biblical teaching, as understood and accepted by the Early Church as well as by the first Lutherans. The Bible alone is the inspired revelation of God. The confessions

¹⁷The main celebration was held at St. Louis on May 14, 1911, at the Coliseum. According to Arthur T. Bonnet, "Dr. C. F. W. Walther," The Lutheran Witness, XXX (October 26, 1911), 169, 20,000 people assembled for the festivities. Other celebrations are mentioned in ibid., XXX (November 23, 1911), 189 in a section headed, "Church News and Comments."

¹⁸E. g., "Walther the Lutheran," in Theological Quarterly, XV (April, 1911), 65-84; (July, 1911), 129-43; (October, 1911), 193-203; and XVI (April, 1912), 65-74. This series of articles traces Walther's literary campaigns against several early movements to divert Lutherans in America further away from their confessions. See also J. K. E. Horst, "Luther und Walther, 'Nachbeter' und 'Stammler,'" Lehre und Wehre, LVII (November, 1911), 481-85; and J. A. Friedrich, "Festrede, gehalten bei der akademischen Feier am hundertsten Geburtstage des seligen D. C. F. W. Walther," at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, October 25, 1911, ibid., LVII (December, 1911), 529-36.

¹⁹Theological Monthly, I (January, 1921), 1-12; (February, 1921), 41-8; (April, 1921), 105-116; (May, 1921), 139-144; II (August-September, 1922), 240-44.

are an important testimony to that revelation occasioned by the appearance of various false teachings. However, as witnesses, the confessions remain subordinate to the Scriptures themselves.

It is folly to oppose the Bible to the symbols. The Bible is, so to speak, God's pledge to us, while the symbols are our pledge to God. The Bible represents God's appeal to men: Do you believe my Word? The symbols are men's answer: Yes, Lord, we believe what Thou hast spoken. The Bible is the mine in which all the treasures of God are hidden; the symbols are the treasure houses in which, as in a spiritual storehouse and armory, the Church has deposited the treasures which in the course of centuries were, with much labor, dug from the Bible-mine and brought to light. The Bible with its teachings is God's manuscript concerning our salvation, which Satan ever strives to falsify and to declare spurious; the symbols contain the documents which the Church has appended to show that the doctrines of the Bible have at all times been believed and maintained. The Bible is the revealed Word of God itself; the symbols are the correct understanding of the Word, which God has given to His Church.²⁰

Furthermore, the Missouri Synod believed that it is the confessions which sustain Lutherans in their distinctive convictions and characteristics. To remain loyal to the confessions is to remain Lutheran. To depart from them is to forfeit the essentials of Lutheranism.

On the basis of the doctrine contained in these books, and on no other, the first Lutherans became united, also externally in ecclesiastical communions. On this basis, then, the Lutheran Church was founded, for from this doctrine it derives its origin, and by its means it is distinguished from all other parties and communions that exist within the Christian Church. . . . For as Christians

²⁰C. F. W. Walther, "Warum sollen wir an den Bekenntnisschriften unserer evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche auch noch jetzt unerschütterlich festhalten?," Der Lutheraner, V (January 23, 1849), 82, quoted in translation by W. H. T. Dau, "Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod," op. cit., I, 108.

in general are, by the Bible, distinguished from Mohammedans with their Koran, so a Lutheran Christian in particular is, by his Symbolical Books, distinguished from all other Christians with their symbols.²¹

The index of Pieper's Dogmatics reveals that he frequently undergirded his exposition with citations from the confessional writings. Two pages of references are listed under the heading, "Symbols, Lutheran."²² A further indication of confessional concern in the Missouri Synod during the Fundamentalist era was the publication in 1921 of a new edition of the symbols together with a long historical introduction.²³ In an article announcing their publication Theodore Graebner emphasized the value of the Confessions in uniting Lutherans against the anti-creedal forces then at work in the ecclesiastical world.²⁴

Martin Luther

Although the writings of Martin Luther, with the exception of those contained in the symbolical books, were not regarded in the Missouri Synod as normative doctrinal authorities, they were highly esteemed and frequently quoted. This appreciation of Luther was closely related to an appreciation of the Bible. For Luther was honored above all as one who had opened the

²¹Ibid., 107,108.

²²Pieper, Dogmatics, IV, 788-90.

²³Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

²⁴"Concordia Triglotta," Theological Monthly, I (October, 1921), 289,290.

Bible, translated it, and proclaimed its truth in an age when it was frequently ignored or contradicted.

From the Bible, Luther learned to know his Savior, and by the Bible he was made free from the spiritual slavery of the Pope and of hell. The Bible, this mighty sword of the Spirit, was Luther's only weapon in his spiritual warfare. With the Bible, Luther defied the Pope and the emperor at Worms in 1521; with the Bible he refuted Zwingli and others at Marburg in 1529; from the Bible he preached his sermons; from the Bible he wrote his catechisms; from the Bible he took his doctrines. Luther stood squarely on the Bible. . . .

How can we know that Luther took his doctrines from the Bible? Shall we take his word for it? No, a thousand times no! Luther was not a new pope. Luther translated the Bible and put it into the hands of the people, so that the people could themselves read and be convinced.²⁵

The extent to which Missouri Synod Lutherans drew upon Luther for theological interpretation and guidance may, again, be illustrated from Pieper's Dogmatics. Seventeen and a half pages of the index (fifteen more than required for confessional references) are devoted to Luther references.²⁶ Further evidence of strong Luther interest is the publication of a German edition of Luther's works by the synodical printing firm, a project which was begun in 1881 and completed in 1910, just as the Fundamentalist movement was getting under way.²⁷ On

²⁵John H. C. Fritz, "How Shall We Celebrate the Anniversary of the Reformation?," ibid., V (September, 1925), 265.

²⁶Pieper, Dogmatics, IV, 951-69.

²⁷Martin Luther, Sämmtliche Schriften, 25 vols. Edited by John George Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881-1910).

the popular level, too, the work and writings of Luther were frequently mentioned. Nearly every volume of Der Lutheraner and The Lutheran Witness, the Synod's biweekly magazines for laymen, contains articles about the Reformer. Referring to such a series one editor says:

We have not Luther with us to post anew on church-doors theses against the evils that plague our world today. But we have Luther's writings, and in them we have the man. No one can read all that Luther has written. But all should read Luther. The attention of the reader is once more directed to the series of extracts which Prof. Engelder is translating for our paper. They are truly messages for our own day. . . . Luther is up to date because the Bible is up to date.²⁸

Orthodox Dogmaticians

Still another theological authority to which the Missouri Synod appealed during the era under consideration in this study, was the literature of Seventeenth Century Lutheran Orthodoxy. The attitude of Missouri Synod Lutherans toward these writings was similar to, if somewhat less exalted than, their attitude toward the writings of Luther. Although they in no sense considered the orthodox dogmaticians to be infallible or absolutely authoritative, synodical writers, nevertheless, admired their learned discussions and their views on the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. However, this appreciation of Orthodoxy was kept in perspective and was not permitted to compete with the supreme authority

²⁸[Theodore] G [raebner], "Reading Luther," The Lutheran Witness, XXXIX (February 3, 1920), 40.

of the Bible or the definitive authority of the confessions.

In 1921 Walther was quoted in order to clarify what the Missouri Synod did and did not believe about the orthodox dogmaticians.

By the way, those who call our theology the theology of the seventeenth century do not know us. While esteeming highly the immense labor of the great Lutheran dogmaticians of that period, still it is not really these dogmaticians to which we have returned, but, above all, our dear Concordia and Luther. . . . Although rich treasures of knowledge and experience are stored in the doctrinal theologies of that period, and although we find joy and delight in studying them day and night, still they are neither our Bible nor our Confessions. On the contrary, even in these dogmaticians we observe occasionally a muddying of that stream which burst forth in crystal purity in the sixteenth century.²⁹

The theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy did have its shortcomings. It was highly intellectualistic and often spiritually irrevelant. A humanistic renaissance in Germany during the seventeenth century had resulted in an obsession with philosophy, specifically that of Aristotle. In the theological realm this led to the expression of Lutheran doctrine in Aristotelean terms. A key characteristic of Orthodoxy was its high estimate of human reason in preparing for and in receiving the revelation of God. Theological debate often became an end in itself and hair-splitting a favorite pastime of the scholars. To a large extent the movement became detached from the common people and the burning issues of life. However, a large and important literature was produced during

²⁹"Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXI (March, 1875), 67, quoted in translation by W. H. T. Dau, "Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod," op. cit., I, 143,144.

this period. These dogmaticians thoroughly examined the heritage of the Reformation and then recast it into impressive philosophical terms.³⁰

For several reasons, however, the influence of Orthodoxy upon the Missouri Synod was beginning to wane during the Fundamentalist era. The vastness of the literature alone was forbidding; and, it was for the most part locked in the Latin language, which--despite their training in the classics--few Missouri Synod pastors and students could readily translate. However, through secondary sources, Orthodoxy did continue to attract attention and esteem. For example, the index of Pieper's Dogmatics lists three and a half pages of references to the works of Johann Quenstedt³¹ (1617-1685), one and three quarters pages to those of Johann Gerhard³² (1582-1637), and nearly one page to those of David Hollaz³³ (1648-1713). A few other synodical writers in addition to Pieper also referred to the literature of Orthodoxy;³⁴ however, in most theological articles and books of this period, references to the seventeenth

³⁰ Jaroslav Pelikan, From Luther to Kierkegaard: a Study in the History of Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1950), pp. 49-80.

³¹ Pieper, Dogmatics, IV, 981-84.

³² Ibid., 933, 934.

³³ Ibid., 941, 942.

³⁴ E. g., F. H. Brunn, "Hereditary Guilt," Theological Monthly, III (January, 1923), 7-11. Also, E. Preuss, "Die Rechtfertigung des Suenders vor Gott," appeared in a series

century dogmaticians are by no means numerous.

Use of Fundamentalist Literature

Did Missouri Synod writers ever use Fundamentalist works as authorities? Did they ever quote Fundamentalists in support of their own positions, or refer to Fundamentalist writings in such a way as to indicate a nearly authoritative respect for them, or a significant dependence upon them?

These questions must be answered in the negative. Missouri Synod Lutherans did take notice of Fundamentalist literature and frequently reacted to it in a favorable manner.³⁵ In some instances they quoted Fundamentalist writers, but they did not view Fundamentalists as their doctrinal teachers or as important guides into the truth of the Bible. When they drew upon Fundamentalist sources it was usually simply to indicate that others outside their synodical boundaries held views similar to their own. A statement by Kretzmann in his volume on the inspiration of Scriptures may be considered typical:

of articles translated by Julius A. Friedrich, *ibid.*, VIII (February, 1928), 33-7; (March, 1928), 65-67; (April, 1928), 97-101; (May, 1928), 129-34; (June, 1928), 161-69; (July, 1928), 193-200; (August, 1928), 225-34; (September, 1928), 257-62; (October, 1928), 289-94; (November, 1928), 321-25; (December, 1928), 353-62; IX (January, 1929), 5-14; (February, 1929), 33-38; (March, 1929), 65-69; (April, 1929), 97-101; (May, 1929), 129-36; (June, 1929), 161-65; (August, 1929), 225-28. This series contains a number of references to the Orthodox dogmaticians. See also "'Mechanical Inspiration' the Stumbling Block of Modern Theology," Theological Quarterly, XVII (January, 1913), 1-18, which defends the position of Quenstedt against the charge that it is a mechanical view of inspiration.

³⁵Infra, pp. 163,164.

It has been stated repeatedly in the course of the discussion that the believing Church of all times upheld the inspiration of the Bible as it has been presented in these pages. In addition to what has been said in Chapters I and IV it will serve to round out the entire presentation if we offer the testimony of a number of writers who are not members of the Lutheran Church. Not that these testimonies are needed in support of the truth, but they will serve to show that the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible is not a specifically Missourian or even a distinctively Lutheran doctrine, but one to which Bible Christians everywhere have subscribed at all times, also during recent years and decades.³⁶ [emphasis added]

This is followed by a number of quotations, including some of noted Fundamentalists such as James M. Gray,³⁷ R. A. Torrey,³⁸ and J. Gresham Machen.³⁹ Similarly, in his defence of biblical accuracy, William Arndt⁴⁰ quotes from Torrey⁴¹ and M. G. Kyle.⁴² Theodore Graebner's God and the Cosmos also includes a number of references to the writings of prominent Fundamentalists.⁴³

³⁶Op. cit., p. 100.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 102.

³⁹Ibid., p. 105.

⁴⁰W. Arndt, Bible Difficulties: an Examination of Passages of the Bible Alleged to be Irreconcilable with its Inspiration (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932).

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 43, 80.

⁴²Ibid., p. 76

⁴³God and the Cosmos: a Critical Analysis of Atheism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1932). Machen is mentioned on p. 9, James H. Leuba on pp. 11, 12, Clarence E. Macartney on p. 33, Harry Rimmer on pp. 310, 326, and a number of others are merely listed in the Bibliography, p. 353.

However, a wider examination of synodical literature during this period reveals that such references to Fundamentalist authorities were the exception rather than the rule. For example, the index to Pieper's Dogmatics lists only two references under the heading "Fundamentalists,"⁴⁴ and contains references to the works of only two representatives of that movement: Leander S. Keyser, the only Lutheran of prominence to be associated with Fundamentalism,⁴⁵ and John Horsch, the author of a vehement attack on Liberalism.⁴⁶ Furthermore, during an entire year (1928) of the Fundamentalist era, neither of the Synod's theological journals⁴⁷ contained any reference to or quotation from Fundamentalist literature, except in book reviews and in brief news paragraphs.

The conservative character of the Missouri Synod was shaped significantly by the four major doctrinal authorities upon which its theologians relied: the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, the writings of Martin Luther, and those of the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians. Of these, only the first, Scriptures, was generally recognized by Fundamentalists. This was enough common ground to create and maintain mutual interest between the Missouri Synod and Fundamentalism. It led some Missouri Synod writers to draw

⁴⁴Pieper, Dogmatics, IV, 343.

⁴⁵Ibid., 946.

⁴⁶Ibid., 942.

⁴⁷Lehre und Wehre, LXXIV (1928) and Theological Monthly, VIII (1928).

occasionally upon Fundamentalist sources. However, the other three authorities, which were also very important to Missouri Synod Lutherans, were largely unknown to Fundamentalists. Furthermore, these authorities contained teachings which most Fundamentalists did not accept. The continued reliance of the Missouri Synod upon these authorities reinforced in its members certain convictions and characteristics which were alien to and critical of Fundamentalism, thus deterring the development of a closer relationship between the two parties.

CHAPTER VII

REJOICING FROM THE SIDELINES

Missouri Synod Lutherans were reasonably well-informed about the Fundamentalist movement, and, in many respects, they rejoiced in it. Throughout the Fundamentalist-Liberalist controversy, their journals and other literature on both the professional and popular levels carried reports on these events. In not a few cases, Missouri Synod writers expressed sympathy for the Fundamentalists, approval of their literature, and admiration for their leaders.

However, this rejoicing was always done from the sidelines. Missouri Synod Lutherans could not identify completely with the Fundamentalists nor accept their views and efforts uncritically. They remained profoundly aware of the distinctions and the divisions which existed between themselves and the Fundamentalists.

The Missouri Synod Takes Notice of the Fundamentalist Movement

The Missouri Synod's attention was first directed to the Fundamentalists by the publication and distribution of The Fundamentals. Already in 1910 a brief review of Volume I appeared in Lehre und Wehre, a theological journal published in the German language. This is the first report of its kind in the literature of the Missouri Synod and is rather matter-

of-fact in tone:

Diese Schrift, die an alle Pastoren, Lehrer, u. gratis versandt wird, enthält auf 123 Seiten sieben Artikel, in welchen Front gemacht wird gegen den modernen Unglauben, der Jesu Jungfrauengeburt, Gottheit und Versöhnung, die Inspiration der Schrift, die Wunder u. leugnet. Die Theologen, welche hier zu Wort kommen und der Schrift auch ein reformiertes Gepräge geben, sind J. Orr, Warfield, Campbell Morgan, Torrey, Pierson, Hayne und der Arzt Kelly.¹

Volume II was not reviewed in this journal and volumes III and IV received only brief mention. However, in a review of volume V, F. B[ente] expressed himself enthusiastically. Of it and the preceding volumes he said that they "gehören zu den besten populären apologetischen Schriften der Gegenwart."² Even greater enthusiasm is evident in an unsigned review of volume II which appeared in Synod's English language theological journal, Theological Quarterly:

Among the most grateful surprises which the year's book market has brought we count this enterprise of two Christian laymen who devote their means to the defence of the fundamental truths of the Christian religion. The pleasure afforded by the first volume which they put forth is increased by the contents of the second. . . .

Our attention was chiefly drawn to Bishop Moule's contribution. It is with genuine delight that we transfer the following excerpts which exhibit the old Biblical and Lutheran conception of Justification by faith. . . .

.
If a wish could be entertained we should see from the same or some equally able pens articles on Original Sin,

¹F. B[ente], a review of The Fundamentals. A Testimony of [sic] the Truth, vol. I, in Lehre und Wehre, LVI (May, 1910), 224.

²Ibid., LVII (August, 1911), 367.

Free will, the Means of Grace, and the Origin of Faith. . . .³

Apparently, interest waned when this wish was not granted, for no further reviews or notices of The Fundamentals appeared in this journal. However, in the "Current Events" section of the Quarterly two years later a letter to the editor of the Omaha World-Herald by a Missouri Synod pastor was reprinted which praised the first five volumes of The Fundamentals and cited them as evidence of the fact that the verbal inspiration of the Bible was still upheld by many.⁴ Earlier the same year Lehre und Wehre printed a brief paragraph which gave a bit of background on The Fundamentals and a favorable evaluation of them:

Die "Two Christian Laymen," in deren Namen und auf deren Kosten die Serie von Pamphleten The Fundamentals herausgegeben wurden, sind die Brüder Stewart in Los Angeles. Sie haben über \$125,000 [sic] und über \$10,000,000 [sic] Exemplare der bis jetzt erschienenen neun Bände der Serie sind zur Verteilung gekommen. Ein P. Louis Meyer dient als Redakteur. In den veröffentlichten Artikeln ist manches gute Zeugnis für Grundwahrheiten des Christentums abgelegt worden, hauptsächlich gegen die übermütige "höhere Kritik."⁵

In general, then, the Missouri Synod's first impression of the Fundamentalists--based on The Fundamentals themselves--was favorable and positive.

As the movement developed and branched out, Missouri

³Theological Quarterly, XV (January, 1911), 50-53.

⁴Ibid., XVII (October, 1913), 229-31.

⁵E. P. [ardieck?], "Die 'Two Christian Laymen,'" Lehre und Wehre, LIX (January, 1913), 36.

Synod publications continued to observe it. Occasional reports appeared about the various gatherings and activities of the Fundamentalists together with interpretation of them from the Missouri Synod's point of view. Prophetic conferences,⁶ the World's Christian Fundamentals Association,⁷ and Bible institutes⁸ received attention, as well as the denominational conflicts,⁹ dissension over Liberalism in the mission fields,¹⁰

⁶ [Theodore] G [raebner], "In der Moody-Kirche zu Chicago," ibid., LX (April, 1914), 184; [Martin] S [ommer], "A Confession of Faith," The Lutheran Witness, XXXIII (April 9, 1914), 58; and "Current Events," Theological Quarterly, XVIII (October, 1914), 232-35.

⁷ [John] Mueller, "The Fundamentals Convention at Memphis," Theological Quarterly, V (August, 1925), 237.

⁸ [John] Fritz, "The Bible Institutes," Theological Monthly, II (April, 1922), 114-17.

⁹ Among references to the controversy among the Northern Baptists are: [John] Mueller, "Shall the Northern Baptists Come to Peace by Compromise," ibid. (August, 1922), 258; [John] Fritz, "An Admission," ibid., I (December, 1921), 377; and [Martin] S [ommer], "The Demand for Creeds," The Lutheran Witness, XLIV (June 2, 1925), 178, 179. The Fundamentalists' struggle among the Northern Presbyterians was also watched closely, e.g., [William] Arndt, "Internal Trouble at Princeton," Theological Monthly, VI (August, 1926), 270-73; and [John] Mueller, "The Real State of the Controversy," ibid., V (May, 1925), 147-49. Methodist Fundamentalists--probably because of their relative ineffectiveness--received much less attention. One report on them is [W. H. T.] Dau, "The Confessional, or Doctrinal, Status of Methodism," ibid. (July, 1925), 212.

¹⁰ E.g., [John] Mueller, "The Teaching of Missions in our Seminaries," Theological Monthly II (April, 1922), 117, 118; the same author, "Side-tracking Evangelistic Work in the Mission-Fields," ibid., I (December, 1921), 369; and G. O. Lillegard, "Confucius' Birthday Celebrated at a Modern Mission House," ibid., III (May, 1923), 134, 135.

and the anti-evolution battles.¹¹ Several brief analyses were made of the movement as a whole. Typical are the following remarks which appeared in Lehre und Wehre, in which appreciation of the Fundamentalists' zeal is mingled with disappointment over their doctrinal inadequacy and their unwillingness to separate from the Liberals--criticisms which will be explored more fully in the next chapter:

positive Theologen . . . für die sogenannten Fundamentals des alten Christlichen Glaubens eintreten - zuweilen freilich mit mehr Eifer als klarer evangelischer Einsicht und rechter Würdigung auch solcher christlichen Lehren, die sie nicht zu den Fundamentals rechnen. Die Pastoren und Glieder der groszen reformierten Gemeinschaften (der Episkopalisten, Presbyterianer, Methodisten, Baptisten usw.) zerfallen in drei Gruppen: die ausgesprochenen Liberalen, die Entschieden Positiven (die als Fundamentalisten zum offenen Kampf übergegangen sind) und die vielen Unentschiedenen, die den Mentel nach dem Wind hangen und abwarten, wo es hinaus will, um sich dann der siegreichen Partie zuzuwenden. Was die Fundamentalisten betrifft, so ist offenbar ihre Zahl keine geringe, und in ihren kämpfenden Reihen steht auch eine ganze Anzahl prominenter Laien, die ihre Gaben und Gelder in den Dienst des alten Glaubens stellen. Zu dem entschiedenen Schritt der Trennung scheinen aber auch die Entschiedensten unter ihnen nicht den Mut finden zu können.¹²

Among Missouri Synod appraisals of Fundamentalism there

¹¹Theodore Graebner, Essays on Evolution (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1925), begins with a reasonably complete description of the Dayton Scopes' Trial, which report is clearly sympathetic to Bryan. Among the references which appeared in periodicals are [W. H. T.] Dau, "Concerning the Anti-Evolution Legislation," Theological Monthly, V (August, 1925), 236; and [John] T. M[ueller], "Feldzug gegen die Entwicklungslehre in den Staatschulen," Der Lutheraner, LXXXI (October 13, 1925), 336.

¹²F. B[ente], "The Bible League of North America," Lehre und Wehre, LXIX (August and September, 1923), 274, 275. Also see, [John] Fritz, "The Deplorable Condition of the Sectarian Churches," Theological Monthly, II (August, 1922), 257; and [John] Mueller, "The World Adrift," ibid., III (August and September, 1923), 260-62.

are some interesting distortions of fact. Francis Pieper, the synod's leading dogmatician, in his Christliche Dogmatik written about 1924, describes Fundamentalism as a movement of the laity in opposition to the unbelieving clergy:

Sometime ago we reported on "an organization of laymen" set up for the purpose of defending the Christian fundamentals. These laymen charge that the universities and most theological seminaries have been training a generation of preachers who deny these fundamentals. . . . Whether this "organization of laymen" will check this destructive flood only the future will show.¹³

In reality, of course, the Fundamentalist movement was no such thing. Although laymen supplied most of the financial backing and several prominent Fundamentalists were laymen (e.g. Bryan, Mauro, and Washburn), the vast majority of Fundamentalist leaders were clergymen. This analysis of Fundamentalism as a laymen's movement was based upon an expression of wishful thinking on the part of John R. Straton in The Fundamentalist in which he said that laymen should rise up against clergymen who had departed from the traditional beliefs.¹⁴

The Concordia Encyclopedia, in an article on "Fundamentalism," wrongly dates the publication of The Fundamentals as 1900, instead of 1909-15, and designates the Moody Bible Institute

¹³This quotation is from the English translation: Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 128,129.

¹⁴[Franz] P[ieper], "Organisierung der Laien gegen die Prediger in den Sektenkirchen," Lehre und Wehre, LXIX (February, 1923), 89,90.

Press as the publisher.¹⁵ The facts are, however, that these volumes were published by another firm and that the Fundamentalist movement was well under way before the Moody Institute became identified with it. Finally, a quotation from Lehre und Wehre already cited¹⁶ erroneously states that the two laymen contributed \$125,000 toward the publication and distribution of The Fundamentals, while the actual amount was \$300,000; and the total number of copies distributed was given at 10,000,000 while the correct number was 2,000,000. Obviously, the most significant inaccuracy was that of Pieper in classifying Fundamentalism as a lay-movement. The fact that it came from the pen of this highly-revered teacher and that it appeared in his dogmatics text has perpetuated this distortion and endowed it with an aura of authenticity.

The Missouri Synod Acknowledges
Fundamentalists as Fellow-Christians and Allies in Battle

Missouri Synod writers felt a definite kinship with the Fundamentalists. They recognized them as sincere believers in Jesus Christ and as earnest witnesses to His truth. As confessional Lutherans, members of the Missouri Synod had their reservations about the Fundamentalists, but they also viewed them as co-warriors against Liberalism. This recognition and

¹⁵ L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann, The Concordia Cyclopedia: a Handbook of Religious Information with Special Reference to History, Doctrine, Work, and Usages of the Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), pp. 276, 277.

¹⁶ Supra, p. 157.

sympathy appeared in synodical literature from time to time. In The Lutheran Witness, after identifying the New Theology with the Old Rationalism of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, Theodore Graebner goes on to explain the importance of understanding Liberalism and the conflict over it.

while we do not fellowship or make common cause with the sects around us, we are not isolated from them. Inasmuch as the essence of the Gospel is preached in their midst, there will be Christians among them, with whom we are united in the One invisible Church of Christ. And inasmuch as they are struggling to retain that measure of faith which they possess, our sincerest sympathies are with them. Besides, it is the business of interested churchmen to know what is going on in other denominations.¹⁷

An unsigned article in the Theological Monthly pictures Missouri Synod Lutherans as being involved in the same battle that engaged the efforts of the Fundamentalists:

Although not endorsing some of the views advocated by prominent Fundamentalists, the Lutheran Church in its conservative section is in hearty accord with these people when they defend the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, and the vicarious atonement. The attack of the book [Do Fundamentalists Play Fair?] is directed against all who believe that the Bible is an infallible guide; the arguments the writer advances to undermine the authority of the Scriptures are ones that the Lutheran pastor has to meet in the performance of his work. We here are challenged to reexamine and to defend our faith.¹⁸

¹⁷"New Theology and Higher Criticism," The Lutheran Witness, XLI (September 12, 1922), 295.

¹⁸"Do Modernists Play Fair?" Theological Monthly, VII (March, 1927), 64,65. See also, [Theodore] G. [Graebner], "It is Impossible to Exaggerate," The Lutheran Witness, XXXV (October 17, 1916), 325,326.

The Missouri Synod
Appreciates Fundamentalist Literature

The periodicals of the Missouri Synod from 1910-1930 are generously sprinkled with laudatory reviews and reports of Fundamentalist literature. This is not to say that Missourians applauded everything that rolled off the Fundamentalist presses, but they did express much appreciation and approval. The following quotation reveals respect for and delight in certain Fundamentalist periodicals:

The frank and bold testimony of the Fundamentalists, their courageous stand against liberalism, and their sincere devotion to the Scriptures have deservedly secured for them cordial sympathy and approval also within the Lutheran Church. This applies in particular to certain church periodicals which have fought for the truth with vigor and zeal, stressing with great distinctiveness the fundamental doctrines of evangelical Christendom, to which all believing Christians must adhere. So much of what the Watchman-Examiner (Baptist), the Presbyterian, the Sunday School Times, and other kindred papers have published on the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the inspiration of the Bible, the power of the Word of God, etc., was so altogether sound and scriptural that the Christian reader was moved to praise God for their testimony to the truth. Indeed, the wearisome controversy has not been without fruits. It has led many to a deeper appreciation of those basic verities upon which the Church of Christ is built.¹⁹

Books by noted Fundamentalists, such as J. Gresham Machen,²⁰

¹⁹ [John] Mueller, "The Difference," Theological Monthly, IV (August and September, 1924), 242, 243. A similar reference is F. B. [ente] in a review of John Horsch, Modern Religious Liberalism: The Destructiveness and Irrationality of the New Theology (Scottsdale, Pa.: Fundamental Truth Depot, n.d.), in Lehre und Wehre, LXVIII (June, 1922), 179-182.

²⁰ [Theodore] Graebner reviews his The Origin of Paul's Religion (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925) in Theological Monthly, II (April, 1922), 127, 128.

William Jennings Bryan,²¹ Melvin Grove Kyle,²² George McReady Price,²³ and others²⁴ were favorably reviewed in Missouri Synod periodicals. However, by the time the flood of Fundamentalist literature reached a crest, synodical writers were growing weary of it:

It seems that Modernism is going to be buried under an avalanche of printed matter emanating from a score of Fundamentalist publishing houses, some of them called into life for no other purpose than to print books opposed to the New Theology and the Higher Criticism.²⁵

As sympathetic as the Missouri Lutherans were to the anti-

²¹ [John] Mueller reviews his Seven Questions in Dispute (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.) in ibid., IV (October, 1924), 318,319.

²² [Theodore] Graebner reviews his The Problems of the Pentateuch: a New Solution by Archeological Methods (Oberlin, O.: Bibliotheca Sacra Co., 1920) in ibid., I (April, 1921), 127,128; and [John] Mueller his The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism (Oberlin, O.: Bibliotheca Sacra Co., c.1912) in ibid., V (July, 1925), 191.

²³ [John] Mueller reviews his The Fundamentals of Geology (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., n.d.) in ibid., III (August-September, 1923), 279-81; and [Theodore] Graebner his Q. E. D., or, New Light on the Doctrine of Creation (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., c.1917), in ibid., I (July, 1921), 221.

²⁴ J. H. C. Fritz, "Der Moderne Unglaube Inmitten der äusseren Christenheit," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (August, 1927), 225-34, and ibid., LXXIII (September, 1927), 264-68 quotes extensively from Machen's Christianity and Liberalism (New York: Macmillan Co., 1924) and Horsch's Modern Religious Liberalism.

²⁵ [Theodore] Graebner in a review of Modernism: What It Is - What It Does - Whence It Came - Its Relation to Evolution, by J. M. Stanfield (New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., n.d.) in Theological Monthly, VII (September, 1927), 286. See also F. B. [ente], in a review of Christianity and Liberalism in Lehre und Wehre, LXX (April, 1924), 113.

liberal efforts of the Fundamentalists, one can sense in this quotation a distaste of the negativism that characterized much of Fundamentalist literature.

The Missouri Synod Applauds Fundamentalist Leaders

From time to time, outstanding Fundamentalist leaders were singled out for recognition and praise by the Missouri Synod press. The courage of these Fundamentalists and their tireless defense of basic Christian truths incited the respect and moral support of the members of the Missouri Synod. A few examples will illustrate this. William Jennings Bryan was defended and commended repeatedly:

"McKinley on a white horse, Bryan on a mule; McKinley is a fine man, Bryan is a fool." This doggerel was recently resuscitated from deserved oblivion in connection with the Democratic convention. Considered from a religious point of view Bryan is a fool in the opinion of most of his fellow-men. Of all Fundamentalists he is the most conservative, the most courageous, and the most clear-sighted.²⁶

William B. Riley was applauded for his campaigns against Liberalism.²⁷ Clarence E. Macartney received the unusual

²⁶ [John] Mueller in a review of Bryan's Seven Questions in Dispute in Theological Monthly, IV (October, 1924), 318,319. See also Mueller's "Chesterton and Bryan," ibid., VI (February, 1926), 54; and "Bryan and His Bible," ibid., VI (March, 1926), 86,87; and [William] A. [rndt], "The Real Issue," The Lutheran Witness, XLIV (June 30, 1925), 211; and [Theodore] G. [raebner], "Evolutionistic University Men," ibid., XL (September 13, 1921), 296.

²⁷ [Theodore] G. [raebner], "A Rationalist is Answered," ibid., XLI (July 18, 1922), 232,233.

distinction (for the Missouri Synod) of having one of his articles reprinted in the Theological Monthly.²⁸ Of J. Gresham Machen it was affirmed that he was "a valiant champion of the old Presbyterian doctrine and that he has written some excellent books against the Modernists and 'higher criticism.'"²⁹ Reuben A. Torrey was described as follows:

Dr. Torrey is a staunch Fundamentalist and has written a number of books in defense of the basic evangelical truths. This book (The Christ of the Bible) is his latest contribution and there is much in it to recommend it to the Christian public. Dr. Torrey is manifestly sincere in his belief and frankly outspoken in his criticism of modern unbelievers. . . .³⁰

Howard A. Kelley, the Fundamentalist physician who contributed a series of articles on "Why I Accept the Bible" to the Sunday School Times was paid high tribute for his testimony.³¹ As will be pointed out in the next chapter, Missouri Synod Lutherans always sustained some misgivings about Fundamentalism and its adherents, but this did not prevent them from "giving credit where credit is due."

²⁸ Clarence Edward Macartney, "The Authority of the Holy Scriptures," Theological Monthly, V (October, 1925), 294-300. In a footnote to the article on p. 300 [W. H. T.] Dau explains that it was printed "as evidence that others think about the authority of the Holy Scriptures as Lutherans do."

²⁹ [William] A. [rndt], "A New Conservative Monthly," Concordia Theological Monthly, I (August, 1930), 624, 625.

³⁰ [John] Mueller in a review of Torrey's The Christ of the Bible (New York: George H. Doran Co., n.d.), in Theological Monthly, V (April, 1925), 124.

³¹ [John] Mueller, "A Syllabus of Reasons for Accepting the Bible," ibid., V (July, 1925), 206.

The Missouri Synod Remains on the Sidelines

As has been mentioned repeatedly in this chapter, Missouri Synod Lutherans maintained definite qualifications in their attitude toward the Fundamentalists. Almost every statement of praise and support for Fundamentalism was combined with some form of criticism or with expression of regret over the alleged deficiencies and errors of that movement. The details of this criticism will be examined in Chapter VIII. At this point it will suffice to note that members of the synod did not consider themselves to be Fundamentalists, but only friends of Fundamentalism, that they were conscious of incompatibilities in both belief and practise which made it impossible for them to embrace Fundamentalism whole-heartedly. John Theodore Mueller points to the difference and to the necessity of observing it. After a paragraph in which he praises certain aspects of Fundamentalism he continues as follows:

Nevertheless, after all has been said, there remains a difference between Calvinistic Fundamentalism and confessional Lutheranism--a difference not in degree, but in kind. This difference must not be overlooked. Honesty compels one to call attention to it. Indeed, the very desire of aiding the Fundamentalists in their struggle makes it necessary. For truth will be victorious only if it is accepted, confessed, and preached in its full glory and absolute purity. The one paramount blessing which we, as true friends, wish the Fundamentalists is the clear visualizing of divine truth, the unqualified acceptance of God's Word, and the absolute rejection of all erroneous doctrines which erring reason may suggest. May the light come to them as it came to Martin Luther when he fought liberalism in the papacy, and may they, as did he, center all they believe and teach in the great doctrines of sola gratia, sola fide, sola Scriptura. It is then only that the difference

between Calvinistic Fundamentalism and confessional Lutheranism will be eliminated.³²

From this it is evident that Missouri Synod Lutherans saw a definite gap between themselves and the Fundamentalists. As the conflict between Fundamentalism and Liberalism raged on, the Missouri Synod rejoiced. It rejoiced because earnest souls were standing up against the advancing forces of Liberalism. It rejoiced (up to a point) that a great deal of literary "ammunition" was being produced. And yet, all this rejoicing was done from the sidelines. For reasons which to it were compelling, the Missouri Synod never joined the Fundamentalist ranks. These reasons will be considered in the next chapter.

³² [John] Mueller, "The Difference," ibid., IV (August and September, 1924), 243. See also Theodore G. [raebner], "Modernist Colleges a Liability to the Church," The Lutheran Witness, XLIX (July 23, 1930), 246.

CHAPTER VIII

WHY THE MISSOURI SYNOD REMAINED ON THE SIDELINES

In order to determine the reasons for the Missouri Synod's remaining outside the Fundamentalist movement it is necessary to review several unique factors in the situation at the time of the conflict, as well as the stated criticisms which were leveled by Missouri Synod Lutherans against Fundamentalism. The evidence presented here indicates that the Missouri Synod's disassociation from Fundamentalism reflects its remarkable unity of doctrine, the ethnic origin of its members, and its strong Lutheran consciousness.

No Liberalism in the Missouri Synod

Fundamentalism arose and flourished in those denominations which had been invaded but not conquered by Liberalism--Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist bodies, all of the north. This invasion constituted the challenge to which conservative churchmen responded in the movement which bears the name Fundamentalism. Where Liberalism enjoyed early and wide-spread victory (e.g., among the Congregationalists) and where it was successfully resisted by a wall of conservatism (e.g., the Southern counterparts of the three above-mentioned denominations) Fundamentalism never took hold. From this it may be concluded that one prerequisite for the reaction of Fundamentalism was a strong and threatening assault of Liberalism, which,

at the same time, did not overwhelm the forces of conservatism.

This condition simply did not exist in the Missouri Synod during the Fundamentalist era. In their comments upon the Fundamentalist-Liberal controversy synodical spokesmen asserted again and again, with mingled gratitude and pride, that Liberalism had made no headway whatsoever in their midst. At a time when other great church bodies were being torn and rocked by the struggle, the Missouri Synod enjoyed a remarkable unity of doctrine and an era of organizational peace. Some assertions intimate that the Lutheran Church in general was free of Liberalism:

God in His great mercy and grace preserved His great prophet Luther from both of these maladies [rationalism and fanaticism], and through this unmerited grace the Lutheran Church has inherited the precious, pure confessionalism which is ours today.¹

Another authority narrows the field down to the Lutheran Church in America. "Of the large Protestant denominations the Lutheran Church of America alone has not until now been infected with Modernism."² However, even this was more than Missouri Synod Lutherans were ordinarily willing to grant. For numerous reports were printed in their literature about

¹ [Martin] S [ommer], "The Fundamental Muddle," The Lutheran Witness, L (March 31, 1931), 122,123.

² M. J. Brueggemann, "Fundamentalism and Modernism," ibid., XLIV (June 16, 1925), 191,192.

evidences of Liberalism in other synods.³ In reality, members of the Missouri Synod were completely confident only of their own doctrinal soundness and that of their associates in the Synodical Conference:

In our church body--the Synodical Conference--there has been up to now, thanks be to God, no need of organizing the laymen against the Pastors. Among the thousands of our pastors there is to our knowledge not a single one who questions the inspiration of Scripture and, as a result, would be forced to espouse the Ego theology.⁴

At the 1927 convention of the Western District of the Missouri Synod, delegates chose to comment upon the controversy then raging in other Protestant denominations and to affirm their complete agreement on and unwavering loyalty to basic Christian truths. A press release later reprinted in Lehre und Wehre reads:

The Western District of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, in annual convention assembled, herewith solemnly affirms that in the controversy dividing present-day Protestantism into contending factions it stands for true Bible Christianity in the fullest sense of the term.

The District furthermore declared that true fundamentalism in its essence is the sum total of all doctrines and teachings contained in the Bible, no less and no more, and that in practice true Bible Christianity includes: 1) Unqualified acceptance of every word of the Bible as divine, infallible, and eternal truth; 2) faith in Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, as the only-begotten Son of God, in His suffering and death as the sole and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the world, in His bodily resurrection from the tomb as Conqueror of death, and in eternal life for those who persevere to the end, and His visible return on the last

³E.g., see [W. H. T.] Dau, "American Lutheran Church Un-touched by Modernism," Theological Monthly, IV (August-September, 1924), 265, 266.

⁴Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. Translated from the German (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 128, 129.

day to judge them quick and the dead.

The District finally declared that there are no differences of opinion on these matters in its midst and that it is determined to maintain the position herewith stated to the day when the Church Militant on earth shall become the Church Triumphant in heaven.⁵

The primary purpose of this statement was, apparently, to exhibit the success of Synod in resisting the inroads of Liberalism and in remaining solidly united in its conservative beliefs.⁶ However, it also includes several criticisms of the Fundamentalists' position. When it states that "true fundamentalism in its essence is the sum total of all doctrines and teachings contained in the Bible," the affirmation takes exception to the principle of Fundamentalism that it is enough to agree on just a few basic points. Furthermore, when it speaks of "eternal life for those who persevere" it is critical of the Reformed theology of many Fundamentalists which teaches that all who attain genuine faith will persevere and be saved. However, the fact to be emphasized at this point is simply that the Missouri Synod was able to boast without exaggeration that it was untainted by Liberalism.

Since there was no Liberalism in the Missouri Synod, there was no need or cause for a Fundamentalist reaction. Since no one within Synod was attacking the foundations of the faith, no force was rallied for their defence. Since all

⁵[Theodore] E [ngelder], "Rechte Fundamentalisten," Lehre und Wehre, LXXIII (August, 1927), 247.

⁶See also [Martin] S [ommer], "Synod's Unanimity," The Lutheran Witness, XLVIII (July 23, 1929), 246.

Missouri Synod Lutherans were conservative, no one needed to seek encouragement and comfort from extra-denominational sources, such as fundamentalist gatherings or organizations. Untouched by Liberalism as it was, the Missouri Synod could afford to remain outside the Fundamentalist movement.

Although it was untouched by Liberalism, the Synod was by no means complacent about it. Numerous warnings were issued in synodical literature against liberal writings and movements. Extensive surveys were made of the various forms of Liberalism along with appropriate condemnations. Among the subjects singled out for attack were the Social Gospel,⁷ evolution,⁸ denials of Christ's virgin birth,⁹ biblical criticism,¹⁰ and others. No doubt, on the theory that the best defence is offense, scholars and journalists kept up a continuous campaign against the enemy which was, as yet, still

⁷E.g., see O. H. Pankoke, "A Word of Explanation," ibid., XXXIII (February 12, 1914), 29,30; an unsigned review of The Socialization of the Church in Theological Quarterly, XVIII (October, 1914), 249-51; and [Paul] K[retzmann], "Strange Ideas of the Kingdom of God," Theological Monthly, VIII (March, 1928), 82.

⁸E.g., see Theodore Graebner, "How Old Is Man?" Theological Quarterly, XX (July, 1916), 129-36, (October, 1916), 231-50; Paul Kretzmann, "The Length of a Creation Day," Theological Monthly, IV (February, 1924), 37-43; and [John] T. M[queller], "Eine Scharfe Verurteilung des Darwinismus," Der Lutheraner, LXXVII (May 31, 1921), 171.

⁹G. Albert Schulze, "The Virgin Birth of Christ," Theological Monthly, VII (May, 1927), 133-45.

¹⁰E.g., see Theodore Graebner, "Little Journeys in the Higher Criticism," ibid., I (October, 1921), 297-303, (November, 1921), 321-9, (December, 1921), 359-65, and ibid., II (January, 1922), 9-18; and [W. H. T.] D[au], "Scripture Proof in View of the Modernists," Theological Quarterly, XIX (April, 1915), 65-71.

unable to penetrate their borders.¹¹ For, as Pieper had emphasized, ". . . we must never overlook the danger threatening us from our American surroundings."¹²

German Ancestry Counteracts War Hysteria

Much of Fundamentalism's emotional power and many of its excesses can be traced to the hysteria produced in conjunction with World War I and its aftermath. The belligerent and crusading spirit of Fundamentalism was, in part, an extension of the fighting spirit artificially introduced into the American people by means of war propaganda. The hatred originally cultivated for use against the "Hun" was warmed over in the hearts of Fundamentalists and directed against the Liberal.

One reason that Missouri Synod Lutherans never "caught" much of this hysteria is that they had been victimized by it. During the war a number of German-speaking pastors and congregations were persecuted by overzealous Americans and, in some cases, forbidden to use the German language.¹³ This

¹¹J. H. C. Fritz, "The Deplorable Condition of the Visible Church Today," The Lutheran Witness, XXXI (February 1, 1912), 19, 20, and (February 29, 1912), 35, 36. Carl S. Meyer in "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (July, 1961), 420-27, lists numerous attacks against liberal thought which appeared in Missouri Synod literature during this period.

¹²Pieper, op. cit., I, 129.

¹³Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod reacts to United States Anti-Germanism During World War I," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXVI (July, 1962), 55-58.

traumatic experience conditioned members of the Missouri Synod against war hysteria and anything related to it. Furthermore, the fact that Germany was their ancestral home naturally made them somewhat skeptical of the German atrocity tales that were circulated. While not uncritical of Germany's faults and responsibilities in connection with the war, members of the Missouri Synod were also inclined to notice shortcomings on the other side.¹⁴ In positive ways, Missouri Synod Lutherans endeavored to demonstrate their patriotism,¹⁵ but this was not accompanied by hysteria. Consequently, they were not set-up for the transition into hysterical Fundamentalism.

Non-Lutheran Features of Fundamentalism

By far the most compelling reason that the Missouri Synod did not embrace Fundamentalism is that this movement included several features which were definitely non-Lutheran in character and inconsistent with sound Lutheranism.

1. Unionism

In the Fundamentalist movement concerned conservatives

¹⁴See [Theodore] G [raebner], "War," The Lutheran Witness, XXXII (August 11, 1914), 133,134. Also, by the same author, "The Greatest of All Wars," ibid., XXXIV (May 18, 1915), 153-5, (June 1, 1915), 166-8, (July 27, 1915), 230-3, (September 7, 1915), 278-82; and "Moral Issues and Religious Aspects of the Great War," ibid., XXXV (February 22, 1916), 49,50, (March 21, 1916), 80-2, (May 2, 1916), 126-8, (December 12, 1916), 383-5, (December 26, 1916), 399-401.

¹⁵Service in the armed forces, purchase of Liberty Bonds, contributions to the Red Cross, etc., Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace: a History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 265,266. Nohl, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

from various Protestant denominations joined forces in order to contend for certain basic biblical truths on which they agreed. Every effort was made to avoid controversy over points of difference, with the result that such doctrines were largely relegated to the background. To Fundamentalists it was far more important to defend the crucial doctrines under attack by Liberalism than to assert the distinctive teachings of their respective denominations. With regard to the latter they "agreed to disagree," and in their associations with one another it was the former doctrines which were constantly emphasized. With few exceptions, Fundamentalists were perfectly willing to worship together, and, in some cases, even to unite organizationally, as long as there was agreement on the fundamentals.

Missouri Synod Lutherans considered this controlling principle of Fundamentalism to be completely unacceptable and even sinful. They believed that Christians can unite for worship and work only if they are in full agreement on all doctrinal points which are clearly defined in the Bible. To restrict requirements for union to agreement on the few basic doctrines which Liberals denied was to violate the integrity of the Christian faith and to underestimate the importance of the non-fundamental doctrines. In the view of the Missouri Synod, Christians who unite without full doctrinal agreement are guilty of the sin of "unionism." This term originated in the nineteenth century in connection with attempts to

unite the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Germany. A strong consciousness of their distinctive Lutheran heritage arose in the members of the Missouri Synod through their involvement in the confessional revival which followed these efforts at unification; and, as a result, they were exceedingly sensitive to the doctrinal differences which existed between themselves and other branches of Christendom, including those from which Fundamentalists came. They took all doctrines seriously and could not understand how other earnest, Bible-loving Christians could ignore certain doctrines and relegate them to a position of obscurity simply in the interest of presenting a united front. Such concentration on fundamentals involved toleration of error and unfaithfulness to the divine revelation. These and similar charges were raised again and again in the comments of the Missouri Synod upon Fundamentalism:

This, we claim is the weakness of Fundamentalism. Precisely for this reason, too, we do not classify ourselves as Fundamentalists. We do not believe that it is necessary simply to agree on the great fundamentals, or essentials, such as the doctrine of Inspiration, of creation, of the Deity of Christ, the atonement, the Last Judgment. The Word of God has spoken with clearness and authority not only on those subjects which are absolutely necessary to salvation. The Scriptures are very clear also regarding the Sacraments, the Ministry, Church Discipline, and although a knowledge of these and similar points is not absolutely necessary for salvation, he who denies any of these points contradicts the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word of God.

There are doctrines essential for salvation, or fundamental, and there are doctrines non-essential, non-fundamental. But not a single doctrine, not even the least, is non-fundamental in the sense that we may con-

fess or deny it, which ever we choose. Once admit that we are free to pick and choose among the teachings of Scripture, and you are different from the Modernists only in degree, so far as your attitude toward the Scripture is concerned.¹⁶

Another writer, while freely acknowledging the sincerity and good intentions of the Fundamentalists, notes grave weaknesses and dangers in the movement. He begins by pointing out that many who put themselves in the ranks of the Fundamentalists actually undermine the foundation of the faith and end up in the same position as the Modernists whom they are trying to defeat. Later in the article he expands this thought:

Diese "Fundamentalisten" gebrauchen das Wort "Fundamentalismus" in einen abzuweisenden, beschränkenden Sinne, nämlich in dem Sinne, dass sie gewisse Schriftlehren, über die bisher kein Konsensus in der Christenheit zu erzielen war, auf die Freiliste setzen. Ihr Losungswort ist: "In wesentlichen Lehren Einigkeit, in nichtwesentlichen Lehren Freiheit." Es wäre nicht recht, wenn wir allen, die in diesem unionistischen Sinne reden und urteilen, ohne weiteres eine leichtfertige Gesinnung zuschreiben oder wohl gar das Christentum absprechen wollten. Sie haben nicht vor, die christliche Kirche zu schädigen, sondern wollen ihr dadurch einen Dienst erweisen, dass sie Rom und den vom christlichen Glauben ganz abgefallenen Protestanten eine auch äusserlich imponierende Front von ernsteren Christen entgegenstellen. Bona fide wollen sie mit ihrer Auffassung des Fundamentalismus für das Wohl der christlichen Kirche eintreten und sorgen. Dennoch liegt hier eine grosse Selbsttäuschung vor. Christus ist sicherlich mehr besorgt um das Wohl seiner Kirche als der frömmste Unionist. Das gibt jeder Christ zu. Und doch hat Christus kein Stück seiner Lehre auf die Freiliste gesetzt. Seine Instruktion an seine Kirche lautet vielmehr: "Lehret sie halten alles, was

¹⁶[Theodore] G[raebner], "The Weakness of Fundamentalism," The Lutheran Witness, XLVII (July 24, 1928), 254. See also by the same author, "Modernist Colleges a Liability to the Church," ibid., XLIV (July 23, 1930), 246; and Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Th. Graebner, and F. E. Mayer, Popular Symbolics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 358.

(ὁρα) ich euch befohlen habe," Matth. 28,20. Freilich geben wir mit Freuden und Dank gegen Gott zu, dasz es mehr Christen als in allen Stücken rechtgläubige Christen gibt. Die christliche Kirche erstreckt sich auch in irrgläubige Gemeinschaften hinein, wenn in denselben noch so viel von Gottes Wort laut wird, dasz eine rechtschaffene Erkenntnis der menschlichen Verdammungswürdigkeit und der Glaube an Christum als den einzigen Sündentilger entstehen kann. Aber von Christi Wort nachlassen oder dispensieren, verstöszt gegen Christi Hausordnung in seiner Kirche und kann nur schädlich wirken, weil auf diese Weise Christi Wort als einzige Quelle und Norm der christlichen Lehre preisgegeben wird und Menschenmeinung Umfang und Inhalt der christlichen Lehre bestimmen will. Das Fundament der christlichen Kirche: "Erbauet auf den Grund der Apostel und Propheten" ist prinzipiell angetastet. Es ist, wenn auch in menschlich guter Meinung, eine Richtung eingeschlagen, die konsequenterweise in völligem Lehrindifferentismus endet.¹⁷

These criticisms were raised primarily against the activities of the Fundamentalists on the extra-denominational plane, as well as against the proposed but never established "new fundamentalist denomination." Members of the Missouri Synod could not conscientiously participate in these syncretistic ventures, and they felt duty-bound to protest against those who did.

They also found cause to criticize the stand of the Fundamentalists within their respective denominations. The object of this criticism was the willingness of most Fundamentalists to remain affiliated with church bodies which tolerated and promulgated Liberalism. On the basis of Bible passages such as Romans 16:17, II Corinthians 6:14-16, Galatians 5:9,

¹⁷F[rancis] P [ieper], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, LXXII (March, 1926), 73,74.

Titus 3:9-11, and others, the Synod's theologians insisted that it is sinful for informed Christians to be associated in ecclesiastical organizations with those who openly and steadfastly deny biblical truth. The only honest, courageous, and faithful course of action for the Fundamentalists would be to separate from the denominations which had been hopelessly infected with Liberalism. When Fundamentalists gave little indication of taking this route, Missouri Synod Lutherans revealed keen disappointment and even disgust. The following quotation is representative of dozens which appeared during the Fundamentalist era.

Are the Fundamentalists doing what the Lord says: Are they separating themselves from those who are denying the fundamentals of Christianity? No; they are not. We do not even have any evidence of their serious intentions of doing so. We know that occasionally the resignation of a false teacher is demanded, but this happens very seldom. The fact is that such denominations as the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and others have many Liberalists in their theological schools, in their pulpits, and also in their pews, have had them for many years, have been tolerating them, are tolerating them today, and are giving no indication of any willingness to change their position in this respect. After all, they are not willing to give to the doctrinal conflict "the center of the stage" and then fight the fight to a finish. They tell us that the controversy--this great controversy in the life and death struggle of the Church--should be "irenic and academic." What do they mean? In the light of what has happened and what is happening to-day we can understand "irenic" to mean this, that the controversy should be so carried on that in spite of it "the peace of the church" be not seriously disturbed; and "academic" we can understand only to mean that the controversy should continue to be formal and theoretical, rather than to have it fought through to such practical results as Scripture would demand, and insist upon, that the prophets of the

Lord separate themselves from the prophets of Baal.¹⁸

Another writer lays the blame upon church leaders, including some Fundamentalists, who, out of concern for denominational tranquility, refused to take proper action against the Liberals. His comments drip with disdain:

It is pitiful for any lover of divine Revelation, when reading the reports of these church conventions, to note how the Liberals are steadily gaining ground; how the truth is trampled in the dust; for that is what it amounts to. And it is all because of the fact that leading men of these church-bodies, pledged as they are to uphold the standards of their faith, with the spine of a jellyfish stand idly by, seeing the ravages wrought by the enemy, but failing to act, being infatuated by the false unionistic ideal. There must be no division in the church, no weakening of material forces and membership, even though doctrines are surrendered: Let quality go if quantity remains!¹⁹

In still another article, the separatistic action of Spurgeon, the famous pulpiteer, is recalled, and Baptist Fundamentalists of America are scored for their unwillingness to follow his example:

A final thought is given to a modus operandi by which the "genuine old-fashioned Baptists of the evangelical type" should "meet the situation." But it is here that the inherent weakness of American Fundamentalism reveals itself. On perusing the writer's clear and emphatic denunciation so thoroughly, she would suggest perhaps Spurgeon's witness against error. But that step American Fundamentalism is unwilling to take, and it is for this reason that the prophecy of Shailer Matthews that "the modernist movement can hardly fail to proceed" may come true. A half-hearted combat will never save the

¹⁸John H. C. Fritz, "Will the Fundamentalists Win Out in Their Fight Against the Modernists?" Theological Monthly, IV (August-September, 1924), 241, 242.

¹⁹C. Thomas Spitz, "Liberalism," The Lutheran Witness, XLIII (June 17, 1924), 227.

evangelical faith from the destructive forces of Modernism. As did Spurgeon in his day, so today the Baptist Fundamentalists must come out from among them and be separate; in other words, they must abandon their program of unionism.²⁰

When J. Gresham Machen and his fellow conservatives in the Northern Presbyterian Church began to take the measures which Missouri had been advocating--by founding Westminster Seminary in protest against the inclusive policy of Princeton Seminary--Der Lutheraner applauded their courage and called upon them to make the break complete, which, of course, they eventually did:

Wie die Tagespresse berichtet, haben die strengeren Presbyterianer vor in Pittsburgh [instead of Philadelphia] ein neues theologisches Seminar zu gründen, auf dem im alten Geist und Sinn Prediger und Missionare ausgebildet werden sollen. Das wäre ein gutes Zeugnis dann, wenn die strenggläubigen Presbyterianer aus der vom Unblauen durchseuchten Gemeinschaft austreten und ihre eigene Synode bilden würden.²¹

No feature of Fundamentalism did more to alienate the Missouri Synod than unionism.

2. Reformed orientation

Most Fundamentalists came from denominations which trace their theology back to Calvin, Zwingli, and other non-Lutheran

²⁰ [John] Mueller, "Present Church and Theological Situation," Concordia Theological Monthly, II (February, 1932), 138-40.

²¹ [John] T. M[ueller], "Ein Zeugnis gegen den Modernismus," Der Lutheraner, LXXXV (August 13, 1929), 278. See also [Martin] S[ommer], "A New Presbyterian Seminary," The Lutheran Witness, XLVIII (September 3, 1929), 296.

reformers. Already in its formative years Lutheranism had drawn careful distinctions between many of its own doctrines and those of the "Reformed" churches, as these non-Lutheran Protestants are usually termed. A basic principle of Reformed theology, at least, as members of the Missouri Synod understood it, was that of interpreting Scripture in the light of human reason. This incipient rationalism, according to Missouri Synod observers, was the foundational weakness of Reformed theology which led to other doctrinal inaccuracies and prepared the way for the total rationalism of the Liberals. This factor, too, loomed large in the thinking of the Missouri Synod, and inhibited involvement in the Fundamentalist movement. Abundant documentation can also be cited in support of this observation. Mueller, for example, offers the following analysis:

It [rationalism] begins with the least tampering with the doctrines of Scripture for the purpose of making intelligible to reason what is a mystery of faith. The Reformed theology from the very outset has tampered with the fundamental doctrines of universal grace and redemption, the person of Christ and His work as Prophet, Priest, and King, trying to construe them in harmony with reason. This rationalizing tendency is the weakness of Calvinism. This is the breach in the wall that has ever been widened.²²

In another place Mueller refers to specific persons:

Of course, Calvin, Beza, Piscator, and other Reformed Theologians were better men than the liberalists of their own time, and so to-day men like Professors Hodge, Warfield, and others are better than Smith, Vedder,

²² [John] Mueller, "The Common Denominator of Calvinism and Liberalism," Theological Monthly, III (February, 1923), 40.

Matthews and their colleagues of the Modernist faith. The former stopped short at the brink and refused to leap into the abyss of unbelief, asserting, though inconsistently, the Gospel-truth in its essential features. The latter go to the extreme limit, enthrone reason, and reject the entire Gospel as utter folly. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that orthodox Calvinism exhibits the same tendencies as modern rationalism, though differing in degree.²³

Elsewhere, too, Fundamentalists are classified with the Liberals for employing the Reformed principle of interpreting Scripture in the light of reason:

The fact is that in their attitude toward the Scriptures the Fundamentalists and the Modern Liberalists do not essentially differ; they differ only in degree. Both the Fundamentalists and the Modern Liberalists accord to human reason the right to interpret what God says in the Bible, the only difference is that the Modern Liberalists have consistently carried out the principle and have therefore applied it to such doctrines as the deity of Christ and the atonement, while the Fundamentalists have not yet gone to the same extent, in other words, are yet more or less inconsistent.²⁴

Among the other doctrines which Fundamentalism had allegedly distorted as a result of its Reformed orientation, were those of the means of grace, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion.²⁵ Again and again it is stated that Liberalism originated in

²³ Ibid., p. 39.

²⁴ John H. C. Fritz, "Will the Fundamentalists Win Out in Their Fight Against the Modernists?" ibid., (August-September, 1924), 239.

²⁵ [John] Mueller, "The Confession of Faith of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association," ibid., VIII (May, 1928), 151, 152; and L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann, "Fundamentalism," The Concordia Cyclopaedia: A Handbook of Religious Information with Special Reference to History, Doctrine, Work and Usages of the Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), pp. 276, 277.

the Reformed hermeneutical principle,²⁶ and that since most Fundamentalists operated with this principle, the Missouri Synod could not enter into fellowship with them.²⁷

A more objective study of the facts reveals that Lutheran theology too, especially during the age of Orthodoxy, had acquired certain rationalistic features, and thus helped to prepare the way for Liberalism.²⁸ Whether the synodical writers were unaware of this, or whether denominational loyalty and admiration of Orthodoxy distorted their judgment on this matter, is difficult to determine. In any case, they believed that Reformed theology was the spawning-ground of Liberalism, and, since most Fundamentalists had a Reformed orientation, members of the Missouri Synod, for this reason, too, felt compelled to keep their distance.

3. Millennialism

When millennialism resumed a prominent place in the

²⁶E.g., see "Calvinismus und Liberalismus," Lehre und Wehre, LX (May, 1914), 213,214; and [Theodore] G [raebner], "Der Zesetzungsprozess, den die neueré Theologie," ibid., LXV (March, 1919), 136.

²⁷E.g., see [John] Mueller, "The Confession of Faith of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association," Theological Monthly, VIII (May, 1928), 151,152; and the same author in a review of R. A. Torrey, The Christ of the Bible (New York: George H. Doran Co., n.d.), ibid., V (April, 1925), 124.

²⁸For a more complete discussion of rationalistic elements in Lutheran theology see Jaroslav Pelikan, From Luther to Kierkegaard. A Study in the History of Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1950), chapters III and IV.

thought and literature of Fundamentalism, this widened the gap even further, as far as the Missouri Synod was concerned. Similar eschatological deviations had occurred in the Missouri Synod, but after the controversy of the 1850's, they were overcome with the aid of the Lutheran Confessions.²⁹ The Missouri Synod's attitude against any form of millennialism was further hardened in its controversy with the Iowa Synod in the 1860's and 1870's. Theologians of the Iowa Synod wanted certain doctrines including that of the millennium to be designated as "open questions," upon which differing opinions could be tolerated. Missouri Synod spokesmen, on the other hand, decided that these questions had been answered with sufficient clarity in the Scripture. On the subject of the Last Things they declared themselves against every form of millennialism.³⁰ It is against this background that the Missouri Synod's rejection of Fundamentalist millennialism is most clearly understood.

During the early part of the millennial resurgence, while its expression was still somewhat restrained, the Missouri Synod's criticisms were comparatively mild. Re-

²⁹August R. Suelflow, "Georg Albert Schieferdecker and His Relation to Chiliasm in the Iowa Synod," unpublished Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1946.

³⁰J. H. C. Fritz, "Missouri and Iowa," in Ebenezer: Reviews of the Work of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of A Century (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 160-73; and O. W. Heick and J. L. Neve, History of Protestant Theology in A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), II, 306.

ferring to the ten-point confession issued by the Prophetic Conference held in Chicago, February, 1914, Graebner wrote:

Im groszen und ganzen ist das ein Bekenntnis, über das man sich freuen kann. Aus den Berichten geht jedoch hervor, dasz alle Redner, die während der viertägigen Konferenz auftraten, dem krassesten Chiliasmus huldigen. In diesem Sinne ist auch Satz 9 zu verstehen (Translated by Graebner as follows: "Wir glauben an das 'zweite sichtbare und baldige Kommen' unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi, um sein weltumfassen des Königreich auf der Erde aufzurichten.")³¹

Considerably less critical--in fact, complimentary--was the report of Sommer on the same conference. He quotes all ten points of the confession and takes exception only to the one with millennialistic overtones. Of the conference in general he states:

The conference was attended by thousands, many men of great national and international prominence in the religious world being in attendance, men from various Christian denominations. We rejoice to find so much Lutheranism in men of non-Lutheran denominations.³²

Four years later, 1918, millennialism had become both more influential and more bizarre. In consequence, Missouri Synod literature adopted a more condemnatory tone. After pointing out millennialist errors in a certain periodical, Graebner issues the following warning:

Let no one say that he can read these articles by Dr. Gray and run no risk of being misled into error and unbelief. He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall. The circumstance that you have been taught the pure apostolic doctrine from your youth does

³¹"In der Moody-Kirche zu Chicago," Lehre und Wehre, LX (April, 1914), 184.

³²"A Confession of Faith," The Lutheran Witness, XXXIII (April 9, 1914), 58.

not render you immune to the germs of infidelity. Should we not call it folly if someone would deliberately take a draught of carbolic acid relying on the effectiveness of an antidote at hand? We say to our readers: Do not read chiliastic literature if you would retain your Lutheran faith pure. The Savior warns us against hearing false prophets, lest their teaching tempt us away from the simplicity of the Gospel, and destroy our souls in hell.³³

In 1921 anti-millennialism was still going strong in the Missouri Synod.³⁴ However, by the beginning of the next decade Missouri Synod writers noted a return to sanity on the part of Fundamentalists with regard to eschatological views.³⁵

From the above review it is clear that the millennialistic bent of many Fundamentalists also constituted a major obstacle to closer Missouri Synod-Fundamentalist relations.

4. Anti-evolution legislation

The Missouri Synod's rejection of the evolutionary theory was vigorous and unequivocal.³⁶ In fact, members of the Missouri Synod took an even stronger stand against evolution

³³"Chiliasm and the Christian Herald," *ibid.*, XXXVII (March 19, 1918), 90. See also by the same author, "Chiliasmus und der Krieg," *Lehre und Wehre*, LXIV (March, 1918), 140-42; and *Prophecy and the War. Was it Foretold?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1918), which was an answer of the Missouri Synod to the war-time wave of millennialism and "prophetic" studies.

³⁴[John] Mueller in a review of five books written against millennialism in *Theological Monthly*, I (October, 1921), 318.

³⁵[Theodore] Graebner in a review of five books by Fundamentalists on Last Things in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, I (January, 1930), 74, 75.

³⁶See footnote 8 above.

than some who were associated with Fundamentalism.³⁷ However, they were not unanimous in supporting the campaigns for anti-evolution legislation which Fundamentalists were waging.

While they agreed with Fundamentalists that evolution should not be taught as fact in the public schools, Missouri Synod observers disagreed with them both on the reason for this and on the method of accomplishing it. Among their reasons for trying to keep Darwinism out of the schools, Fundamentalists included the point that it contradicted the Bible. While granting that this was true, spokesmen of the Missouri Synod did not feel that this reason should enter into legislative considerations. If evolution were to be outlawed, synodical writers felt, it should be outlawed on the grounds that it had been disproved scientifically (this was their conviction) and that it was destructive of morality. However, they were not at all certain that legislation was the answer. Instead, they leaned more in the direction of better programs of education which would expose the deficiencies and dangers of that theory.

One prominent writer and teacher came out strongly

³⁷Some writers upon whom Fundamentalists relied heavily for anti-evolution material were willing to concede that God employed a certain amount of "development" in the process of creation, and a few even leaned in the direction of theistic evolution. Missouri Synod reviewers expressed dissatisfaction with these concessions to evolutionary thought. E.g., see J. T. Mueller in a review of Leander Keyser's Contending for the Faith in Theological Monthly, I (February, 1921), 58-60; and [Theodore] G[raebner] in a review of A. W. McCann's God or Gorilla? in The Lutheran Witness, XLI (June 6, 1922), 191.

against anti-evolution, if it were enacted as a means of protecting the Bible:

Concerning the anti-evolution legislation in Kentucky and Tennessee, two things may be said. On the one hand, it is a legitimate effort to stop a waste of public funds for purposes of a propaganda that cuts deeply into one of the most sacred interests of citizens who must supply these funds. Moreover, it exposes the ethics of certain scientists to merited scorn and contempt. If skepticism, agnosticism, atheism, and infidelity need high schools with all their costly appurtenances, they should be willing to pay for them. Nor should they obtain their pupils, as in the common schools of our system of public education, under coercive state laws. On the other hand, it is deplorable that statements like these are heard: Genesis 1 had to be protected, etc. If that was the real motive back of the legislation, it was wrong. The Word of God calls for no such protection, and it is no business of the state to provide it. If the state had to come to the support of the Bible in this instance, it may do the same in every other instance, and then we have Caesaropapism, the principle that the state decrees what people shall or shall not believe. It is the entering wedge of a state religion, the ideal for which the Reformed churches are constantly striving.³⁸

Other commentaries, milder in tone, carry the same conviction.³⁹

Perhaps the most important statement of the Missouri Synod on this subject, one which defines its position both with regard to evolutionists and Fundamentalists, came from the pen of Paul Lindemann. Originally it was released to the daily press of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and then reprinted in The Lutheran Witness. The statement is given in its entirety:

³⁸ [W. H. T.] Dau, "Concerning the Anti-evolution Legislation," Theological Monthly, V (August, 1925), 236.

³⁹ "Do Modernists Play Fair?" ibid., VII (March, 1927), 68; [John] Mueller, "Preventing the Spread of Evolution Legislation," ibid., 87; and [Theodore] G[raebner], "Wrong Again," The Lutheran Witness, XLIV (April 7, 1925), 114.

The people of the State of Minnesota have been more or less wrought up over the bill presented to the State Legislature, sponsored and instigated by the Rev. W. B. Riley, a clergyman of Minneapolis, which would prohibit the teaching in tax supported institutions of the evolutionary theory regarding the origin of man. In order to eliminate various misconceptions regarding our position in the matter, we shall endeavor to make a simple statement, which we believe will represent the almost unanimous position of our Church. We believe that such a statement will also help to judge dispassionately the obvious misrepresentations of the case on the part of the local press. The editorial treatment of the question by the newspapers of the city has been eminently unfair and exhibits a failure to appreciate the real point at issue. Let us seek to formulate our position paragraphically.

1. We unequivocally accept the Scriptural account of the origin of the world and of man as recorded in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis.
2. We reject the evolutionary theory as untenable both on Scriptural as well as on scientific ground, claiming that it is scientifically unproved and untenable. We hold this position regarding both cosmic and organic evolution.
3. We believe that the current presentation of the theory of evolution in tax-supported schools is subversive of the principles laid down in the constitution of our State. We rightfully forbid the teaching of religion in public schools and insist on strict separation of Church and State; but we also have the right to demand that the State do not teach religion. The limitation which forbids the State to teach religion does not give it the right to teach practical atheism and to undermine the faith of the youth committed to its care.
4. We resent the attempt of the press to create the impression that efforts are being made to foist religion unto the State and to inject religious restrictions into our educational system. The contrary is the case. The point at issue is whether the State shall be allowed to break down certain religious convictions which the Church has reared. As we see it, the State is now meddling with religion, and an effort is to be made to confine it to its sphere.

5. We resent the impression which the press is seeking to create that anti-evolutionists are standing in the way of progress and enlightenment and are trying to curb and restrict scientific research. That is unfair. The Lutheran Church has ever most assiduously fostered education and intellectual progress. We fear nothing detrimental to, or destructive of, Biblical truth from any scientific source. But we emphatically object to the presentation of constantly shifting hypotheses as scientific facts. We have no objection to the most painstaking study of the theory of evolution as a theory, but we do object to the teaching of a theory as an established science.

6. We are not supporting that bill at present before the Legislature because we do not believe that the special legislation will be effective in a case like this, which needs agitation and education rather than legislation. We do not believe that the bill will be of practical value even if it should pass. We do sympathize with the sentiments that prompted it, but we do not feel ready to sponsor the method which is being pursued.

7. But we do resent the impression created as though our refusal to sponsor the bill implies that we sponsor the theory of evolution and are satisfied with the policy in vogue at the university. Let it be known that we are whole-hearted anti-evolutionists and that our opposition is not based on intellectual "medievalism" and general cultural benightedness, as the press would have you believe. Science deals with established facts and not with changing speculations.⁴⁰

Lindemann's remarks achieved semi-official status when, in a slightly altered form, they were accepted by resolution of the Twin-Cities Pastoral Conference and published as a paid advertisement in the daily papers of the area.⁴¹

Thus, on the evolution question, too, the Missouri Synod

⁴⁰Paul Lindemann, "The Anti-Evolution Bill," ibid., XLVI (February 22, 1927), 50, 51.

⁴¹"Our Stand on the Teaching of the Theory of Evolution," ibid., (April 6, 1927), 130.

chose to stand apart rather than run the risk of compromising its distinctive Lutheranism. However, in this case, the theological difference arose not on the subject of evolution itself, but rather on the manner of contending against it.

Missouri Synod Lutherans expressed dissatisfaction with the Fundamentalists' philosophy of anti-evolution legislation, detecting in it a dangerous mingling of Church and State. While Calvinism has traditionally supported the principle that the State should support the objectives of the Church, Lutheranism has opposed it, although often tolerating it in practice.⁴² The founders of the Missouri Synod had been unhappy in the State-controlled Church of Germany.⁴³ This had instilled in their descendants a negative attitude toward the mingling of Church and State and had made them staunch advocates of the separation of these realms.

Missouri Synod Lutherans were united in their rejection of Liberalism and in their confession of conservative theological beliefs. Consequently, no one within the Synod was drawn into the Fundamentalist camp for the conservative encouragement and support which that group had to offer. Furthermore, the German ancestry of most of its members conditioned the Synod against war-hysteria, a factor which in other Protestant conservatives had evolved into an emotional

⁴²John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics: a Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 552, 553.

⁴³Walter O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), pp. 23-6, 90-6, 567.

climate congenial to Fundamentalism. Finally, synodical observers were critical of the non-Lutheran features of Fundamentalism. They objected to the unionistic tendencies of the movement--a willingness to unite for worship and work on the basis of only very limited doctrinal agreement. They warned against the Reformed background and outlook of most Fundamentalists, as well as the millennialism which many of them advocated. They found fault with the philosophy of Fundamentalism and some of its methods in the campaigns against evolution. It was for these reasons, primarily, that the Missouri Synod did not identify itself with the Fundamentalist movement.

And yet, the Missouri Synod did not, on this account, lose interest in Fundamentalism. This interest continued and, in some respects, even increased during the 1930's. However, it was not an interest in bringing the Missouri Synod into the Fundamentalist movement. Rather, it was the hope of drawing Fundamentalists into the Missouri Synod.

CHAPTER IX

THE MISSOURI SYNOD'S OVERTURES TO FUNDAMENTALISM

By the 1930's Fundamentalism was no longer a moving force in American Protestantism. Both on the denominational and extra-denominational levels it had lost the power to exert effective influence or even to attract serious attention. And yet, there were still a great many Fundamentalists. Despite the fact that they had lost their battles, they still managed to maintain their convictions and identity. However, their position was by no means pleasant or satisfying. In their own congregations and denominations they were, in many cases, a despised, or, at best, a tolerated minority. They were confronted with the growing power of Liberalism in their midst, and yet, had no suitable means with which to combat it. Their cause was clearly losing ground. Many individuals among them felt personally deprived because their spiritual leaders were offering them the "husks" of Liberalism instead of the life-giving truths of the Bible.

Throughout the Fundamentalist era the Missouri Synod had expressed sympathy and concern for the Fundamentalists in their plight. While there was still some hope for a Fundamentalist victory members of the Missouri Synod provided moral support in that direction. When such victory proved unattainable Missouri Synod spokesmen called upon

Fundamentalists to separate from the denominations which had bowed to Liberalism. Only Machen's group of Presbyterians had followed this course of action. Other Fundamentalists remained in their denominations and endured the frustrations which this entailed.

During the 1930's the Missouri Synod began to make overtures to these disheartened Fundamentalists. By means of a remarkable radio speaker, Walter A. Maier, whose program, "The Lutheran Hour" eventually reached around the globe, the Missouri Synod let it be known that it still proclaimed and defended the fundamental Christian truths, and that no Liberalism was tolerated in its midst. Although proselytizing was carefully avoided in these broadcasts, the speaker made it clear that Fundamentalists would be warmly welcomed by the Missouri Synod and that in this church body they could find relief from their spiritual frustrations. Now, Maier's primary purpose in The Lutheran Hour was certainly not to gain converts from among the Fundamentalists, but rather to reach the unbelieving and unchurched segments of society. However, a study of his radio sermons reveals that the plight of the Fundamentalists was a strong secondary concern. The expression of this concern is the special interest of this chapter.

The Missouri Synod as a Haven for Fundamentalists

Even before Maier's radio debut the Missouri Synod viewed

itself as a haven for Fundamentalists. Already in 1923 Dau asked, "May not the Lutheran Church with its loyal Bible-faith some day become the asylum for such as are fleeing from the attacks of modernistic and liberalistic unbelief?"¹ Another writer called upon his fellow members of the Missouri Synod to be properly grateful for their doctrinal soundness and to exercise this gift in such a way as to rescue other Protestants from the shipwreck of Liberalism:

And to us, if we really and earnestly consider the deplorable conditions existing in churches other than our own because of the curse of liberalism, there must arise in our hearts a feeling of sincere gratitude to God for bringing us into the Church of the pure Word and Sacraments--our dear Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. Without our merit God has preserved us from Liberalism and Rationalism, this destruction that wasteth at noonday.

. . . (our church should become) ever more what it has been heretofore, a beacon light to a drifting Protestantism and a mighty bulwark against the wiles of Satan, who has blinded the eyes of them that believe not, in this case the Liberals, using them as willing tools to disrupt and corrupt the Church of Christ on earth.²

Missouri Synod Lutherans felt sorry for Fundamentalists who were struggling to preserve and to propagate essential Christian doctrines in the unfriendly atmosphere of their liberal denominations. From the experience of their Saxon forefathers members of the Missouri Synod had learned to appreciate the pain and hardship of this situation. Consequently, they entertained the hope that Fundamentalists

¹[W. H. T.] D.[au], "The Defeat of Mr. Bryan," Theological Monthly, III (July, 1923), 204.

²C. Thomas Spitz, "Liberalism," The Lutheran Witness, XLIII (June 17, 1924), 227.

would discover the strong biblical conservatism of their church body and eventually seek refuge there. Missouri Synod Lutherans could not conscientiously move toward Fundamentalism, but they sincerely hoped that at least some Fundamentalists would move toward the Missouri Synod. While no campaign was conducted to this end, the synod did invite weary and disgusted Fundamentalists to consider membership in their group. Graebner points to the Missouri Synod as a far better solution to the Fundamentalists' dilemma than the new fundamentalist denomination that was being proposed at the time:

Fundamentalism is satisfied with agreement in the fundamental doctrines, and it is this Dr. Riley has in mind when he advocates the formation of a fundamentalist Church. Aside from the practical difficulties involved, which do not concern us here, the Lutheran Church still believes that in its confessions it has the true interpretation of Biblical teachings. And the Lutheran Church cordially invites all who have tired of rationalism and skepticism in their own midst to investigate these confessions and, having done this, to affiliate themselves with the Church which to the present day subscribes whole-heartedly to the doctrines of ecumenical (universal) Christianity set forth in its Book of Concord.³

Walter A. Maier--Ambassador to Fundamentalism

The Lutheran Hour

In October, 1930, Walter A. Maier, Ph.D., Professor of Old Testament at the Synod's Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, under the sponsorship of the Lutheran Laymen's

³ [Theodore] G. [raebner], "Modernist Colleges a Liability to the Church," ibid., XLIX (July 23, 1930), 246.

League, began a series of radio broadcasts over thirty-two stations of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Called "The Lutheran Hour," this program featured a strong biblical message directed to the contemporary American scene. Sins and weaknesses of every kind--personal, social, and ecclesiastical--were forcefully denounced, and hearers were directed to the atoning work of the divine Savior for forgiveness and help. A dynamic speaker and an engaging personality, Maier soon attracted a large listening audience, including many Fundamentalists. Here was a man who expressed the very concerns and truths for which they were battling with diminishing results. Furthermore, here was a man whose graduate theological training at Harvard University enabled him to reply to Liberalism with authority and confidence. At the time there was no other conservative Protestant voice on the air, at least on a network basis, and Maier was hailed as the champion of all Bible-loving Protestants. Until his program appeared, the liberal-orientated Federal Council of Churches had a monopoly on Protestant network broadcasts, having been granted control of all free time available to Protestants. Understandably, Fundamentalists chafed under this situation and were most grateful and delighted when the Missouri Synod was able to put Maier on the air, even though these were paid broadcasts.⁴

After the original series of thirty-six broadcasts the

⁴The Concordia Seminary Lutheran Hour Committee, John H. C. Fritz and William Arndt, "The Lutheran Hour: Its

program was cancelled because of financial difficulties in the depression-ridden synod, as well as a new network policy which restricted religious broadcasts to Sundays. (The First Lutheran Hour was conducted on Thursday evenings so as not to conflict with the Sunday worship programs of the churches.) However, in 1935 another attempt was made, with a series of sixteen broadcasts originating from Detroit under the co-sponsorship of the Detroit Lutheran Pastoral Conference and the Lutheran Laymen's League. These broadcasts were carried out on a smaller scale than that of the original venture, employing only two large stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System with several smaller stations joining in as the series progressed. However, response was sufficient to warrant conducting the broadcasts the following year, and under the sponsorship of the Lutheran Laymen's League, they have been on the air until the present day. Maier was the regular speaker until his death in 1950, and his popularity as well as that of the program grew steadily with the result that The Lutheran Hour was eventually heard over hundreds of stations throughout America as well as in many foreign lands.⁵

The primary purpose of the program was evangelistic.

History and Record," in Walter A. Maier, The Lutheran Hour: Winged Words to Modern America, Broadcast in the Coast to Coast Crusade for Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), pp. 302-24. Hereafter referred to as First Lutheran Hour.

⁵"Lutheran Hour Background Materials," Bulletin Number 8, The Lutheran Hour Office, St. Louis, Mo. (mimeographed).

In every sermon Maier appealed to his hearers to repent of their sins and to seek pardon and eternal peace in the redemption of Jesus Christ. Much of what he said was geared to unbelievers and backsliders. His earnest witness was conveyed in vivid and colorful language, which was designed to engage the attention and consideration of those who seldom, if ever, crossed the threshold of a church building. With insight and skill he spoke of the tragedy of remaining apart from God, and with all the persuasion at his command he urged his hearers to accept God's offer of forgiveness, fellowship, and final glory in the Crucified One.

Maier's anti-Liberalism

However--and this was particularly appealing to Fundamentalists--Maier also devoted a substantial amount of time and attention to the evil of Liberalism and to the need for combatting it with greater effectiveness. At least half of his sermons during the 1930's contained sections which blasted the doctrinal deviations of Liberalism and the disastrous results of its influence in many Protestant churches. In his very first series, listeners heard this scathing attack against the dominant force in American Protestantism:

Tonight we skip over the centuries, and we find that Jesus is still on trial before the tribunal of unbelieving humanity. The question at issue is still the same, "Art Thou the Christ?" Those who cross-examine Jesus today likewise are churchmen, some of them the leaders of present-day religious thought. And the verdict? It is essentially the same rejection of Christ

and denial of His Messiahship that invoked the wrath of God upon that city in which Christ was condemned. There is only one fundamental difference today, and that makes the modern infidelity all the more repulsive and damnable: today the persecutors of our Savior are zealous in their appropriation of the Christian name and profuse in their exaltation of the man Jesus; today the opposition to Christ is disguised as the modern message of the Christian Church and as a deeply spiritual twentieth-century discovery of God. But in the veiled haze of this camouflage comes the swift stab in the back; prompting mock loyalty to Christ is the traitorous spirit beneath the Judas kiss.

How else can we explain the tragic denial of the Christ of the Bible that disfigures so many churches in our country and in Canada, churches which frown on the use of hymns in which the atoning blood of Christ is the central theme; churches which have degenerated into mere social and ethical societies, in which the foundation messages of sin and grace are unappreciated and unknown? How else can we interpret this super-tragedy that just in this Lenten season, when the thoughts of Christendom should be Christ-centered and Christ-conscious, an organization that claims to represent large portions of Protestant Christianity in the United States has issued a Lenten booklet for prayer and personal devotion in which there is no direct mention of the blood of the atonement, no clear-cut admission of sins in every human heart that have nailed the Savior of mankind to the cross? How else can we analyze the scathing attacks on Biblical Christianity that are featured in our modern periodical literature, the undermining of Christian faith that is prompted by nominally Christian organizations, and the general rejection of the Christ of God in churches that glorify the creature rather than the Creator, that concern themselves with the here rather than with the hereafter? What lies beneath all this, disguised and decorated though it may be? What else, if not the modern perpetuation of the spirit that nineteen hundred years ago nailed Christ to the Cross?⁶

This was music to the ears of frustrated Fundamentalists. It must have heartened them to hear such a bold and devastating assault against their traditional enemy, the enemy which by

⁶Op. cit., pp. 108,109.

that time had disarmed them. And such assaults became a regular part of Walter Maier's preaching. An extract from a sermon delivered in 1935 reveals that his hostility toward Liberalism had not been assuaged in the slightest degree by a five years' absence from the air:

Far more pernicious than this twentieth-century folly [atheism] is the termite boring from within the Church which eats away the pillars upon which all Christian hope and faith must rest. Great denominations have permitted their leaders to question the Bible, to sow seeds of doubt as to its validity, and then brazenly to deny its authority. Teachers in some of the influential divinity schools profess and acknowledge only a caricatured Christ, reconstructed from vague and vapid theories, as far removed from the almighty all-dominant Savior as stunted human souls are separated from the gleaming glory of God. Preachers, eagerly bidding for the salvos of mass applause, pollute their pulpits by open denials of Christian truth or by sensational, but ill-founded discussions on social and economic issues, which completely eliminate the Crucified and repeat the hoary pagan delusion of salvation by character and through accomplishment instead of by grace, through faith.

Let no one make the mistake of minimizing the influence of those who are thus busily engaged in removing the ancient landmarks of Christian faith. They have been supported by the lavish millions of American plutocrats; they enjoy the acclaim of prominent sections in the American press; they have a strangle-hold on much of chain broadcasting. Their infidelity has pervaded the realms of youth-training, discolored much of the literature that will serve as a guide for tomorrow's fathers and mothers, compromised with the ugly sin of our day, and altogether made itself the greatest menace to our national blessing and welfare.⁷

That same year he unleashed a broadside at the sensationalism to which some liberal clergymen resorted in an effort to put

⁷Christ for Every Crisis: the Radio Messages Broadcast in the Second Lutheran Hour (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), pp. 24,25. Hereafter referred to as Second Lutheran Hour.

life into their services. Fundamentalists, who were frequently criticized on the same grounds, must have enjoyed the following passage immensely. Maier scores the religious teacher or preacher

who forsakes the faith of the fathers and champions a religion that people like to hear, because it slides over sin and puts a theological veneer over the sordid passions of men. . . . We witness the deplorable spectacle that so unfortunately and unfairly helps to bring the Church into disrepute: these ever-changing, sensation-craving pulpiteers, who turn their sanctuaries into theaters where bare-footed ballet-dancers gyrate in the name of Christ's holy religion; the pulpit performers, who preach sermons on the characters from our comic strips or who break first-page publicity by telling American parents that they should not permit their children to pray at bedtime lest these evening prayers provoke dark, apprehensive thoughts or even nightmares.

These devices of the weather-vane pulpit are as froth that is blown away with every change of the wind; and these chameleon-like preachers, who can change their color to match every shade of popular favor, only lead men more deeply into sloughs of despair. . . .⁸

As late as 1939, fifteen out of twenty-seven sermons preached by Maier on The Lutheran Hour contained anti-Liberal sections of some length.

Among the elements of Liberalism which Maier singled out for particularly intense treatment was the theory of evolution. As an Old Testament scholar with some training in archaeology he had a special interest in this point. Anti-evolutionary statements are sprinkled generously throughout his sermons, especially those of the first series. One sermon was devoted exclusively to this theme. Entitled, "Creation or Evolution,"

⁸Ibid., pp. 66,67.

it contained statements which could be received with nothing less than enthusiasm by his Fundamentalist followers:

As contrary to this [evolutionary theory] as any two irreconcilable extremes may be, we have this simple, but sublime record of the Scriptures, which tells us that "The Lord God formed man." This is the revelation of Heaven, which assures us that the human race was called into existence by a very direct act of God, so that you and I must trace the beginning of human existence, not along the path which leads from some primitive life cells, upward to the bleary-eyed, coconut-munching, trapeze-swinging baboon, but directly to the creative hand of God, who formed man as His masterpiece, in His own divine image.

.....

When a long list of experts, eminent in the scientific world, denounce the claims of this delusion that is being taught to our boys and girls in tax-supported institutions of higher and lower learning, intelligent Christians dare not accept blindly the unguarded statements that slip into our Sunday newspaper supplements and our popular magazines and that repeat, parrot-like, the unfounded fiction of the master minds of misrepresentation. This is tragic evidence of a human perversion, which dissipates its energy in the futile task of shooting infidel peas against the Gibraltar of this divine dictum, "The Lord God formed man."

.....

If . . . you and I can trace our descent, not from the creative hand of God, but from the grinning gorilla, then the best philosophy of life for you and me may be this, that we rob and steal and maim and cripple and carouse and chase from the satisfaction of one lust to the fulfillment of another vicious desire. If there is no God in heaven who has placed you and me into this world for a high and holy purpose, then down with law and order! Away with purity and honor and virtue! That is the tragic, yet, logical consequence to which the doctrine of a beast beginning leads.⁹

Occasionally, he also leveled his sights at the Social Gospel movement in the manner of the following quotation:

⁹First Lutheran Hour, pp. 64, 66, 67, 68.

Then there is the social Church and the preacher who in effect maintains that the Church's field of first duty is not to bring men into the presence of the merciful God, but to solve race relations, to fight against industrialism and capitalism, to investigate coal-mines, to picket steel strikes, and in general to present a panacea for the evils of the day by social reform in its varied ramifications, by working for the body instead of the soul, for the here rather than the hereafter; preachers who have the glitter, but lack the gold, who are more concerned about minimum wages than about the wages of sin, more interested in industrial codes than in the Christian's code. To all such the Savior, who first forgives sins and then removes the consequences of sin, who first purifies the heart and then the life, raises His voice in reproach and says: "Cleanse first that which is within the cup."¹⁰

This emphasis, too, was one in which Fundamentalists could rejoice.

Maier's stress on the fundamentals

However, it was not only his negative attitude toward Liberalism which made Maier popular with Fundamentalists. Of equal, and, probably even of greater importance to them, was his positive proclamation of the fundamental Christian doctrines which were so dear to them. Abundantly evident in every sermon were his unswerving loyalty to the Bible as the divinely inspired and infallible revelation of God, and his firm belief that Christ is the God-incarnate, virgin-born, crucified, risen, and glorified Savior from sin. Especially those Fundamentalists who no longer heard these doctrines in their own churches were grateful for their powerful presentation by the Lutheran radio preacher. Scriptures and Christ--

¹⁰Second Lutheran Hour, p. 91.

these were the overlapping foci of Maier's "good-news."

Can an enlightened modern American mind still believe in the Bible? Can we still hold that Scripture is what it claims to be, namely, the inerrant, complete, and inspired revelation of God to mankind; or must we join the increasing ranks of those who reject the Bible as a disappointing relic of a superstitious age, now happily removed by the tremendous conquests of human learning? Is the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, upon which hundreds of millions of human beings down through the ages have based their hope for time and for eternity, still the power of God unto salvation, or is it simply tradition? Is the Bible merely human, or is it gloriously divine?

In answering this alternative (which, I pause to remind you, is the basic issue in the religious battle now being waged in our country), we declare our conviction that the Bible is the Word of Truth and Power. We believe that this position, far from being mere sentimentality, is based upon the most conclusive evidence and that the case of the Scriptures in our modern day rests upon reason so convincing and considerations so forceful that, unless the investigator is hopelessly biased and permanently prejudiced, he must come to the realization that the Bible today is what it professes to be, namely, the power of God unto salvation, earth's highest truth, heaven's perfect verity.¹¹

His initial sermon of the 1936 series illustrates the centrality of these themes which were to remain dominant throughout his radio ministry:

Addressing you from the campus of a divinity school that for almost a century has dedicated its resources to the Christ of the Scriptures, I offer you in the name of the Triune God not the Christ of present-day compromise and concession, not the Christ of twentieth-century indifference and indecision, not the Christ of modern doubt and denial, who has been exalted in His humanity only to be robbed of His deity, but (above all the evasion and distortion, the rank unbelief of our day) the Christ of the Cross. With my hands on the Bible, I dedicate this radio mission to the preaching of that Cross,--not as a memorial to martyrdom, a glorified symbol of an unselfish ideal, but as "the accursed tree," the cruel, heart-breaking gibbet on which the Savior died the blackest death of all

¹¹First Lutheran Hour, p. 10.

history. That crucified Christ, Son of God, yet Son of Man, offering the eternal mercies of forgiven sins as the free gift of His boundless grace; strengthening our faltering souls with His never-failing Spirit; guiding those who trust in Him from the sorrows of this life to the glories of the next; the Savior for every sin and for every sinner, the unfailing Friend for every moment and for every path; the Christ for our hearts, our homes, our churches, our nation. . . .¹²

This was the message which Fundamentalists loved and had fought for, and because Walter A. Maier preached it so forcefully and eloquently, they admired him deeply and accepted him into their hearts.

Was Maier a Fundamentalist?

This emphasis on the fundamentals combined with his harsh condemnation of Liberalism raises the question, was Walther A. Maier a Fundamentalist? The Missouri Synod in its official organs disassociated itself from the Fundamentalist movement. Was Maier an exception?

This question must be answered in the negative. He did not participate significantly in Fundamentalist activities,¹³

¹²Christ for the Nations: the Radio Messages Broadcast in the Third Lutheran Hour (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936), p. 13. Hereafter referred to as Third Lutheran Hour.

¹³Eugene R. Bertermann, a long-time associate of Maier, reported to the author of this study in a letter dated March 6, 1963, that the Lutheran Hour Speaker did serve as a guest lecturer at several Winona Lake Conferences in the early 1940's. However, this can hardly be considered significant participation in the Fundamentalist movement. These conferences were primarily educational and informational in nature and not designed to foment fundamentalist campaigns. Besides, the Fundamentalist movement had been at a standstill for more than a decade by this time.

nor did he hold membership in Fundamentalist organizations. His attacks against Liberalism and his defence of fundamental doctrines were not essentially different from what his fellow-Missourians had been doing for generations. It was just that his radio pulpit provided him with a nation-wide audience, including many Fundamentalists, who, thereby, were given the opportunity to recognize him and his church as kindred spirits. Nor did he compromise his Lutheran convictions or ignore distinctive Lutheran doctrines in order to gain the approval of Fundamentalists. His sermons include strong passages on the Lutheran concepts of the Sacraments and the operation of the Holy Spirit in the means of grace, and these, among others, were points on which Missouri Synod Lutherans and Fundamentalists disagreed.

And if you are Christ's, think of the blessed help He offers you. The blue-prints for building this better life are in God's Word. Remember that in your Bible you hold the wisdom and love of Heaven written particularly for you,--the divine plan of soul-building that has never proved wrong, that never can make a mistake. Here, in the help that God gives you to build a faith and life that will last into eternity, you have His sacred ordinance, Holy Baptism (and again I pray that none of you has neglected this washing of regeneration, this rebirth by the Spirit and by water) and the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of your Savior given and shed to seal in your burdened heart the assurance of forgiven sins that all the research laboratories in the world can never impart.¹⁴

¹⁴Fourth Lutheran Hour: Winged Words for Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1937), p. 253. Hereafter referred to as Fourth Lutheran Hour. See also First Lutheran Hour, pp. 177, 178, 253; and Walter A. Maier, The Cross from Coast to Coast: Radio Messages Broadcast in the Fifth Lutheran Hour (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 217. Hereafter referred to as Fifth Lutheran Hour.

This evidence seems to disprove the charge that Maier was a Fundamentalist in the sense this term originally conveyed.

However, it must be said that Maier did call himself a fundamentalist (with a lower case "f") and was even proud of the designation. And yet, in so doing he defined the term without reference to the historical movement which called it forth and without endorsing the non-Lutheran elements of that movement. Less than a year before he died, in a sermon heard over the Mutual Broadcasting System on September 25, 1949, entitled, "You, Too, Should be a Fundamentalist," Dr. Maier explains the sense in which he uses the term:

some people use the word "fundamentalist" to express their contempt for anyone who trusts each word of Scripture.

. . . I thank God that I am a fundamentalist and praise the Holy Spirit for helping me to make the Bible the foundation of my faith.

The term "fundamentalist" describes a person who believes unswervingly in the foundation facts of our Christian faith, the whole Christian truth as revealed in Scripture.¹⁵

On page four of this sermon he lists five foundational truths of the Bible: deity of Christ, virgin-birth, vicarious atonement, bodily resurrection, and second coming. It is significant that in the definition quoted above he describes a fundamentalist as one who believes "the whole Christian truth as revealed in the Scripture." This contradicts the Fundamentalists' view that it is enough to agree on just a few basic points. With this phrase Maier revised the concept of Fundamentalism

¹⁵Not published, but on file at the Lutheran Hour Office, St. Louis, Mo., p. 1.

to one which he, as a Missouri Synod Lutheran, could embrace. But, of course, historically the term had quite a different meaning, referring specifically to those who participated in the literary, denominational, extra-denominational, and legislative campaigns against liberal thought in the period 1909-1930, and their direct descendants. By defining the word differently Maier could apply it to himself and the entire Missouri Synod, for that matter. However, and this is the ironical part, by this very definition he excluded those who had historically been called by this name. For, the original Fundamentalists were not committed to the whole Christian truth as revealed in Scripture, but only to the fundamentals.

Maier's message to Fundamentalism

While Maier did not become a Fundamentalist himself or try to move his church body in that direction, and while he did not compromise his Lutheran convictions out of deference to his Fundamentalist following, he did exhibit a different attitude toward Fundamentalists than the Missouri Synod had previously expressed. The difference lay in his reluctance to polemicize against this group. The Missouri Synod's admiration of and sympathy for Fundamentalism had usually been combined with criticism and with recognition of the doctrinal differences that existed between the two groups. However, Maier had very little to say along these lines. Though he was unsparing in his condemnation of liberal errors, he issued

very few negative statements against Fundamentalist errors. In a positive way he brought out the distinctive teachings of Lutheranism, but he did not often accompany this with a rejection and denunciation of the corresponding Fundamentalist view. Rather, he chose to stress the convictions which Missouri Synod Lutherans and Fundamentalists held in common, such as the five points of Fundamentalism. He dwelt upon areas of agreement, and, although He also preached on areas of disagreement, he did this in such a way as to avoid stirring up ill-will.

Why did Maier exempt Fundamentalists from polemical attack, if this was not the usual Missouri Synod procedure? If the Lutheran Hour speaker ever recorded an answer to this question, it was not turned up in this study. However, one factor in particular unquestionably entered into his thinking, on this point. In his radio sermons Maier was talking to Fundamentalists, not about them. The quotations cited in the previous chapter which were critical of Fundamentalism were taken from periodicals written primarily for Missouri Synod readers. Their purpose was to caution members of the Missouri Synod against mistaking substantial agreement with Fundamentalism for complete agreement, to warn them against entering into unionistic associations with Fundamentalists. Maier, on the other hand, addressed himself primarily to people outside the Missouri Synod. His aim was to present the message of his church in such a way as to gain acceptance

and response from his hearers. This can best be accomplished with a friendly and positive manner. It grows out of rapport and mutual respect, and is easily blocked by negativism and controversy. As radio speaker for the Missouri Synod, Walter A. Maier was an ambassador to the listening audience, including many Fundamentalists. As an ambassador he had to be diplomatic and tactful about sensitive points.

He did not bother to be diplomatic with Liberals because he considered them to be enemies of Christ and His truth. He was not interested in getting along with them, but rather in defeating them and in warning against their influence. Fundamentalists, on the other hand, were his fellow-warriors in the battle for truth, brothers and sisters in Christ, even though, in his view, they were afflicted with some errors of their own.

What was Maier trying to accomplish through the preaching that he addressed to Fundamentalists? For one thing, he was trying to encourage them in their battle against Liberalism. Again and again he challenged conservatives in other denominations to exert greater efforts against Liberals in their midst and to leave their denominations if those efforts failed:

The cross marks the parting of ways that separates genuine Christianity from counterfeit. With all my soul I appeal to my Christian friends throughout the land to hold fast to the true, essential Christ, since almost every major church-body in the United States today is honey-combed with denial. Because super-organizations in control of church policies feature men who are openly hostile to the Gospel; because sections of the religious press and much of the religious broadcasting are dominated

by a radical, anti-Christian spirit, I repeat: Hold fast to the one blessed foundation of our faith! Protest against every change, every question mark, every addition, or every deletion! And if you belong to a modernist church, where the preacher offers sermons on "Amos in Andy" or "The Wisdom of Will Rogers," and, neglecting Christ, slides back to the hoary delusions of salvation by morality, remember this advice: Because you cannot toy with your immortal soul nor play with your eternal destiny, do not subject yourself Sunday after Sunday to soul-destroying poison. You must "fight the good fight of faith," and if this denial of Christ continues, you who want to believe in the divine and atoning Savior and the preachers who studiously reject Him cannot worship together. You must come out and be separate!¹⁶

He also suggested on more than one occasion that Protestantism might have to be realigned into two groups, one conservative and the other liberal.¹⁷ This was a fond dream of some Fundamentalists and was occasionally proposed as a last resort, if everything else should fail, but it was seldom taken very seriously. That Maier seriously advocated such a move, or that he expected his own church body to participate in it, is exceedingly doubtful. This was an empty threat that conservatives sometimes waved at Liberals. Taken alone it was not very formidable simply because it was not very feasible, but when combined with several other threats it added something to the effect. An example of this use of the realignment threat is seen in a long impassioned paragraph which

¹⁶ Fourth Lutheran Hour, pp. 34,35. A similar quotation is found ibid., pp. 329,330. See also Fifth Lutheran Hour, pp. 198, 200, 203, 204; and Walter A. Maier, The Radio for Christ: Radio Messages Broadcast in the Sixth Lutheran Hour (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939), pp. 45-57. Hereafter referred to as Sixth Lutheran Hour.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 51,52.

capsules Maier's entire attitude toward Liberalism and his strategy for contending against it:

American Churches, too, must heed this prophetic cry, "Hear the Word of the Lord!" For an organized effort is underway to dismantle our Christian faith and to foist upon our credulous age the word of men paraded as new, modern, enlightened, although these delusions are as ancient as the hoariest heresies. Picture, if you will, the brilliant agnostics in almost every denomination, who read from the Scriptures with fingers crossed, mental reservations, and tongue in cheek, who find as much truth in the Koran, Goethe's Faust, Tolstoy's novels, the inscriptions of Pharaoh Amenophis, as in the Scriptures, who tear down the Cross of Calvary as they erect the double cross of their deceit. Think of the smooth, oily surrender of the deity of our Savior, His virgin birth, His vicarious death, atonement, and resurrection, His coming to judge the quick and the dead, in short, the denial of every fundamental truth of His Gospel and the substitution of these hazy theories and human inventions that have made God a mere conception, a vague idea, a fantastic being, indifferent to the weal and woe of mankind, delusions that have traced man back to the jungle, made them puppets jerked about by their irreconcilable whims of a brutal fate; and realize that only by a return to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired oracles of God, can there be any hope of real, virile, dynamic Christianity in this land. Remember that almost every major denomination of Protestantism is honeycombed by this disloyalty; that the first major step in the disintegration of any church-body is a compromising attitude toward the Scriptures and the tolerance of unbelief, doubt, and suave skepticism. I repeat, the appeal to American churches is: "Hear the Word of the Lord!" And if this be a battle-cry that is to mobilize the latent forces of a complacent laity to action; if it be the rallying summons to a spiritual crusade for Christ; if it mean the splitting of American churches into two groups, one liberal and unbelieving and the other conservative and faithful unto death; if it requires the breaking of conventional ties and the banishment of pulpit Judases, then I still repeat the cry: "Hear the Word of the Lord!"¹⁸

From these and many similar quotations it is evident that a major objective of Maier's preaching to Fundamentalists was

¹⁸Second Lutheran Hour, pp. 35,36.

to recharge their fighting spirit in the war against Liberalism, and to urge them to withdraw from their denominations if the victory were lost.

In addition, Maier wanted to tell Fundamentalists that they could always turn to the Missouri Synod for fellowship, if and when they decided to leave their denominations. This invitation was extended in guarded terms and then only occasionally, lest the "Hour" be accused of proselytizing. But it was extended, nevertheless, and the attentive listener could hardly miss the point: The doors of the Missouri Synod, a bulwark of conservative, biblical Protestantism, are open to all discouraged and defeated Fundamentalists. Maier's exact words in one sermon were:

humanity alone has never found rest. Here, however, in the Church of Jesus Christ, in its prayers, its hymns, its reading and exposition of the Scriptures, its Sacraments, its messages of comfort in bereavement, of happiness in sorrow, you have the fulfilment of this sacred promise, "Ye shall find rest for your souls."

If some of you within the range of these words tonight live in an area in which the Church of Jesus Christ is not represented; if some of you have access only to churches that do not dispense this rest and peace and comfort; and if you want to have the blessings of the Gospel and be identified with the Church,--the great body of Lutheran Christians maintaining this radio ministry will consider it a privilege to bring this message of rest to you if you will but send us the particulars.¹⁹

Another statement in the same volume indicates that some had already accepted this offer: "I want to thank those pastors of other denominations who love the free and unrestricted

¹⁹First Lutheran Hour, p. 172.

preaching of this blessed Savior and who have expressed the desire to come into our Church and join in this crusade for Christ."²⁰ This type of invitation appeared in his sermons throughout the decade. One from the Fifth Lutheran Hour, 1938, offers to minister to Gospel-hungry churches.²¹ The following year, he invited those without a satisfactory church connection to write him, presumably, so that he could put them in contact with a representative of his church.²²

Still another purpose which Maier revealed in his sermonic comments to Fundamentalists was to secure their financial backing for the program. This was both valid and necessary. The program cost a great deal of money, and, since it was promoting a cause dear to the hearts of the Fundamentalists, there was no reason for not asking them to share in its support. When he appealed for funds, which, incidentally, was not often, Maier supplied a form of motivation that could hardly fail to elicit a favorable response from conscientious Fundamentalists. A representative appeal is the following taken from a sermon of the Fourth Lutheran Hour:

if you hold, as we have always held, that the Church's responsibility is not to present economic theories or to propose legislative programs, but now, as never before, to seek the kingdom of God, to prepare men for the next world, and to do this first, last, and always through Christ and for Christ, will you not during these days send us your letter, your suggestion, your endorsement, your encouragement, your vote for a new and larger

²⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

²¹ Fifth Lutheran Hour, p. 277.

²² Sixth Lutheran Hour, p. 288.

Gospel network? You know that we pay for every minute of our broadcasting time, while other networks, which arbitrarily bar us from the air, grant their facilities free of all charge to some who deny the Christ of the Scripture. Stand by us in the face of this opposition! We must have--above all else--an aggressive, militant Christianity in this day, when the shadows of evening are lengthening over the land, together with the uncompromising loyalty of the great and blessed doctrines of the infallible Bible and our all-sufficient Savior, His full deity, His virgin birth, His atoning death on the cross, His glorious resurrection, and His second coming.²³

The Lutheran Hour was battling for the fundamentals and every contribution was a vote to extend and to strengthen the campaign. Maier knew how to open the hearts and the purses of his Fundamentalist listeners.

Results of Maier's overtures

In some respects, Maier's efforts with the Fundamentalists seemed to have been in vain. No new victories were won against Liberalism, and for that matter, no new major campaigns were even attempted. Nor was there any sizeable influx of Fundamentalists into the Missouri Synod. The third objective, securing financial contributions from Fundamentalists, was probably quite successful, although no documentation is available on this.

However, Maier did unquestionably bring about a change in Missouri-Fundamentalists relations, a change which brought the two groups closer together, if not on a theological level,

²³Fourth Lutheran Hour, p. 356.

at least on an emotional level. Through the Lutheran Hour, the Missouri Synod stepped out of the background and into a place of prominence among American Protestants. Fundamentalists were led to discover the Missouri Synod's solid biblical conservatism and remarkable doctrinal unity, qualities which they could well appreciate. No doubt, indirectly, the "Hour" did prepare some Fundamentalists for later affiliation with the Missouri Synod. Fundamentalists, as a rule, did not hesitate to change denominations as long as the new group was faithful to basic biblical doctrines. Since the Missouri Synod was such a church, Fundamentalists looking for a new denomination, in some cases were probably moved to consider joining that body. Many members of the Missouri Synod, too, listened to the broadcasts, and, as a result, became far more conscious of the conflict over Liberalism than ever before, and doubtless gained a new respect for their fellow Christians in other churches who were fighting for the truth. Maier's own sense of kinship with Fundamentalists, and with all Christians for that matter, helped to awaken a more ecumenical spirit in the Missouri Synod than had previously prevailed.²⁴

²⁴The closing pages of Maier's First Lutheran Hour and Second Lutheran Hour include excerpts from letters of grateful hearers, many of whom are easily identified as Fundamentalists, as well as expressions of joy from members of the Missouri Synod over the faith and response of these people to the program. At the time of this writing a full-length biography of Walter A. Maier by his youngest son, Paul Maier, is in production. This volume will be entitled "A Man Spoke, a World Listened," and will be published by McGraw-Hill, New York, April, 1963. Paul Maier kindly supplied the author of this study with copies of several pages of his manuscript which deal with his father's relationship with Fundamentalism. His conclusions, in general, concur with those of this study.

Walter A. Maier was the Missouri Synod's only ambassador to Fundamentalism and its only major informational outlet to this group. Although Maier had many grateful and enthusiastic listeners among the Fundamentalists, there is no evidence that he succeeded in "Lutheranizing" many of them. This was not his purpose. Rather, he desired to encourage them in their opposition to Liberalism, to invite them into the Missouri Synod if their efforts in this direction were frustrated, and to secure their financial support for his program. He did not use his radio pulpit as an instrument for correcting what he considered to be their doctrinal errors or for emphasizing his own distinctively Lutheran convictions. He consistently stressed those points on which Missouri Synod Lutherans and Fundamentalists agreed. Consequently, despite his popularity among the Fundamentalists, it cannot be said that Maier or his church body exerted any significant doctrinal influence upon them. His impact was limited to the emotional level--creating a more friendly and sympathetic climate between the Missouri Synod and Fundamentalism.

CHAPTER X

FUNDAMENTALISM'S INFLUENCE UPON THE MISSOURI SYNOD

Members of the Missouri Synod became acquainted with Fundamentalists only through what they read by and about them, and through informal, individual contacts. Fundamentalism had no "ambassador" to the Missouri Synod corresponding to Walter A. Maier, who served as the Missouri Synod's unofficial spokesman to Fundamentalism. Nor were there any negotiations between the two groups either of an official or quasi-official nature. Under these conditions of limited and indirect communication, it was inevitable that Fundamentalism's influence upon the Missouri Synod be hampered. Further retarding this influence was the Synod's traditional aversion to theology from non-Lutheran sources.

And yet, it cannot be said that the Missouri Synod was completely immune to the modifying forces of Fundamentalism. At least some traces of Fundamentalist influence appear to have been left upon the Synod. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the nature and extent of that influence, as well as the conditions which may have fostered it.

The Missouri Synod's Resistance to Fundamentalist Influence

Missouri Synod Lutherans were profoundly aware of the theological differences which existed between themselves and

the Fundamentalists. To their way of thinking these differences were serious, and, if ignored, could prove detrimental to the spiritual and doctrinal welfare of their church. Consequently, synodical writers were careful to point out these differences and to warn their readers against inadvertently adopting erroneous Fundamentalist views.¹ The roots of this attitude can be traced back to the doctrinal authorities upon which the Synod relied.² Of these, the Lutheran Confessions in particular nurtured the delineation and perpetuation of distinctively Lutheran doctrines in contrast with those of other churches. This reserved and critical attitude toward non-Lutheran theology, which remained very much a part of the Missouri Synod during the period under consideration, was in itself a powerful deterrent to the absorption of Fundamentalist ideas.

Several practical measures, growing out of this attitude, were taken by the Synod to protect its members from outside influences. Its By-Laws required that all manuscripts of a religious or theological nature submitted for publication to any of the Synod's agencies be censored by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.³ Furthermore, the Constitution

¹Supra, Chapter VIII.

²Supra, Chapter VI.

³Synodical Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, compiled by the Order of the Synod, English Edition, translated from the fifth completely revised German Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), pp. 22, 94, 95, 141.

of Synod required that all member congregations use only doctrinally pure agendas, hymnbooks, and catechisms in both church and school,⁴ a requirement which was to be enforced through the office of Circuit Visitor.⁵

The effectiveness of these measures can be seen in the fact that synodical literature during the Fundamentalist Era (1909-1931) and the subsequent decade contains no evidence of Fundamentalist influence. Journals, pamphlets, and books--both on lay and professional levels--are remarkably free from such non-Lutheran elements. Although synodical writers frequently reported on the Fundamentalist movement, expressed approval of some Fundamentalist leaders, and even agreement with some of their views, they did not echo any of the non-Lutheran accents of Fundamentalism. Rather, they repeatedly affirmed the traditional positions of the Missouri Synod and scrupulously noted the deviations of Fundamentalism. Thus it must be said that the official voices of the Missouri Synod were not significantly altered by Fundamentalism.

Fundamentalist Influence at the "Grass-Roots" Level

However, there are reasons for believing that some of the thought and spirit of Fundamentalism did filter into the Missouri Synod at the "grass-roots" level. It appears that some pastors and laymen of the Synod were touched by the

⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁵Ibid., pp. 50-53.

modifying forces of that movement.

Documentation for this is sparse. In 1918,

Theodore Graebner wrote:

we must stop the Reformed seepage into our pulpit-work, lest it begin, very soon also to affect our congregational practise. Our correspondents testify that by their own observation, the danger of Reformed influence in our preaching and practise, though mainly in the former, was not exaggerated in our introductory remarks in the October issue of this MAGAZINE. Those forces which have put the ROT into Protestantism are even now endeavoring to undermine the structure of our Church.⁶

It must be noted that Graebner did not refer specifically to Fundamentalist influence, but rather to Reformed influence in general. The final sentence of the quotation suggests that he may have been thinking primarily of liberal rather than Fundamentalist influence. The term "rot" is applied to Fundamentalism nowhere else in synodical literature. However, an examination of the earlier articles which he mentioned reveals that Liberals and conservatives are lumped together under the Reformed classification, and that both are viewed as undesirable influence. And yet, of the names which he lists in this connection none were Fundamentalists.⁷ These inconclusive comments are the nearest thing to published reports of Fundamentalist influence upon the Missouri Synod

⁶"A Modern Library of Theological and Religious Literature,' Second Announcement," Magazin für ev.-luth. Homiletik and Pastoraltheologie: Homiletic Magazine, XLII (November, 1918), 527.

⁷"A Modern Library of Theological and Religious Literature,' Announcement," ibid., XLII (October, 1918), 479.

that were turned up by this study.

However, the personal observations of reliable observers suggests that the influence of Fundamentalism may have been apparent in the Synod at least occasionally and among certain people. Of the four Missouri Synod clergymen who observed the movement first-hand, and who were willing to record their impressions for this study, two recall no evidence of Fundamentalist influence, one recalls several instances of such influence, and the other believes that Fundamentalism made a significant impact upon the Synod.

John Theodore Mueller, a 1907 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and a professor there since 1920, states:

So far as I know our professors and pastors have always kept away from fundamentalism as this was an essentially Reformed movement. However, since we have taught verbal and plenary inspiration, as did the fundamentalists, though from a different orientation, we were at times charged as being fundamentalists. This charge is still wrongly maintained by some.⁸

Paul M. Bretscher, a 1915 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and professor there since 1941, agrees essentially with his colleague:

I really do not recall a single instance where in my opinion the false accents of "Fundamentalism" had infiltrated the thinking of our pastors and teachers though it is possible that the stress on "Inspiration" in those years (the Twenties) may have been due in part to some articles in "The Fundamentals." But I can't prove this.⁹

⁸ John Theodore Mueller, "Letter to Milton L. Rudnick," dated February 18, 1963, in possession of the recipient.

⁹ Paul M. Bretscher, "Letter to Milton L. Rudnick," dated February 14, 1963, in possession of the recipient.

Elmer E. Foelber, also a 1915 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and House Editor of Concordia Publishing House since 1953, while agreeing generally with Mueller and Bretscher, does recall several defections to Fundamentalism.

The influence of Fundamentalism on the Missouri Synod clergy and laity was practically nil. While they viewed with satisfaction Fundamentalism's stress on the blood atonement and the Scriptures as an inerrant guide over against the humanism of the so-called Modernists, they strongly condemned the concomitant millennialism and rejection of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments. Since revival campaigns were much employed by the Fundamentalists in both the cities and rural areas, a few Lutherans left their church for one of the Fundamentalist groups. As to the clergy, I recall only three who defected. Two were young men, and one was in his fifties. All three became ardent millennialists. The two young men developed into revivalists, and the middle-aged man was received into the U.L.C. ministerium and given a pastorate.

The Missouri Synod pastors, though warmly invited, refused to participate in the Fundamentalist union services and urged their members not to attend. The reasons therefore were those pointed out above and the aversion to anything deemed unionistic.¹⁰

Richard R. Caemmerer, a 1927 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and professor there since 1940, observed Fundamentalist influence both in the Synod's apologetic method and in its approach to the Holy Scriptures.

These volumes [The Fundamentals] stood on the shelves of synod's pastors and laymen since the beginning of this century, and their method influenced apologetics within the Missouri Synod for many years.

The direction of the volumes was to present an apologetic for the supernatural content and origin of the Bible,

¹⁰ Elmer E. Foelber, "Letter to Milton L. Rudnick," no date, but received February 18, 1963, in possession of the recipient.

particularly the Virgin Birth and deity of Christ, in the words of outstanding theologians from both sides of the Atlantic. The process of apologetic: The Bible as infallible revelation, the higher criticism as destructive, became the method also of the Missouri Synod theologians and pastors. The process of arriving at a subscription to Biblical truth by affirming the reliability of the basic message is consistent; the Biblical and Lutheran process of arriving at a faith in God as Father because of the message of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, is only implicit. They did much to divert the preaching of the Missouri Synod from the Gospel as a means of grace to a deposit of doctrine to be accepted by a faith which is the duty of man.¹¹

The purpose at this point is not to evaluate the specifics of these observations, but rather to note that at least some observers recall at least some Fundamentalist influence within the Synod.

Certain conditions which existed within the Missouri Synod during the period under consideration would have made some Fundamentalist influence very possible and even likely.

The first of these is the strong sympathies which many

¹¹Richard R. Caemmerer, "Letter to Milton L. Rudnick," dated February 13, 1963, in possession of the recipient. That The Fundamentals were a major cause of the phenomena mentioned by Caemmerer may be seriously questioned. Numerous articles in synodical literature which were written before the appearance of these volumes employed the apologetic method which Caemmerer refers to. See Carl S. Meyer, "The Historical Introduction to 'A Brief Statement,'" Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (July, 1961), 421,422. Furthermore, this emphasis in Synod on the form rather than the function of Scripture during this period was probably occasioned more by Liberalism's attacks against verbal and plenary inspiration, than by Fundamentalism's replies to these attacks. See ibid., p. 424. However, since The Fundamentals were widely circulated among members of the Synod and widely used for sermonic materials, the preaching emphasis noted by Caemmerer may probably be attributed to these volumes, at least in part. Bretscher, op. cit., reports, ". . . in my parish ministry, 1918-1923, I often consulted these books (The Fundamentals) and found good material in them for sermonizing."

members of the Synod felt toward Fundamentalists.¹² The Missouri Synod and Fundamentalism were alike in their subscription to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and in their belligerent attitude toward Liberalism. Because of these similarities the two parties could understand and support each other, at least in some respects. What may have happened is that some Missouri Synod Lutherans, as a result of these sympathies, were led to accept and to reflect ingredients of Fundamentalism which were not in keeping with sound Lutheranism. Although the Missouri Synod was conscientious about the thorough indoctrination of both clergy and laity, it is doubtful that all members were acute enough theologically always to detect the non-Lutheran features of Fundamentalism which they were incorporating into their own outlook.

The language transition from German to English which picked up momentum after 1911 and continued at a rapid pace during the entire Fundamentalist era, substantially increased the susceptibility of the Missouri Synod to the influence of Fundamentalism.

Until 1911 the Missouri Synod had largely shied away from work in the English language. Congregations conducted some services in English where this was deemed necessary; however none worked exclusively in that language. A small English Evangelical Lutheran Conference was organized in 1872. However, when it applied for admission to the Missouri

¹²Supra, chapter VIII.

Synod that same year its application was denied, although its members were in doctrinal agreement with the Synod. The language barrier was given as the reason. In 1890 the English Conference changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States. Cordial relations and close contact were maintained between the English Synod and the Missouri Synod. Opportunities for English work were, by common consent, directed to the attention of the former, and those for German work to the latter. Finally, in 1911 both Synods agreed that the time had come for amalgamation. The arrangement was that the English Synod would become a district of the Missouri Synod with the privilege of establishing missions in any of the territorial districts of the Missouri Synod that it desired.¹³

There were several reasons why Missouri Synod Lutherans had declined to enter seriously into English work before 1911. For one thing, German was the language which they used best and the only language which many of them could use. Furthermore, prior to 1900 hundreds of thousands of German immigrants had streamed into the United States, providing the Synod with a missionary challenge equal to and surpassing its resources. And, in addition, there was fear in some members that the extensive use of English might subject the Synod to the corrupting

¹³Paul T. Dietz, "The Transition from German to English in the Missouri Synod from 1910-1947," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXII (October, 1949), 99,100.

influences of American theological Liberalism.¹⁴

However, by 1911 the picture was rapidly changing. There were many second and third generation Americans in the Synod by this time, including a number of pastors who were reasonably competent in English.¹⁵ Furthermore, the streams of German immigrants had all but dried up, eliminating the major field which the Missouri Synod had been working.¹⁶ And the Missouri Synod was beginning to produce some English literature of its own. Consequently, by 1911 it became obvious that the Synod should initiate serious and extensive work in the English language, and the first step in this direction was the merger with the English Synod.

The rapid expansion of this work during the period under consideration can be seen, in the first place, in the increased quantity of English materials produced by the Synod's Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis. In the period 1909-1911 only

¹⁴Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace: a History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 7, 107, 152. See also Leonard William Heidemann, "Acceptance of the English Language in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod," unpublished Master of Science thesis, Iowa State College, 1950, pp. 34-36, 52-54.

¹⁵Dietz, op. cit., pp. 97-9. Even before the turn of the century Franz Pieper observed that three-fourths of the ministerial candidates who graduated from the Synod's seminaries were in a position to work in English, if this became necessary. "Kirchlichzeitgeschichtliches, I. America," Lehre und Wehre, XLIII (May, 1897), 156.

¹⁶Pieper, op. cit., p. 156.

eight titles out of thirty-four were in English,¹⁷ while in the period 1929-1932 ninety-six out of one hundred twelve were in English.¹⁸ Another indication of expanded English work is the remarkable increase in the number of congregations which used the English language either exclusively or in part. In 1912 only 610 out of a total of 2,756 congregations employed English in their programs.¹⁹ However, by 1930 the proportion had been more than reversed. In that year 4,460 out of a total of 4,751 congregations were using English.²⁰ The transition was accelerated primarily by the anti-German attitudes and actions of many Americans during World War I.²¹

A major problem of the Synod during the transition was the shortage of suitable literature in English. For despite the efforts of synodical writers and printers, the selection of English materials remained meager. In 1918 Theodore Graebner addressed himself to this problem in two articles already

¹⁷Achtundzwanzigsten Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Ev. Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staten, versammelt als Dreizehnte Delegatensynode zu St. Louis, Mo. in Jahre 1911 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1911), pp. 146,147.

¹⁸Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Regular Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, assembled at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 15-24, 1932 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), pp. 179-81.

¹⁹Heidemann, op. cit., p. 50.

²⁰Ibid., p. 57.

²¹Ibid., pp. 54-56. See also Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod Reacts to United States Anti-Germanism during World War I," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXVI (July, 1962), 55-58.

cited.²² He observed that the phenomenal growth of English work had greatly increased the need for English theological books. To fill this need, the President of Synod, F. Pfothenhauer, had appointed a committee for English theological and religious literature. This committee was scheduled to begin printing a new series of volumes the following year, 1919.²³

In the next issue of the Homiletic Magazine Graebner listed the projected volumes: a book of sermons on free texts, a catechetical work on the decalogue, a translation of Prof. Bente's Anfaenge und Niedergaenge des Amerikanischen Luthertums, and a book of practical hints for the missionary. Larger projects also under consideration were a popular commentary on the entire Bible, a Lutheran cyclopedia, a Bible History for children, and a scholarly commentary on the entire Bible.²⁴

It is apparent from this list that the synodical presses to this point had turned out very little English material for use in the congregations. The proposed items represented only the beginning of a solution. At the time of this writing, nearly two generations after Graebner's article appeared, much of the Synod's important literature from the past remains locked in the German language, and is thus inaccessible to

²²Footnotes 6 and 7.

²³G. [raebner], "A Modern Library of Theological and Religious Literature," Announcement, op. cit., pp. 479,480.

²⁴G. [raebner], "A Modern Library of Theological and Religious Literature," Second Announcement, op. cit., pp. 525,526.

the worker who is largely restricted to the English language.

In the absence of suitable synodical literature in English, some pastors and lay workers who were involved in English work made use of the literature of other church bodies, including that of Fundamentalist writers. This was permitted and even encouraged in the case of those books which were considered "safe"; however, not all readers were capable of making this distinction. Furthermore, it was considered necessary to understand the theological positions of competitive church bodies.

However, if the minister depends upon Reformed helps for his sermonizing, whether as regards to style or contents, or draws his ideas regarding congregational work, publicity, advertising, etc., from these sources, our Church and Synod are in a bad way. . . . It would be the end of confessionalism, of a Lutheranism that squares its claim of apostolicity. It would mean the invasion of Reformed skepticism, of the New Theology, of externalism, of formalism, and man-worship.²⁵

The last sentence of this quotation may seem to indicate that the author is concerned only about the danger of Reformed Liberalism. However, in this connection it should be remembered that Missouri Synod observers believed that there was a foundational weakness in Reformed theology--the principle of interpreting the Bible in the light of human reason. This weakness, though most obvious in Reformed Liberals, was also present in Reformed Fundamentalists, and could be dangerous to Lutherans who were exposed to it, the synodical commentators

²⁵G. [raebner], "'A Modern Library of Theological and Religious Literature,' Announcement," op. cit., pp. 478-79.

felt.²⁶

This concern continued into the 1920's. The constitutional prohibition did not apply to the personal libraries of church workers and could not be enforced perfectly even in the educational programs of the congregations. An article in The Lutheran Witness in 1920 reports that some Lutheran pastors were using the International Sunday School Lessons, and points out the incongruity and danger of this practise.²⁷ Five years later a similar complaint was registered in the same periodical. Entitled "Reading Ourselves Out of the Lutheran Church," it points to the deficiencies and deviations which a Lutheran could expect to find in such non-Lutheran reading material.²⁸ Warnings against millennialist literature have already been mentioned.²⁹

And yet, despite these warnings, in their practical necessity, it appears that some Missouri Synod Lutherans continued to read the forbidden items. Furthermore, it is likely that among the materials upon which members of the Synod drew most heavily were the timely, biblicistic writings of Fundamentalists. In this manner, Fundamentalism colored the thought and the attitudes of some Missouri Synod Lutherans,

²⁶Supra, pp. 182-5.

²⁷"The 'International' Lessons and the Lutheran Sunday School," The Lutheran Witness, XXXIX (April 27, 1920), 138,139.

²⁸[Theodore] G. [raebner], ibid., XLIV (May 18, 1925), 169.

²⁹Supra, pp. 185-8.

at least to some degree.

In addition to the two factors already mentioned--general sympathies toward Fundamentalism and the use of Fundamentalist literature--there was a third factor which may have exerted a Fundamentalist influence upon the Missouri Synod. That was the popularity of Walter A. Maier. Among his most avid listeners and readers were his fellow clergymen in the Missouri Synod. At Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, where he was a professor, Maier was the hero and model of many students, especially after 1930 when he began his radio ministry. A result of this popularity was that preaching from some Missouri Synod pulpits took on a likeness to Maier's both in content and delivery. His sermon books sold well,³⁰ and, in some cases, provided not only inspiration, but also outlines and illustrations for the sermons of his ministerial admirers.

To whatever extent this took place (it cannot be determined with accuracy), Missouri Synod preaching took on something of a Fundamentalist emphasis. That Maier's preaching reflected such an emphasis has already been demonstrated,³¹ and the reasons for this appear to be valid. He was speaking to unchurched people who needed this stress on the most basic Christian doctrines, as well as to Fundamentalists with whom he was trying to establish and to maintain rapport. However,

³⁰According to the records of Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, the first six volumes of his Lutheran Hour sermons sold a total of 27,773 copies.

³¹Supra, pp. 201-8.

that this emphasis was equally valid in the parish pulpits of the Synod where it was sometimes introduced may be open to question. There, a stress on the fundamentals may have led to a de-emphasis of other important Lutheran concepts such as the sacraments, the means of grace, the Church, etc. While Maier did not neglect these doctrines altogether in his radio preaching, nor compromise the Lutheran position with respect to them, neither did he proclaim them as frequently or as extensively as might be expected, had he been preaching in a parish pulpit of the Missouri Synod.

Alleged Fundamentalist Influence
in the Doctrine of Biblical Inerrancy

The Missouri Synod's view of the Bible, especially on the point of inerrancy, has been called Fundamentalist. Elson Ruff, editor of The Lutheran, a periodical of the United Lutheran Church, wrote of Walter A. Maier shortly after his death, and of the Synod to which he belonged:

He upheld the teaching of the Missouri Synod, of which he was a member, that the Scriptures "contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their priceless words the infallible truth, also those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters." That is fundamentalism exactly and squarely defined. That's not only not Lutheran, but it's hopelessly bad sense.³²

Ruff here alleges that the doctrine of scriptural infallibility

³²"In Conclusion," The Lutheran, XXXII (January 25, 1950), 50. A somewhat similar reference is found in O. W. Heick and J. L. Neve, History of Protestant Theology, Vol. II in A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), p. 311.

is a non-Lutheran notion which the Missouri Synod picked up from the historical movement called Fundamentalism.

In reality, leaders of Lutheran thought as early as the seventeenth century were stoutly defending and maintaining biblical inerrancy, not only in doctrinal matters but in every other subject as well. Robert Preus in his study of inspiration as taught by the Lutheran Orthodox dogmaticians devotes an entire chapter to inerrancy, in which he includes this quotation from John Quenstedt (1617-1685):

The holy canonical Scriptures in their original text are the infallible truth and free from every error, that is to say, in the sacred canonical Scriptures there is no lie, deceit, no error, even the slightest, either in content or words, but every single word which is handed down in the Scriptures is most true, whether it pertains to doctrine, ethics, history, chronology, typography, or onomastics; and no ignorance, lack of understanding, forgetfulness or lapse of memory can or should be attributed to the amanuences of the Holy Spirit in their writing of the Holy Scriptures.³³

That the Missouri Synod received its teaching of biblical infallibility from the Orthodox dogmaticians rather than from Fundamentalism can be substantiated from Franz Pieper's Christliche Dogmatik, which first appeared during the period 1917-1928.³⁴ The index lists nearly half a page of references under the heading "Scripture (inerrancy)"³⁵ of which a number

³³The Inspiration of Scripture: a Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians (Mankato, Minn.: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1955), p. 77.

³⁴Four vol. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917-1928). The references which follow are from the English translation: Christian Dogmatics, 4 vol. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1957).

³⁵Ibid., IV, 730.

include citations from the Orthodox dogmaticians.³⁶ Furthermore, in his lengthy section on Holy Scripture,³⁷ Pieper's reliance upon these same dogmaticians is evidenced by dozens of quotations from their writings, while in the entire section there is only one reference to Fundamentalist writings.³⁸ During the period under discussion, the literature of Orthodoxy was an important doctrinal authority of the Missouri Synod. However, Fundamentalist literature never achieved this status.³⁹

Fundamentalists were, in part, the product of the Orthodox movement in Calvinist Theology,⁴⁰ which in some ways resembled Lutheran Orthodoxy. This may explain the similarity which existed between the Missouri Synod's statements on biblical inerrancy and those of Fundamentalism. The fact that Missouri Synod Lutherans contended for this doctrine is no proof that they were influenced by Fundamentalism, and it does not make them sub-Lutheran. The seventeenth century dogmaticians from whom the Missouri Synod inherited its formulations on this doctrine were much closer to the foundations of Lutheranism, at least historically, than any of their present-day critics.

Whether or not the Synod's devotion to biblical inerrancy

³⁶Ibid., I, 223 (Quenstedt and Calov), 277 (Quenstedt).

³⁷Ibid., I, 193-367.

³⁸Ibid., I, 271, note 82.

³⁹Supra, pp. 151-4.

⁴⁰T. A. Kantonen, Resurgence of the Gospel (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c.1948), pp. 3, 131.

was a healthy development; whether or not this doctrine is consistent with Luther and the Confessions--these and similar questions lie beyond the scope of this study. The concern here is simply to disavow the implication, not infrequently drawn, that the views of the Missouri Synod on this doctrine were significantly shaped by Fundamentalism.

The Fundamentalist movement had little opportunity to exert a substantial influence upon the Missouri Synod. The channels of communication were limited and indirect. Furthermore, the Synod was surrounded by a wall of resistance to non-Lutheran ideas and emphases.

However, at least some observers are convinced that in certain individuals and in some respects the Fundamentalist movement did leave its mark. And some conditions prevailed during this period which would have favored such a development. Many members of the Synod were sympathetic to the Fundamentalist cause, and Fundamentalist literature was used in the Synod during the transition from German to English. Furthermore, Walter A. Maier's admirers frequently reflected his fundamentalist emphases in their parish preaching. These are factors which may have left at least some members of the Synod open to the modifying forces of the movement. However, there is no evidence of a general or significant departure in the Synod from confessional Lutheranism to Fundamentalism.

The allegation that the Missouri Synod's doctrine of biblical inerrancy is derived from Fundamentalism represents

a misunderstanding of the history of theology. Not Fundamentalism but Lutheran Orthodoxy is the Synod's source of this doctrine.

CONCLUSION

The Fundamentalist movement was a reaction of certain conservative American Protestants against the theological Liberalism which had invaded their church bodies, and, in some cases, the public schools of the land. Liberalism had come into its own during the last half of the nineteenth century when some theologians, particularly in Germany, sought to accommodate the Christian religion to the scientific theories and methods which were revolutionizing the thought of the Western World. Among the most important elements of Liberalism were: the theology of religious experience, which made man, rather than God, the object of religious study; the science of biblical criticism, which reduced the Holy Scriptures to human literature and discarded traditional views about its divine authority; the theory of evolution, which removed man from his lofty position as a creature fashioned in the image of a personal God, and which contradicted the Genesis account of creation; and the social gospel, which emphasized the transformation of society, rather than the salvation of the individual soul. As these radical concepts gained the credence of increasing numbers of American Protestants and began to alter the teachings of American churches, conservatives became alarmed. With every means at their disposal they sought to check the progress of Liberalism and hoped eventually to eliminate it from their

denominations.

Several factors of a non-theological nature contributed to the rising conservative reaction which was to become the Fundamentalist movement. Following the Civil War, industrialization and urbanization rapidly transformed American society and adversely affected the hold of many Protestant churches upon their members. Millions of people moved from rural areas, where the church was usually a central and dominating force in their lives, to large cities, where they either lost contact with their churches or became only loosely attached to them. Thus, a secular atmosphere, and--as a result of deplorable social conditions--an immoral attitude as well, usually prevailed in urban areas. Since the cities were also the centers of Liberalism, conservatives were inclined to blame that movement for the secularization of society. In connection with World War I a strong and sometimes vicious emotionalism entered into the conservative camp. Hatred against the Germans, which was carefully cultivated through propaganda, was frequently converted into antipathy toward Liberals, who were identified as the product of unbelieving German theology. After the war a belligerent and suspicious mood lingered in many conservatives and gave an ugly turn to their assaults against Liberalism. Finally, Fundamentalism was colored and shaped, in part, by the men who rose up to lead the movement. Some were selfless, responsible, intelligent, and even scholarly. Nearly all were tireless in their efforts and

prolific with the pen. However, a few brought discredit upon the movement by their fanaticism, sensationalism, and profiteering.

There were conservative reactions against Liberalism even before the Fundamentalist movement was launched in 1909. Right after the Civil War a wave of anti-Liberal literature--much of it with strong millennialist leanings--was directed against the new theology. Numerous large gatherings of conservative Protestants were organized throughout the country in order to defend and to advance the traditional beliefs. A new era of revivalism added to the confidence of conservatives. Although evangelism--not polemics--was the main purpose of revivals, the speakers did proclaim a conservative message and were not hesitant about denouncing Liberalism. A more significant contribution to the conservative cause was made by the numerous Bible schools founded during this period, which trained large numbers of church workers, many of whom were to become active in the Fundamentalist movement. Several major denominations--Methodists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, and Baptists--were disrupted by the conflicts over Liberalism during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. In no case, however, did conservatives enjoy lasting victory, although some important battles were won, especially among the Presbyterians. And yet, the experiences and techniques of these earlier conservatives were to be revised and

reinforced by a new generation of ecclesiastical crusaders-- the Fundamentalists.

A new conservative movement began in 1909 with the publication and free distribution of millions of copies of The Fundamentals, a twelve volume series of paperback booklets devoted to the conservation and promulgation of certain basic Protestant beliefs which were under attack by Liberalism. By a calm and moderate statement of their convictions, the authors of these booklets endeavored to undergird the faith of those who shared their beliefs and to convert those who did not. They sought, furthermore, to counteract certain undesirable tendencies which were present in some conservatives. Many of the articles were devoted to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, with special emphasis upon refuting the claims of biblical criticism. The person and work of Christ were also treated extensively, with special reference to His deity, virgin birth, atoning death, and bodily resurrection. The subject of millennialism which had figured prominently in pre-Fundamentalist literature, was played down because of its controversial nature. Although generally in agreement with Lutheran theology, these volumes contain some features which are unacceptable to most Lutherans. For example, they present an individualistic concept of Christianity without sufficient emphasis on the doctrine of the Church, and make derogatory comments about the sacraments and exaggerated statements about prayer. However, many Protestants received

The Fundamentals enthusiastically and were spurred by them into a new crusade against Liberalism.

The Fundamentalist crusade consisted of a number of independent and often uncoordinated efforts, which, however, were united by a common goal--the overthrow of Liberalism. The theological focus of the movement shifted from the Five Points of Fundamentalism to millennialism and then to a refutation of evolution. The extra-denominational devices of the pre-Fundamentalist era were pressed into service--literature, Bible conferences, Bible institutes, and, to a lesser degree, revivals. An important innovation on the extra-denominational level was the establishment of a permanent, comprehensive, conservative organization, The World's Christian Fundamentals Association, which became a center of strategy and agitation for the movement. Some decisive battles were conducted in three major denominations. Fundamentalists in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. fought long and hard to legislate Liberalism out of their denomination, but in the end were repudiated. Northern Baptists and Northern Methodists experienced less severe but, nevertheless, painful conflicts over Liberalism, but here, too, the Fundamentalists lost. The other level of Fundamentalist activity was political--efforts to outlaw the teaching of evolution in the public schools of certain states. Although some such laws were passed and one test case was successfully prosecuted, the effect of these anti-evolution measures was only temporary.

For a time, teachers, particularly in the south, were afraid to teach the controversial subject, but, gradually, industrialization and urbanization began to change southern sentiments, and inhibitions against teaching evolution disappeared. By the 1930's Fundamentalist activity on every level had bogged down because of the depression, the defeats which the movement had sustained, and the death or retirement of many of its important leaders.

Missouri Synod Lutherans, like the Fundamentalists, were conservative Protestants. However, their conservatism differed in certain significant respects from that of the Fundamentalists. Their theology was derived from sources and authorities which, for the most part, were either unknown to or unrecognized by Fundamentalists. Only the Bible itself, to which Missouri Synod Lutherans subscribed without reservation or qualification, was regarded as authoritative by both groups. The other authorities, those on which the Synod based its understanding of the Bible, were distinctively Lutheran: the Lutheran Confessions, the writings of Martin Luther, and the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians. Doctrines foreign to and even antithetical to Fundamentalism are perpetuated in these authorities. Although synodical authors occasionally referred to the literature of Fundamentalism, it was never put on the same plane with the traditional Lutheran authorities.

Because the Missouri Synod, like Fundamentalism, was

violently opposed to Liberalism, it was generally sympathetic toward that conservative group. Synodical literature frequently reported on fundamentalist activities, recognized Fundamentalists as kindred spirits, expressed appreciation of some Fundamentalist literature, and registered approval of some Fundamentalist leaders. However, at no time did the Missouri Synod identify itself with Fundamentalism.

The reasons for this are manifest. In the first place, Liberalism was not an internal problem of the Synod. It had succeeded in holding the line against the new theology, and, as a result, none of its members felt the need for outside conservative support, such as the Fundamentalists had to offer. Secondly, by their German ancestry, most members of the Synod had been rendered immune to the war hysteria which later was converted into emotional support of Fundamentalism. Finally, certain non-Lutheran features of the movement--unionism, Reformed orientation, millennialism, and anti-evolution tactics--alienated Missouri Synod Lutherans. Consequently, their sympathy toward Fundamentalism never developed into identification with or unqualified support of the movement.

During the 1930's, when Fundamentalism was clearly a failing cause, the Missouri Synod made some interesting overtures in that direction. Even before this time, certain synodical writers had viewed their denomination as a refuge for conservative Protestants who had become discouraged with their own church bodies. However, it was during this decade,

through a nation-wide radio broadcast, "The Lutheran Hour," that the Synod was able to address itself forcefully to such people. Walter A. Maier, the dynamic speaker on this broadcast, echoed the phrases which Fundamentalists loved to hear. Repeatedly and colorfully he denounced Liberalism and affirmed the doctrines which Fundamentalists held dear. As a result, he had many listeners and supporters from this group. However, he did not compromise nor ignore his distinctively Lutheran beliefs, and he cannot be properly classified as a Fundamentalist. His message to Fundamentalists was that they should renew their opposition to Liberalism, or, if that failed, feel free to come into his church body, and, in the meantime, lend their financial support to his broadcast. Although he inspired no new Fundamentalist campaigns and failed to "Lutheranize" any significant number of Fundamentalists, Maier did succeed in bringing Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod closer together, at least on the emotional level.

Fundamentalism's influence upon the Missouri Synod was by no means profound or significant. The Missouri Synod's traditional resistance toward non-Lutheran theology and its constitutional prohibitions against the use of non-Lutheran materials in the congregations constituted a powerful deterrent to any outside influences. An examination of synodical literature during the Fundamentalist era (1909-1930) and the subsequent decade reveals no significant intrusion of Fundamentalist ideas. However, on the "grass-roots" level

Fundamentalism did make something of an impression, at least in the opinion of some observers. Certain conditions which existed in the Synod at this time may have encouraged this phenomenon. The Synod was generally sympathetic toward Fundamentalism, and some Fundamentalist literature was used during the language transition from German to English. Furthermore, the fundamentalist emphases of Walter A. Maier were reflected in the preaching of some Missouri Synod pastors. Although some Fundamentalist influence may have crept into the Synod as a result of these conditions, there is no evidence of a general or serious shift in the direction of Fundamentalist thought. The Missouri Synod's doctrine of biblical inerrancy is frequently attributed to Fundamentalist influence, but the actual source is Lutheran Orthodoxy.

In summary, although Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod were similar in certain respects, although they showed a considerable amount of interest in one another and warm mutual sympathies, they never joined forces or exerted substantial influence upon one another. Although both fought fiercely and doggedly against the common foe of Liberalism, they remained in separate camps. Consequently, neither group was significantly affected by the existence or actions of the other. Those who see a closer relationship between them have failed adequately to understand either Fundamentalism, or the Missouri Synod, or both.

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