The Presbyterian Church as a Church tolerates contra-confessional doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments and the Last Things in large numbers of its teachers and pastors. . . . The Westminster System has been virtually displaced by the teaching of the dogmatic divines. It is no longer practically the standard of faith of the Presbyterian Church. The Catechisms are not taught in our churches, the Confession is not expounded in our theological seminaries. The Presbyterian Church is not orthodox by its own Standards. It has neither the old orthodoxy or the new orthodoxy. It is in perplexity. It is drifting toward an unknown and a mysterious future. . . .

There have been so many departures from the Standards in all directions, that it is necessary for all parties in the Presbyterian Church to be generous, tolerant, and broad-minded.

Charles A. Briggs
(Whither?, 1889)

5
The Broadening Church In the U.S.A.

THE sixty years between the reunion of 1869 (actually consummated in 1870, but approved in 1869) and the reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary in 1929 witnessed significant growth in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. For instance, in the forty or so years following reunion, the number of churches more than doubled and the number of communicant members more than tripled.[1] Much was accomplished for the furthering of Christ's kingdom on earth, and the Church was opening its doors to include more and more people. However the Church was also broadening in a far deeper and more significant way—namely, in its doctrine, and chiefly in its toleration of teaching blatantly contrary to the doctrinal system and spirit of its Confession of Faith. This story is well told by Professor Lefferts A. Loetscher in his well-known book, *The Broadening Church* (1954), a study of theological issues in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., since 1869.[2] A similar trend was also taking place in the other mainline American Churches. It is all-important that we grasp this broadening trend if

1. S. H. Roberts, *A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 1917, 67-78.

2. L. A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869*, 1954. Actually, the story is only carried down in 1936. This book (*BC*) is the crucial secondary source for this period. It is well-documented and contains much valuable information. Loetscher is Professor of American Church History at Princeton Seminary, and the fact that he writes from the standpoint of the Broadening Church gives the book even more value.

we are to understand the history behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. Thus the present chapter deals with the history of the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church during the sixty-year period (1869-1929) in terms of this development and the reaction to it within the Church. The relevant topics before us, then, are the rise of modernism, the reaction of fundamentalism, the Princeton tradition, and the triumph of indifferentism.

Rise of Modernism

The decades following the reunion of 1870 witnessed intense activity in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., especially in the areas of home and foreign missions, Christian education, and social reform. 'The causes of temperance and Sunday observance, which had been the classic centers of Protestant social concern next to slavery, continued as objects of Presbyterian interest in the period after the Civil War.'[3] In connection with all this activity there emerged a more streamlined and centralized Church organization.[4] In due time this organization passed into the control of men under the spell of modernism.

Indeed, by far the most significant development within the Church during this period was the rise of modernism. Apparently, the term 'modernism' was first officially used in

3. L. A. Loetscher, 'Some Events and Trends Since 1869,' in G. J. Slosser (ed.), *They Seek a Country: the American Presbyterians*, 1955, 257. This brief article (p. 251-266) is on the whole a very perceptive introduction to general developments in the post-reunion period. For documents relating to these developments, see M. W. Armstrong, L. A. Loetscher, and C. A. Anderson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Enterprise* (*PE*)*: Sources of American Presbyterian History*. 1956, 225 ff.

4. *Cf. ibid.*, 259: 'Running through such activism is often the implication that the church is primarily a voluntary society, chartered to do business for the Lord; and also the intimation that anything that hampers the church's work should be eliminated or reduced. . . . The intense activity of this period, with resulting development of executive power, has perhaps made possible authoritarian tendencies in the area of the church's spiritual and theological life, which happily have not as yet materialized.' One may wonder whether Loetscher's confidence, that such 'authoritarian tendencies' have not triumphed in the U.S.A. Church, is well-founded.

Presbyterian circles in 1909 to designate the liberal theology which had for some time been infiltrating the Church.[5] What, basically, is modernism, or liberalism, anyway? What, at bottom, is the spirit of modernism?

The positive thrust of modernism is simply this: to bring the Christian faith up-to-date. It is an attempt to make Christianity acceptable to the modern world. However, to do this the historic Christian faith, as all modernists admit, will have to be drastically reinterpreted, or as the renowned popularizer of modernism, Harry Emerson Fosdick, used to put it: 'we must adjust the ancient faith to the best intelligence of our day; we must modernize Christianity if the modern mind is to be expected to believe in it.'[6]

Now it is obvious that an underlying assumption of modernism is that the modern mind is basically on the right track. Now what is this track along which modern thought is proceeding? It is simply the agnostic (?) assumption that, as far as we know, development is ultimate, and that the mind of man, for better or for worse, is the ultimate interpreter of this development. The modern mind is obsessed with the thought of development, process, and progress. This can be seen in its approval of the theory of evolution and in its attitude toward social change and many other areas of life.[7]

The negative implications of this frame of mind for historic Christianity are, of course, considerable. With respect to the matter of Scriptural authority, there can be no finished revelation of God in history and Scripture. Thus every man,

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5. *BC,* 102.

6. For Loetscher's interpretation at this point, see *BC*, 11: 'What is loosely called the "liberal theology" is best defined as an attempt to mediate between historic orthodoxy and the radically altered scientific and cultural outlook. . . . Because the "liberal theology" was an attitude and a method of adapting traditional views to the new situation rather than an accepted system of ideas, its adherents—and there were scarcely any, including revivalists, who were not in some degree responsive to its ideals—differed widely among themselves in the degree and the manner of adapting the old ideas. But they were deeply convinced that the expression of Christian truth must adjust itself to the times or die.'

7. *Ibid.,* 9 ff., *et al. Cf. PE.* 234 ff., *et al.*

including the Christian, can be liberal-minded. He is free to believe whatever seems best to him. With regard to matters of doctrine and a confession of faith, there can be no permanent 'system' of doctrine, for that which is 'true' doctrine today may not be so true tomorrow. As far as the Church is concerned since nobody can be sure that there is any final, distinctively Christian truth—there is no reason why all who claim to be Christian cannot get together to bear a united witness to the modern world.

At this point much more could be said about modernism in terms of the peculiar form which it took in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—namely, classic liberal theology (one must be careful to distinguish the generic type from its passing manifestation).[8] However, perhaps the best way to illustrate modernist principles at work in the Presbyterian Church is to glance at the views of that most conspicuous representative of modernism, Charles A. Briggs.

Of Old School background, Briggs is, more or less, the self-appointed reformer of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in the last decades of the nineteenth century. He sees himself as the Church's guide through the maze of intellectual and cultural developments cascading upon her.[9] According to his programmatic book *Whither?* (1889), in the face of these challenges 'a new reformation is necessary.'[10] Indeed, modern scientific methods are preparing the way for such a reformation—which will emancipate the Church from the Protes-

8. *Cf. BC,* 6, 90 f., *et al.,* where Loetscher mentions some of the various elements in the modernism of the period: evolutionary naturalism, humanistic idealism, relativistic pragmatism, *etc.* For a perceptive analysis of the various philosophical currents underlying modernism, see C. Van Til, *The New Modernism,* 1946.

9. For an account of these developments and their effect upon the Churches, see *BC,* 8 ff., *et al.* For an account of Briggs' background and career, see *BC,* 27 f., *et al.*

10. C. A. Briggs, *Whither? A Theological Question For the Times,* 1889, 21 (*cf.* 296 *et al.*). 'All Christian denominations have drifted from their standards, and are drifting at the present time. No one who has examined the facts and considered the historical situation can doubt it. The question that troubles us the most is—Whither?' (5)

tant scholasticism of the seventeenth century, especially in the form taught at Princeton Theological Seminary, a departure from the Reformation. Briggs claims to be an adherent of orthodoxy, but he distinguishes between his own orthodoxy and the 'orthodoxism' represented by Princeton Seminary. Orthodoxy loves truth and, in following the truth wherever it leads, is willing to learn; orthodoxism, on the other hand, in claiming to know the truth, is unwilling to learn, and thus amounts to a prejudiced traditionalism. 'The battle against science, philosophy, exegesis, and history must come to an end. All truth should be welcomed from whatever source, and built into the structure of Christian doctrine. The attitude of *Traditional Orthodoxy* should be abandoned as real heterodoxy, and the attitude of Advancing Orthodoxy assumed as the *true* orthodoxy.'[11]

The source of these sentiments Briggs explicitly traces to his historical and Biblical studies in Germany,[12] the chief source of liberalism in the American Church. This fact is particularly evidenced in his discussion of the formal principle of Protestantism, namely, the authority of Scripture. Briggs emphatically rejects the doctrines of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. In doing so he appeals to the assured results of German higher criticism. The theological scholarship of Europe has proven just how untenable and ridiculous the notion of inerrancy is. In that these doctrines are contrary to established fact and established truth, they are positively dangerous. Nevertheless, despite their heterodoxy, there is room in the Church for those who hold them, provided they hold them as private opinions and do not attempt to impose them on others.[13]

Briggs' view of Scriptural authority—or lack thereof—is

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11. *Ibid.*, 12 ff., 18. Yet, although traditional orthodoxy is heterodox, there is room for it in the Church (*cf.* x, 90)!

12. *Ibid.*, vii. Briggs concentrated in Biblical studies and historical theology during the years 1866-1869.

13. *Ibid.*, 63 ff., 69, 90. The attack on verbal inspiration and inerrancy is specifically directed at the Princeton theologians (89, *et al.*). For an account of

set forth more fully in his infamous address on the subject when inaugurated in 1891 as Professor of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York. Throughout this address, Briggs assumes those higher critical views of the Bible which he had brought back from Germany. These views assume that the Scriptures are the haphazard, merely human product of a process of development, whereby the religious understanding of men has progressed from a lower to a higher level. Therefore, much of Scripture is not only outdated, but false and immoral.

Nevertheless, despite such views, Briggs claims to hold to the authority of Holy Scripture. It is admitted, at the outset, that this is a matter 'upon which everything depends.' First of all, we must not assail the church and reason in the interest of Biblical authority, for God speaks through these as well as through Scripture.[14] Then there are certain barriers to the appreciation of divine authority in Scripture. First of all, there is the barrier of superstitious Bibliolatry, the worship of a book. The second obstacle is the dogma of verbal inspiration, that is, the Biblically unfounded claim that the very words of the original Scriptures are ultimately the product of the supernatural work of the Spirit of God. The third thing that keeps men away from the Bible is the authenticity of the Scriptures. 'It may be regarded as a certain result of the science of the Higher Criticism that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. . . . Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name.' The fourth barrier is the dogma of the inerrancy of Scripture. For historical criticism has proved the existence of errors which no one can explain away. Other hindrances to the authority of Scripture are an emphasis on supernatural miracles in the Bible and insistence on minute, predictive prophecy.[15] Briggs goes on to discuss the theology

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higher criticism as related to the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., in the late nineteenth century, see *BC,* 18 ff.

14. C. A. Briggs, *The Authority of Holy Scripture*, 1891, 23.
15. *Ibid*., 29-40. *Cf. PE,* 251.

of the Bible in a spirit foreign to Scripture and the Confession of Faith. Yet he maintains that he has not 'departed in any respect from the orthodox teaching of the Christian Church as set forth in its official creeds.' The address ends with a blast against 'dead orthodoxy' and denominationalism, and a plea for Church unity.[16]

Not content to limit his attack on the authority of Scripture, Briggs also attacks the Westminster Confession of Faith.[17] There is no doubt in his mind that the Confession is patently Calvinistic. However, in excluding Arminianism the Westminster divines went too far in their formulations of Christian doctrine. 'These definitions have ever been regarded as hard and offensive, and . . . they have kept multitudes from uniting with the Presbyterian Church.'[18] Briggs himself is obviously opposed to the particularistic doctrines of the Confession, especially the doctrine of particular redemption. In short, Chapters I-XI suffer from excessive definition, Chapters XII-XXII have been neglected in the Presbyterian Church and Chapters XXIII-XXXIII are no longer held in the Church with any unanimity. In fact, the Church allows certain doctrines contrary to the Confession, for example, premillennialism.[19]

> The Presbyterian Church as a Church tolerates contra-confessional doctrines of the Church and the Sacraments and the Last Things in large numbers of its teachers and pastors . . . The Westminster System has been virtually displaced by the teaching of the dogmatic divines. It is no longer practically the standard of faith of the Presbyterian Church. The Catechisms are not taught in our churches, the Confession is not expounded in our theological seminaries. The Presbyterian Church is not orthodox by its own Standards. It has neither the old orthodoxy or the new orthodoxy. It is in perplexity. It is *drifting* toward an unknown and a mysterious future.[20]

However, to Briggs this future is not so mysterious!

16. *Ibid*., 62, 67.
17. *Whither?*, 9 ff.
18. *Ibid*., 98.
19. *Ibid*, 99 ff., 163ff., 205, 213. *Cf.* 211: 'There are several extra-confessional errors now prevalent in the Presbyterian Church in the department of eschatology.'
20. *Ibid*, 223 f.

'There have been so many departures from the Standards in all directions, that it is necessary for all parties in the Presbyterian Church to be generous, tolerant, and broad-minded.'[21] It is significant that when the General Assembly of 1889 opened the question of revising the Westminster Confession, Briggs advocated a whole new creed.[22] He no doubt agreed with his colleague, Philip Schaff, who wrote: 'The old Calvinism is fast dying out. . . . We need a theology and a confession that will . . . prepare the way for the great work of the future—the reunion of Christendom in the Creed of Christ.'[23] Despite the able leadership of men like Henry J. Van Dyke, a former Old School man who had voted against reunion, the cause of creed revision was defeated.[24] However, ten years later, in 1903, the Confession was revised in such a way as to tone down the distinctive Calvinism of the Confession, or counterbalance it with the whole counsel of God-depending upon one's interpretation. Three modes of revision were employed. First, there were three small changes in the text.[25] Second, two new chapters were added, one on the Holy Spirit and the other on the Love of God and Missions. Third, a Declaratory Statement was appended to explain the Church's disavowal of certain inferences commonly drawn from the Confession. It maintains that God's eternal decree (III) is held in harmony with His love to all mankind on the one hand and human responsibility on the other; and that the expression 'elect infants' (X, iii) is not to be regarded as teaching that any dying in infancy are lost.[26] It is significant

21. *Ibid*., x.

22. *PE*, 248 f. 'The terms of subscription are the key of the history of the American Presbyterian Church.' Briggs both calls for 1) definite terms of subscription; and 2) a definition of what the essential and necessary articles are in a new creed.

23. *BC*, 43.

24. *PE*, 246 ff. *BC*, 39 ff.

25. For these changes see *BC*, 87. For a brief account of revision, see 83 ff.

26. For the text of the Declaratory Statement, see *PE*, 268 f. For that of the added chapters, see any post-1903 edition of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

that Loetscher considers those changes as bringing the confessional position of the Church into accord with the classic Dutch Arminianism of the seventeenth century.[27]

Revision was one helpful step toward reunion with the historically non-Calvinistic Cumberland Presbyterians in 1906 as well as other ecumenical endeavors on the part of the Church, such as the organization of the Federal Council of Churches in 1908 and the unsuccessful plan for an 'organic union of the evangelical churches of America' conceived in 1918 and put forward in 1920.[28] As would be expected, the modernists in the Church were, among others, in favor of such ecumenism. It is significant that Briggs writes as early as 1889: 'The barriers between the Protestant denominations should be removed and an organic union formed. An Alliance should be made between Protestantism and Romanism and all other branches of Christendom.'[29]

This ecumenical outlook is even more clearly evinced in Briggs' *Church Unity* published twenty years later (1909). In this book he sets forth his philosophy of church history. For example, eternal punishment is denied and universal salvation is taken for granted.[30] More particularly, he speaks of the passing and coming Christianity in three phases: Passing Prot-

27. Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.*, 261 f. Loetscher explicitly says: 'The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in its Declaratory Statement of 1902-03 wrote, as you will note, that the change (to Arminianism) was "in harmony with" the Calvinism of the unmodified Confession. This was to forestall a victory in the courts by the opponents of the change who might win, as did similar opponents in Scotland in 1900 when they succeeded in getting the Law Lords to declare the resultant Arminian Church not to be the legal successor to the former Calvinistic Church. By such changes the Arminianism of the Remonstrants of the Synod of Dort and *The Marrow of Modem Divinity* finally won permanent recognition.' From a strictly theological standpoint one may doubt whether this is indeed the case.

28. L. A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians.* 1958, 90. *Cf. BC,* 95 ff.

29. *Whither?,* xi. *Cf. PE,* 244-246. In 1885 Briggs wrote: 'We desire the organic union of all branches of the Presbyterian family in a broad, comprehensive, generous, catholic Presbyterianism. . . . We are also hopeful of a combination of Protestantism and the ultimate reunion of Christendom. . . . Presbyterianism is not a finality. It is a stepping stone to something higher and grander yet to come.' C. A. Briggs, *American Presbyterianism,* 1885, xiii.

30. C. A. Briggs, *Church Unity: Studies of Its Most Important Problems,*

estantism, Mediating Modernism, and the Coming Catholicism. 'Modernism is the embodiment of the *Zeit-Geist*, the spirit of our age, that our Lord is using to mediate between the past and future of his Kingdom.'[31] The traditional differences among the denominations are fast disappearing and an entirely new line of cleavage is appearing—that between the modernists and medievalists.[32] However, in Hegelian fashion this conflict will be resolved to produce a better, universal Church. Indeed, 'the Church has always from the beginning been growing better.' Finally this Coming Catholicism will bring about not only the reconciliation of Christian and Christian but Christian and Jew.[33]

We see, then, that in modernism one thing leads to another. There is first of all the denial of the authority of Scripture in any effective sense; then denial of fundamental Christian doctrines with particular opposition to the system taught in the Confession; and, finally, a willingness to tolerate almost any type of teaching within the Christian Church.

1909, 345 ff., 350 ff., 360 ff. *Cf.* 319, 426 ff. By this time, of course, Briggs was no longer in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. See below. [pp. 164-165]

31. *Ibid.*, 440. *Cf.* 439 f., where Briggs amplifies this judgment: 1) 'Modernists use the method of Biblical Criticism and accept its results without hesitation.' This destroys the dogma of the inerrancy of Scripture. 2) 'Modernist study Church History by the methods of Historical Criticism.' This does away with traditional history. 3) 'Modernists study dogmas by the use of modern philosophy.' 4) 'Modernists accept without hesitation the results of Modern Science.' *E.g.* the principle of evolution. 'All Modernists see in Church History a development, or evolution, of institution and doctrine.' 5) 'Modernists advocate a reform of the Church and its institutions in accordance with modern methods of government and discipline, and with scientific, social and economic principles. They practice the active rather than the passive virtues, and urge more comprehensiveness and efficiency in religious work. This involves practical reform all along the line.'

32. *Cf.* a similar statement as early as 1889: 'The sectarian divisions are becoming merged in the vastly greater and more important conflict between the conservatives and the progressives in all the Churches.' *Whither?*, 296.

33. *Church Unity*, 450 f. *Cf.* 450: 'When the great *fundamental* Catholic principle of Holy Love has become the material principle of entire Christianity, it will fuse all differences, and, like a magnet, draw all into organic unity about the centre where love itself truly reigns. Nothing in this world can stand against such a Catholic Church. She will speedily draw all mankind into the Kingdom of our God and Saviour.'

Reaction of Fundamentalism

Although the terms 'fundamentalism' and 'fundamentalist' did not come into vogue until after the publication of the first volume of *The Fundamentals* in 1910, the fundamentalist spirit appeared long before.[34] What is this? Simply the conviction that Christianity, doctrinal disagreements among Christian people notwithstanding, involves certain basic and essential doctrines, apart from which it both does not exist theoretically and ceases to exist practically.[35] It was, indeed,

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34. This statement assumes, of course, the brief working definition of the 'fundamentalist spirit' stated in this paragraph. We should be careful to distinguish this basic spirit from much of what has gone under the banner of the modern movement (see comment of Ramm below). The two basic works on the modern fundamentalist movement, both unsympathetic, are S. G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism,* 1931; and N. F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy,* 1954. The former, written by a modernist in the midst of the fundamentalist controversy, suffers from many serious defects, but is nevertheless helpful as a source. It has the merit of seeing a basic continuity between modern fundamentalism and traditional, orthodox Protestantism (*cf.* 53, 61, 334). The latter, while also seriously defective in places, also recognizes this. 'The principal cause for the rise of the fundamentalist controversy was the incompatibility of the nineteenth century orthodoxy cherished by many humble Americans with the progress made in science and theology since the Civil War' (14). This basic continuity is challenged in a significant article by E. R. Sandeen, 'Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism,' *Church History* (Mar., 1967), 66-83. 'The fate of Fundamentalism in historiography has been worse than its lot in history. . . . The thesis of this article is that Fundamentalism was comprised of an alliance between two newly-formulated nineteenth century theologies, dispensationalism and the Princeton Theology which, though not wholly compatible, managed to maintain a united front against modernism until about 1918' (66 f.). More of this thesis (which is further developed in E. R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930,* 1970) below. As an example of the rough treatment accorded fundamentalism by historians, we may note Fumiss' five-point characterization of it (*op. cit.,* 34 ff.): a) 'Uncertainty'; b) 'Violence in thought and language'; c) 'Ignorance, even illiteracy,' or 'anti-intellectualism'; d) 'Egotism'; and e) 'The great sentimentality and concern of the Fundamentalists for children!' For a much saner catalog of some of the component elements of fundamentalism, see G. M. Marsden, *The New School Presbyterian Mind* (Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University), University Microfilms, 1966, 308: 1) the relative unimportance of the organized church; 2) the importance of interdenominational cooperation; 3) the value of mass evangelism; 4) the necessity of a conversion experience; and 5) the stress on a strict code of personal ethics.

35. *Cf.* B. Ramm in *United Evangelical Action* (Mar. 15, 1951), 2, 23: '*Fundamentalism* originally referred to the belief that there were certain great truths in Christianity, which, if changed, would dissolve Christianity.' Ramm

this spirit which was implicit in the Adopting Act of 1729 and behind the constitutional demand for belief in all the doctrines essential to the system taught in the Confession.

This demand was periodically brought to the attention of the Church. For instance, the General Assembly of 1880 urged upon seminary professors the necessity of guarding against any 'fundamental errors,' such as would undermine the 'authority of the Holy Scriptures.' A similar warning was given in 1882 concerning holding to any views which would tend to unsettle faith in 'the doctrine of the divine origin and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.' In 1883 it was declared that 'the denial of the authenticity or truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures is a denial of their inspiration.'[36]

In 1891 formal charges of heresy were brought against Charles A. Briggs in the Presbytery of New York. However, these were dismissed in the interest of 'the peace and quiet of the Church.' Upon appeal, however, the General Assembly of 1892, reversed this decision, forcing the New York Presbytery to reconsider the case. At the same time, it dealt with the main issue of the Briggs case in the famous Portland Deliverance:

> The General Assembly would remind all under its care that it is a *fundamental* doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible Word of God. Our Church holds that the inspired Word, as it came from God, is without error. The assertion of the contrary cannot but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred Books. All who enter office in our Church solemnly profess to receive them as the

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continues: 'In the last forty years another movement has developed within historic fundamentalism that has given the term an odious connotation. Men with much zeal, enthusiasm, and conviction, yet lacking in education and cultural breadth, and many times highly individualistic, took to the stump to defend the faith. Many times they were dogmatic beyond evidence, or were intractable of disposition, or were obnoxiously anti-cultural, anti-scientific, and anti-educational. Hence, the term came to mean one who was bigoted, an obscurantist, a fidist [sic], a fighter, and anti-intellectual.' Quoted in L. Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement*, 1963. This book aims to be an informative treatment of the movement since 1930 (v). Gasper observes at the outset of his work: 'Religious fundamentalism is rooted in apostolic doctrine, Medieval-Reformation theology, American revivalism' (v).

36. *BC*, 28, 35, 37.

only infallible rule of faith and practice. If they change their belief on this point, Christian honor demands that they should withdraw from our ministry. They have no right to use the pulpit or the chair of the professor for the dissemination of their errors until they are dealt with by the slow process of discipline. But if any do so act, their Presbyteries should speedily interpose, and deal with them for violation of ordination VOWS.[37]

In early 1893 Briggs was acquitted by the Presbytery of New York. The General Assembly of that year, however, found him guilty, suspending him from the ministry until he should give satisfactory evidence of repentance.[38] The General Assembly also reaffirmed the solemn Portland Deliverance as to the inerrancy of Scripture, as having always been the belief of the Church; and 'unanimously adopted' the resolution, 'That the Bible, as we now have it, in its various translations and versions, when freed from all errors and mistakes of translators, copyists, and printers, is the very Word of God, and consequently wholly without error.'[39]

In 1894 Professor Henry P. Smith of Lane Seminary was suspended from the Presbyterian ministry for not holding to the inerrancy of the Scriptures when interpreted in their natural and intended sense. Dr. A. C. McGiffert of Union was forced out of the ministry in 1900 on similar charges. However, it is significant that none of the 87 signers of an official protest to the Assembly of 1893 against suspending Briggs for not holding to the inerrancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture were ever prosecuted. The sentiment in the General Assemblies of 1898 and 1899 was for peace, as opposed to prolonged controversy, in the Church.[40]

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37. *PE,* 249.

38. *PE,* 253. For an account of the Briggs Case, see *BC,* 48 ff. For some relevant documents, see R. E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States,* 1895, 411-414. For a fuller presentation of documents, see J. J. McCook (ed.), *The Appeal in the Briggs Heresy Case,* 1893. For a recent full-scale study of the trial, see C. E. Hatch, *The Charles A. Briggs Heresy Trial: Prologue to Twentieth-century Liberal Protestantism,* 1969.

39. *BC,* 56-62.

40. For the text of this protest, see *PE,* 250 f. *Cf.* also *BC,* 63-72. More of this document below.

Nevertheless, the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church at the turn of the century was clearly controlled by fundamentalists, or conservatives as Loetscher calls them. That this was the case is largely due to the rise of interdenominational fundamentalism in the last half of the nineteenth century and its influence within the Presbyterian Church. Perhaps the most influential expressions of this movement are the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) and *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915). The views represented by these well-known publications were widespread in the Church.

Dispensationalism, as the system of doctrine taught in the *Scofield Bible*, may be traced to J. N. Darby and the beginnings of the Plymouth Brethren Movement in England in the 1830's.[41] During the latter years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century this teaching became very widespread in America through the media of Bible and prophetic conferences, the establishment of Bible-training institutes, and the *Scofield Reference Bible.*[42] Perhaps one of the greatest factors in its success in fundamentalist circles was its intensive emphasis on the Bible in the face of modernism. Indeed, in the midst of the modernistic attack upon the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, 'the dispensationalists were able to win many converts to their cause by arguing that only dispensationalism really took the Bible seriously.'[43]

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41. For an unsympathetic, but important, study of Darby and early dispensationalism, see C. B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism,* 1960. For Scofield's classic treatment of the dispensationalistic hermeneutic, see *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,* 1928 *et al.* In this connection, see the unsympathetic work of D. P. Fuller, *The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism* (Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary), 1957. For a massive systematization of dispensational theology, see L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Vols. I-VIII), 1948. For the ablest present-day presentation of the system, see C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today,* 1965. *Cf.* also J. F. Walvoord, *Dispensational Premillennialism,* n.d., pamphlet reprint from *Christianity Today* (Sept. 15,1958). For the dispensationalist appeal to history, see A. E. Ehlert, *A Bibliography of Dispensationalism,* 1965.

42. The ablest study of this movement is C. N. Kraus, *Dispensationalism in America,* 1958. The foreword to this work is written by Lefferts A. Loetscher (7-10).

43. Sandeen, *op. cit.,* 70. *Cf.* Kraus, 57, 65 ff., e.g.—'Dispensationalism can

Interestingly enough dispensationalism's appeal was almost entirely to fundamentalists of Calvinistic background-Baptists and Presbyterians. In fact, many of the leading dispensationalist leaders were Presbyterians. This was no doubt due to its strong emphasis on the sovereign transcendence of God and the absolute depravity of man, as well as upon the grace of God.[44] Another factor may have been a strong emphasis on the application of Bible doctrine to practical Christian living and holiness of testimony.

Perhaps the greatest emphasis of the dispensationalists was their insistence on the literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy, especially the premillennial return of Christ when he shall establish his thousand-year kingdom upon the earth. This is opposed to the postmillennial doctrine that, through the preaching of the Gospel and the outpouring of the Spirit the world will gradually pass into a thousand-year period of righteousness and peace before the second coming of the Lord. The success of premillennial teaching in fundamentalist circles was due no doubt in part to the increasing secularization of society, the resultant disillusionment with the attempt to reform society on the basis of the principles of evangelical Christianity, and the comfort of viewing the Lord's return in terms of an imminent apocalyptic crisis in the face of an increasingly distressing cultural situation.[45] There is no doubt some justification for the remark of S. G. Cole concerning the fundamentalists: 'Culturally perplexed,

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best be understood as an attempt to define progressive revelation at a time when the concept of organic historical development was beginning to be applied to the history recorded in the Bible. Because they believed that the concepts of immanence and evolution undercut the orthodox doctrine of a supernatural revelation, the dispensationalists sought a rationale of Biblical history which would preserve its theological relationships as they had been explained in the orthodox tradition of Calvinism' (67; *cf.* 121). Both Loetscher and Kraus suggest that there is an odd affinity between modernism and dispensationalism in their treatment of the Bible (9, 102).

44. *Ibid.*, 71. *Cf.* Kraus, 57 ff. Kraus declares that, despite the similarities between the two, dispensationalism is foreign to historic Calvinism; nevertheless, 'the basic theological affinities of dispensationalism are Calvinistic' (50).

45. *Cf.* Kraus, 56, (*cf.* 8, 16, 54).

they fell back upon the Protestant Book to assure them of the reality of the Christian Messiah who would soon come to succor saints and destroy the faithless human order.'[46]

It should be pointed out at this juncture, however, that despite certain affinities, premillennialism must not be identified with modern dispensationalism. For what is often called historic premillennialism existed in American fundamentalism and in the Presbyterian Church before the advent and wide appeal of 'dispensational truth.' In fact, while not wholly accurate, there is a sense in which dispensationalism arose within the premillennial camp and later came to dominate it. In the words of C. N. Kraus: 'Like the proverbial cuckoo's egg, dispensationalism was hatched in the nest of premillennialism, and when hatched it soon completely dominated the nest.'[47] An example of this development is the difference between the first International Prophecy Conference in 1878 and the second in 1886. The burden of the first conference, under the leadership of such Presbyterians as Samuel H. Kellogg and Nathaniel West, was the inadequacy of postmillennialism and the necessity of premillennial teaching; dispensationalist teaching was incidental to it; whereas that of the second was the necessity and elaboration of 'the entire system of dispensational truth.'[48] Nevertheless, there

46. Cole, *op. cit.*, 35 (*cf.* 37, 53).

47. Kraus, 109. Kraus, however, maintains the basic distinction between the two. 'Premillennialism can be defined as a theological entity distinct from its dispensational trappings; and historically, it has been so defined and defended apart from dispensationalism. This interpretation of the relation between the two positions has been verified by recent developments within the premillennialist camp' (110). Nevertheless, Kraus admits that the historic premillennialists often sounded like the dispensationalists: 'Darbyite dispensationalism assumes a premillennial eschatology, and there are many areas in which they overlap. Often dispensationalism is only a matter of further defining and explaining tenets already held by premillennialists. . . . The terminology of the Plymouth Brethren was often accepted when there was no clear understanding of all the implications, and under the shell of dispensational phrases lay more or less undisturbed the meat of historic premillennialism' (55).

48. *Ibid.*, 97; *cf.* 82 ff., 59. On the other hand, Sandeen writes: 'The 1878 Premillennial Conference marks the beginning of a long period of dispensationalist cooperation with Princeton-oriented Calvinists. The unstable and incomplete syn-

were always those historic premillennialists like Kellogg and West who, distressed with the trend of the premillennial movement, refused to be identified with the dispensationalists. In fact, West once complained in disgust that there was arising within the premillennial fold 'a brood of heresies, scarcely less numerous than the sum total of all that appeared in the first four centuries of the Christian Church.'[49]

The Fundamentals were a series of articles published in twelve volumes between 1910 and 1915. Subtitled *A Testimony to the Truth*, they were sent free of charge to every Christian worker in the English-speaking world so far as their addresses could be obtained. The expense of this is shouldered by 'two intelligent, consecrated Christian laymen . . . because they believe that the time has come when a new statement of the fundamentals of Christianity should be made.'[50] It is well-known that these were wealthy Los Angeles businessmen, Lyman and Milton Stewart. It is significant that Lyman Stewart, the leading figure in the endeavor, was both a Presbyterian and a dispensationalist, who once wrote: 'A man who does not have a grasp of dispensational truth cannot possibly rightly "divide the word of truth."'[51] For this reason many, if not most, of the contributing authors were either Presbyterians, dispensationalists, or both. E. R. Sandeen calculates that 19 authors responsible for con-

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thesis which is now known as Fundamentalism at this point first becomes visible to the historian' *(op. cit.,* 72 f.).

49. *Ibid.,* 101; *cf.* 74, 88, 109 f. for aspects of Kellogg's outlook. *Cf. PE,* 241 f. See especially S. H. Kellogg, 'Premillennialism, Its Relation to Doctrine and Practice,' in *Bibliotheca Sacra,* XLV (1878), 234-274. *Cf.* C. A. Briggs, 'Origin and History of Premillennialism,' *Lutheran Quarterly Review,* IX (1879), 207-245.

50. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (*FUN*), 1910-1915, Foreword to Vol. I. Cole speaks of these volumes as 'a reactionary protest.' "This event gave the party an aggressive policy and a consciousness of social solidarity in an urgent cause. In this action the historian finds the clear emergence of Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was the organized determination of conservative churchmen to continue the imperialistic culture of historic Protestantism within an inhospitable civilization dominated by secular interests and a progressive Christian idealism. The fundamentalist was opposed to social change,' *etc. Op. cit.,* 53. But see Sandeen, *op. cit,* 80.

51. Sandeen, *op. cit.,* 77 (n. 50).

tributing 31 of the 90 articles can be identified as dispensationalists. Nevertheless, he notes that 'dispensationalism as such was never made the subject of a separate article; when it did occur, it appeared only as the natural expression of a dispensationalist author.'[52]

The vast majority of the articles are apologetical and/or polemical in thrust. Perhaps half of them deal with such apologetical issues as the existence of God, evolution, higher criticism, and the authority of Scripture. In fact, the vast majority of these deal with the inspiration, authenticity, and value of the Bible. Most of the other half are polemical in character, either expounding various Christian doctrines with modernism in view or refuting various counterfeit movements such as modern cults or Romanism. A few others deal with such practical matters as the Christian life, evangelism, and missions.[53]

The theological orientation of *The Fundamentals* is on the whole basically Calvinistic, although there is certainly no attempt to bring out or emphasize Reformed distinctives. The two articles that deal with the second coming of Christ are by premillennialists. The second of these, found in Volume XI, is by Charles R. Erdman of Princeton Seminary, son of dispensationalist conference speaker, W. J. Erdman. However, while the article stresses the imminence of the Lord's return, it has nothing in it of distinctly 'dispensational truth.' All who hold to the authority of Scripture agree on the essential fact of the personal and glorious second advent. However, as to incidental, though important, details 'there is difference of opinion even among the most careful and reverent students.' For this reason, Erdman calls for tolerance with respect to the specific eschatological views of others with a view to united action in the immediate task of evangelizing a lost world.[54]

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52. *Ibid*., 79.

53. For an index to the articles, see *FUN*, XII, 124-128.

54. *FUN*, XI, 87 ff., 98. The other article on the second advent, is 'The Hope of the Church' (VIII, 114-127) by J. McNicol.

Indeed, it is not until Volume XI that we seem to find distinctly dispensationalist articles. The first, by C. I. Scofield, himself, is entitled 'The Grace of God.' In this article the author clearly teaches that it is Galatianism to hold that the justified believer is put under law as a rule of life, although Protestantism has 'most inconsistently' held to this error.[55] The second article, by A. C. Gabelein, is on 'Fulfilled Prophecy'; but while the whole article presupposes dispensational teaching, the main thrust of it is that fulfilled prophecy is a potent argument for the Bible against modern denials of its truthfulness.[56] Interestingly, there is an article in Volume X entitled 'Why Save the Lord's Day,' which is hardly compatible with the dispensationalist view of the matter. [57]

The purpose of *The Fundamentals* was eminently practical, described in the following terms: 'We know that by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit "The Fundamentals" have been used for the conversion of sinners, to the strengthening of wavering believers, and to the full surrender and consecration to His service of earnest Christian men and women. To God be all the praise!'[58] However, to this end the truth was to be presented in a plain, but scholarly, fashion, and articles kept on a high intellectual level. For instance, the first two articles in Volume I are by two of the most learned men in Christendom—renowned Presbyterian theologians James Orr of Glasgow and B. B. Warfield of Princeton.[59] In this connection, we note the observation of Sandeen: 'It is clear that the Fundamentalists, though alarmed and dismayed with the teaching of the Modernists, were not ill-informed nor ignorant. Nor were they behaving like obscurantists or retreating from the world. Their movement at this time possessed great vigor, particularly in evangelism and world missions.'[60]

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55. *Ibid.*, 49 f.
56. *Ibid.*, 55 ff.
57. *FUN*, X, 5 ff.
58. *Ibid.*, Foreword.
59. *FUN*, I, 7 ff., 'The Virgin Birth of Christ' (Orr); 21 ff., 'The Deity of Christ' (Warfield).
60. *Op. cit.*, 77.

The sponsors of the project—if not at the beginning, at least after the first two volumes—were making a self-conscious attempt to awaken and nurture a fundamentalist movement. It was noted in Volume III that many readers were for organizing a prayer band 'for the express purpose of making this entire movement an object of definite prayer—that God will guide in *every detail* and entirely fulfill his purpose in the existence of the movement.'[61] The foreword to Volume V speaks of the gratifying favor and opposition, sometimes bitter, with which the articles have been received.[62] Many have responded to the call for a prayer band. 'We hope to hear from thousands of others—those who are willing to unite in earnest prayer that God's special blessing may rest upon this entire Movement, to the end that it may result in a world-wide revival in the study of the Word and in the deepening of the spiritual life of believers.'[63]

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61. *FUN*, III, 128; *cf.* IV, 128.

62. *FUN*, V, Foreword: 'The favor is from those who believe in the fundamentals of Christianity; and the opposition is, in the main, from the religious people who have really ceased to be Christian in their faith, while, for some reason, they desire to retain the label of Christianity. The fact that they have been reached and led to think is cause for thanksgiving.'

63. *Ibid.*, 125. Note the mentality of the only one of these letters which is published in the set (*ibid.*, 127 f.), introduced as 'one of a vast number more or less similar':

'And now let me say how much I appreciate this Testimony movement which you have started. I am with it heart and soul. I daily bless those two Christian laymen who have devoted their means to this holy and glorious enterprise. It is a well directed blow at the enemy. Hitherto the critics have had everything their own way. Fenced around with great learning and scholarship, ordinary men have shrunk from attempting any attack upon their position. We have been looking long to Christian scholarship to give us a lead, but its utterance was not only uncertain but tinged with compromise. I have no doubt there were thousands of men, like myself, grieved to the heart before the Lord because of the present-day tendency to do away with the inspired Word of God and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'. . . It seems to me we have shown too much deference to human scholarship and mere worldly wisdom or learning. In all the churches it has been set above the wisdom which cometh from above. Worldly scholarship has been put in place of the Holy Spirit, and now our chief seats of learning have become hotbeds of infidelity and materialism!

'I pray God to bless and prosper your grand enterprise. You are prayed for and shall be prayed for as long as I am in the flesh, so put my name on your circle of prayer. I sincerely hope you will see your way before long to establish some

There can be little doubt that *The Fundamentals* had a tremendous impact on the English-speaking Protestant world. From the outset the volumes were in great demand by laymen as well as Christian workers. At the beginning of Volume XII the sponsors refer to the publication of some three million sets and the reception of some 200,000 letters 'since the movement began.'[64] Perhaps it would not be going too far to say that, without *The Fundamentals* the fundamentalist movement in its later self-conscious phases, whether undenominational or denominational, would have been an unlikely development.

As already noted, there can be little doubt that interdenominational fundamentalism was a distinct factor in strengthening fundamentalist sentiments within the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. For instance, the General Assembly of 1910, citing the responsibility of church courts under the Adopting Act to define basic doctrines, pronounced five doctrines as 'essential and necessary'; while others, unmentioned, were declared to be equally so. These five are 1) the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible; 2) the virgin birth of Christ; 3) His substitutionary atonement as a satisfaction to divine justice; 4) His bodily resurrection; and 5) the supernatural character of His mighty miracles.[65] The origin of these five points is an interesting question. It has been assumed, following S. G. Cole, that they derive from a 1895 statement of the Niagara Bible Conference.[66] However, Sandeen declares that this is a patent mistake. The General Assembly's action is 'the only occasion (relevant to early Fundamentalism) on which any denomination or group ever made a five-point statement.'[67] At any rate, these five points were reaffirmed by the

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sort of union or league for the enrollment of all those who are on the Lord's side for the maintenance of the faith once delivered to the saints. (See Mal. 3:16.) Let all of us who are on the Lord's side come out and show ourselves.'

64. *FUN,* XII, 4.

65. *PE,* 280 f. *Cf. BC,* 98 f.

66. Cole, *op. cit.,* 34, 98. *Cf. BC,* 98; G. M. Marsden, *The Presbyterian Guardian,* Jan., 1964, 6 f.

67. *Op. cit.,* 80.

General Assemblies of 1916 and 1923, and no one who denied them was to be allowed to be an officer of the Church—though, significantly, no official charges of heresy were brought to bear upon the many ministers who either openly denied these doctrines, or were not prepared to affirm them.

It should be noticed that with this declaration the Assembly had added other 'fundamental' doctrines to that of the authority of Scripture. It should also be noticed that none of these essential and necessary doctrines touched upon the distinctively Reformed theology of the Confession. It is apparent that much of the fundamentalism in the Presbyterian Church was not a distinctively Presbyterian fundamentalism.

This leads us to stress the interdenominational, or even nondenominational, character of much of the fundamentalism in the Presbyterian Church. This fact is evinced not only by a lack of appreciation for much of distinctive Calvinistic doctrine in general, but especially by a lack of appreciation for the distinctively Presbyterian doctrine of the church in particular. Many considerations could be brought forward to substantiate this point, but three illustrations will suffice. First, not only the modernists but the fundamentalists were willing to sacrifice Presbyterian distinctives with a view to organic union with other evangelical bodies.[68] Second, much of fundamentalist ecclesiology in general tended toward independency, as well as interdenominationalism, nondenominationalism, and even antidcnominationalism. In general, fundamentalism, with its stress on the invisible character of the church, tended to have a low appreciation of the visible church, certainly as conceived of in historic Presbyterianism.[69] Finally, the ecclesiology of dispensationalism in particular—with its lack of appreciation for Covenant Theology, its par-

68. *Cf. BC*, 100.

69. *Cf. FUN*, IX, 5 ff., 'The True Church' by Bishop J. C. Ryle. It is significant that this is the only article in *The Fundamentals* dealing specifically with the doctrine of the church.

enthesis view of the church, and its generally individualistic, antiecclesiastical spirit—was difficult to square with the historic Presbyterian doctrine of the church.[70]

Thus we see that, in the face of the modernistic attack upon the Bible, much of the fundamentalism in the Presbyterian Church tended to emphasize the formal principle of Presbyterianism at the expense of its material principle, and almost to the exclusion of its practical principle. This discrepancy between certain aspects of fundamentalism on the one hand and historic Presbyterianism on the other leads us to consider the Princeton tradition.

The Princeton Tradition

The intellectual center of the fundamentalist reaction to the rise of modernism was Princeton Theological Seminary. Indeed, there are those who see the modern fundamentalist movement in terms of an uneasy alliance between modern dispensationalism and the Princeton theology in the face of the modernistic menace.[71] One example, among many, for

70. *Cf.* Kraus, *op. cit.*, 102 ff; Sandeen, *op. cit.*, 69: 'The ecclesiology of dispensationalism is so individualistic that each individual becomes his own church; his own sanctification is the only holiness the church can know. Through this emphasis holiness teaching became linked to the Fundamentalist movement.' Sandeen has in mind, specifically the Keswick or Victorious Life teaching. On this point, see Kraus, 61, 121; L. S. Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*, 1918, 29; B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism*, 1931, 305 ff.

71. Sandeen, *op. cit*, 67: 'The thesis of this article is that Fundamentalism was comprised of an alliance between two newly-formulated nineteenth century theologies, dispensationalism and the Princeton Theology which, though not wholly compatible managed to maintain a united front against modernism until about 1918.' Sandeen does not give any specific reason for singling out the date 1918. *Cf.* 74: 'The two movements were by no means completely compatible, but the common Modernist foe kept them at peace with one another throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Attacks upon the dispensationalists were occasionally heard from such a man as B. B. Warfield, but at the same time the books of the dispensationalists were being regularly reviewed and recommended in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review.*' *Cf.* L. A. Loetscher's introduction to Kraus, *op. cit.*, 7: 'Together with the more intellectual resistance offered by conservative Protestantism to evolution and Biblical criticism, dispensationalism constituted the vanguard of the modern fundamentalist movement. Fundamentalism of the more academic Calvinistic type still tries to maintain almost unchanged the relationship between Christianity and culture that was formulated in the days

this cooperation is the fact that the Stewart Evangelistic Fund sponsored a trip by Professor Robert Dick Wilson to the Orient with a view to strengthening missionary faith in the Bible.[72] At the same time, Princeton as the custodian of an old and distinctively Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, occupied a position of its own within fundamentalist circles. In other words, the Princeton position differed somewhat from that of other fundamentalists and conservatives. This will become apparent from a brief account of its major features.

The Princeton theology stressed the function of the human mind in apprehending the Christian faith. It maintained that the human intellect can attain to truth, strongly rejecting the anti-intellectualism of post-Kantian modernism which maintains that we can know nothing of any realm beyond this realm of sense, and accordingly relegates faith and religion to the sphere of feeling, and truth and reason to the sphere of facts. In time Princeton also came to look askance at certain anti-intellectual, or unscholarly, elements in fundamentalist circles. For to Princeton men Christianity is not anti-intellectual or non-intellectual, but the only reasonable conclusion to the facts of the world of thought, history, and experience taken as a whole.[73]

To demonstrate this, Princeton was committed to defend, first, the general historical trustworthiness of the Scriptures; second, their inspiration and consequent inerrancy; and, third, their separate doctrines, namely, the Reformed Faith.

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of the Protestant Reformation, in spite of the fact that in the intervening centuries Western culture has radically altered.' The quotation as a whole reveals that Loetscher has in mind the old Princeton tradition and its contemporary inheritors centered at Westminster Theological Seminary.

72. Cole, *op. cit.*, 54.

73. *BC*, 21-25. For this general outlook see the standard works of the more eminent Princeton theologians: *E.g.*, Samuel Miller, Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Francis L. Patton, and Benjamin B. Warfield. For a popular twentieth century presentation written in the midst of the Fundamentalist Controversy of the 1920's, see J. Gresham Machen, *What Is Faith?*, 1962 (orig. ed., 1925), 13 ff. *et al.*

One can believe in the truthfulness of historic Christianity without believing in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, but the system of Christian doctrine taught in Scripture, can only be consistently constructed upon this doctrine of the inspiration and authority of the Bible.[74]

Thus much of the labor of the Princeton theologians was spent on the defense of the trustworthiness and inspiration of the Bible. For instance, learned Old Testament scholars like William Henry Green and Robert Dick Wilson argued against the validity of the so-called assured results of higher criticism.[75] A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield argued for the verbal inspiration and consequent inerrancy of the original autographs of Scripture.[76]

There can be little doubt that Warfield with his incredible learning was the ablest exponent of the Princeton tradition in the period of the Broadening Church. As Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology he relentlessly defended the au-

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74. *BC,* 31 f. See especially the works of B. B. Warfield. Cf. E. R. Sandeen, 'The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism,' *Church History,* Vol. XXXI, 1962, 307-321. This article is a subtle, but unconvincing, critique of the Princeton doctrine of inspiration. For discussions of the Princeton apologetic and theology, see the following: J. O. Nelson, *The Rise of the Princeton Theology* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University), 1935. W. D. Livingstone, *The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Work of Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University), 1948. G. P. Hutchinson, *Presbyterian Apologetics in the Twentieth Century* (Unpublished Manuscript). S. E. Ahlstrom, 'Theology in America: A Survey' in A. L. Jamison and J. W. Smith (ed.), *The Shaping of American Religion* (Vol. I Religion in American Life, Princeton Studies in American Civilization, Num. 5), 1961, 232-321 (260 ff., 'Charles Hodge and the Princeton Theology'). For further bibliographical help see N. R. Burr, *A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America,* Vol. IV (Pts. 3, 4, and 5), Princeton, 1961, 999-1004 ('The Princeton Theology'). *Cf.* Vol. IV (Pts. 1 and 2), 297-302 ('Presbyterians').

75. *Cf.* the oft-reprinted booklet by R. D. Wilson, *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* 1953 (10th ed.), 10: 'I try to give them [*i.e.,* students] such an intelligent faith in the Old Testament Scriptures that they will never doubt them as long as they live. . . . I have come now to the conviction that *no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament.*'

76. See, *e.g.,* A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, 'Inspiration,' in the *Presbyterian Review,* II, (1881), 237 ff. *Cf. PE,* 239 f. *Cf.* also Sandeen, 'The Princeton Theology,' *op. cit.,* 314 ff. For a list of the main theological journals which embody the Princeton outlook, see *BC,* 183.

thority of the Bible and expounded the Calvinistic Gospel of the Confession of Faith in the Old School tradition.[77]

> The Calvinist is the man who has seen God, and who, having seen God in his glory, is filled on the one hand with a sense of his unworthiness to stand in God's sight, as a creature, and much more as a sinner, and on the other with adoring wonder that nevertheless this God is a God who receives sinners. He who believes in God without reserve, and is determined that God shall be God to him, in all his thinking, feeling, willing,—in the entire compass of his life-activities, intellectual, moral, spiritual,—throughout all his individual, social, religious relations,—is, by force of that strictest of all logic which presides over the outworking of principles into thought and life, by the very necessity of the case, a Calvinist. . . . Calvinism is not a specific variety of theistic thought, religious experience, evangelical faith, but just the perfect manifestation of these things. The difference between it and other forms of theism, religion, evangelicalism is a difference not of kind but of degree.[78]

It was their strong allegiance to Calvinism that led Warfield and the Princeton faculty to oppose the proposed revisions of the Confession, which were supported by many fundamentalists. For this would inevitably lower the testimony of the Church and lead to an even greater broadening of it to include many presbyters with decidedly anti-Reformed convictions.[79] Nevertheless, when the Confession was revised in 1903, Warfield was willing to make peace with the new Confession on the ground that, whatever the revisors' motives, the revisions themselves did not necessarily negate Calvinistic particularism but rather complemented it by emphasizing the universalistic side of the Gospel.[80]

Princeton's allegiance to the Confession was indeed a decisive factor in their pronounced opposition to an inclusivist ecclesiastical policy. 'Broad Churchism,' Francis L. Patton

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77. *Cf.* B. B. Warfield, Collected Writings (10 Vols.), 1927-1932.

78. B. B. Warfield, 'The Theology of John Calvin,' in *Calvin and Augustine*, Philadelphia, 1956,491 f.

79. *BC*, 42 f., 83 f. 'It is an inexpressible grief to me,' wrote Warfield, 'to see it [*i.e.*, the Church] spending its energies in a vain attempt to lower its testimony to suit the ever changing sentiment of the world about it' (83). *Cf. PE*, 248.

80. B. B. Warfield, *The Confession of Faith as Revised in 1903*, 1904, 24, 28 f., *et al.*

once remarked, 'is the land which lies between strict orthodoxy and open infidelity.' Writing in 1893, William B. Greene, Jr. saw three parties in the Church in connection with the Briggs Case: 1) those who more or less agree with Briggs and want to see the case dismissed; 2) those who do not agree with him and want to see the case decided against him; and 3) those who, while disagreeing with him, want the case dismissed on the ground that the Presbyterian Church should be broad enough to include him. This would mean the end of denominationalism. However, would this be to the advantage of Christ's case? 'The broader a church becomes, the fewer and less definite must be the truths to which it witnesses.'[81]

Greene later published an article entitled 'Broad Churchism and the Christian Life,' in which he pronounces broad churchism one of the great foes of truly Christian living, chiefly because it is rooted in indifference to truth.' Broad churchism is defined as 'the tendency to regard Church union as more important than Church distinctions.' In that it is more or less indifferent to truth, it is 'ecclesiastical utilitarianism'—that is, whatever is useful to bring about the union of the most Churches must be right and true. As such, it is to be distinguished from the tendency toward Church federation, which is animated by a love of the truth. Greene is bold to maintain that 'the religion of the heart and the theology of the head cannot be divorced,' and calls for a revival of that doctrinal teaching and preaching which does not shirk from declaring the whole counsel of God.[82]

Thus the Princeton School was strongly opposed to that indifference to denominational distinctives which characterized much of fundamentalism, not only for the sake of preserving Presbyterianism, but also the truth common to all denominations. As Patton once remarked: 'The way to conserve that which is common to all is for each denomination to be jealous of the doctrine that is peculiar to itself.'[83]

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81. *BC,* 13, 59.
82. *Princeton Theological Review*, July, 1906, 306-312, 316.
83. *BC,* 42.

However, despite this aversion to broad churchism the Princeton faculty were not especially zealous in Church affairs, especially after the cases involving Briggs and Smith. The main thrust of the faculty's endeavors was the strengthening of the Seminary in the scholarly defense of the Reformed Faith, with a view to exerting a saving influence on the Church. With regard to those fundamentalists who were not distinctively Reformed, it was thought that, as long as they believed the Bible, there was much hope of winning them over to a full-fledged Reformed and Presbyterian position.[84] Princeton was much more concerned to combat the modernist view of the Bible which would mean the death of the Christian Church. As R. D. Wilson put it in 1918, the controversy raging around the nature of the Bible is more important for the life of the Church than even the Arian Controversy or the Protestant Reformation.[85]

It was ever the conviction at Princeton that the Seminary's distinctive position was nothing more or less than that of the Bible. Maitland Alexander, Chairman of the Board of Directors, remarked in 1921: 'We hear today of the Princeton position. It is a misnomer. True, we occupy a position, we defend it, we are uncompromising in our warfare against those who would attack it, but it is not the Princeton position. It is the Apostolic position; it is the position of the Lord Jesus Christ.'[86]

After the death of Warfield, J. Gresham Machen came forward in the early 1920's as the leading spokesman, not only for the Princeton position in particular but also for the fundamentalists in general. Yet Machen himself was not in

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84. This attitude was in part due to that optimism which characterized Charles Hodge and the Princeton theologians (*cf. BC,* 41). For instance, Warfield once characteristically wrote: 'Calvinism can never be rejected when it is understood. ... It requires only a little reiteration, defense, and detailed exposition to silence all its enemies and conquer the world.' *Confession as Revised,* 39.

85. *BC,* 103; *cf.* 37.

86. *Addresses Delivered at the Inauguration of Reverend Caspar Wistar Hodge,* October 11, 1921, 'The Charge,' 3.

agreement with much of fundamentalism: its skeptical attitude toward scholarship, its attempt to reduce Christianity to brief creeds, its lack of appreciation for Reformed and Presbyterian distinctives, its dispensationalism and premillennialism, and its negative attitude toward personal Christian liberty with respect to ethical practices not specifically condemned in Scripture. For this reason he never called himself a fundamentalist, and once wrote: 'The term fundamentalism is distasteful to the present writer and to many persons who hold views similar to his. It seems to suggest that we are adherents to some strange new sect, whereas in point of fact we are conscious simply of maintaining the historic Christian faith and of moving in the great central current of Christian life.'[87]

At the same time, Machen was more than ready to take his stand with the fundamentalists against the modernists. As he once put it:

> Do you suppose, gentlemen, that I do not detect faults in many popular defenders of supernatural Christianity? Do you suppose that I do not regret my being called, by a term that I greatly dislike, a "Fundamentalist"? Most certainly I do. But in the presence of a great common foe, I have little time to be attacking my brethren who stand with me in defense of the Word of God. I must continue to support an unpopular cause.[88]

This outlook is seen in Machen's enthusiastic defense of Billy Sunday when, at the request of the Seminary, he came

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87. J. G. Machen, *What Is Christianity?* (ed. N. B. Stonehouse), 1951, 253. See this series of articles to grasp Machen's exposition of the nature of Christianity and its application to various cultural concerns. With regard to the issue of premillennialism, it should be noted that, although the Princeton theologians as postmillennialists (*eg.*, Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield) had opposed it, through the years it had come to be respectfully represented on the seminary faculty; so that the Princeton tradition cannot be appealed to as excluding the influence of premillennial teaching.

88. N. B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir*, 1955, 337 f. This biography is exceedingly helpful to the understanding of the Princeton Tradition, the Broadening Church, and the Presbyterian Separatist Movement although it suffers from a lack of thorough documentation by means of footnotes. With regard to Machen's attitude toward the fundamentalist taboo of smoking, see 85: 'My idea of delight is a Princeton room full of fellows smoking.

to the hostile town of Princeton in early 1915. In his mind there was a close connection between Billy Sunday's evangelism and the Princeton theology. 'His methods are as different as could possibly be imagined from ours, but we support him to a man simply because, in an age of general defection, he is preaching *the gospel.* . . . There ought to be the closest kind of cooperation between real evangelism and the type of theology that we represent—indeed the two things are absolutely necessary to each other.'[89]

Machen was also disturbed by the anti-cultural attitude of much of fundamentalism. The modernists wrongly want to subject Christianity to distinctively modern culture. However, on the other hand, many fundamentalists have a negative attitude to human culture as such, and tend to use their religion as means of withdrawal from the great cultural questions of the day—in the economic and social sphere, in politics, education, and the arts. However, the church must come to grips intellectually with all these areas, consecrating them to Christ and applying Biblical principles to the cultural problems of the modern world.[90]

When the modernist attack upon Princeton came in 1927, Machen summed up the historic position of the School: 'For over one hundred years Princeton Theological Seminary has stood firmly for the vigorous defense and propagation of the Reformed or Calvinistic system of doctrine, which is the system of doctrine that the Bible teaches.' The Princeton position is thus nothing less than the full-fledged Christianity of

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When I think what a wonderful aid tobacco is to friendship and Christian patience I have sometimes regretted that I never began to smoke.'

89. *Ibid*., 226 f.; *cf.* 222 ff., 253 ff.

90. *What Is Christianity?,* 156 ff., 'Christianity and Culture.' Everyone who wants to understand Machen and the movement associated with him ought to digest this particular article. It should also be read by every beginning seminary student. For Machen's brand of 'fundamentalism,' see especially 244 ff., 'Does Fundamentalism Obstruct Social Progress?,' and 253 ff., 'What Fundamentalism Stands For Now.' *E.g.,* 251: 'Thus we maintain that far from being inimical to social progress, "Fundamentalism" (in the broad, popular sense of the word) is the only means of checking the spiritual decadence of our age.' *Cf. What Is Faith?*. 126.

the Confession as over against a 'reduced Christianity.' For this reason, the Calvinistic doctrines of grace are essential as a basis for church cooperation at home or on the mission field. Moreover, since the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Confession is true, it is intended for the whole world, not merely for Presbyterians, and should accordingly be preached to all for the spread of the Presbyterian Church around the world.

Furthermore, Princeton stands, not merely for the propagation of true Christianity, but for its scholarly defense. For unless the Faith can be defended, there is no point in propagating it. Defense is prior to propagation, and to perform this task, in the modern world, the Seminary must stand against the prevailing views of both the modern world and the modern church.[91]

For Machen Princeton represents 'a warm and vital type of Christianity,' which he characterizes as follows:

> The type of Christianity that not only proclaims the gospel when it is popular to proclaim it, but proclaims the gospel in the face of a hostile world, the type of Christianity that resolutely refuses to make common cause, either at home or on the mission field, with the Modernism that is the deadliest enemy of the cross of Christ, the type of Christianity that responds with full abandon of the heart and life to the Saviour's redeeming love, that is willing to bear all things for Christ's sake, that has a passion for the salvation of souls, that holds the Bible to be, not partly true and partly false, but all true, the blessed, holy Word of God.[92]

However, the Christianity of the Princeton tradition was to be unwelcome in the Broadening Church.

Triumph of Indifferentism

We have already seen how the desire for peace in the Presbyterian Church was responsible for the cessation of heresy trials. We are now to see how this sentiment, coupled with broad churchism on the part of many so-called fundamentalists and conservatives, eventually led to the triumph of modernistic indifferentism in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

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91. J. G. Machen, *The Attack Upon Princeton Seminary*, 1927, 5 ff., 'For What Does Princeton Seminary Stand?'

92. *Ibid*., 37.

A prime example of this attitude is *A Plea For Peace and Work* issued in 1893 with reference to the Briggs Case. The *Plea* begins with the statement that it is the primary interest and duty of the minister to bring the 'simple Gospel' to the hearts of men. The great task of the Church is simply to preach and to practice 'plain Christianity.' The present theological controversy over doctrines which are not essential hinders single-hearted devotion to this task, as have the past controversies of the Church. The vast majority of the Church have little sympathy with such 'extremes of dogmatic conflict,' and are longing for 'peace and united work,' while representing many different shades of theological opinion. There should be no test of orthodoxy other than the Confession itself, of which the theory of the inerrancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture is but one interpretation. Moreover, the surest defense of the truth is practical proclamation in the form of missionary enthusiasm. 'It is in this spirit that we join our voices in a plain straightforward fraternal expression of the desire for harmony and united devotion to practical work.'[93]

The spirit behind the *Plea*, as Loetscher admits, is relativistic pragmatism, the doctrine that whatever works, practically, is true and right. Nothing can be, because nothing is, absolute or ultimate; all is relative. All truth is in the process of becoming. With this assumption one can only have a pragmatic doctrine of the Church. This doctrine was to underlie what Loetscher calls a third party in the Church composed of those whose personal theological inclinations might be either in the direction of liberalism or fundamentalism, but who, at any rate, were resolved to transcend theological differences in the name of united action. 'To this party the Church's future . . . was to belong.'[94]

It was scarcely twenty years before this pragmatic spirit would infiltrate Princeton Seminary itself. In 1909 there

93. *PE*, 253 f. The *Plea* was signed by 235 ministers.
94. *BC*, 59, 90.

erupted a much publicized 'student rebellion' against the anti-practical intellectualism of the seminary's position and curriculum. However, it was not until 1914 when J. Ross Stevenson succeeded Patton as president that this outlook gained a foothold in the faculty itself. It was pushed by the department of practical theology represented by Stevenson and Charles R. Erdman. Eventually Stevenson's emphasis on the 'intensely practical' carried the board, and the curriculum was revised with a resultant relaxing of the seminary's traditional academic standards. Warfield ceased to attend faculty meetings in disgust at the trend of events.[95]

Machen was likewise alarmed by this trend which was a reflection of the growing indifference to doctrine in the Presbyterian Church at large. 'The Church,' he writes in 1915, 'is still fundamentally evangelical—but sadly indifferent to the big questions.' As he put it two or three years later, 'doctrinal indifferentism' is a most serious danger confronting the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. With men like Stevenson and Erdman in view, he writes: 'The optimistic talk of some men, themselves evangelical, who decry doctrinal controversy is absurd.'[96]

Much of this optimistic talk centered around the prospect of church union. This prospect came to the fore with the doctrinally indifferent Plan of Union of 1920 adopted by the General Assembly and sent down to the presbyteries for ratification. The Princeton faculty was divided on the issue. President Stevenson, with the support of Erdman, was one of its foremost proponents; while Machen led the rest of the faculty in opposition to it. His position is that the ratification of the plan 'simply means that the Presbyterian Church, so far as its corporate action is concerned, will have given up its testimony to the truth.' He is opposed to 'the substitution of vague generalities for our historic standards, as the expression of what we are to regard as fundamental in our faith.'[97]

95. Stonehouse, *Machen*, 149 ff., 212 ff.
96. *Ibid*., 221, 241 f.
97. *Ibid*., 305 f.

Due to the efforts of Machen and others on the Princeton faculty, the Plan of Union was defeated in 1921. However, during the course of the struggle the cause of historic Presbyterianism lost its greatest champion with the death of Warfield. To Machen it seemed that it was also the death of the old Princeton.[98] It would not be long before the course of events would bear out this premonition.

One of the most influential representatives of the pragmatistic indifferentism which was to carry the day was Robert E. Speer, a contributor to *The Fundamentals* and Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. When charges of modernism among the Board's missionaries came up in 1921, Speer's response is 'I wish we could get up such a glow and fervor and onrush of evangelical and evangelistic conviction and action that we would be swept clear past issues like the present ones so that men who want to dispute over these things could stay behind and do so while the rest of us could march ahead.'[99]

For some time the fundamentalists were becoming increasingly alarmed at the advance of modernism in the Church. The signal for action came with the 1922 publication of Harry Emerson Fosdick's blatantly modernistic and belligerent sermon, *Shall the Fundamentalists Win?* 'The Fundamentalist program,' he cries, 'is essentially illiberal and intolerant. . . . I do not believe for one moment that the Fundamentalists are going to succeed. . . . The first element that is necessary is a spirit of tolerance and Christian liberty.'[100]

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98. *Ibid*., 310.

99. *BC*, 105 f. *Cf. FUN*, III, 61 ff; XII, 64 ff. Speer was well-known as a champion of the evangelical missionary spirit. For a sample of this, see R. E. Speer, *The Finality of Jesus Christ*, 1933. See also W. A. Wheeler, *A Man Sent From God*, 1956.

100. Quoted in H. S. Smith, R. T. Hanly, L. A. Loetscher (ed.), *American Christianity*, II, 1963, 296, 299. This document is a classic and concise statement of the modernist outlook, as well as one of the most important documents of the whole Fundamentalist Controversy. *E.g.*, 'We must be able to think our modern life clear through in Christian terms, and to do that we also must be able to think our Christian faith clear through in modem terms' (296). For a fundamentalist

The response to this provocation is the Philadelphia Overture to the General Assembly of 1923, requesting the Assembly to direct the Presbytery of New York to require the preaching and teaching in the Presbyterian Church where Fosdick, although a Baptist minister, was supplying the pulpit, to conform to the doctrinal system of the Confession.

At the Assembly the fundamentalist candidate for moderator, William Jennings Bryan, was defeated by his opponent, who remarked, 'I look upon my election as a victory for tolerance rather than for liberalism.' Nevertheless, the five fundamentals were reaffirmed; and the Philadelphia Overture was passed by a vote of 439-359. However, the fundamentalist victory was too close for comfort, in that a majority of the ministers had voted against it, and almost no one connected with the boards or offices of the Church had voted for it. It was the elders alone who carried the day.[101]

At the end of 1923 Machen's supply preaching at the First Presbyterian Church in Princeton was publicly and severely criticized by eminent University Professor Henry Van Dyke, an eloquent spokesman for the broad church party. Labeling Machen's sermons as 'bitter, schismatic and unscriptural,' he declares: 'We want to hear about Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, not about Fundamentalists and Modernists.'[102]

It was in this spirit that the influential *Auburn Affirmation*, eventually signed by 1,274 Presbyterian ministers, first appeared in early 1924. The *Affirmation* is explicitly designed to 'safeguard the unity and liberty' of the Church in view of the action of the Assembly of 1923. The signers all claim to hold to the Confession, and to preach earnestly 'the doctrines of evangelical Christianity.' However, they refuse, in the name of liberty of conscience, to be bound by the

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treatment of the controversy precipitated by this sermon, see E. H. Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict*, 1940, 29 ff.

101. *BC*, 111 f. *Cf.* Stonehouse, 351 ff.

102. Stonehouse, 357.

Church to any one interpretation of the doctrines of the Confession, citing 'God alone is Lord of the conscience,' and the fact that the Church has historically permitted theological differences within its bosom, subordinating them to recognized loyalty to Christ and united work for the Kingdom of God.

More specifically, the *Affirmation* denies the constitutional right of the General Assembly to define the essential doctrines of the Church without the consent of the presbyteries. With respect to the five fundamentals, there is a direct denial of the doctrine of inerrancy. Furthermore, the General Assembly has no right to commit the Church to any theories concerning the inspiration of the Bible, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the supernatural power of the Lord. These are facts which all Christians believe, although many reject various theories of these facts, such as the theory of Biblical inerrancy. There follows then the crucial statement:

> Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion, and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship.
>
> Finally, all evidences of division are deplored in the face of a world so desperately needing a united testimony to the gospel of Christ.[103]

The fundamentalist candidate, Clarence E. Macartney, was elected moderator of the General Assembly of 1924, by whose action Fosdick was forced to break off his connection with the Church on the ground of his Baptist affiliation. However, far more important, the fundamentalists did not have Fosdick dismissed on the ground that his teaching violated the five fundamentals.[104]

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103. *PE*, 284-288.
104. *BC*, 121-124.

The General Assembly of 1925 elected as moderator, Charles R. Erdman, the candidate of the broad church party. Erdman, it will be recalled, was Professor of Practical Theology at Princeton Seminary. He had contributed to *The Fundamentals* and openly declared, 'I have always been a Fundamentalist in my beliefs.' His platform was 'old-fashioned orthodoxy and Christian spirit and constitutional procedure.' However, Erdman, among many others, had moved to a broad church policy. When the General Assembly directed the New York Presbytery to reverse its decision to license certain ministerial candidates who had refused to affirm their belief in the Virgin Birth, Erdman convinced the liberals who were considering withdrawing from the Church to wait and see what the future policy of the Church would be. For, the theological question aside, they were right on the constitutional one: that is, their contention that the General Assembly cannot alter or add to the constitutional requirements for ordination, without the concurrent consent of the presbyteries to such an amendment, was correct.[105]

Under Erdman's inspiration the Special Commission of 1925, dominated by broad churchmen such as Speer, was appointed to look into the constitutional question. The practical problem facing the commission, given the difficult task of amending the Constitution, was how to interpret it in such a way as to allow for presbyters who did not believe in the five fundamentals without repudiating them as doctrines of the Church. However, to make a long story short, this the commission managed to do with an appeal to the mediating character of the mainstream of Presbyterian life in America: 'Toleration does not involve any lowering of the Standards. It does not weaken the testimony of the Church to its assured convictions.' By finally accepting the commission's report unanimously and without debate, the General Assembly of 1927 decided the constitutional question, with all its doctrinal implications, in

105. *BC*, 126-128. *Cf. FUN*, X, 89 ff.; XII, 108 ff.

favor of indifferentism. The General Assembly may not demand conformity to any doctrine apart from merely quoting the exact language of the Confession. The position of the *Auburn Affirmation* became the official position of the Church.[106]

Machen was well aware of the momentous significance of the work of the Special Commission of 1925. As he wired Macartney during the General Assembly of 1926: 'If the evangelical party votes for this report, its witness bearing is gone and all the sacrifices of the past few years will go for nothing.' [107]

However, this is exactly what happened. Perhaps the following incident can illustrate the attitude which brought about this turn of events. When Macartney was questioning certain aspects of the report, his brother arose and said: 'I am for this report from cover to cover, not so much for what it says or does not say, as for the spirit that pervades it.' Then Mark A. Matthews arose to speak in favor of the report. In the words of one historian: 'This militant fundamentalist of former days pleaded with his brethren for peace and unity.'[108]

We only need mention one further triumph, the reorganization of Princeton Seminary by the General Assembly of 1929 to conform to the modernistic indifferentism regnant in the Church as a whole. Willing to tolerate indifference to fundamental doctrines—indeed, to doctrine in general—the

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106. *BC*, 128-135. Such is the gist of Loetscher's own analysis. He is careful to point out the momentous significance of this development for the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. 'The work of this Special Commission of 1925 was therefore a turning point in the theological history of the Church since the reunion of 1869. It meant that moderate theological liberalism would have what it had unsuccessfully sought almost since the reunion, an acknowledged and assured place in the Church's life and thought. By assuring to local presbyteries greater autonomy and theological liberty at a time when the administrative functions of the Church had long been becoming more centralized, the commission made important concessions to cultural pluralism and theological diversity, concessions which were necessary to preserve the Church's unity' (135).

107. *BC*, 132 f.

108. Cole, *op. cit.*, 114 f. *Cf.* 129 f. for Cole's judgment as to why the fundamentalists lost out in the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church: 'The fundamentalists' cause lost in the courts for the reason that its sponsors depended upon an appeal to loyalty to historic traditions at the expense of pursuing proper legal methods.'

Church was not willing to tolerate at least one institution within the Presbyterian Church which stood, without compromise, for the Word of God and the Presbyterian principles found therein.[109]

The Broadened Church

In summary, we have seen modernism, under the guise of indifferentism, take control of the denominational machinery of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., so that this great Church virtually became The Broadened Church in the U.S.A. This modernism was a new phenomenon opposed in principle both to the spirit and teaching of the Bible, to Reformed theology, and to Presbyterian ecclesiastical principles. Indeed, it was opposed to historic Presbyterianism, whether of the Old School or New School tradition. It is true that there are certain formal similarities between modernism and certain aspects of the New School tradition; and that, without a doubt, New School tolerance respecting certain doctrinal issues helped to prepare the mind of the Church for the triumph of modernistic indifferentism. However, New School Presbyterianism was certainly not the direct parent of modernism, if for no other reason than that it was rooted in a profound reverence for the authority of the Bible in the traditional sense. As Loetscher points out, with reference to the relationship of the Old School—New School controversy to the rise of modernism: 'The old issues had given place to new, and the lines of division were not identical.'[110]

That this is the case is convincingly argued by George M. Marsden, who maintains that the characterization of New School Presbyterianism as 'proto-liberal' is 'a vast and misleading simplification.'[111] In fact, there are very striking

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109. *Cf.* Machen, *Attack*, 10, 16 f., 39. For the details of this development, *see BC*, 136-148; Stonehouse, *Machen*, 409-441; Rian, *op. cit.*, 60 ff.

110. *BC*, 36; *cf.* 18, 25-27, 33.

111. Marsden, *New School*, 312 (*cf.* 306). Both conservative and liberal authors tend to fall for this oversimplification. *Cf.* Rian, *op. cit.*, 19-23. E. A.

similarities between New School Presbyterianism and fundamentalism. 'The New School, despite its undeniable affinities to theological "liberalism" in its tradition of a broader interpretation of the Westminster Confession, had nearly as great affinities to twentieth century Fundamentalism. The emphasis in the New School movement on revivalism, legalistic reformism, strict Biblicism, a relatively low view of the church, a form of millennialism, and a tendency to emphasize the fundamentals of orthodoxy as a means of unifying the church against rationalism and corruption all suggest characteristics of the later Fundamentalist Movement.'[112]

With regard to the turn of events of the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church, it is of the utmost importance to realize that modernistic indifferentism could not have carried the day apart from the theological and ecclesiastical indifference of many so-called conservatives, or evangelicals, or fundamentalists within the Church. Various factors, no doubt, account for this fact. However without a doubt two are primary. The first is that much of the conservatism within the Church—shot through, as it were, with dispensationalism and other hardly Reformed theological tendencies—was far from the confessional position of historic Presbyterianism. Although this conservatism was more faithful to the Westminster Confession of Faith than rank modernism, it was likewise open to the justifiable charge of dishonest unfaithfulness not only to the confessional system of doctrine itself but also to the ordination vows by which that system was supposedly to be upheld by solemn oath. This fact was exploited by the modernists for all it was worth; and it disastrously weakened any fundamentalist appeal to the Confession with a view to excluding modernists from the Church.

The second factor to be noted is the fact that the conservative party within the Church was either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the historic Presbyterian view of the church.

Smith, *The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900*, 1962, 264.

112. *Ibid.*, 308 ff.

There can be little doubt that interdenominational fundamentalism and dispensationalism made a heavy contribution to this state of affairs, which greatly weakened the cause of those who appealed to the Confession and the distinctively Presbyterian Constitution of the Church. This factor—oddly coupled with a general feeling of denominational loyalty, especially to the church organization—is of incalculable significance in explaining how the Broadened Church came to be.

The years of the Broadening Church were truly what one of its foremost advocates has called 'a period of theological indifferentism.'[113] It was also a period when this indifferentism became dominant in the Church. However, although this broadened church was controlled by a coalition of modernists and indifferentists, it still had many fundamentalists in it. It remained to be seen what would become of them. What course of action, if any, would they pursue? Would the Broadened Church be broad enough for them? What, ultimately, would be their relationship to this broadened and ever broadening church?

Would the Broadening Church in the U.S.A. eventually split to produce a new beginning? Shortly before B. B. Warfield's death, J. Gresham Machen had one last conversation with the man he had come to admire above all others:

> In the course of the conversation I expressed my hope that to end the present intolerable condition there might be a great split in the Church, in order to separate the Christians from the anti-Christian propagandists. 'No,' he said, 'you can't split rotten wood.' His expectation seemed to be that the organized Church, dominated by naturalism, would become so cold and dead, that people would come to see that spiritual life could be found only outside of it, and that thus there might be a new beginning.'[14]

To Warfield the Broadening Church was 'rotten wood.' The truthfulness of his prophecy and the fate of his expectation is the story of the Presbyterian Separatist Movement.

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113. A. C. Zenos, *Presbyterianism in America*, 1937, 100. We shall return to this book in Chapter 6.

114. Stonehouse, 310.