

The background of the cover is a photograph of a church interior. It shows rows of wooden pews, a white piano on the left, and a white altar with a large wooden cross on the wall behind it. The lighting is soft and warm.

The **HISTORY** and **HERITAGE**

of Fundamentalism
and Fundamental Baptists

David W. Cloud

*The History and Heritage of Fundamentalism
and Fundamental Baptists*

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What Is This Book All About?

The book contains an extensive history of Fundamentalism in general and of fundamental Baptists in particular. It is packed with fascinating biographical sketches. The major segments are

- “Interdenominational Fundamentalism”
- “Metropolitan Tabernacle of London, England”
- “Fundamental Baptists of the North”
- “Fundamental Baptists of the South”
- “Where Are Fundamental Baptists Today?”
- “New Testament Churches in the Last Days”

Education

A chief purpose of the book is to understand the past so that we can properly evaluate the present and be stronger for the future. It has been said that those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them.

Very few churches are well educated about their history. And the history of the last two centuries is even less known than the broad outline of earlier history.

When I graduated from Bible college in 1977, I didn't know the history of fundamental Baptists beyond a vague outline. I have since remedied that and have found it to be hugely profitable. Other than the study of the Bible itself, three things have been of major benefit to me for the ministry, and that is the study of history (both church history and world history), the study of archaeology, and the study of Israel.

But this book is not only for education in church history, it is an extensive Bible course on the gospel, the church, biblical inspiration, Bible prophecy, holiness, prayer, Bible study, preaching, hymnology, Christian unity, Christian education, defense of the faith, biblical separation, evangelism, child training, the life of faith, theological liberalism, ecumenism, New Evangelicalism, and many other things.

Testing

Another major objective is to encourage and strengthen the biblical testing mindset. God has given His people the right and responsibility to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21), and that

is what we want to do. We aren't critical-minded; we are biblical provers. Our chief goal is not to find things are wrong, but to find things that are good to which we can hold fast for the glory of God.

We need to be passionate about a biblical testing mindset. It is highly emphasized in Scripture and massively important for godly Christian living and spiritual protection.

"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going" (Pr. 14:15).

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Ac. 17:11).

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Co. 10:5).

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

We want to approach history with the mindset that Paul taught to the church at Thessalonica.

"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th. 5:20-23).

Note five major lessons from this fundamental passage about testing:

First, we are to despise not prophesyings, and this points to the Word of God. When Paul was writing this epistle to the church at Thessalonica, the prophesyings were not yet complete, but by the end of the apostolic age, the canon was finished. Jude said the faith was "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). With the writing of the Revelation, the canon was complete, and in the last chapter it is sealed with a solemn warning against adding to or taking away from it (Re. 22:18-19). This applies to Revelation, of course, but it also applies to the entire Book of which Revelation is the closing chapter. The

prophesyings were finished. From then until now, we have the complete Scripture which is the sole authority for faith and practice. It is able to make the man of God “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Ti. 3:16-17). Neither church fathers (so-called), nor councils, nor theologies, nor confessions, nor new prophecies add one jot or tittle to the canon of absolute truth. None of these are Scripture. Rather, all are to be proven by Scripture. We won’t find our authority for the New Testament church by looking at the Waldensians, the Lollards, the Protestants, the European Anabaptists, the British Baptists, the American Baptists, the Awakenings, the Revivalists, the Brethren, the non-denominational Bible churches, the New Reformed Calvinists, or any stream of the fundamental Baptists. All are to be tested by God’s Word, for only there do we find the church that pleases God.

Second, we are to prove ALL things. We are to prove every single thing. Nothing is out of bounds: no church, no preacher, no ecclesiastical leader, no author, no institution, no organization, no school, no mission, no organized fellowship, no association, no denomination, no movement. We are divinely commissioned to prove *all* things.

Third, we are to hold fast that which is good. This means that “good” is to have the preeminence in our testing. Good is *what* we are looking for. We are looking for things that are good to hold on to for the glory of Christ. When we prove things in church history, we are not just looking for the wrong, we are especially looking for something good to help our Christian lives and ministries and churches. We aren’t focused *only* on the good and the “positive,” after the fashion of New Evangelicalism. We do *not* neglect the “negative,” but the good is what we are most interested in. Good also defines *how we are proving*. We don’t want a critical spirit. We want to have Christ’s love in our hearts in all our provings, so that we care for those that we prove, wanting the best for them, being kind and patient and merciful, even as we test them and reject that which is wrong.

Fourth, we are to abstain from all appearance of evil. When looking at church history, we want to learn from everything that is right, but we also want to reject everything that is wrong by the absolute standard of God’s Word and by the guidance of God’s Spirit. Notice the word “all.” Every evil is to be rejected, every error, every false thing,

every worldly thing. Note that *even the very appearance* of evil is to be rejected. That is a high standard! This is the opposite of the popular principle that many things are “non-essentials.”

Fifth, a proving mindset is a necessary element in being sanctified wholly (1 Th. 5:23). Those who reject the testing mindset and do not consider it to be true Christianity couldn’t be more wrong!

Exhortation

A third objective of this book is exhortation. The study of church history should exhort us to every good thing, such as the following:

- The necessity of holding to the infallible inspiration of Scripture in the midst of nearly universal attacks against it
- The necessity of holding to the true Christ, the true Gospel, and the true Spirit
- The necessity of having faith in God in an era of skepticism
- The necessity of understanding that salvation is only through Jesus Christ and His substitutionary atonement
- The importance and centrality of the New Testament church
- The importance of a regenerate church membership
- The importance of biblically qualified leaders
- The importance of sound, effectual preaching and teaching
- The importance of serious Bible study
- The necessity of full surrender to Christ and wholehearted discipleship
- The necessity of holy, pilgrim Christian living and separation from the world
- The importance of being warriors for the faith, of standing boldly and unequivocally for truth and righteousness
- The necessity of separation from apostasy
- The necessity of understanding true Christian unity as opposed to man-made unity
- The necessity and practicality of the imminent, pre-tribulational return of Christ for His own
- The necessity of making biblical evangelism and the Great Commission the first priority until Jesus comes

Protection

A fourth objective of this book is protection from error.

If we will know our heritage, and analyze it biblically as God instructs us to do, and hold to the old paths of God's Word, we can avoid errors that were made in the past so that we can have greater victory in the present.

That is a major purpose of this book.

Getting Stronger

A final objective is to get stronger. We don't intend just to "hold the fort"! In light of the promises of God's Word, we *can* have strong New Testament churches today, in the last hours of the age, in the midst of end-time apostasy. In fact, we are convinced that we can have better churches than have existed in our lifetime, or even the lifetimes of our parents and grandparents, if we will take the Word of God seriously and make it, truly, our sole and final authority, and throw away our dependence on tradition. Building on the good heritage that we have been given, we can have churches that are better than the old denominational churches before liberalism, better than the old non-denominational fundamentalist churches, better than the typical fundamental Baptist churches. They won't be larger, but they will be better. We can have less wood, hay, and stubble, and more gold, silver, and precious stones.

This book is not just about the past; it is about the present and the future as we await the Shout! It is a call to strengthen existing churches, to plant new churches, to train and ordain God-called men, to encourage and support church planters who know what they are doing.

We especially want to encourage and challenge young preachers. An older preacher who founded and pastored a large church with a Bible college and has preached in hundreds of churches, said, "I'm sure I couldn't join 50 churches in America, and I'm being generous. Even many pastors who have [good] music and dress standards are weak and won't 'rock the boat' for anything. It's a sad day. Most of the churches that I could recommend are new works pastored by young men."

I can say about the same thing on both sides of that coin, meaning that I perceive that it is a sad day overall, but I, too, know of a number

of young men (and some not so young) who are establishing new churches that, I am convinced, are going to be really good churches by God's grace. They know what they are doing much more than I did as a young church planter just starting out 40 years ago. And these new churches don't just encourage me, *they really, really encourage me!* I do everything I can to help them. (We describe a few of the churches that we consider strong today in the chapter "Where Are Fundamental Baptists Today?"

This is our passion. It is how we have spent the better part of our lives. We are church planters in one of the darkest and most difficult parts of the world. We aren't just historians and armchair theorists.

And we are seeing more power and blessing and fruit today than ever before. We are seeing more true life-changing conversions, more young people surrender to Christ, more non-conformity to the world, more transformation of lives by the renewing of the mind, more serious Bible study, more families built up, more children biblically trained, more preachers raised up and better trained, more young preparing well for marriage.

We are encouraged in the Lord!

Interdenominational Fundamentalism

Introduction

Fundamental Baptists have deep roots in the interdenominational Fundamentalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Even those who do not like the name “fundamentalist” cannot escape the reality of these roots.

For myself, the name “fundamentalist” really means little to nothing. At the same time, I don’t mind the name even though I reject many things about the old fundamentalist movement, which will be clear in these studies. When I call myself a “fundamental” Baptist, I am referring especially to the characteristics of strong contention for the faith (fighting) and separation. This is what distinguished independent Baptists of a bygone day with denominational Baptists.

(We would note that there is a difference between “interdenominational” and “non-denominational.” Interdenominational refers to associations between those who are of different denominational stances (e.g., Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, Brethren, Holiness). Non-denominational refers to those who do not have a denominational name, such as the Bible churches.

Fundamentalism was a theological war that pitted Bible believers against modernists, *but it was much more than that*. It was a spiritual revival. There was a great stirring that produced an emphasis on the infallible inspiration and life-changing power of Scripture, the complete fallenness and lostness of mankind, Christ alone as Lord and Saviour and salvation only through Him, the necessity of Christ’s vicarious blood atonement, the new birth through repentance and saving faith, the literal interpretation of Bible prophecy with the focus on the imminent return of Christ, separated, pilgrim Christian living, and single-minded zeal in the fulfillment of Christ’s Great Commission.

The fundamentalist movement was interdenominational, but there was a strong and unique Baptist side to it that eventually went its own way as the fundamental Baptist (independent Baptist) movement. In fact, by the 1970s, Fundamentalism had largely been subsumed into fundamental Baptists. There were a few fundamentalist Presbyterians,

Methodists, and Bible churches left, but the vast bulk of churches that had fundamentalist character were fundamental Baptist. Even the remaining fundamentalist institutions that began as non-denominational, or interdenominational, such as Bob Jones University (founded by a Methodist evangelist), had gravitated largely to fundamental Baptists.

“[Fundamentalism was initially] a broad coalition (conservative Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, etc.), but by the 1960s, ‘predominantly Baptist separatists’” (“The Fundamentals vs. ‘fundamentalism,’” *BIOLA magazine*, Summer 2014, citing George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*).

Today, most denominational Baptist churches are deeply compromised, if not apostate, and most of the old non-Baptist fundamentalists are in the same condition. The old-line non-Baptist fundamentalists of the 1940s have morphed into the evangelicalism of today. They have gone the way of New Evangelicalism, compromise with theological liberalism, and conformity to the world.

Evangelicalism today is permeated with heresies such as limited inspiration, theistic evolution, ecumenism, neo-orthodoxy, universalism, annihilationism, Unitarianism, contemplative prayer, homosexual Christianity, psychobabble, charismatic mysticism, and textual criticism.

Many books have documented this sad state of affairs, such as *The Battle for the Bible* and *The Bible in Balance* by Harold Lindsell, *New Neutralism II: Exposing the Gray of Compromise* by John Ashbrook, *The Tragedy of Compromise* by Ernest Pickering, *Evangelicalism Divided* by Iain Murray, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* by Francis Schaeffer, *No Place for the Truth* by David Wells, and *The Coming Evangelical Crisis* edited by John Armstrong. We have summarized this documentation in *New Evangelicalism: Its History, Characteristics, and Fruit*, available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org. It has review questions and is designed to be used as a training course for churches, homes, and schools.

Fundamental Baptists are what is left of the old Fundamentalism, for the most part, and they, too, are collapsing and sliding down the slippery slope of apostasy, as we document in this book.

If we will know our heritage, and analyze it biblically as God instructs us to do, and hold to the old paths of God's Word, we can avoid errors that were made in the past so that we can have victory in the present. That is a major purpose of this book.

Some highlights of the history of interdenominational Fundamentalism are as follows:

- Birthed in the Midst of End-Time Apostasy
- An Infallible Bible
- Zeal for God's Word
- Bible Conferences
- Bible Preaching
- Bible Prophecy
- Understanding End-time Apostasy
- Holy Christian Living
- Evangelistic/Missionary Zeal
- Bible Institutes
- Bible Study
- Hymn Singing
- Interdenominationalism
- *The Fundamentals*
- Keswick Holiness
- Dwight L. Moody
- R.A. Torrey
- Harry Ironside
- Brethren Writings
- Wheaton College
- World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA)
- Fundamentalist Presbyterians
- Interdenominational Youth Ministries
- Charles Fuller and the Old Fashioned Revival Hour
- Bob Jones University
- Monroe Parker
- Dallas Theological Seminary
- Independent Fundamental Churches of America (IFCA)
- Grace Brethren Churches
- Fundamental Evangelistic Association
- Ohio Bible Fellowship
- Fundamentalism Captured by New Evangelicalism

Birthed in the Midst of End-Time Apostasy

Fundamentalism was birthed in the midst of the end-time apostasy that is prophesied in Scripture.

The Lord Jesus Christ described this in the parables of the mystery of the kingdom in Matthew 13 (“the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” Mt. 13:11). The final one, the Parable of the Leaven, summarizes the course of the church age. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Mt. 13:33). We see that the leaven of apostasy will spread until the whole of professing “Christendom” is corrupted. This tells us that the end of the church age will witness an explosion of apostasy. The vast majority of churches will not follow the “faith once delivered to the saints.” The progress of leavening is exactly what we see in church history, and a nearly entire leavening is exactly what we see today.

The apostle Peter described end-time apostasy:

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter. 3:3-7).

Here we see scoffers attacking the Bible, denying its supernatural events, particularly the global flood and the Second Coming. The scoffers deny predictive prophecy. They preach a uniformitarian view of human history that is not marked by God’s supernatural intervention.

The prophetic Word reveals the secrets of their hearts, telling us that they are motivated to walk after their own lusts. They profess to reject the Bible on scientific grounds, but in truth they are motivated by base, selfish concerns. They boast of their scholarship, but God’s Word says they are “willingly ignorant.”

The apostle Paul described end-time apostasy:

“But evil men and seducers SHALL WAX WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving, and being deceived. ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3-4).

Increasing apostasy is exactly what we see in church history. Roman Catholicism developed over a period of a few hundred years after the apostles and spread false Christianity throughout the world. The Protestant Reformation had many scriptural elements and resulted in great social and political benefits, but it did not reject all of Rome’s errors (e.g., infant baptism, universal church, state church, amillennialism, replacement theology).

In the 19th century, there was an explosion of apostasy: German higher critical thinking or theological liberalism, Humanism, Darwinian and theistic evolution, Unitarianism, Marxism, Freudianism, and cults such as Jehovah’s Witness, Mormonism, Seventh-day Adventism, Christian Science, and Swedenborgianism.

Revival of Roman Catholicism

In the 19th century, Roman Catholicism was experiencing a revival. In 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of Immaculate Conception (Mary was born sinless). In 1870, this pope summoned the first Vatican Council, which decreed that the pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra* (“from the throne”), referring to the blasphemous claim that the pope is a spiritual ruler who has the authority to define doctrine.

Romanism was sweeping through England on the back of **the Oxford Movement** (so called because its leaders were associated with Oxford University). The beginning of the movement is dated July 14, 1833, with a sermon preached by John Keble at St. Mary the Virgin Church, the university church at Oxford. John Keble and John Henry Newman began writing *Tracts for These Times* in 1833 to promote a Romanized Anglicanism. Thus the movement was also named *Tractarianism*.

By 1845, several hundred Anglican clergy had joined the Roman Catholic Church, and a large number of those who remained were

“Anglo-Catholics.” In 1840, there were less than 500 Roman priests in England, only 16 convents for nuns and two colleges for training priests. By 1890, there were 2,600 priests, over 400 convents with more than 15,000 nuns, and 29 colleges for priests (H.G. Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, 1891, pp. 2-3).

Consider the testimony of historian J.A. Froude, who described the wretched spiritual climate in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Froude’s father was an Anglican parish minister, and an older brother, Richard Hurrell, joined the Oxford Movement and wrote one of the *Tracts for These Times*. J.A. Froude had intimate, first-hand information about the religious situation in England, and he testified that the twin evils of Rationalism and Romanism had devastated the Church of England.

“Now, while one set of men were bringing back medievalism, science and criticism were assailing with impunity the authority of the Bible; miracles were declared impossible; even Theism itself was treated as an open question. ... Both these movements [Romanism and rationalism or modernism] began within a short distance of one another, and were evidently connected. there is scarcely a clergyman in the country who does not carry upon him in one form or other the marks of the Tractarian movement. ... The Church of England has not only admitted Catholic doctrine but has rushed into it with extraordinary enthusiasm” (J.A. Froude, *Short Studies about Great Subjects*, 1883, pp. 163, 164, 218).

In the last half of the 19th century, immigration brought millions of Roman Catholics to America from Ireland (4 million) and Europe, dramatically changing the face of American society.

“In 1850 Catholics made up only five percent of the total U.S. population. By 1906, they made up seventeen percent of the total population (14 million out of 82 million people)—and constituted the single largest religious denomination in the country” (“Roman Catholics and Immigration in Nineteenth-century America,” National Humanities Center).

Marxism

Marxism was also on the march. In January 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published *The Communist Manifesto* in London. Marx was an immoral, cruel man who hated God. He considered religion

“the opiate of the people” and the very concept of God to be a hindrance to human development. *The Communist Manifesto* announces a war to the death against truth, religion, and morality, “Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality.”

Wherever Marx’s philosophy has operated, it has produced turmoil, variance, hatred, violence, and death. Within a year after the publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, over 50 violent attempts took place to topple established governments, including the third French revolution (James Webb, *The Occult Underground*, 1974). Marxist political movements swept across Europe, England, and America, seeking to overthrow democratic republics.

By 1917, communist revolutionaries had gained control of the Russian Empire and were well on their way to dominating and brutalizing a large portion of the world.

Theological Liberalism

German Rationalism and theological liberalism were beginning to permeate Protestant denominations in England and America.

Consider two of the prominent names:

Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834) of Halle, Germany, exalted experience and feeling over Bible doctrine. He used traditional Christian language but gave this language new meaning. He emphasized the necessity of knowing Christ through faith, but by this he did not mean holding the Bible as the historically true and infallible Word of God; he was referring merely to man’s own intuition or consciousness. Schleiermacher’s “faith” was not faith in the Word of God but faith in faith. It was blind mysticism. He did not consider historical biblical truth to be necessary to faith. Thus Schleiermacher could say, “With my intellect I am a philosopher, and with my feelings quite a devout man; ay, more than that, a Christian” (quoted by Daniel Edward, “Schleiermacher Interpreted by Himself and the Men of His School,” *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Vol. 25, 1876, p. 609). He said, “[T]he heart still had ways of knowing the mind knows not of.” Schleiermacher barred doctrinal preaching from the pulpit (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, p. 11). “Schleiermacher is correctly viewed as the chief source of the massive change which has occurred in the historic Protestant denominations during the last two hundred

years. ... In his separation of the intellectual content of Christianity (the objective biblical revelation) from Christian 'feeling', Schleiermacher seemed to provide a means whereby the essence of Christianity could remain unaffected, no matter how much of the Bible was rejected. Hostile criticism of Scripture need not therefore be seen as a threat to the 'faith' ... Christianity, it was concluded, could be successful irrespective of whether Scripture were preserved as the Word of God, and this thought was the more appealing as the theological scholarship of the nineteenth century became increasingly destructive" (Murray, p. 11). Schleiermacher paved the way for the New Evangelical view that men can be genuine Christians even though they reject biblical doctrine. On this basis, Billy Graham fellowshipped with modernistic skeptics and Roman Catholic bishops and popes.

Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) was the father of the documentary theory of the Old Testament. His work is also called Higher Criticism. Wellhausen built on the teaching of Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-69), a student of the German philosopher Hegel who applied an evolutionary theory to the development of the Bible. Wellhausen was Graf's student. In 1878, Wellhausen published *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, which had a powerful influence in the spread of the documentary theory. According to this view, the Old Testament is not divine revelation but merely the record of the evolution of Israel's religion. Much of the Pentateuch is considered "sacred legend." Wellhausen held "that Hebrew religion had undergone a development from the primitive stories of nomadic times to the elaborate, institutionalized ritualism of the period of the centuries before the birth of Christ" (*The History of Christianity*, Lion Publishing, 1977, p. 554). Wellhausen denied the historicity of Abraham, Noah, and other Old Testament characters. He wrote, "From the patriarchal narratives it is impossible to obtain any historical information with regard to the patriarchs" (*Prolegomena*, p. 318). He claimed that Israel did not know about Jehovah God until Moses taught them this. He claimed that the laws and the priestly system were not given by Moses but were developed after Israel was in Canaan and, in some cases, after the Babylonian exile, and that most of the Pentateuch was written during the days of Israel's kings as a "pious fraud" to encourage a revival. It was pieced together from writings by unknown men. (Wellhausen also

claimed that the Gospels portray a mythical Jesus created by the writers of the New Testament.)

The letters JEDP were used to summarize the Graf-Wellhausen theory. J stands for Jehovah, E for Elohist, D for Deuteronomy, and P for the Priests' Code. These are supposedly different streams of documents that were used to create the Pentateuch over a long period of time.

This theory has, in its ever-changing forms, wielded vast influence in theological education in most denominations. "As one generation of students passed into the next, the teachings of Graff and Wellhausen became established dogma, and the result was growing disbelief not only in the book of Genesis but in the entire Old Testament" (Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, p. 391).

The number of supposed sources for the Pentateuch multiplied until eventually Wellhausen claimed that he could discern 22 different authors of the first six books of the Bible!

By the time that the *Polychrome Bible* was published in 1893, the critics had developed the most amazing ability to discern even tiny portions of original documents that were allegedly spliced together to form the early books of Scripture. The authors of the *Polychrome Bible* included Wellhausen, S.R. Driver, Charles Briggs, and other influential modernists. The *Polychrome Bible* was color-coded to identify the alleged source documents. Consider the *Polychrome* edition of the book of Judges by G. F. Moore. He claimed that the verses that form Judges 2:6 to 3:6 are made up of 23 different fragments all ingeniously spliced together. "... in thirteen cases he claims to show that three words are from one author, while the context is from another author. In ten cases he claims that two words are from one author and the context from another, and in eight cases he would have us believe that one single word is from one author and the context from another, one of these words being the personal pronoun 'I' (Judges 6:16)" (John L. Campbell, *The Bible Under Fire*, 1928, p. 16).

Ernest Pickering identified nine major characteristics of the theological modernism that was birthed in this era:

1. A rejection of the historic Christian doctrine of biblical inspiration.
2. A tolerance of all views that come from within the religious community.

3. An emphasis upon the validity of human experience over the revealed truth of God.
4. A denial of the absolute and unique deity of Christ.
5. An emphasis on the dignity and goodness of man.
6. A rejection of the total depravity of man and the resultant necessity of the new birth.
7. An evolutionary concept of the origin of all things as opposed to a creationist view.
8. A rejection of the supernatural interventions of God in human history.
9. An emphasis upon the social gospel, that is, that the main mission of the church is to correct societal ills. Sin is essentially social and thus salvation must involve the correction of these social problems (Pickering, *The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 3).

Consider some general descriptions of the condition that existed in Europe and England and America in the latter half of the 19th century when Fundamentalism was born:

“Never in the history of man has so terrific a calamity befallen the race as that which all who look may now behold advancing as a deluge, black with destruction, resistless in might, uprooting our most cherished hopes, engulfing our most precious creed, and burying our highest life in mindless desolation ... The flood-gates of infidelity are open, and Atheism overwhelming is upon us” (George Romanes, 1878, cited from Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, p. 371).

“A wave of colour blindness about theology appears to be passing over the land. The minds of many seem utterly incapable of discerning any difference between faith and faith, creed and creed, tenet and tenet, opinion and opinion, thought and thought, however diverse, heterogeneous, contrariant, and mutually destructive they may be. Everything, forsooth, is true, and nothing is false, everything is right and nothing is wrong” (J.C. Ryle, 1884, *Principles for Churchmen*).

“A CHASM IS OPENING BETWEEN THE MEN WHO BELIEVE THEIR BIBLES AND THE MEN WHO ARE PREPARED FOR AN ADVANCE UPON SCRIPTURE. ... Those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the

Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death. ... Attendance at places of worship is declining and reverence for holy things is vanishing. We solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to THE SCEPTICISM WHICH HAS FLASHED FROM THE PULPIT AND SPREAD AMONG THE PEOPLE" (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel*, November 1887).

"Spurgeon's days saw apostasy as a trickle; by the time of the Bible League's foundation [1892] it had become a stream; shortly it expanded to a river, and today it has become a veritable ocean of unbelief. For the most of men the ancient landmarks have disappeared from sight. Life upon earth has become a voyage on an uncharted ocean in a cockle-shell boat 'tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.' Never before in human history has the 'sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive' (Eph. 4:14) been so greatly in evidence. 'Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived' (2 Ti. 3:13)" ("The Bible League: Its Origin and Its Aims," *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, Abingdon: The Bible League, 1984).

"The unspiritual condition of the churches ... and the alarmingly prevalent skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland is, without doubt, almost wholly attributable to the advocacy of these criticisms by a large majority of the prominent pastors and theological professors in those lands. The same condition of affairs is measurably true in England, Scotland, New England, and in every community where this criticism is believed by any very considerable number of people and openly advocated" (L.W.Munhall, *The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics*, 1896).

"The fact is that Germany, by the mid-19th century, was flooded by unbelief. Its schools and colleges, as well as its churches, contributed to this. Its Protestant hymn-book was revised in order to deprive it of much of its evangelical content. Philosophy replaced theology, and Scripture was dealt with savagely. Miracles ceased to be accounted miracles; they were explained away. Bible prophecies were discredited. Christ was robbed of his deity. His resurrection, it was said,

never took place. Either he did not really die but suffered a fainting fit, or he retreated after his supposed death to some place known only to his disciples. D.F. Strauss startled the world by a *Life of Jesus* (published in 1835-36) which admitted a framework of fact, but claimed that much of the content of the Four Gospels was sheer mythology. Julius Wellhausen [1844-1910] achieved notoriety by attacking the orthodox teaching on the authorship, unity and inspiration of the Scriptures, and unhappily many followed in his steps. He was the chief pioneer of Higher Critical views, and under his influence many theologians throughout Western Europe and America questioned or abandoned the authority even of Christ himself” (S.M. Houghton, *Sketches from Church History*, p. 239).

This is a glimpse into the conditions that existed when Fundamentalism arose in the late 19th century. End-time apostasy was blossoming.

An Infallible Bible

The foundation of Fundamentalism is the conviction that the Bible is divinely inspired: plenarily, verbally, infallibly, inerrantly.

This confidence in the Bible’s infallibility, and a literal interpretation of it, is the fountainhead of Fundamentalism.

This is the clear teaching of Scripture itself. *It is the teaching of Jesus Christ.* “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18). *It is the teaching of the apostle Paul.* “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). *And it is the teaching of the apostle Peter.* “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pe. 1:20-21).

This has been the belief of God’s redeemed people ever since. Those who are borne of the Spirit love the Book that the Spirit has delivered to mankind. They know it is the living Word of God. They are born again through the witness of that Book and they grow spiritually by its

words. They exclaim with the Psalmist, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103).

This was the doctrine of the Presbyterians who wrote the Westminster Confession between 1643-48. “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

This was the doctrine of the General Baptists of England in 1678, as stated in their “Orthodox Creed”: “And by the holy Scriptures we understand the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, as they are now translated into our English mother tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity, and authority, in the protestant churches of Christ to this day.”

But by the early 19th century, there was a growing movement among Protestants to downgrade the doctrine of biblical inspiration. It was the firstfruits of theological modernism.

The Unitarians were at the forefront. A prominent name was the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). He rejected the divine inspiration of Scripture. “It was Coleridge who was responsible, more than any other single individual, for the diffusion of German neology [new theology] through Cambridge University and thence through the Anglican Church” (James Sichtler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 12). (The role of Unitarians in the downgrade of inspiration is extensively documented in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

Consider the British & Foreign Bible Society (BFBS). It was the world’s first Bible Society, formed in 1804, and yet it was corrupt from the beginning. The BFBS joined hands with Roman Catholics and Unitarians (Andrew Brown, *The Word of God Among All Nations*, p. 12). In the 1820s, the British and Foreign Bible Society was distributing Bibles with a preface denying the infallible inspiration of Scripture. “The preface, by a French theologian, Dr. Haffner, treated inspiration in the way that had so disgusted Haldane in Geneva: Ezekiel, for instance was said to have possessed ‘a very lively imagination’” (D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p.

88). By 1831, the Unitarian influence was so strong within the BFBS that when an attempt was made to adopt a statement of faith that would include a simple profession that Jesus Christ is God, *it was rejected by a large majority!* Those who cared about truth left the BFBS and founded the Trinitarian Bible Society.

Thus, already in the early decades of the 19th century, theological liberalism, with its questioning of biblical infallibility, was beginning to spread across Europe, England, and America. By the last half of the century, its influence was great.

Fundamentalism was a restoration of the apostolic view of Scripture. From its inception, a belief in the infallible inspiration of Scripture was its hallmark. It was held by interdenominational fundamentalists of all stripes. It was held by northern fundamental Baptists, and it was held by southern fundamental Baptists.

A.J. Gordon rightly observed that true revivals are led by “believers in the inspiration and infallible authority of the Word of God” (*Evangelism Old and New*, 1905).

Point #1 of the 14-point Niagara Creed of 1878, which was drawn up at the dawn of the fundamentalist movement, stated,

“We believe ‘that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,’ by which we understand the whole of the book called the Bible; nor do we take the statement in the sense in which it is sometimes foolishly said that works of human genius are inspired, but in the sense that the Holy Ghost gave the very words of the sacred writings to holy men of old; and that His Divine inspiration is not in different degrees, but extends equally and fully to all parts of these writings, historical, poetical, doctrinal and prophetic, and to the smallest word, and inflection of a word, provided such word is found in the original manuscripts: 2 Ti. 3:16, 17; 2 Pe. 1:21; 1 Co. 2:13; Mr. 12:26, 36; 13:11; Acts 1:16; 2:4.”

Gordon’s *Watchword*, founded in 1878, was one of the first periodicals that exposed liberalism, and the very first issues warned of the downgrade in the doctrine of inspiration. He said, “The inspiration of Scripture includes the whole and every part of it. ... The inspiration includes not only all the books of the Bible in general but in detail, the form as well as the substance, the word as well as the thought.”

In 1899, R.A. Torrey promoted the infallible inspiration of Scripture in his book *The Divine Origin of the Bible*. Torrey gave 10 proofs of the divine origin and authority of the Bible: (1) The testimony of Jesus Christ, (2) fulfilled prophecies, (3) the unity of the Book, (4) the immeasurable superiority of its teachings to those of any other book or all other books, (5) its indestructibility, (6) the character of those who accept it and the character of those who reject it, (7) the influence of the Book, (8) its inexhaustible depth, (9) as we grow in wisdom and holiness we grow toward the Bible, (10) the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit.

One of the major purposes of *The Fundamentals* of 1910-1915 was to defend the infallible inspiration of Scripture. The first 25 of the 90 articles dealt with biblical inspiration. Number 20 was "The Inspiration of the Bible: Definition, Extent, and Proof" by James M. Gray.

The World Conference on Fundamentals of the Faith, founded in 1919, had a nine-point statement of faith that began with the verbal inspiration of Scripture. "We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life."

Oliver Van Osdel, a fundamentalist leader among northern Baptists in Michigan in the early part of the 20th century, wrote, "We believe that the Bible is inspired from the first word to the last. It is all essential and all Fundamental, or the Holy Spirit would not have dictated it. ... To be sure there are doctrinal portions, prophetic portions, and historical portions, but every part is essential to the fully developed Christian life, or God would not have placed these particular things in His Word" (*Baptist Temple News*, June 1930).

W.B. Riley, prominent fundamental Baptist leader in the North, held the Bible to be the infallible Word of God in every part and detail. In 1943, he said, "The Holy Scriptures are supernatural in the circumstance that they leave no vital subject untouched. By implication, illustration, type symbol, or direct discussion they compass the entire experience of man and shed light upon every worthwhile subject" ("Divinely-Ordered Divisions," Conservative Baptist Regional meeting, Chicago, October 1943).

John R. Rice, prominent fundamental Baptist leader in the South, had exactly the same view and promoted it through the widely influential *Sword of the Lord* paper, founded in 1934. The masthead announced that it was “An Independent Christian Weekly, Standing for the Verbal Inspiration of the Bible..”

Lee Roberson, another major figure among fundamental Baptists in the South from the 1940s to the 1980s, said, “I believe the Bible from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelation! Not a single line, not a verse, not a chapter, not a story, not a miracle, not a parable would I omit from the Word! This is God’s Book, and I believe it” (Roberson, “Inspection Day for Highland Park Baptist Church”).

To hold the Bible as the infallible Word of God is to believe Jesus Christ and the apostles, and this is a grand and glorious thing in this dark world. It is essential to revival. To depart from it is to quench the Spirit.

Zeal for God’s Word

Fundamentalism as a movement had serious weaknesses, we believe, but the strength of Fundamentalism was its stand for the infallible inspiration of Scripture, its testing mindset, its zeal for the truth, its willingness to fight for the truth, to defend the truth, to preach *against* error as well as *for* truth, and to separate from error.

This is biblical and right. In fact, no Christianity that lacks this is biblical and right.

“Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things* to be right; and I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:128).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Ro. 16:17).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Co. 6:14).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11).

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Ti. 1:3).